



Loretta Smith



Charles McGee

Election Campaign Kickoffs

Smith goes for city council; McGee for county commission

Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith, the only representative from the black community in local city or county government, made her campaign for a future open seat on the Portland City Council official Saturday; and Charles McGee, an activist parent from the black community, announced that he will run to replace Smith.

Smith is running for the position held by Dan Saltzman who is not seeking re-election. She kicked off her campaign with supporters Saturday at the Urban League of Portland's Multicultural Senior Center in northeast Portland.

A former and long time representative from U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden's Portland's office, Smith has become known for fighting for the most vulnerable of her constituents during her two terms on the county commission, helping fund health and human services and summer jobs for youth.

"Loretta is running to help those who are being left out of our new prosperity, and left behind with rising rents and expenses," said a statement from the Smith campaign "She knows that we need to look out for those across our city who are struggling if Portland is going to remain a place where everyone can live, work, and play."

Smith will face an immediate obstacle to her campaign. A petition submitted to the the Multnomah County Circuit Court on

Tuesday seeks to keep her name off the ballot. Seth Woolley of the Pacific Green Party alleges she violated county charter rules for campaigning for the office before she was eligible to run and should resign.

McGee made his campaign official a few days earlier for the seat Smith holds, representing north and northeast Portland on the five member county commission.

"What we need is a leader with a passion and understanding for this community, a vision for a better tomorrow, and a proven track record for getting it done for north and northeast Portland. I believe – with your support – I can be that leader," McGee said.

If elected, McGee would be the first African-American man to serve on the Multnomah County Commission. He grew up in northeast Portland attending Portland Public Schools. In 2005, as a freshman at Portland State University, he ran for the PPS Board. Although he didn't win, the campaign channeled his drive to create change for Portland's underrepresented students.

In 2006, McGee co-founded the Black Parent Initiative, where he continues to serve as executive director. BPI works to help black parents achieve financial, educational, and spiritual success and advocates for public policy to address educational disparities for young people of color in Portland schools.

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