

EDITORIAL/OPINION

House Dist. 18 - Debnam

A great deal of pride and satisfaction swept through the community when the Oregon Legislature finally approved District 18. It was a hard fought battle between those who believed the community where most of the state's black population live should be placed in one district for the first time—a district that could become a basis for unity and political and economic influence—and those who thought black people would do better if they had some influence in three or more districts as had been the history.

The district was formed—over 50 per cent minority, but less than 50 per cent black—and it seemed that for the first time black voters would yield enough influence to select a legislator of their choice. The organizational work that was necessary to coalesce the community around one candidate and give that candidate enough votes to win did not happen. The result was a free-for-all in the Primary. Five black candidates ran and the result was the selection of Ed Leek, who is white, as the Democratic Party nominee.

Because the feeling is still there that this district should be able to select a black candidate, the General Election brought fourth another slate of candidates. Jimmy "Bang Bang" Walker started his own party; Kent Ford is an Independent; Rev. John Jackson is a write-in candidate.

Late in the race, when the Republican candidate was declared ineligible, Chad Debnam was selected by that party to be its nominee. None of the non-party candidates were willing to withdraw so we have a four-way race.

One thing Ed Leek says is true—the party label is important. The two parties will select the committee memberships; the division of power and influence will take place in those two party caucuses. The independent has no where to go; he gets the crumbs. District 18 deserves better.

Unlike some, we do not question Ed Leek's right to run in District 18. We also do not automatically favor a black over a white candidate. However, we believe that this district at this time would be better served by a black legislator. There is a great absence of black people in positions of influence or power in this state. This is an opportunity for the lawmakers, the decision makers, to be exposed to a black perspective.

It is with all this in mind that we endorse Chad Debnam for House District 18. We would have preferred that Debnam had been more involved in the community—"paid his dues" as they say. We would have preferred that he carry the Democrat label—since the Democrats are in power in the legislature.

On the positive side, Debnam is bright and concerned. He has lived in Portland most of his life and attended school here. He has family in the District. In his work in promotion, marketing and public relations he has worked with all economic levels; he won't be overly impressed or bought off by affluence. He is willing to listen to what the people have to say. He has pledged to hold regular Town Hall meetings to share ideas and information. We think Debnam would do a good job in Salem and we recommend his election.

Whether the Representative from District 18 truly represents and serves the people of the district is entirely up to the voters. No legislator should be sent to Salem to deal with the regulars and the lobbyists without a community looking over his shoulder. The outcome of this election, the performance of the legislator elected, depend on the community and its ability to play a positive role in the political processes.

The hour is late but it is not too late to elect Debnam to the Oregon Legislature. It will take work, effort and unity, but it's not impossible.

Governor - Kulongoski

During Governor Atiyeh's term in office the nation and the world have gone through a major recession. Oregon has been hit hard—enormous deficits in funding, curtailment of services, unemployment above 10 per cent. We do not believe the state should have been caught off guard—the Governor and his staff must have seen it coming. Governor Atiyeh clung to Reagan economics far too long—until his own state was in a crisis and the election was approaching.

We do believe the Governor is sincere in his efforts to include black people in state government. We find him open and honest. However, we are extremely disappointed to hear in his ads and his talks that he is taking credit for eliminating 2400 "bureaucrats" from state employment. The credit—if this is really something to be proud of—should go to the economic recession. The hundreds of jobs that have been lost due to budget cuts are not only destructive to families but to the economy as a whole.

Among those who have lost their jobs are many of the minority people Governor Atiyeh has pledged to employ. During the first three years of Atiyeh's administration—before the cuts—black employment had dropped from 560 to 495. Blacks also lost percentage-wise in nearly all salary ranges. July 1982 statistics were not available, but with the great loss in employment this past year, we could expect that blacks have been hurt.

State Senator Ted Kulongoski has a creditable record in the Senate, where he has authored affirmative action bills, migrant labor and other labor legislation, sponsored the South Africa divestment bill, warned of the dangers and high cost of nuclear power, opposed the WPPS plants and Northwest Regional Power Act that raise utility bills. His stand on the power issues demonstrates courage in a state that has a highly influential private utility industry.

Kulongoski has consistently sponsored and supported legislation to protect workers, the poor, minorities and women. His economic development proposal favors small business and labor intensive industry. His plans for stepped-up state construction time-tables, use of BPA funds for energy conservation industry, investment of state funds in Oregon instead of South Africa and California—all point to a more rapid recovery.

We believe Kulongoski has the vision and energy, the enthusiasm and leadership ability to bring more jobs to Oregon. For many years—both as a legislator and as a union attorney—his interest has been with the worker. They are his constituents and they need him now.

We recommend Ted Kulongoski for Governor.

County Executive: Buchanan

Dennis Bushanan and Gordon Shadburne, both currently County Commissioners, are vying for the position of County Executive to be vacated by Don Clark.

During his seven years on the County Commission, Buchanan has consistently held a liberal voting record—supporting social and health programs, the 911 emergency system and ERA, opposed the billboard interests, etc. Shadburne's record has been conservative—opposing Commission support of ERA and the nuclear freeze, taking "law and order" stands, and in general supporting reduced taxes at the expense of social programs.

For the difficult economic times that lie ahead, we believe Buchanan has shown more maturity and understanding and will better protect the rights of those in need of County services.

Vote for Dennis Buchanan, County Executive.

Measure 51 - Yes

Measure 51 on the City ballot would establish a police audit committee composed of three City Commissioners and aided by citizen volunteers. It would monitor the police internal investigations process, take complaints about police or by police officers, review and make recommendations regarding complaints where one party is dissatisfied. It would not investigate complaints or discipline officers.

The police union and the police hierarchy oppose this measure—calling it an intrusion of politicians into police work. Actually they oppose any form of outside review.

We favor a true police review board that would allow members of the public to investigate and determine discipline. Lacking this, we favor Measure 51 as a potential for some citizen oversight of the Police Bureau.

District Court, Dept. 3 Michael Marcus

Michael Marcus is best known to the public because of his work with Legal Aid. Marcus has become a leading authority on landlord/tenant law, writing most of Oregon's current laws. He has represented low income tenant groups such as those of Evergreen Apartments and Park Haviland who faced eviction because of lack of enforcement of city codes. His work in landlord/tenant law has greatly added to the protection of renters against unscrupulous or neglectful landlords. He also has written a book to inform the layman of the law.

Appointed as a judge pro tem by the Supreme Court, he has had experience on the bench in both criminal and civil cases.

Marcus has had valuable experience working with people from all walks of life. We believe that his history of working to protect the rights of the poor will carry over into his service on the court. He has learned first hand the disadvantages of being poor when involved in the justice system.

We endorse Michael Marcus for District Court Judge, Department 3

Congress, 3rd Dist: Ron Wyden

Ron Wyden has done a creditable job in his first term in Congress. He has become a leader in aging issues and has brought jobs to Oregon. We do not like his career criminal bill or his stand on South Africa, but in most areas he has a good voting record. Wyden keeps in close contact with the district and is available to his constituents.

Labor Commissioner: Mike Wooten

The Labor and Industries Commission is responsible for the all-important Civil Rights Bureau. We, and the black community, are still looking for a Labor Commissioner who will forcefully and diligently enforce civil rights. We do not know if Mike Wooten will do the job but we are willing to give him the opportunity.

House District 13: Bauman

Rick Bauman has established a record in the House that includes support of peoples' utility districts, opposition to nuclear power, support of a tax structure based on ability to pay, prison reform, environmental protection, strengthening education, favoring human rights and women's rights. We recommend the election of Rick Bauman to District 13.

House Dist. 14: Gold

In her first session in the House Shirley Gold made her mark. Her sensitivity to the needs of young people, senior citizens and minorities brought respect from her colleagues. A former teacher and teacher's union leader, she is concerned about educational programs and workers' rights. We recommend a vote for Shirley Gold for House District 14.

House Dist. 17: Priestley

Wally Priestley is seeking his 9th term in the House, this time from District 17, the St. Johns area. Priestley's interests are with the working class and include minority and women's rights, public utilities, taxes according to ability to pay. Vote for Wally Priestley, District 17.

Superintendent of Public Instruction: Duncan

Verne Duncan has been Superintendent of Public Instruction since 1974. Duncan has had teaching experience at all levels of education. Quiet and reserved, he has gained the reputation of not being effective with the legislature. Perhaps he should hire a lobbyist to serve that function. Duncan's emphasis on basic skills—especially reading and writing—has brought up the state's performance in those areas. Duncan has shown courage in tackling difficult areas—sex education, creationism and minimum requirements. We recommend a vote for Verne Duncan.

NO: Measure 2

Measure 2 is an attempt to lengthen the period of time the Governor has to sign or veto bills. Currently the Governor has 20 days to sign or veto a bill, and the public has 90 days after the Governor's signature to file a referendum petition against the bill. Measure 2 extends the governor's time from 20 to 30 days. So as not to shorten the time available for petitioning, the bill states that petitions can be signed following the signature of the leaders of the House and Senate rather than waiting for the Governor's signature. However, it does not specify how long the House and Senate leaders have to sign. This bill, as now written, could endanger the people's right of referendum—one of the few opportunities the voters have for direct participation in government.

YES: Measure 1

Measure 1 allows local governments to raise their tax base to include new construction. Currently, once the voters have accepted a tax base, no government can increase its tax base by more than 6 per cent per year plus any increase in property value due to annexation. This measure would allow an annual increase (up to 15 per cent) due to new construction. This is important to growing districts whose needs due to growth outstrip the current tax base.

County Commissioner: Gladys McCoy

Gladys McCoy will work with Dennis Bushanan to protect social and health programs now funded by the County. In times of economic hardship it is mandatory that Commissioners understand the needs of the elderly and youth who require County services. Ms. McCoy also favors City-County consolidation, which would eliminate overlapping services and save tax money. The *Observer* recommends a vote for Gladys McCoy.

Wilcox, Radakovich, Wood, Pearce

A recent ballot measure established new elective offices where appointment offices had previously existed. This forces those professionals now holding the positions to run for office.

Jim Wilcox is currently Director of the Multnomah County Division of Assessment and Taxation. He has been with the department since 1971. The department, with a budget of \$5 million and a staff of 140, appraises property and assesses taxes.

William Radakovich, candidate for County Clerk, has been director of the Multnomah County Division of Elections since 1975. He has been a professional with the County since 1954.

Danel Wood is seeking election to the new position of District Court Clerk. He has been an employee of the Multnomah County District Court for 10 years and has been deputy administrator since 1979. His opponent is Rosalie Huss, a right-wing Republican who has sought numerous elective positions.

Fred B. Pearce, Sheriff and Director of Public Safety for Multnomah County, is seeking the elective office of Sheriff. Pearce has been with the Sheriff's Office for 27 years, was appointed Assistant Director of Public Safety in 1976 and Sheriff/Director in 1982. The department has 300 employees and a budget of \$13 million. Pearce has had administrative experience and extensive special training in police work and management. His opponent, John Kerslobe, has been a deputy sheriff for 21 years and has no administrative experience.

The *Observer* recommends retaining the professionals now in office—Wilcox, Radakovich, Wood and Pearce.



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