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IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

Excerpts from Articles on Congressman Tim Mahoney, Who Says "...This Isn't The Greatest Job I've Had"

'Very candidly, this isn't the greatest job I've had'

By Jessica Holzer

The Hill

May 24, 2007

Washington--Rep. Tim Mahoney (D-Fla.), the freshman member who barely beat the name "Mark Foley" in the most bizarre race of the last election, has had a shaky transition to life in Congress. And Democratic leaders have taken note.

The millionaire Florida businessman has shrugged off advice from some seasoned lawmakers and exhibited an impatience for the glacial pace of Congress, prompting Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.), the Democratic Caucus chairman, to have a quiet tête-à-tête with arguably his most vulnerable freshman, according to several sources, including one Democratic lawmaker.

Mahoney denied that a Democratic leader had confronted him, but said, "I think there was a concern that I wasn't happy in Congress. Very candidly, this isn't the greatest job I've had."

Mahoney was causing enough worry about whether he could cope in Congress that the Democratic leadership tapped a prominent Washington insider, Chuck Brain, to act as an informal adviser, according to a Democratic lobbyist. Now the head of his own lobbying firm, Brain was a longtime congressional staffer who served as the Clinton White House's chief liaison to Capitol Hill.

Brain confirmed that he was advising Mahoney but denied that anyone had asked him to do so. Brain called Mahoney a "friend," saying that Rep. Artur Davis (D-Ala.) introduced him to the freshman last year when Mahoney was running for office.

"I'm trying to do what I can for the Democrat who is perceived by Republicans to be the most vulnerable," he said.

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But Emanuel implied that the freshman was improving, a tacit acknowledgement that Mahoney had gotten off to a rocky start. "Where he was in the first two months is totally different from where he is now," he said, adding: "Anyone who's a CEO and executive who comes to Congress, the rhythm changes."

Mahoney's early frustrations place him among a host of business executives who have come to Congress brimming with confidence and big ideas but become discouraged when they realize that seniority rules in the nation's capital.

Mahoney, 51, previously headed up a thriving financial services firm he co-founded with a friend. But he had never worked in politics, setting him apart from many of his fellow freshmen in the House who had served in state legislatures or other elected offices.

"I think there should be a law that says, before you run, you have to do the job for two weeks," Mahoney said. He continued, "There's nothing in my experience in 30 years in business that even comes close to doing what you have to do in Congress. It's a very hard job."

Asked whether he had buyer's remorse, Mahoney suggested that his happiness with the job is beside the point because he's only in Congress to serve the people he represents. "My presence here isn't why I'm here. If I can't be effective in getting things done for my constituents, then I won't be here," he said.

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There is little doubt that Mahoney will have a tough reelection fight. His district voted 54 percent for President Bush in 2004. After former Rep. Mark Foley (R-Fla.) dropped out of the 2006 race amid the now-infamous House page scandal, Mahoney beat his Republican opponent, Joe Negron, by less than 2 percentage points, even though Foley's name remained on the ballot.

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[His] legislative aims will prove elusive if he can't stomach the horse-trading and painstaking cultivation of relationships that is so inherent to lawmaking. So far, there are signs that he's had some early stumbles on that score. "What's distressing for people who thought he was a relationship guy is seeing he's not a relationship guy," one Democratic lobbyist said.

One Democratic lawmaker questioned Mahoney's approach, saying that unless he adapts to his surroundings in the House, "it is possible to get rejected by the whole body."

According to the lawmaker, Mahoney initially clashed with fellow Florida Democratic freshman Rep. Ron Klein on national catastrophe fund legislation the two are working on, and the conflict precipitated the tense conversation with Emanuel.

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Mahoney's job satisfaction/security

By: Adam Smith

St. Pete Times Buzz Blog

May 25, 2007

Tallahassee--Widely seen as the most vulnerable Democrat in the U.S. House, Tim Mahoney didn't help himself when he was quoted in The Hill newspaper this week. "I think there was a concern that I wasn't happy in Congress. Very candidly, this isn't the greatest job I've had," said the Palm Beach Gardens businessman trying to get used to the pace of action in Congress.

State GOP Chairman Jim Greer, before taping a "Political Connections" interviewing airing Sunday, said Mahoney can expect to hear a lot about that quote between now and election day and voters will "place a Republican in that office who would care about the job much more than Congressman Mahoney."

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D.C. transition tough on Mahoney

By: Amie Parnes

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

May 25, 2007

Washington--Rep. Tim Mahoney is a little homesick.

He misses the life he gave up in Florida: the sizable Palm Beach Gardens home; the sprawling ranch in Venus; the horseback riding with his daughter, Bailey; the evenings and weekends with his wife, Terry.

And sometimes he misses the financial services firm he founded and left behind, along with the flexible work schedule and the hefty paycheck.

Mahoney, the Democrat who represents part of south-central Florida, said he had to make a "huge personal sacrifice" by taking on the job as congressman in January. Since then, life in the nation's capital has been an adjustment for the political neophyte, he said.

"I came from a situation where I owned my own business," Mahoney said. "I had no constraints on my time. This is a big adjustment for me ... it's the most demanding job I've ever had."

Since taking office, Mahoney has been living in a small apartment on Capitol Hill with little furniture, "like a college kid," he says.

He has learned to do his own laundry.

His fridge is stocked with Lean Cuisines.

"It's not the greatest job, being away from home," he said. "Do I like being up here in 8 degree weather, living in a 650-square-foot apartment? No."

In an interview published Thursday in The Hill, a Capitol Hill magazine, Mahoney said, "I think there should be a law that says, before you run, you have to do the job for two weeks."

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In the Hill article, an unnamed lawmaker said Mahoney clashed with Rep. Ron Klein, D-Boca Raton, on the national catastrophic fund legislation the two lawmakers were crafting together.

But Klein denies any friction with Mahoney.

"We're getting along well," he said, adding that Mahoney is "doing fine" as a lawmaker.

Mahoney has been called the "luckiest man in politics" since narrowly winning the congressional seat last fall after Rep. Mark Foley, R-Fort Pierce, dropped out of the race in the wake of a sex scandal.

Since then Mahoney has tried to prove himself even as some observers say the chances of him keeping his office in a so-called Republican stronghold are slim.

The National Republican Congressional Committee has already begun pouring money into the district in its quest to win back the seat and recently launched a string of radio ads attacking Mahoney.

But the congressman said he intends to be back on the job in the next term and is campaigning to ensure that happens.

Federal Election Commission records show he already raised \$460,000 in the first quarter of campaigning.

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Mahoney says work in House difficult

By: Larry Lipman

Palm Beach Post

May 25, 2007

Washington--Rep. Tim Mahoney raised millions of dollars to win a seat in Congress, but now he says "it's not the greatest job" he's ever had.

A rancher and former owner of a financial services company who used to control his hours and set his own agenda, Mahoney said being a new member of the 435-member House of Representatives "is a big adjustment for somebody with my background."

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The district encompasses eight counties, including parts of Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie and Okeechobee.

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While some lawmakers thrive on what Mahoney called the "pomp and circumstance of the position," he said he would "be less-than-honest if I said that being able to tell you where I'm going to be every day for the next year is a fantastic experience for me," or that he relishes "10- or 14-hour days and working through all these issues."

Coming to Washington was a big adjustment, he said.

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Mahoney won the 16th District congressional seat last year after the Republican incumbent, former Rep. Mark Foley, resigned in disgrace involving electronic communications he had with former House pages, who were teenagers. The name of Foley's last minute replacement, state Rep. Joe Negron, R-Stuart, wasn't even on the ballot.

The NRCC seized on Mahoney's comments about the job in an article published Thursday in The Hill, a newspaper that circulates around the Capitol.

"With three top-tier candidates already lined up to challenge the 'vulnerable' Mahoney, it appears that he won't have to cope with his job much longer," the NRCC said in a news release.

"His voting record reflects that of a lawmaker that doesn't seem interested in representing the interests of his district, as he votes with San Francisco liberal, Nancy Pelosi 94 percent of the time," the release said, referring to the House speaker. "Don't worry, Tim. Your days are numbered. The job you disdain will soon no longer be yours."

Mahoney denied reports in the Hill article that the Democrats had assigned a lobbyist to act as his unofficial mentor on Capitol Hill or that he clashed with fellow freshman Rep. Ron Klein, a Democrat from Boca Raton, over catastrophe fund legislation the two are drafting.

Mahoney acknowledged that sometimes he and Klein disagree about how to tackle the insurance issue, "but having a different view is hardly friction."

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