



Congressional Races

“One Seat at a Time”

David Gay — New York, 25th District

“Overthrowing the government, one seat at a time,” is the avowed goal of David Gay, a congressional hopeful in New York’s 25th District, where veteran Republican Congressman James Walsh is retiring after 10 terms. “Some people look at it as ‘anarchic,’” the Syracuse resident says of his catchy but controversial slogan, “but I don’t see it that way at all. One seat at a time is not any kind of anarchy.”



As he spoke, Gay, who has the endorsement of the New York Constitution Party, was walking the streets of downtown Syracuse, collecting signatures to get on the ballot for the September 15 Republican primary. Republican committees in the district’s four counties have all endorsed candidate Dale Sweetland, a candidate less likely to “overthrow” the restrictions on personal freedom that Gay opposes — like the Patriot Act and its broad grant of surveillance power to the government.

“It’s just a way to spy on American citizens,” Gay says. “It hasn’t done much at all to protect us from terrorists.” Gay would also vote to end the military occupation of Iraq, a stand that puts him at odds with the top of the GOP ticket, but in harmony with voters in the district, he says. “In the northeast, most people are antiwar, even Republicans.”

Gay, whose wife is a native of Cuba, would lift the ban on trade with that island nation. “It hasn’t done anything to help the Cuban people,” he says. “This embargo has kept money out of the people’s hands and kept it in Castro’s hands.”

A “Ron Paul Republican” who is “not afraid to say it,” Gay wants to bring home U.S. troops from bases around the world. “We can’t afford it,” he says of the far-flung military commitments. “We can’t afford to even think about it. Yet we’re doing it.” Our military presence in foreign lands is also fanning the flames of anti-American resentment worldwide, he said. Referring to the 9/11 attack, Gay says, “There are a lot of things we can do to make sure it doesn’t happen again — starting with getting out of other countries.”

LEARN, Baby, LEARN!

Scott Garrett vs. Dennis Shulman — New Jersey, Fifth District

Congressman Scott Garrett (R-N.J.) has decided to fight one of Washington’s “alphabet soup” programs with a new acronym.

“I’ve been pushing legislation called LEARN,” he says. The Local Education Authority Returns Now Act would “allow states their rightful authority to opt out of the federal control of education and return it where it’s supposed to be, at the state level,” Garrett says. He would like to repeal the No Child Left Behind Act, but “with as much difficulty as I have getting support for this (LEARN) bill, I would say that’s not in the works.”



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Garrett wants U.S. troops out of Iraq, but says, “Unfortunately, we’re in a box, as there’s no quick fix.” He is opposed to building permanent bases there and is wary of the “Bush doctrine” of striking first against perceived threats. “The best approach to deal with any of these situations is what the Founders intended,” he says. “Let Congress make the determination on whether to fight a war.”

In Washington Garrett has maintained the reputation for fiscal conservatism he gained by opposing tax increases as a member of the legislature in New Jersey. As a freshman congressman, he voted against the Bush administration’s addition of a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. He opposed the leadership of both parties and voted against the Central American Free Trade Agreement. But Garrett contributed to a significant White House victory when he voted for the FISA amendment that allows warrantless interceptions on international phone calls and grants liability immunity to telecommunications companies that turned over records of customers’ communications to government investigators.

He is pro-life on the abortion issue and is opposed to embryonic stem-cell research, stands that put him sharply at odds with his Democratic opponent, Dennis Shulman. A clinical psychologist and ordained rabbi, Shulman has scorned Garrett as one of the “out of touch politicians” who are “blocking research that could lead to cures for my patients and congregants.” He opposes restrictions on “reproductive choice,” claiming that the way to reduce the number of abortions is through “education, contraception, and accessible health care and services.”

Shulman, who has been blind since childhood, is an author and educator as well as a psychologist and rabbi. He opposed the Iraq War “from its inception as ill-advised,” he says, and now favors a “rapid and responsible” withdrawal. On social issues, he supports “hate crime” legislation and wants the protection of anti-discrimination laws extended to homosexuals, lesbians, bisexual, and transgendered persons. Garrett, he says, has an “anti-GLBT [Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender] voting record.”

Long Way From Home

Tom McClintock vs. Charlie Brown — California, Fourth District

Supporters and opponents agree Tom McClintock has come a long way in his quest to become the next congressman from California’s Fourth District. Forced by term limits from his state Senate seat in southern California’s Ventura County, McClintock has won the Republican nomination for Congress in a district that runs from the eastern suburbs of Sacramento to the Oregon border. Even before the June primaries, his Democratic opponent, Charlie Brown, had been running a fundraising campaign asking for \$100 donations for each of the 418 miles between Ventura County and the Fourth Congressional District.

“I have found people care more about where the candidate stands than where the candidate lives,” McClintock told the *New York Times*. Former Congressman Doug Ose, the runner-up in the June 3 primary and himself a resident of an adjoining district, pressed the “carpetbagger” issue in his campaign ads with little apparent success. Ose, who styles himself a pragmatist, had the endorsement of two former governors, George Deukmejian and Pete Wilson, and the district’s retiring representative, John Doolittle.

McClintock, meanwhile, appears to relish the role of conservative black sheep with the “moderate” Republican establishment. He recalled that when Wilson was governor, he proposed the biggest tax increase in California history. “I fought him every step of the way,” boasts McClintock, who was in the state Assembly at the time. He has also been a frequent thorn in the side of Gov. Arnold



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Schwarzenegger, after running unsuccessfully in the 2003 recall election that propelled the Hollywood muscleman to power in Sacramento.

McClintock stresses his opposition to tax increases and earmark appropriations, as well as a tough line on illegal immigration. He wants the fence along the Mexican border completed, illegals deported, and sanctions against employers of illegal immigrants rigorously enforced. He has called for removing the federal restrictions on domestic oil exploration in both the Gulf of Mexico and in the "Arctic tundra," formally known as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

"We expect our federal government to protect our borders, to protect our individual freedoms as Americans," he said in his victory speech on primary night. "And beyond that, we want it out of our pockets, away from our families, and out of our faces."

Brown, a retired Air Force officer and teacher, is making his second run for the seat, having lost by three percentage points to Doolittle in 2006. It was the first time that Doolittle, now nearing the end of a nine-term incumbency, had received less than 60 percent of the vote. Brown capitalized on the fact that Doolittle was under investigation for alleged involvement in the Jack Abramoff bribery scandals, and ran against a culture of corruption in Washington.

Despite a 47 to 31 percent Republican advantage in voter registration, Democrats are hoping widespread dissatisfaction with the economy and the war will persuade voters to opt for change of a non-radical nature. With a "Patriotism before Partisanship" theme, Brown has been emphasizing his military service and, not surprisingly, his local roots.

"I'm someone who lives in the district and will come back to talk to people in the district," he says.

The Price Is Wrong

William "B.J." Lawson vs. David Price — North Carolina, Third District

It didn't take much to convince Dr. William "B.J." Lawson that he should run for Congress this year in North Carolina's Third District. "My district chairperson took me out to lunch and told me not to run 'cause I wasn't their guy. If you ever want to encourage me to run, tell me not to. That will guarantee that I run," says Lawson, a neurosurgeon who left his residency to start a medical software business, which he has since sold.

Lawson not only ran, but won the Republican primary with 71 percent of the vote over Augustus Cho. Now he faces the more formidable challenge of taking on Rep. David Price, a 10-term incumbent who sits on the Appropriations Committee and chairs the subcommittee on Homeland Security. "He's well known for his ability to bring 'bacon' back to the district," Lawson notes, while contending that Price "practices a system of government that is broken."

"Voters know we need change and David Price personifies status quo," says Lawson. "Our campaign provides a clear alternative to what's going on in Washington." A Ron Paul supporter during this year's presidential primary campaign, Lawson espouses a conservative/libertarian philosophy that leaves him wary of government solutions to almost any problem.

"I think for the most part they have taken the idea of free trade and treated that idea with Orwellian contempt," he says of trade agreements like NAFTA, CAFTA, and the GATT/WTO accords. "I don't support trade deals that undermine our national sovereignty and push us toward a global government."

Both Lawson and Price oppose the Iraq War. Price voted against the resolution authorizing the president to initiate military action in 2002, and early in 2007, he sponsored a resolution calling for



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withdrawal of our troops by the end of the year. Lawson sees the war as a waste of both lives and money. "I think we need to be getting out of Iraq and Afghanistan," he says. "Our presence there is destabilizing the region and it puts us in a position of trying to support a foreign policy we can't afford."

While Price has sponsored a variety of legislation on education, housing, and healthcare, Lawson argues for limiting federal activity to the powers delegated by the Constitution.

"I think the fundamental disagreement I have with Mr. Price is his perspective that the government can do whatever it wants to," he says. But while Price defends a woman's "right to choose," Lawson opposes the court-decreed constitutional "right" to abortion.

"I believe government exists to protect life," Lawson say. "I think the Supreme Court did a terrible thing and exceeded its authority in *Roe v. Wade*. We need to restrain the Supreme Court from making social judgments."

Immigration Implosion

Jason Chaffetz vs. Bennion Spencer — Utah, Third District

Six-term Congressman Chris Cannon appeared to have everything going for him in his campaign for reelection in Utah's Third District, often described as the nation's most conservative. He had the endorsement of President Bush, who carried the district with 77 percent of the vote in 2004. He had the backing of the state's Republican senators, Bob Bennett and Orrin Hatch. He had a 96-percent rating from the American Conservative Union. And he would outspend his primary challenger by 7-1.

But on June 25, Jason Chaffetz took 60 percent of the vote in the Republican primary, leaving Cannon as the district's lame-duck congressman. A consultant and former chief of staff to Governor John Huntsman, Jr., Chaffetz spent \$100,000 in a campaign that had no paid staff and did no polling. A first-time candidate, he is now considered the overwhelming favorite in the heavily Republican district to defeat Democrat Bennion Spencer in November.

Chaffetz ran an anti-incumbent campaign, blaming Cannon for out-of-control federal spending and soaring gas prices. "If you want to change the results, you have to change the people you elect," he said. Cannon's votes in favor of the No Child Left Behind Act ("the most intrusive and cumbersome education bill in history," said Chaffetz) and the costly prescription drug benefit for Medicare recipients were also issues.

But illegal immigration was the "hot button" issue that motivated voters to fire Cannon. The Utah congressman has drawn the ire of immigration foes nationally with his support of a program to allow illegal aliens to remain in the states as "guest workers," while traveling freely back and forth across the border. He also sponsored a bill to allow children of illegals to pay in-state tuition rates at colleges. And in 2002, he told attendees at a Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund dinner: "We love immigrants in Utah. And we very often don't make distinctions between legal and illegal."

Chaffetz rallied "amnesty" opponents to his campaign, by calling for a "pathway to deportation" for the illegals, along with heightened border security and prosecution of employers who hire undocumented immigrants.

Chaffetz, 41, first made a name for himself as the place-kicker on the high-scoring Brigham Young University football team led by quarterback Ty Detmer. In his collegiate days, he was a Democrat and a co-chairman of Utah for Dukakis. (Dukakis's wife, Kitty, was formerly married to Chaffetz's father.) Today he chides his fellow Republicans for abandoning "core values" and "conservative principles" like



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cutting spending, limiting the role of the federal government, adhering to the Constitution and providing “a strong national defense.” He wants to abolish the U.S. Department of Education and “dramatically reduce the size and scope of the federal government.”

Spencer, the Democratic opponent and a former TV journalist, wants to reform, rather than eliminate, the No Child Left Behind Act and believes Congress should help school districts recruit better teachers with higher pay. He is for increased funding for research and development of alternative sources of energy. And he would: “Bring undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and permit those who are in good standing to pay a fine, learn English and get in line to become legal U.S. citizens.”

Illegal immigration will no doubt continue to be a hot topic when temperatures drop in the fall.

“Politically Incorrect”

John “Jimmy” Duncan — Tennessee, Second District

Though it may have been unpopular with both his GOP colleagues in the House and many of his constituents back home, Rep. John “Jimmy” Duncan of Tennessee’s Second District has no regrets about being one of only six Republicans to vote against the authorization of military force against Iraq. “If the country [Iraq] were stabilized tomorrow, it still wouldn’t be worth what we’re spending there,” the 10-term congressman told *Metro Pulse* magazine last.

Duncan also voted against expenditures for the Department of Homeland Security and opposed both the original Patriot Act and its reauthorization. He did, however, vote for the FISA amendment that allows warrantless interceptions on international communications. Duncan also voted for the costly addition of the prescription drug benefit to Medicare that the Bush administration pushed through Congress.

Yet he has maintained his standing as a foe of big-spending government, winning the “Taxpayer’s Hero” designation by Citizens Against Government Waste. He describes his politics in terms of “traditional conservative positions against massive foreign aid, deficit spending, and being the policemen to the world.”

Describing himself as a “localist,” he also voted against the federal No Child Left Behind Act, believing that “Teachers and principals are smart enough to run their own schools.” His “politically incorrect” (in his words) push for increased border security to stop illegal entry into the country and his support for oil production in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge have done nothing to hurt his popularity in the district.

Democrats Bob Scott of Knoxville and David Hancock of Maryville are competing for their party’s nomination to run against the 10-term incumbent, who has won past elections with as much as 82 percent of the vote. Despite his controversial stands, no one in the district is likely to be betting against “Jimmy” Duncan.

Bailey’s “Base”

Collins Bailey vs. Steny Hoyer — Maryland, Fifth District

Having won the Republican primary in Maryland’s Fifth District, all Collins Bailey has to do now to win a seat in the U.S. Congress is defeat Steny Hoyer, a 14-term incumbent and the House majority leader. But Bailey, a positive thinker, sees his political glass not as half empty, but pretty close to full.

“If you can believe what you read in the paper, Congress has a well-deserved 14-percent approval rating,” he says. “That means my base is 86 percent.” Bailey sees himself as part of a vanguard of “new



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people running for office, who respect the Constitution, sound money, American sovereignty, and cutting spending.” Those principles have been abandoned by both parties, he says.

“I supported the president’s position in 2000 when he promised a more humble foreign policy, a more judicious use of our troops and no nation building,” he says. Whether the issue is U.S. military commitments or multi-lateral trade agreements, “I think we need an America-first policy,” Bailey says.

“‘Free trade’ sounds like good American free enterprise capitalism,” he says. “I think what we need to do is look at fair trade.” American companies are at an unfair disadvantage, he says, when we import goods from countries with no labor, safety, or environmental standards.

Now in his fourth term as a member of the Charles County Board of Education, Bailey is unequivocal in his condemnation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. “I think it’s horrible,” he says. “Education issues should be handled locally.”

Bailey, who won his three-way primary with 44 percent of the vote, has targeted Hoyer as a free-spending liberal whose earmarks in appropriations bills have contributed significantly to ballooning budgets and deficits. Hoyer was among the top 10 “earmarkers” on the ’08 budget, according to the watchdog group Taxpayers for Common Sense.

While that may outrage Bailey and other fiscal conservatives, it is also one reason why no one will be surprised if Hoyer wins a 15th term this fall. As the *Washington Post* has noted, “Hoyer has won enormous goodwill in his district for bringing home hundreds of millions of dollars in federal projects.”

Jack Kenny is a free-lance writer living in New Hampshire.



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