

A GEORGIST IN CONGRESS?

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By Scott Baker, New York, NY

Long-time Georgist and Founder and Co-Director of the Earth Rights Institute; Author of "The Earth Belongs to Everyone;" Online course developer: Land Rights and Land Value Capture; General Secretary, International Union for Land Value Taxation; Global Outreach Coordinator, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation; and UN NGO Representative, ECOSOC, Alanna Hartzok, is running for Congress in the 9th congressional district in Pennsylvania.

Alanna is a dedicated activist and colleague in the Georgist community which will certainly treat her as very wonderful news, as might the good people of Pennsylvania, once they become aware of her campaign. Her theme of collecting the Land Rent is particularly timely given Pennsylvania's recent embrace of Fracking, often to the enrichment of the companies doing the Fracking, but to the detriment of its local citizens. How Hartzok handles the multifaceted nature of fracking, will be a test not only of her, but of the Georgist philosophy of sharing the gifts of nature via rent collection as well. I got some indication of her high attention to this issue from a featured debate she arranged and chaired at the Annual Council of Georgist Organizations in Harrisburg, in the summer of 2012. Her views on the rights to the commons may be found in her articles, such as this one: Claiming the Commons, published in the Common Ground-USA newsletter, GroundSwell. (Full disclosure: I am president of the local NY-metro Chapter of Common Ground-USA). The following information was supplied to me by a Georgist source and lightly edited for publication here. Alanna Hartzok is now officially on the ballot, running for Congress in the 9th district of Pennsylvania. As soon as her campaign website is set up, it will be:



<http://www.alannaforcongress.com/>

Here are quotes from an article in the Daily American, March 11, about Hartzok's campaign: "Democrat enters the fray in the 9th Congressional District". The 9th Congressional District race appeared to have only three candidates, all Republicans. But a Franklin County woman quickly put together an effort and turned in enough signatures to appear on the primary ballot. Alanna Hartzok said she was asked by the Franklin County Democratic chairman if she would run for the Democratic nomination. This will not be Hartzok's first run in the 9th District. She ran as the Green Party candidate in the 2001 special election to replace U.S.Rep. Bud Shuster. His son Bill won that race. Hartzok is the co-director of the Earth Rights Institute, which is described as an organization "working for

economic justice and peaceful resolution of conflicts." Hartzok said she is in favor of a free and fair economy and fair market rules. She said there is a horrible distribution of wealth in the United States and a collapsing middle class. She is calling for economic democracy. "The rules and the program go beyond left or right," she said. "The bird flies on two wings: The right is freedom and the left is fairness. I am in favor of a free, fair economy." She said there are ways to take ideas from both the

right and the left which could make for a better democracy. She said the state's wealth is found in its gifts from nature. "We have to fairly share the limited gifts of nature," she said. "People need environmental rules and regulatory rules enforced. We should not eliminate the (Clean Air or Clean Water Act). We need permission from we the people on what resources are extracted from the earth." She favors an arrangement similar to the Alaska Permanent Fund, through which funding related to the oil industry is invested and a dividend is paid to the state's residents. One of the ideas behind the fund was to save money for future generations, which would no longer have oil as a source of revenue. She said the fund allows people to get their fair share of the profits from the oil industry. She said money could also be put into education. Hartzok does not appear to have a primary opponent.

http://www.dailymail.com/news/local/somerset/democrat-enters-the-fray-in-the-9th-congressional-district/article_b05e6cdc-a964-11e3-aedb-001a4bcf6878.html (This site is behind a Paywall)

There will be a race on the Republican side of the ticket. All 3 Republican candidates, U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster, Travis Schooley of Franklin County and Art Halvorson of Bedford County turned in signatures by the state deadline. Pennsylvania's 9th district's primary is May 20, and as this article points out, the winner is by no means decided, due to low turnout and general apathy. http://www.heraldstandard.com/opinion/editorials/blame-game/article_d9475e6c-d313-59de-9c00-5aeb9fefa4b3.html

It's not clear whom Alanna will be running against at this time.

And Hartzok is not the only Georgist Democrat in a political race this year: A Democratic candidate for County Council in Maryland, Jim Wildoner, advocates a land user fee approach to property tax reform, and cites the Democratic Freedom Caucus (DFC), a caucus within the Democratic Party, advocating LVT-oriented tax reform, individual liberty, constitutional democracy, and social responsibility. Wildoner's campaign website says that he has: "Proposed an infrastructure user fee (IUF) that would be placed on your property tax bill and tax deductible." (continued on page 14)

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His website also says: "Jim has adopted the DEMOCRATIC FREEDOM CAUCUS platform (<http://www.democraticfreedomcaucus.org>) because it generally states his political views on promoting social justice, individual liberty, constitutional democracy and fiscal responsibility." He has previously served as a Council Member for New Carrollton, from 2003 to 2013, where he has held all positions on the council, and has a degree in Business Management and an MS in Finance. Wildoner's campaign website: <http://democracy.com/WILDONERforCountyCouncil>. His position on tax reform: <http://democracy.com/WILDONERforCountyCouncil/issues.aspx>. His bio from the DFC's platform: <http://democracy.com/WILDONERforCountyCouncil/bio.aspx>.