

The Hour

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Libertarian candidate calls for Iraq debate

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NORWALK — Phil Maymin says he doesn't want to buckle your seat belt.

Nor does he have any desire to make you order healthy food at a restaurant or tuck you into bed at night so you get enough rest.

What Phil Maymin wants is to represent you in the House of Representatives. The Libertarian entered the 4th District race last week, and on Monday he challenged established candidates Republican U.S. Rep. Christopher Shays and Democrat Diane Farrell to a debate on the Iraq war.

Maymin believes America has been over-regulated, both socially and economically.

"If I put a restriction on you that I think will benefit you, I have violated your freedom," Maymin said. "It's up to you

how to live your life."

The 31-year-old Greenwich businessman also opposes illegal immigration and the Iraq war. As he announced his candidacy, Maymin took a shot at Shays and Farrell's positions on the Iraq.

"Both would have voted, as virtually every politician of both ruling parties did, to allow the Iraqi invasion," Maymin said. "Both want a gradual pullout of troops now based on achievable benchmarks. They are as different as night and later that night."

Farrell's campaign said she supported an amendment that required authorization from the United Nations Security Council or a second vote in Congress before President Bush could use force in Iraq.

Maymin believes America's two-party system offers voters

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"a false choice."

"It's kind of a game that they play, the two parties together," he said. "Imagine that Coke and Pepsi were owned by the same company. It's such a great marketing ploy to get people to love one and hate another."

Democrats campaign on social liberties and Republicans on economic liberties, Maymin said, adding that neither party delivers on its promise.

"Republicans have been in control of Congress for a while and tax revenue continues to go up," he said.

Maymin said he hopes to participate in upcoming Shays/Farrell debates and has challenged the mainstream candidates to defend their views on Iraq on Aug. 29 at Greenwich Town Hall.

"Currently, I am the only candidate willing to set a deadline," Maymin wrote in an e-

mail to Shays and Farrell's campaign managers. Maymin promised "a civil discussion with each candidate speaking in turn for a maximum of two-minute stretches."

Shays' campaign manager Michael Sohn declined, saying "We have a lot of debates scheduled in October and we'll debate our opponents then."

Farrell's campaign manager could not be reached for comment Monday evening.

Shays and Farrell spokesmen said the two campaigns have scheduled seven debates in October. Whether Maymin is invited to participate is up to the organizations planning the debates, Sohn said.

Those organizations include the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce, various Leagues of Women Voters, Temple Israel in Westport, Fairfield University, the American Association of Retired Persons and other groups.

Maymin is a long-shot candidate in what has been rated one

of the tightest House races in the country. In 2004, Shays defeated Farrell 52 percent to 48 percent, a narrow margin for the veteran incumbent accustomed to double-digit victories.

As a minor-party candidate, Maymin collected signatures to enter the race. State officials certified that Maymin produced the nearly 3,000 signatures necessary, and a spokeswoman for the candidate said he collected "just over 5,000."

Maymin was born in the Soviet Union, and the Communist regime influenced his political views.

"We moved here when I was 5 (years old)," he said. "I heard stories from my parents about growing up and how miserable it was in the Soviet Union. Freedom is important to me."

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