

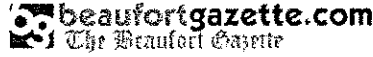
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### U.S. Rep. Wilson basks in support at town meeting Friday

By JOSH DAWSEY  
jdawsey@islandpacket.com  
843-706-8141  
Published Friday July 9, 2010  
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If it's true town hall meetings are the people's chance to grade politicians U.S. Rep. Joe Wilson passed with flying colors at a gathering Friday in southern Beaufort County.

Democrats in Washington though? Not so much.

The crowd railed against government spending, bureaucracy and illegal immigration in pleas to the West Columbia Republican for help.

"These people are more informed than ever, and they can actually weigh the issues and see what's going on in America," Wilson said. "Big government is not the solution. The solution must come from the private sector."

Wilson, who represents South Carolina's 2nd Congressional District, which includes Beaufort County, faces at least two opponents in November's general election -- Democrat Rob Miller and Constitution Party candidate Marc Beaman, both of Beaufort County.

Wilson called for the destruction of the Department of Education, a reduction in the Department of Energy and the repeal of President Barack Obama's health care package.

He urged Arizona officials to stand firm in their support of a recently enacted law making it a state crime for illegal immigrants to apply for a job or to be caught without registration papers showing their immigration status, Wilson said. English should be the U.S. official language.

The crowd loved it.

Friday's event in a packed auditorium on the south campus of the University of South Carolina Beaufort wasn't a campaign event, but at times it had the air of a political rally.

Wilson received standing ovations, loud rounds of applause and shook a long line of hands after the meeting.

"He works very hard for us, and he means what he says," said David Grande, a Sun City Hilton Head resident. "We love him. And I don't think it's all about politics. He really wants what's best for America. That's what you want to see from the people who run Washington."

Wilson said he's seen an outpouring of support in advance of his race against Miller, whom he defeated by 8 percentage points in 2006. Wilson has been criticized by some in recent weeks for supporting the financial-industry bailout in 2008. He said he didn't regret the vote because the economy was in dire straits and needed help.

Local economic officials spoke during the meeting about their efforts to bring jobs and lower the unemployment rate in Beaufort County.

Kim Statler, director of the Lowcountry Economic Network, asked for regional cooperation in attracting big companies to the area.

Marjorie Thomas of the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce spoke about her agency's efforts to lower Beaufort County's 7.7 percent unemployment rate. The state average is 11 percent.

That matters to Chad Beauchamp. The 43-year-old Bluffton resident said he has been unemployed since October. He asked Wilson for help in finding a job and was directed to Thomas.

Beauchamp had something in common with seemingly everyone else there.

Infamil

Beneficial bacteria found there can help support his natural defenses.

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