

A few examples of how your life and the political issues important to you will be directly impacted by what will go on Tuesday night at the neighborhood caucus meetings.

### **Jeff Buhman**

Who is Jeff Buhman? He's the Utah County Attorney General the county's top law enforcement officer and the man responsible for a large chunk of your property tax dollars.

Not only is he an important guy, he was only recently elected. In 2006 he challenged his own boss, Kay Bryson (a 16-year incumbent!) and won the election after a bitter race that got a lot of attention in the Utah press. Many police officers in the county campaigned hard for Mr. Buhman and he won a resounding victory. It was an inspiring and exciting election.

So how come most of you, even if you live in Utah County and even if you're pretty good about watching the news, have probably never heard of Jeff Buhman?

Because chances are you didn't get to vote for him! Mr. Buhman and Mr. Bryson were both Republicans, and since a Democrat did not run for Utah County attorney general in 2006 the entire race was decided 5 months before the November general election. It was decided at the Utah County Republican Party convention.

In other words the only people who got a vote were the 1200 Utah County Republican party delegates who were themselves elected at their **neighborhood caucus meeting** just a few months earlier. Who were the delegates representing you?

### **Chris Cannon & Illegal Immigration**

Ah, here's someone we all know. Chris Cannon is one of 3 guys who represents Utah in the United States Congress. He's been in office for over 10 years now and is up for re-election again in 2008.

However, many Utahns are pretty upset with Mr. Cannon. They feel like he's soft on illegal immigration and largely because of that he was challenged by Republican contenders in 2004 & 2006. He kept his job both times by winning narrow victories over his Republican opponents.

In 2006 Chris was opposed by 2 Republican candidates: John Jacobs and Merrill Cook. Mr. Cook was eliminated at the State Party convention on the first ballot. By the time the first ballot had been counted and they were ready for second ballot to be cast many delegates had already left the convention!

John Jacobs won that second ballot 52% to 48%. A solid victory, but party rules say that if you can't win more than 60% of the delegate votes you have to go to a general primary. So John Jacobs and Chris Cannon went on to a general primary vote in September, and after making a statement to the press about the devil being against him, John Jacobs lost soundly. That gave Chris Cannon the party nomination and he went on to beat Democrat Christian Burridge in November's General Election.

Here's the important thing to take away: if just 50 delegates had switched their votes on the second ballot at the state party convention in July, John Jacob would have won the Republican party nomination and likely the entire election!

This year Chris again faces stiff Republican opposition. 3 Republican contenders are vying to replace him:

- **David Leavitt:** former Juab County prosecutor, brother of Mike Leavitt (Secretary of Health and Human Services in the Bush administration and former governor of Utah), and one of the top 10 congressional contenders in the nation according to Congressional Magazine.
- **Jason Chaffetz:** former chief of staff to Gov. John Huntsman
- **Joe Feruson:** prominent member of the ultra-conservative Eagle Forum

It's entirely possible that this year's race will be entirely decided at the republican party state convention in July. If you live in District 3, the 2 or 3 state delegates from your area will have a big say in who your congressman will be next year.

## Vouchers

Think the voucher fight is dead? If so you're dead wrong. The next fight on school vouchers in Utah will begin at the neighborhood caucus meetings tomorrow night.

If you've been reading the Deseret News this week you'd have seen a half-dozen articles talking about how a lot of anti-voucher candidates have filed this year to run against legislators who voted in favor of vouchers in the Utah State House of Representatives and Utah State Senate. If they are unsuccessful a voucher bill is likely to come up again in 2009.

My own representative, Craig Frank, is a strong voucher supporter and sponsored a couple of bills during this last legislative session in support of charter schools. Although he ran uncontested in the past 2 elections, this year he faces 3 opponents (2 republican & 1 democrat) all running on anti-voucher platforms.

Rep. Frank's fate, like many legislators, may very well be decided at the Utah County Convention this June. This Tuesday my precinct will select 5 people to serve as delegates to that convention. There are rumours that one of Rep. Frank's opponents is planning to pack our caucus meeting so that her anti-voucher supporters will win all or most of those delegate spots.

It's easier to do than you would think.

At my last caucus meeting only 25 people showed up. If a candidate for office had talked 10-15 supporters from my area into coming to the meeting that would have been sufficient to win all of those delegate positions. Since Rep. Frank only represents 15 precincts (for a total of about 100 county delegates), my precinct's 5 county delegates are over 10% of the votes needed to win the Republican Party nomination (and probably the entire election). All with 10 to 15 people!

Regardless of how you feel about vouchers, it should be sobering to realize how few people it takes to swing an election like this.