

## Rep. Gibson gives New Paltz 'farewell' talk before leaving office

### Monday

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NEW PALTZ - As he gave his so-called public "exit interview" at SUNY New Paltz on Monday night, New York Rep. Chris Gibson, R-Kinderhook, wasted no time in addressing the issues, beginning with his thoughts about President-elect Donald Trump.

"We ought to give him a chance," said Gibson, a Republican moderate. "He said the system is rigged. I spent six years in D.C.; I think he is right. He said we should drain the swamp. We should hold him accountable."

The event was the brainchild of Susan Lerner, executive director of the organization Common Cause New York, who sat beside Gibson and asked him questions.

Gibson, who at one point explored a run for governor in 2018, has represented New York's 19th Congressional District for six years.

Now he's preparing to leave office at the end of the month.

"He's transitioning into academia," said Gibson's wife Mary Jo, a licensed clinical social worker who accompanied him to the event.

Gibson has taken a teaching job at Williams College in Massachusetts, where he will be teaching courses in national security and leadership.

First elected into office in 2010, he is a retired Army colonel who served overseas in the Gulf War, as well as in Kosovo and Iraq. He taught at West Point after retiring.

As he looks ahead, Gibson says he's focused on one theme.

"This should be the age of reform," he said.

Among the reforms that Gibson said he would like to see are term limits for those in elected office, and campaign finance reform.

Gerald Benjamin, director of the center at SUNY New Paltz which bears his name, pointed out that Gibson "decided to term-limit himself after six years and put family first."

Benjamin went on to praise Gibson for his record of bipartisan work, his military service and his knowledge of national security.

Gibson will be replaced in January by John Faso, a Republican. Faso is a former Assemblyman and 2006 gubernatorial candidate who also lives in Kinderhook; he beat Democrat Zephyr Teachout in the November election.

In addition to teaching, Gibson said he's writing a book about his political philosophy.

He has said he plans to re-evaluate whether to return to politics after his son graduates from high school in 2019.

Meanwhile, the Gibsons also shared some good news with the audience of about 50 people.

"Our daughter just got accepted to SUNY New Paltz today," Chris Gibson said.

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