



ED LEEK



CHAD DEBNAM



JIMMY WALKER



KENT FORD



PAUL WATHEN



REV. JOHN JACKSON

## District 18: A crowded race

Six candidates are seeking election to the House of Representatives for District 18. Ed Leek is the Democratic Party nominee; Chad Debnam is the Republican Party nominee; Paul Wathen is the Libertarian Party's candidate, Jimmy "Bang-Bang" Walker represents New District, New Party, Kent Ford is an Independent, and Rev. John Jackson is a write-in candidate.

### What is your economic plan for the community?

**Leek:** "I will support the economic development plan being worked out by the Democratic Caucus and Ted Kulongoski." In addition Leek supports a community controlled local development corporation to bring development to the district; obtaining a portion of Bonneville Power Agency's funds reserved for conservation under the Northwest Regional Power Act for use in creating jobs through home insulating and related industry; using affirmative action to target more state dollars for District 18.

**Ford:** Reinvest state pension funds in Oregon to provide jobs and help sustain the economy. "I have no specific plan but will investigate the possibilities."

**Debnam:** "I will propose the designation of a community development zone that will allow the citizens of the district to plan what they would like to see in the area; would provide cooperation of government agencies and the private sector. Since the resources that could be brought to bear are state economic development bonds, tax incentives, state and local government contracts, investment of state funds, community reinvestment funds of the financial establishment. Local development corporations, coops, profit-sharing corporations all can provide a way for the residents to participate. The residents should decide what kind of commercial and labor intensive light-industry they want and monitor those companies that do decide to relocate."

**Wathen:** "The single biggest problem is jobs for the people. I believe jobs will come from small business within the district. We need to clear away the bureaucracy, restrictions, taxes." Wathen proposes a free market zone where taxes and regulations would be cut or eliminated. The district needs to create its own jobs and economic base. Sub-minimum wages would provide jobs for youth.

**Walker:** "The area is in bad shape. The priority is to get as much work in the area as possible. I would try to pass laws that would relax taxes on small businesses and create jobs by motivating citizens to become creative. . . . We should get off our haunches and try to create something." He would have the city hire young people to clean empty lots.

### What is your position on Measure 3?

### What is the answer to the tax problem?

**Leek:** He is opposed to Measure 3 and speaks against it. If Measure 3 passes "we will have to take a long overdue look at the tax structure to see how much money needs to be raised and how best to do it." His proposals include: a graduated corporate excise tax to raise taxes at the upper income level; removal of tax breaks for charitable organizations; restore the inheritance tax; a graduated personal income tax; elimination of property tax relief. "I believe in a progressive tax where the people at the top pay more taxes."

**Ford:** He is "definitely opposed" and urges everyone to vote against it and work vigorously against it. If Measure 3 passes there should be no cuts in basic education or social services. "I believe strongly that a graduated income tax should be passed," tax loop-holes should be closed, tax should be restructured. "People know I will fight and struggle—I will look and see what is happening and then come up with proposals."

**Debnam:** "No. I am opposed to Measure 3. We would see a total drop in the level of services of schools, police, firemen, etc." He would not support a sales tax; would want no new taxes, but would consider a lottery. The tax structure should be reviewed to see what changes should be made.

**Wathen:** Supports Measure 3 but believes it is too harsh and a more gradual reduction of property tax should be made. The biggest single impact of Measure 3 would be on schools and "I believe education is extremely expensive in this state" basically because funding is political. Wathen opposes taxes because they are mandatory. He favors a system where communities would band together to buy services and each would pay voluntarily. "People should pay for what they get; we should be responsible for our own financial situation." Help to people in need should be voluntary—the persons should ask for help and his neighbor should volunteer that help. The only function of government should be to provide protection.

**Walker:** Measure 3 would damage our way of life very soon. If it passes, he would favor a lottery with one winner a year in each precinct in the state. This would take more administration and create more jobs.

### As a State Representative what would you do to combat the effects of racism in District 18?

**Leek:** "Racism is a historical fact, something that will be with us. The only way to overcome racism is to allow people to be economic equals. Until people are economic equals they cannot be social equals." Among the things that can be done to combat the effects of racism are:

require affirmative action in evaluation of state managers' performance reviews; state contracts of less than \$50,000 can be let without bidding and should be used for affirmative action. No one is overseeing affirmative action in all state agencies; a review should be done to determine if goals are being met. State contracts should carry strong affirmative action language to influence private industry. If elected he will develop a network of advisors to research and propose legislation.

**Ford:** "I intend to get a strong affirmative action bill in the legislature and will introduce a racial harassment bill that will be part of the constitution so a circuit court judge can't say it's unconstitutional. . . . We need to have a person in the capital who will struggle to ensure minority rights will not be stepped on."

**Debnam:** "It is important to have a racial harassment bill that is constitutional and I will work with the ACLU and others to develop such a bill. . . . Racism is personal; you can't legislate it away. But I would try to create pride in minority people, have them participate, stay in touch, watchdog government for them." "I support affirmative action whole heartedly and I would try to put more teeth in the law. I will push for harsher penalties against those who discriminate in employment and housing." "When we have a strong economic base and something of our own, this will help."

**Wathen:** "I know there are some people with fairly strong racist leanings. Where racism matters most is when someone is physically hurt or is denied an opportunity. We can't really change someone's head but I don't think that it matters that much what they think if their thoughts don't get in the way." "One of the most powerful weapons is a 'free market.' There is a price on racism. If the person is willing to be irrational he has to pay the price." He supports laws requiring at least consideration of minority bidding, basically because "that is the price government pays for discrimination." In a free market situation the employer would hire those who do the best job and if the worker were not satisfied with wages or conditions he could go elsewhere.

**Walker:** "I have confronted racism all my life but I have worked in a dignified manner. I set an example, let them know I don't go along with that crap. You have to be proud. You have to know you can't mess with me." The racial harassment bill is good; affirmative action is a must—it allows minorities and women to get into the mainstream.

**Editor's note:** Rev. John Jackson, a write-in candidate, was not available for an interview.

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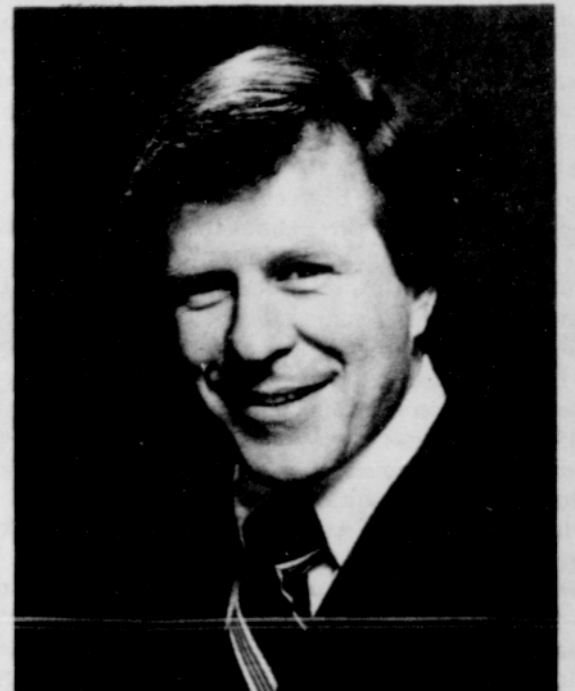
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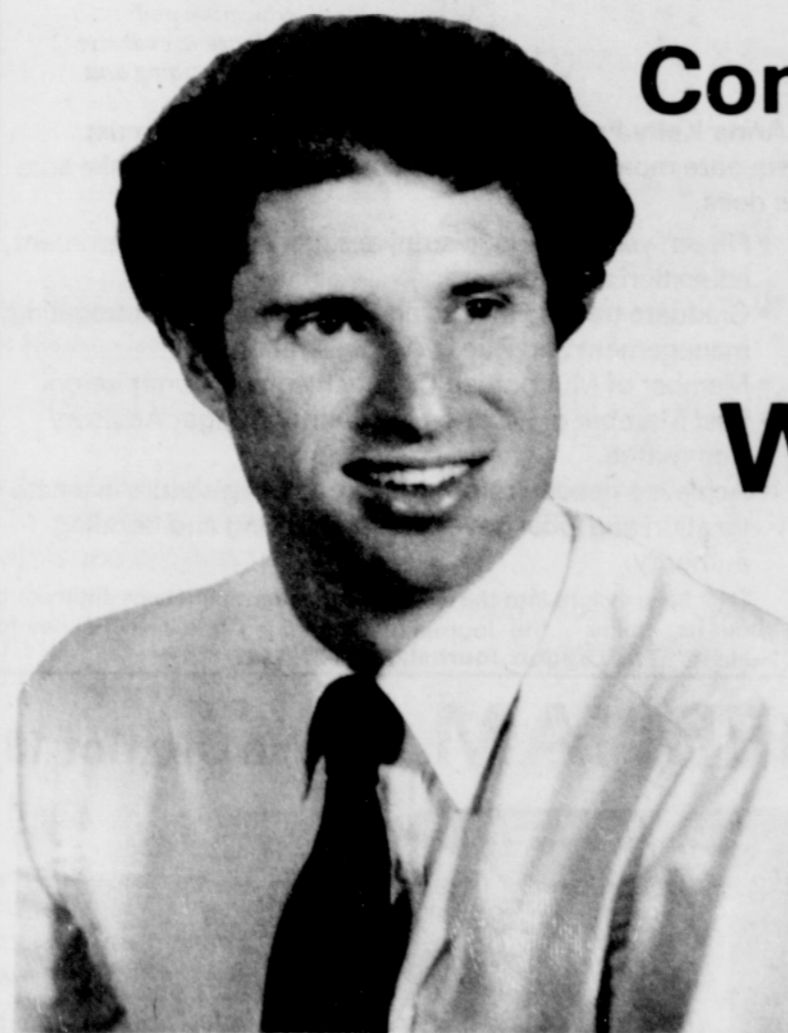
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