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Midterm Watch: Tom Perriello

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Distinctly Catholic

Of all the House races I am watching in November, none is more compelling than Virginia-5. Democratic incumbent Tom Perriello won the conservative, rural district two years ago by a few hundred votes. I profiled Perriello for NCR last year. Despite the conservative leaning in his district, he has remained a champion of climate change legislation, and he voted for both the economic stimulus and the health care reform bill, all positions that will be used against him by the GOP this fall. There is no member of Congress more courageous than he.

This morning, Politico reports that Perriello had a great fund-raising haul in the second-quarter, raising \$660,000. He now has \$1.7 million cash-on-hand. His opponent, Robert Hurt, has not released his second quarter numbers but it is doubtful he can match Perriello's cash-on-hand figure, seeing as Hurt just won a hard-fought primary and, as of May 19, had only \$119,000 cash-on-hand.

All the political winds are against Perriello but he has been indefatigable about both informing and serving his constituents, holding nearly endless town meetings throughout the sprawling district. If he wins, it will show that Democrats can win anywhere, if they have the right candidates, willing to explain their positions and, most especially, to respect their constituents enough to listen.

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