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## So tell me, why vote Republican in Morris?

*By Michael Soriano*

I am grateful to R. Gregory Jones for his June 24 column about Democrats "punishing (the) affluent" in Morris County. His column contained one profound question worth noting. "Why would anyone in Morris County want to elect a Democrat to municipal office?"

I asked that question when I first started attending my local Democratic meetings. I wonder whether Jones asks similar questions of his fellow tax-and-spend Republicans in Washington Township. The all-Republican Washington Township Committee unanimously voted to impose an 11.1 percent municipal tax increase on its residents in 2005. This \$1 million increase in the prior year's \$8 million local tax levy proved instrumental in the election of Kevin Nedd, the township's first non-Republican committeeman in close to 30 years. Nedd now is a Democrat.

Nedd has delivered three consecutive municipal budgets with declining tax increases, culminating in this year's 2.3 percent municipal tax increase, characterized by this newspaper as "not bad," given the current state of the economy. Nedd is just one example of why Morris County voters should support local Democrats this fall. There are many other municipal candidates, who, like him, have earned public trust.

Let's take, for example, the predominantly Democratic Morristown Council, which just took on a great project -- to install solar panels at its sewage treatment plant with the help of a \$1.7 million rebate from the N.J. Clean Energy Program. The project will prove a great investment for the Morristown taxpayer, as the panels will be paid off in five to 10 years, and will continue to help the plant be largely energy independent for many years forward.

The Randolph Democratic ticket of Dan Lynn, Howard Schoenberger and Jay Sweifach are big proponents of this tax-saving measure as well, in stark contrast to the GOP incumbents. Unfortunately, my five Republican council members in Parsippany blew off the same rebate opportunity, ensuring that the energy source for our plant will be subject to rising energy costs for years to come.

Further up our Democratic ticket this year, we have a congressional candidate Tom Wyka, who has pledged to fight pork-barrel earmark spending in Congress. Most of this is done at the behest of corporate and special-interest lobbying outfits that fund the massive campaign war chests of the likes of Wyka's Republican opponent, Rep. Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, R-Harding. Seven-term incumbent Frelinghuysen also has decried sensible pay-as-you-go rules as a license to tax and spend, hypocritically ignoring his complicity in the Bush borrow-and-spend policies that create monstrous debt that we'll be saddled with for generations to come.

If you're looking for a bigger reason to vote Democratic this year, each of our federal candidates, from Wyka to Frank Lautenberg to Barack Obama, will agree that they are dedicated to ending the mindless occupation of Iraq. When you divide up the cost of the worst foreign policy blunder in the history of this country, you will discover that the share of the federal tax burden on our own Morris County is a whopping \$1.9 billion, or \$38 million for Jones' Washington Township and \$178 million for my Parsippany.

The real question Jones should have asked is, why would anyone in Morris County want to elect

Republicans whose total campaign strategy consists of consistently blaming Democrats for their own fiscal incompetence? As you can see, the GOP has lost its way. My party is not perfect, and politics aside, as a family man and a homeowner, I understand Jones' frustrations with Trenton. However, I think Jones should look to the Republicans in Washington, D.C., and in Washington Township for the greatest source of his tax woes.

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