

Demms win big



U.S. Rep.-elect Jim Himes, D-4th District, speaks during the election night party of his campaign against incumbent U.S. Rep. Christopher Shays, R-4th District, at the Brevhouse in Norwalk on Tuesday. State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, right, looks on. Himes' defeat of Shays unseats the final Republican U.S. congressman from New England. AP

Himes beats Shays, unseating the final Republican U.S. congressman from New England

By Ken Dixon
STAFF WRITER

Republican U.S. Rep. Christopher Shays of Bridgeport couldn't fight the Democratic tide of 2008 Tuesday. Jim Himes, a 42-year-old former Wall Street banker, is the next congressman from Connecticut's 4th District.

Himes will be the first 4th District Democratic since Donald J. Irwin of Norwalk, who lost to Republican Lowell P. Weicker in 1968.

Shays, who has held the seat since 1987, conceded defeat at 9:50 p.m., ending a campaign that cost the candidates a total of \$9 million. Late Tuesday night, with about half the 17-town district reporting voting results, Himes had about 57 percent to Shays' 42 percent.

The 63-year-old Shays, looking sad with his wife, Betsi, before about 400 supporters at the Norwalk Inn, thanked the district for sending him to Washington for the past 21 years and wished Himes good luck.

Shays said he would have liked to have been a part of the next Congress.

"My contract is not being renewed," Shays said. "There is absolutely no regret whatsoever, and I have a tremendous amount of gratitude."

Shays said he thought he was going to win re-election this year, despite an anticipated large turnout for Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama.

"We had this tsunami that was on its way," he said, noting while both John McCain and Barack Obama ran good campaigns, the latter's Connecticut support swept Shays out of office.

Himes, who left investment banking six years ago to work for an affordable housing company, said about 10:20 p.m. that the election was historic.

"My brothers and my sisters, I thank you from the bottom of my heart," he said. "We have in many ways changed history tonight."

Himes called Shays "a man of cour-



Phil Noel/Staff photographer
U.S. Rep. Christopher Shays, R-4th District, talks with Liz Wachler of Bridgeport at Black Rock School in Bridgeport on Tuesday.

age and grace and an example for all of us." He praised Shays for breaking from the Republican mainstream in Congress during his congressional tenure.

Himes parlayed a big turnout from Obama supporters, particularly in the cities of Bridgeport, Norwalk and

Stamford, to end Shays' incumbency, which dates back to an August 1987 special election following the death of U.S. Rep. Stewart B. McKinney of Fairfield.

Himes spent more than three hours greeting early morning voters outside Bridgeport's Blackham School, joined by local candidates for the General Assembly, as well as Attorney General Richard Blumenthal.

"I think Jim will make us proud," Blumenthal said.

At about 4 p.m., Donald Neafsey, a retired computer salesman, sat in a beach chair outside Fairfield's McKinley School waiting for a ride home.

"He's been there too long and he's too complacent," said Neafsey, a military veteran who criticized Shays for not helping local vets get regular rides to the veterans hospital in West Haven.

Kristyn Castaldi, a 22-year-old social worker who had just cast her first ballot at McKinley School, said she voted for Himes because Shays seemed to have held the job for too

long. "It's time for a change all around," said Leola Davis, a 34-year-old single mother of two who was leaving Blackham School at about 9 a.m. Tuesday. "Jim Himes said he's going to help the middle class."

Shortly before noon, Baruch Levine, a 78-year-old retired professor of ancient and near eastern studies at New York University, left Shelton Intermediate School, where he had just voted with his wife, Corinne, 73, an artist.

"It's the age of the negative vote," Levine said. "It's a shame it has to be that way." He admitted not knowing much about Himes, but he voted for him anyway.

A Republican has represented the 4th District for all but six of the past 66 years, since Clare Luce Booth was elected as the first woman representative from Connecticut in 1942.

Staff writers Neil Vigdor and Tony Spinelli in Norwalk and Peter Urban in Washington contributed to this report.

Murphy denies Cappiello's Congressional bid

By Dirk Perrefort and Robert Miller
STAFF WRITERS

DANBURY — U.S. Rep. Chris Murphy won a decisive re-election to his second term in Congress Tuesday.

In doing so, Murphy denied State Senator David Cappiello of Danbury his bid for the seat.

With 92 percent of the precincts reporting, Murphy held a 59-39 percent lead over Cappiello in the 41-town district, according to unofficial tallies.

Murphy's electoral strength was so great that he even won convincingly in Cappiello's hometown.

When it became clear around 10 p.m. that Murphy, 35, had won Danbury, much of the evening was anticlimactic at the Howland-Hughes department store in downtown Waterbury — where the congressman held his victory party.

Murphy won Danbury, Cappiello's home turf, by about 2,700 votes, according to unofficial results. Murphy received 13,651 votes in Danbury, while Cappiello received 10,930.

Murphy addressed his supporters at around 10 p.m. and called the election "an evening we will remember for the rest of our lives," with reference to the election of Barack Obama as America's



U.S. Rep. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., celebrates his victory over Republican David Cappiello at a rally in Waterbury on Tuesday. AP

first black president.

"Tomorrow, we will wake up to a new world," Murphy proclaimed.

That world, he said, will favor "good old-fashioned jobs," rather than favoring corporate profits and will only make American soldiers fight "wars of necessity, not of political choice."

At around the same time, Cappiello greeted his supporters at Anthony's Lake Club on Vespucci Drive in Danbury.

"I wish Murphy the best of luck — not just for him but for all of us," Cappiello said.

The mood was somber in Cappiello's camp for much of the evening. Several dozen dedicated supporters gathered around television screens throughout the evening as numbers slowly came in.

Cappiello, 40, said he always knew the race would be a challenge — and he would be the underdog.

Cappiello, who served in

the state's General Assembly for more than 12 years, did not seek re-election to the 24th District state Senate seat. That seat was won by Republican Michael McLachlan, who was running against Democrat Duane Perkins and independent Manuel Bataguas.

Cappiello said he would be concentrating in the next few days on his family. As for another congressional run, he said "I'm not saying I'm going to run again, but you never



Chris Ware/Staff photographer
Republican David Cappiello, concedes defeat at the Vespucci Lodge in Danbury on Tuesday.

know."

Murphy told his supporters "priorities one, two and three are the economy," he said.

He said health care reform and energy reform will be part of the revitalization of the economy.

During the run-up to the election, Murphy significantly outspent Cappiello.

According to campaign finance reports submitted on Oct. 15 with the Federal Elections Commission, Murphy raised more than double the amount of money Cappiello did. The congressman collected nearly \$2.9 million, while Cappiello raised about \$1.3 million.

Close to \$1 million in contributions to Murphy's campaign came from political action committees, which Cappiello took issue with during the final months of the campaign.

Cappiello, who raised

about \$206,000 from PACs, said Murphy collected more than \$250,000 in contributions from financial firms including Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac — while sitting on the Financial Services Committee that regulates the industry.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

This space is reserved for correcting errors or clarifying statements appearing in News-Times news columns. We urge readers to report factual errors or items needing clarifications by calling 744-5100. Ask for the editor.

As part of its Chapter 11 reorganization, the Florida company WCI received court approval to sell one building, with 22 units, at its Pelican Preserve condominium project in Fort Myers, Fla. There are about 920 other residential units at the development. A story in The News-Times on Sunday erred in reporting the condominium project's name and the nature of the sale.