



The Republican.

Power, democracy discussed

Wednesday, October 29, 2008

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SPRINGFIELD - U.S. Sen. John F. Kerry, D-Mass., signed a "Values Pledge" Tuesday night presented by an organization that seeks to improve the lives of low-income families.

Kerry addressed more than 500 people who gathered at St. Jude's Roman Catholic Church in Indian Orchard for the community convention of the Alliance to Develop Power.

Kerry, who is seeking re-election to a fifth term Tuesday, said he stood with those gathered to work for a more equitable society. But the senator also said achieving power requires commitment.

"Power doesn't come from just talking about it. You have to work for it," said Kerry, who added that democracy requires effort such as neighbors speaking with neighbors and citizens registering to vote.

The senator also said every religion and philosophy speak to people treating others as they would wish to be treated.

"They all have a philosophy about respect for other human beings," he said. "Every single one of them."

Kerry also said he was tired of politicians speaking about how pious they are while "they forget to take care of people." The senator, however, did not name a specific politician.

Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Murray was also expected to appear at the convention, and the state's other United States senator, Edward M. Kennedy, who was headed to Washington, D.C., sent a letter to the alliance.

"We all have a responsibility to help members of our communities in need," Kennedy wrote. "The war on poverty has casualties like any other war and we must respond in ways that are as good and compassionate as the American people.

"We know what must be done. We're a stronger country when we're a fairer country."

The alliance, formerly known as the Anti-Displacement Project, was formed in 1993. The alliance, which represents 5,000 families in Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin counties, works to organize low-income families to have a say over the decisions that affect their lives, including jobs, housing and immigration issues.

The "Values Pledge" signed by Kerry reads, in part: "Our politics and policies must reflect our core values as a nation by promoting basic democratic principles, recognizing the contributions of all communities to this nation, rejecting the exploitation of workers, and holding politicians accountable for real solutions to the issues facing our nation."

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