

Amit Singh takes on Democrat heavyweight in Virginia's 8th district

GEORGE JOSEPH

Though the Republican Party confronts more criticism currently for the state of the economy and the Iraq war, it does not deter businessman Amit Kumar Singh from seeking a ticket to contest the election for Congress from the 8th District in Virginia.

"It is precisely because the Republican Party has offered big government candidates that I am running. The Republican Party used to champion fiscal responsibility, protecting the rights of the people, and peace and trade with all nations," he said.

"I grew increasingly frustrated with the lack of choice being offered by the parties and wanted an advocate who truly represented the people. My message is that the American Dream should be accessible to all who come to this nation," Singh said.

The district with a population of 650,000 is predominantly Democratic and represented by Congressman Jim Moran.

"My chances in the primary are very good due to a message that resonates with voters – a vision of less government waste, a government that respects our civil liberties, and a stronger economy. My opponent has unsuccessfully run for the Republican nomination in the past," he said.

But general elections are typically won by candidates with the most money, he noted. For this they will accept money from special interest groups or big businesses. "I am not taking contributions from corporate special interests and lobbyists," he said.

"I think people in Virginia's 8th district want a change from some of the big government candidates they have been offered. I believe my philosophy of limited government, personal liberty, and strong national defense will be in line with Republican voters here."

Singh has collected about \$20,000, raising about \$9,000 at a single fundraising event last week. "At the event we



■ Amit Kumar Singh

announced our goal of raising \$20,000 by the end of the month but we came away having reached that mark by the end of the night," he said.

He expects to spend about \$50,000 for the primary scheduled for June 10.

"Given his ability to raise \$9,000 in a single day, Amit Singh proved he can contend with Jim Moran in the November general election," said campaign manager Steve Bierfeldt. "The Republican party of Virginia wants a nominee capable of providing a real challenge and they have

that in Amit Singh."

Singh was born and raised in Colonial Heights, a suburb of Richmond. His father has been a math professor for 35 years at the local university; his mother is a homemaker.

He said the family used to spend its entire summer in India because his parents did not want the children to lose touch with Indian culture.

"Like most Indian families in America, education was a major focus of my childhood. My family never imagined I would leave the engineering firm I started to become a public servant. They are very supportive of my run for Congress and respect my decision to serve their adopted country," he said.

Singh graduated from the University of Virginia with a BS in electrical engineering and moved to Arlington to work for NASA and the Department of Defense. In 2000, he started small business, which currently works with the US intelligence community and American servicemen on a daily basis.

His campaign recently unveiled its plan for field operations within the 8th district, the 'Amit Singh Accessibility Program,' or ASAP aimed at reaching out to voters in Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax.

Voters in the 8th district do not register by party so it is difficult to give an exact number of voters on a party basis, Singh said, adding, "Typically, the voters favored the long-time Democratic incumbent. However, my campaign is not targeted at members of a particular party, but all those who live in the 8th district, all those who want to see responsible leadership, and those who want to bring real change to Washington."

When most immigrants are Democrats he chose to be a Republican because "the Democratic incumbent does not properly represent the people of the 8th district. Unfortunately, some Republicans have not done a good job reaching out to immigrants which is disappointing given that the limited government platform is more in line with the immigrant mind set of working hard to pursue the American dream," he said.

According to Singh, the Democrats often take the immigrant vote for granted. "By subsidizing illegal immigration they are harming legal immigration from countries with high levels of education and skills," he said.