

Alexakis tries again to unseat Gilchrest
Lost to incumbent by 50 percentage points in 2004
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EASTON — U.S. Rep. Wayne T. Gilchrest, R-Md.-1st, lost his first bid for Congress in 1988, against Democratic incumbent Roy Dyson. Gilchrest tried again in 1990, after Dyson had suffered serious political damage from rumors and scandal.

Gilchrest won, ending Dyson's decade-long lock on the 1st District Congressional seat. Despite gaining re-election in 1992 with a mere 51 percent of the vote, Gilchrest has been virtually invincible ever since.

Kostas Alexakis, 52, has faced Gilchrest before, in 2004, as the Democratic nominee for the 1st District Congressional seat. But Alexakis lost that race — by a margin of 50 percentage points. Gilchrest received 75.77 percent of the vote, and in some counties, such as Talbot and Kent, he got 80 percent. This Democratic defeat was not quite as bad as in 2002, when Gilchrest trounced Ann Tamlyn with 76.67 percent of the vote.

Alexakis, however, is not deterred by Gilchrest's landslide victories. He was born in Sparta, Greece, a city historically renowned for producing fierce warriors claiming descent from Hercules. While his ancient ancestors may have cut their long locks after their defeat at Thermopylae, Alexakis the Spartan maintains his moustache and says he has no intention of truckling before Gilchrest.

"The goal was not to run once," he said. "It's a conservative district. People don't change their minds too quickly ... You must commit to a long battle if you are going to succeed."

Alexakis thinks that Gilchrest "has been ineffective in representing the district in Congress," and he believes he will offer leadership that Gilchrest has failed to provide.

In particular, Alexakis thinks the 1st District needs a strong voice on the protection of the Chesapeake Bay and on the "totally broken" public school system. He championed both these issues in 2004 ("those are nonpartisan issues"), and he intends to do the same on the campaign trail this year.

"The problem with Congressman Gilchrest is he doesn't do anything," he said. "He's not forceful ... We need someone who will forcefully pursue a plan to stop the degradation of the Bay."

He said "enforcement action by the federal government" is what is required to stop pollution.

“I think you deserve to live in an environment that’s not Bangladesh-like” — pointing to sewer systems that routinely discharge into local creeks and rivers after a heavy rain.

Alexakis thinks education reform “requires pointing the finger to those [school] districts that are failing to educate our students.” While he doesn’t agree with President George W. Bush on much of anything, he was a supporter of the No Child Left Behind Act — “the best that this administration has offered,” he said.

“The accountability measures in that act were wise and well-thought out,” he said.

Regarding Iraq, Alexakis takes a decidedly un-Spartan view: he was an opponent before the invasion, and today he advocates withdrawal. And he is not concerned that the predominantly conservative 1st District may not respond well to his views on the war, which he calls “a blunder.”

“I think that this war has proved to be a very sad chapter in American history,” Alexakis said. “The solution is to step back and realize that with military might you can’t force people to go your way. We need to be reasonable and stop the carnage... We have to leave, I think. The sooner the better. You just cannot justify being there. There’s just no way.”

He came to the United States as a child. His parents settled in Arlington. He currently lives in Arnold with his wife Laura and their 8-year-old daughter Eleni.

Alexakis, who earned a degree in electrical engineering from George Washington University, holds a law degree and is member of the Virginia bar. So, in addition to being a real estate developer, financier, and owner of a software company, Alexakis is also a lawyer.