

Congressman hand-delivers his message

Sanders spends a day wooing Springfield vote

By Toya Hill

Free Press Staff Writer

SPRINGFIELD — There's something about campaigning eye-to-eye with voters that forces candidates to add more to their message than simple political rhetoric.

■ Sanders, Leahy post large leads in Vermont poll, **4A**

■ Clinton denies hindering trade agreement, **5A**

It means connecting with each group and person and being

adept enough to respond to their needs.

Friday, in the southern Vermont town of Springfield, that challenge faced U.S. Rep. Bernard Sanders, I-Vt. He won't know until Nov. 3 whether he succeeded, but he gave it his all.

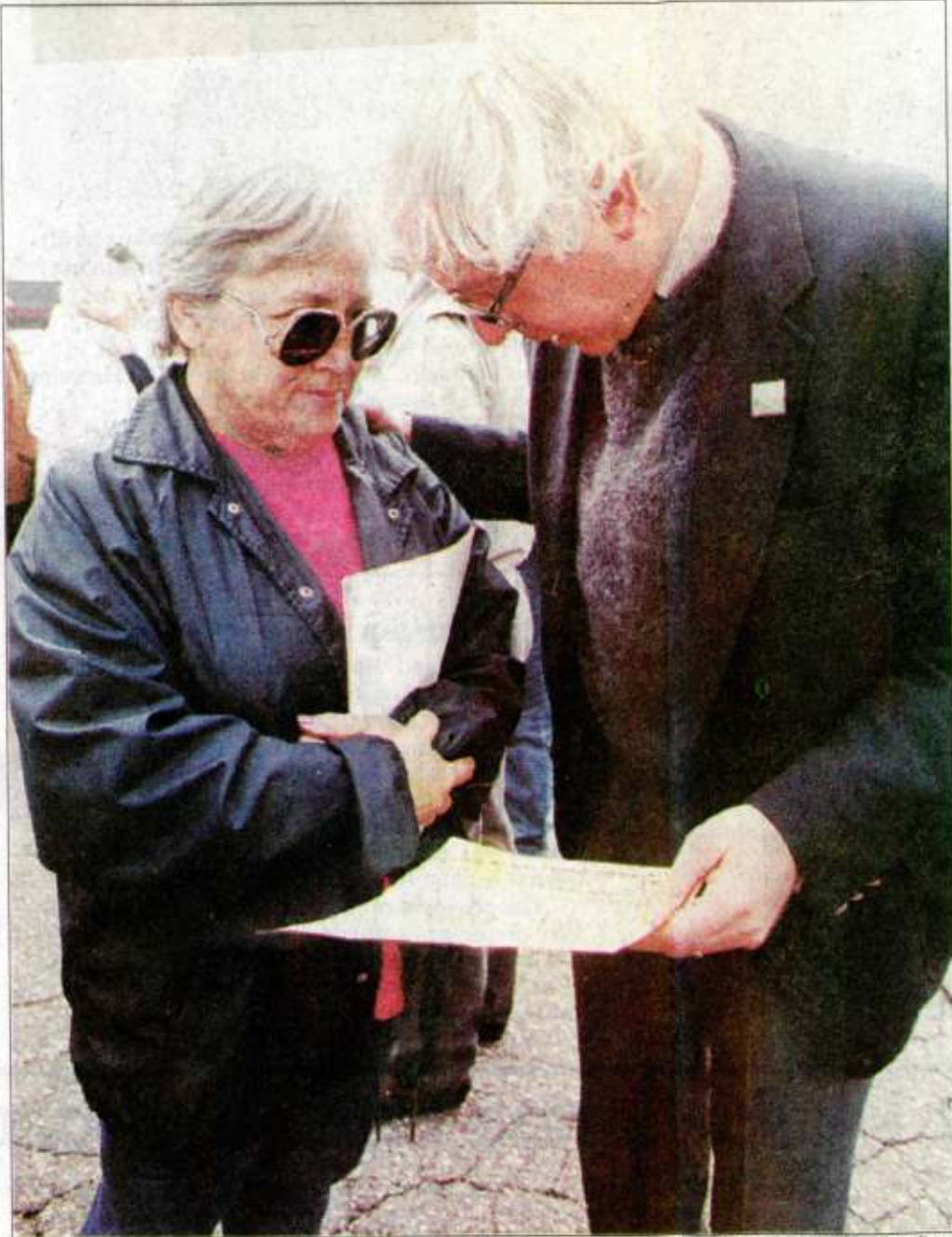
One of Sanders' first stops in Springfield took him before a group of clients and staff at Black River Rehabilitation center, an area mental health center. Standing in the middle of a crowd, Sanders didn't take long to break out his message that the "system" must be equal for all.

Sanders made a point of speaking simply but passionately.

"We now have the opportunity to significantly reduce military spending," Sanders said, with a cup of coffee in one hand and a doughnut in the other. And that money can be used to take care of people who have been neglected, he said.

What do you think about spending hundreds of billions of dollars on Germany and Japan? Is that fair? Sanders asked the crowd, getting a hearty

See **SANDERS, 2A**



ADAM PIKE RIESNER, Free Press

Congressman Bernard Sanders talks with Linda Craig of Enosburg while campaigning recently in St. Albans.

SANDERS: Congressman takes campaign to southern Vt.

Continued from Page 1A
chorus of "nos" in reply.

"Who knows what Reaganomics is?" he asked. "Trickle-down," responded Neale Gilson of Bellows Falls, who is a client at Black River.

Asking individuals their names and drawing the audience in with questions, Sanders touched on his main campaign issues — health care, job creation, affordable housing and repairing infrastructure.

"For people with disabilities, we need affordable housing," he said. "We have neglected many people who have problems."

Just a short while later, Sanders could be heard preaching much the same message, only to a much different crowd.

Among a group of United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America union members, Sanders bellowed his ideas and focused on health care, an area of concern to the union.

"Health care is a right, not a privilege," Sanders told the group

crowded outside Jones & Lamson Vermont Corp. A single-payer system covers everybody, he said.

Before the gathering, an official from the machine tool company ordered the group off J&L's parking lot. A spokeswoman said the gathering had not been cleared with management.

"Things don't change," said Sanders, an ardent supporter of unions. "It's been going on for 100 years."

The day's stumping continued for the progressive independent, but not without a stop to his local campaign headquarters. The office is a grass-roots operation in the basement of an old building in downtown Springfield.

Several volunteers could be seen working on campaign projects like addressing fliers. A child lay quietly on a blanket on the floor coloring in a coloring book. If Sanders' laid-back style wasn't so widely known, it would be easy to mistake his operation as that of a newcomer, not a campaign office for the state's

only representative to the U.S. House.

One of Sanders' last stops in town was the Westview housing project, a low-income complex. Sanders visited the site two years earlier while campaigning.

Speaking to a small crowd of mostly children, Sanders focused

on themes such as more federal funding for education and improving the environment through such energy efficiency methods as weatherizing and better insulating homes. He also spoke about a woman's right to an abortion.

"He impresses me," Westview resident Vera Mitchell said.