

Hon. Mark S. Singel
Remarks on Senate Bill 761

Senate State Government Committee
Senator Mike Folmer, Chairman

Tuesday, November 14
Hearing Room One, North Office Building

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I support Senate Bill 761 which would allow for the selection of lieutenant governor candidates by candidates for governor.

I offer you perspectives from two points of view: first, as an individual who negotiated the choppy waters of winning two primary elections as a lieutenant governor candidate and, secondly, as a candidate for Governor who was teamed with a partner who had been through the same primary process.

Running for lieutenant governor in Pennsylvania requires a complete commitment of time and energy. It involves the same bone-wearying effort of any other statewide pursuit with the unnerving difference that all of the priming in the primary may find one matched with a reluctant partner. In recent years, it has become common for gubernatorial contenders to state their preferences shortly after their own candidacies have been established. This does not preclude the voting public playing the role of a shotgun-toting father and arranging a marriage instead!

There is plenty of history in which tickets were established by chance rather than design. In the 1986 election, I had the blessing of the Democratic gubernatorial hopeful early in the campaign process, but still had to fend off two determined suitors. In fact, even with the gubernatorial candidate's support, I was considered a long-shot. My own win defied the odds but it secured the Casey-Singel partnership for the duration of the campaign and the next eight years.

Currently, our constitution allows any candidate to exercise his or her prerogatives to run for the office of Lt. Governor. Here are three points to consider:

- 1) A divisive primary fight for Lt. Governor could drain important resources leaving both teams scrambling in the general election.
- 2) A forced merger between those who survive the primary slugfest may not achieve the cooperative, effective level of partnership required to actually govern once the election is over.
- 3) Selecting a lieutenant governor establishes an expectation that the second-in-command is "with the program." This allows for a sharing of duties that is beneficial to the Governor and to the Commonwealth itself.

Of all the social rituals in our culture, blind dating is among the worst. Lieutenant Governor Candidates put on their best appearances, seek the approbation of a generally apathetic electorate, engage fully in the spring courtship, and then hope for a pleasant relationship with a mate who may or may not be interested.

The answer is clear: allow gubernatorial candidates to select their running mates. This could be done by stating preferences after the nominations, with the running mates ratified by the parties' state committees – just as SB 761 envisions.