



For Immediate Release

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“Brownie, you’re doing a heck of a job”

Latest Ehrlich Political Appointment Reminiscent of Bush-Style Patronage

ANNAPOLIS, MD (February 9, 2006) – Today, the O’Malley-Brown campaign condemned the Ehrlich Administration’s appointment of Douglas Burkhardt as the head of the Office of Smart Growth. Stating that our quality of life and environment are too important to subject to political cronyism, O’Malley-Brown campaign manager Jonathan Epstein denounced the hiring as purely political.

“Appointing a connected friend with absolutely no environmental or planning experience to run the state’s most important office to stop sprawl sends a clear message about the lack of importance Bob Ehrlich places on managing growth in Maryland,” said Epstein. “Runaway sprawl and poorly-planned development are adding to gridlock and affecting our sense of community. The Office of Smart Growth is too important to leave in the hands of an unqualified political patron.”

According to today’s Washington Post, the Washington, D.C. metro area has the third worst traffic in the nation. Despite this, Burkhardt has no planning experience. Instead, Burkhardt, who is acquainted with Planning Secretary Audrey Scott through his failed campaign for Annapolis City Council, formerly ran a consulting firm that specialized in information technology and mortgages.

“Unfortunately, this is just the latest example in a disturbing pattern of White House-style cronyism from Bob Ehrlich,” said Epstein.

Michael Brown, the former Director of FEMA and also former Commissioner of Judges at the International Arabian Horse Association, came under fire last fall for his lack of experience in emergency preparedness in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Bush has also been criticized for many other political appointments.

Burkhardt’s hiring is the latest in the long list of patronage appointments by Bob Ehrlich:

- **Appointing an Ice Dancer to the Port of Baltimore.** Shortly after Bob Ehrlich came to office, the Port of Baltimore was forced to hire long-time Ehrlich political

operative Gregory J. Maddalone, as head of legislative affairs. Maddalone is a former ice dancer with no background in either maritime or legislative issues.

- **Appointing Camp Counselors and Comedians in the Maryland Energy Agency.** Bob Ehrlich filled the Maryland Energy Administration with partisan loyalists with no experience in energy issues. Media and investigative reports suggest that the partisans hired were “a succession of junior staff members with firm Republican Party ties but little or no energy experience, according to internal agency e-mails and résumés...[t]heir résumés list such positions as camp and dorm counselor and such activities as ‘improvisational comedian.’” [*Washington Post*, 3/18/05].
- **Appointing Campaign Hatchet Man to High Level Posts Throughout Maryland Government.** Joseph Steffen, a longtime Ehrlich campaign and congressional worker, was appointed to a high level job in the Governor’s office and in several other executive departments. News reports cite former political opponents as describing Steffen as Ehrlich’s “hatchet man” and “dirty trick operator.” [*Baltimore Sun*, 2/10/05]. Steffen, himself, admits to spreading malicious and false rumors against Ehrlich’s political opponents.
- **Appointed Political Loyalist Tied to Jack Abramoff as Deputy Chief of Staff.** Ed Miller, the Current Deputy Chief of Staff to Ehrlich started a company that laundered money for disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff.

“Bob Ehrlich is busy fighting for his political friends instead of hard working Maryland families, our communities and our environment,” said Epstein.

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