

Mark Warner speaks in Martinsville

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Former governor Mark Warner announced his bid for U.S. Senate to a crowd of 150 people this morning in Martinsville, promising to work across party lines to tackle gas prices, health care and troop withdrawal from Iraq.

“The problems we face are not left versus right, Republican versus Democrat. It’s critical that we find common ground,” Warner said, adding that if elected, he wants to build a bipartisan group of 10 to 12 senators called the “Radical Centrists.”

Warner said he hopes to move forward on construction of I-73 and secure federal support for retraining workers. He also called for a “plan to draw troops down in a way that doesn’t leave Iraq a haven for terrorists.”

Warner urged breaking the country’s “addiction to foreign oil” and cited alternative energy sources, “but not corn-based ethanol, which just drives up food prices.”

This morning’s event at Main Street Restaurant was part of a three-day kickoff for Warner’s campaign that started May 4 in Abingdon. Martinsville is one of nine cities on the tour.

Other speakers included state Sen. Roscoe Reynolds, D-Ridgeway; Del. Ward Armstrong, D-Collinsville; Martinsville Mayor Kimble Reynolds Jr.; city Sheriff Steve Draper; and Eric Penn, a student at the New College Institute.

Warner served as governor of Virginia from 2002 to January 2006.