

Mobley to run for Kopetski's congressional seat

Former gubernatorial candidate expects GOP support

SALEM (AP) — Al Mobley, who ran as an independent in the last gubernatorial election, announced Thursday he'll run as a Republican for the seat held by freshman Democratic U.S. Rep. Mike Kopetski.

Mobley is the only GOP candidate to announce a bid so far for the 5th District seat.

Mobley drew 13 percent of the vote in the governor's race last year against Democrat Barbara Roberts and Republican Dave Frohnmayr.

Some Republicans believe Mobley's conservative candidacy siphoned enough votes from

Frohnmayr to put Roberts into the state's top office with less than a majority of the vote.

Despite that, Mobley said Thursday he expects substantial GOP backing in his bid for Congress.

"I think the Republican Party is going to be solidly behind me except for a few soreheads you get in any campaign," he said.

Oregon Republican Chairman Craig Berkman said he thinks any bitterness caused by Mob-

ley's independent run for governor has largely disappeared.

"I think people have moved on from last election," Berkman said in an interview. "They're not focused on it and they don't care about it."

Asked whether most Republicans could back Mobley's candidacy if he wins the GOP nomination next May, Berkman said: "I think we most likely will, especially if he runs a mainstream campaign, which he will have to do in order to

win."

Mobley, 64, is retired from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and lives in Monmouth.

His gubernatorial race had the backing of the Oregon Citizens Alliance, a conservative, anti-abortion group that refused to support Frohnmayr.

Mobley, who recently stepped aside as alliance's vice chairman, said Thursday he no longer has any formal ties with the group but still backs its philosophy. No top alliance offi-

cials attended Mobley's news conference.

Even so, Lon Mabon, chairman of the organization, said the group expects to help Mobley in his bid for Congress.

"Obviously, Al lines up with our political philosophy," Mabon said.

Kopetski, a former state representative, unseated five-term Republican Rep. Denny Smith in the 5th District contest last year.

Mobley called Kopetski a "liberal, Portland-style politician who is out of touch with the 5th District."



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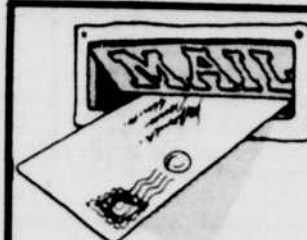
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