
10th District Race Leads '10 Ballot

By Erika Jacobson Moore

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As the national media and attention seems to be focused on some highly contentious races as the Nov. 2 election draws closer, the candidates in the 10th District have been conducting seemingly, by comparison, smooth campaigns as they vie for the opportunity to represent Loudoun and Fairfax residents in the U.S. House of Representatives. But even without the high profile fights and back-and-forth public jabs, each of the three candidates has attempted to separate himself from the competition, calling into question the abilities of their counterparts as well as the policies that they endorse.

Only a week before voters will head to the polls to choose between the three candidates, they faced off during a League of Women Voters' forum held Monday night at Dominion High School in Sterling. Incumbent Frank Wolf (R-VA-10), Democratic challenger Jeff Barnett and Libertarian William Redpath covered a wide range of topics, from the economy and jobs to drug legalization, immigration and health care, during the 90-minute debate.

A 30-year incumbent, Wolf has been able to easily turn away challenges from Democrats in all his recent campaigns, including back-to-back efforts from Judy Feder in 2006 and 2008. Barnett, a first-time politician, said he decided to run to bring some fresh ideas to Congress as well as be a part of a House that would look toward the future instead of governing by "looking through the rearview mirror." Redpath joined the race to "lead by example" in the Libertarian Party. This is his fourth time running for office in Virginia as a part of the Libertarian Party. He first ran for the House of Delegates in 1993, then the State Senate in the January 1998 special election, governor in 2001 and the U.S. Senate in 2008.

Wolf once again received some heat during the debate from Barnett about his length of his service and being an "entrenched" politician, but the Republican made sure to emphasize that he fully discloses his voting record on his Web site and touted his belief in bipartisanship.

"Honesty and integrity is very important to me," Wolf said. "I have a history of reaching across the aisle and working in a bipartisan way." Wolf also stressed his work on the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission fighting genocide in the Sudan and promoting rail to Dulles.

Barnett, meanwhile, stressed his experience as a "jobs creator," saying he knew how to bring "21st century green jobs" to Northern Virginia and make small businesses more competitive in seeking government contracts.

"We are closely tied here to the federal government. Small businesses in this economy are getting squeezed out by dealing with the federal government. That hurts jobs, hurts innovation and costs us money," Barnett said.

Redpath seemed to field the lion's share of questions on controversial topics, including abortion and drug legalization. His response to a question about whether he supported federal funding for Planned Parenthood was reflective of many of his positions to trim the reach of federal authorities in favor of more state-based responsibilities and increased market freedom.

"I do, but not by the government," Redpath responded. "I think that people should be able to live their lives as they like, without interference as long as they are not harming other people or their property...at the end of the day I think most of the social issues should be handled by the various states."

Each of the men's answers reflected the feel of their campaigns throughout the summer. Wolf continues to focus on his record, pointing out that voters know what he has done and what he stands for.

The biggest issue for Wolf will continue to be the economy. In recent years, Wolf has been advocating a bill introduced with Rep. Jim Cooper (D-TN-5), the SAFE Commission Act, which is designed to address

the problems facing the country's economy now, and help it prepare for the future.

If approved by Congress the legislation would create a 16-member Securing America's Future Economy, or SAFE, Commission to deal with the "unsustainable imbalance between long-term federal spending commitments and projected revenues; increases in net national savings to provide for domestic investment and economic growth; the implications of foreign ownership of federally issued debt instruments; and revision of the budget process to place greater emphasis on long-term fiscal issues." Under the bill, the commission would be required to develop "methods for estimating the cost of legislation as an alternative to the current Congressional Budget Office method; and hold at least one town-hall style public hearing within each Federal Reserve district."

While the bill has not come to the floor for a vote, and has been referred to two House committees, Wolf is convinced of its effectiveness. "It is the leading bill in Congress to deal with what we are facing," he told Leesburg Today during the campaign.

The recent appropriation bill-Wolf sits on the House Appropriation Committee-also includes language about job repatriation, to try and bring back companies that have moved abroad. That will involve talking to those companies to find out "what it would take" to bring them back to the U.S., including incentive packages. Small businesses will play a large role in the recovery of the American economy, Wolf said, providing the most job creation, and therefore they must be supported. Many of the small businesses in this area are subcontractors, which could benefit from the return of larger companies to a U.S. base of operations.

The country's economy also is at the top of Barnett's priority list, with focus on the housing crisis and job creation. Barnett supports creating a Consumer Financial Protection Agency that is a combination of existing offices tasked with being the watchdog for pensions, savings and homes. In a three-prong strategy, Barnett advocates institutionalizing the short-sale process so homeowners can force the sale when banks refuse to modify their underwater mortgages; guaranteeing an FHA loan two years after the short sale, giving homeowners with good credit the opportunity to recover; and giving more bankruptcy protections to homeowners, instead of large corporations.

Economic recovery, he said, is not about supporting big business, but giving the needed resources to smaller companies.

"The playing field right now is tilted, and it's tilted toward the large corporation," Barnett told Leesburg Today. "So who does a small business turn to? Well, they can turn to me. Regardless of their party."

Some of the issues that have been the focus of work by Wolf, Barnett agrees are important, like preservation, gangs, and immigration.

Gangs will always exist, Barnett, a supporter of the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, said, but the implications of gang activity are affecting not only day-to-day life for residents, but also national security, as terrorism cells and other groups could also be classified as gangs. Barnett said he is intrigued by the four-part immigration bill presented by Rep. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Rep. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) that includes patrolling the border, creating a "fool proof" Social Security card, a guest worker program and a pathway to citizenship. Barnett said the important thing to remember is, while a portion of illegal immigrants came here illegally, about half came to the U.S. through legal means and simply stayed after their visas expired.

For Redpath, national security, and "getting the government out of businesses it shouldn't be in" are top priorities. One of the biggest areas where Redpath would like to see a shift is in control, from the federal government to state and local governments.

"The nation was founded on the principle of federalism," Redpath told Leesburg Today. "Government should be as close to the people as possible. What can be devolved to state and local [governments] should be." Among the issues that the federal government should not be involved in are transportation, education, and social services, he said.

The federal government also should stay out of what Redpath defines as "victimless" crimes, such as drugs and gambling. To achieve that Redpath supports repealing all federal laws and prohibitions on the matters, leaving it to the states to determine how to handle the issues.

In other areas, Redpath points to the Cato Institute's identification of \$348 billion in possible spending cuts in the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Transportation, Energy, Education and Housing and Urban Development. The final two departments would be closed completely. Redpath said education is not something mentioned in the U.S. Constitution, and the federal government needs to stop getting involved

in that and similar areas, like farm subsidies and corporate welfare. And as to those who might say it is not the right time to begin limiting government programs, Redpath has a simple answer.

He believes that spending as much as the rest of the world combined on defense actually leaves the U.S. more vulnerable because it is more likely to become involved in other issues in other countries. Redpath also supports the defense spending cuts outlined in the Sustainable Defense Task Force's report from June that would save almost \$1 trillion over the next 10 years. On immigration, Redpath is supportive of a more open, albeit regulated, policy. If a person does not have a criminal background, a serious communicable disease or cannot be "reasonably deemed a security threat," they should be able to immigrate and work toward citizenship.

Detailed information on each candidate can be found on their campaign Web sites: www.wolfforcongress.com; jeffbarnettforcongress.com; and www.redpath2010.com.

In addition to the Congressional race there are four other issues on next week's ballot, including three proposed amendments to the Virginia Constitution and one local school bond issue.

Also, voters in Loudoun's smallest town will select their mayor and Town Council representatives. Hillsboro is the first town to vote to change their municipal elections from May to November, achieving a cost savings. The town traditionally follows a write-in campaign to elect its mayor and council based on a slate gathered from those who wish to serve. The current council members all wish to continue to serve. So, barring surprises, Mayor Roger Vance and council members John Dean, Joe Gertig, Amy Marasco, Belle Ware and Steve Morgart will be reelected.

The school question asks voters whether the county should issue its general obligation capital improvement bonds to the tune of \$27.82 million for a Leesburg area elementary school. [See story, Page 23]

The Constitutional questions come from those already approved by the General Assembly that need voter approval before being ratified. The first question asks, "Shall Section 6 of Article X of the Constitution of Virginia be amended to authorize legislation that will permit localities to establish their own income or financial worth limitations for purposes of granting property tax relief for homeowners not less than 65 years of age or permanently and totally disabled?"

The change would allow the assembly to expand localities' authority to grant such tax relief. Currently, eligible residents must demonstrate "an extraordinary tax burden."

The second question asks voters whether the Constitution should be amended to require the General Assembly "to provide a real property tax exemption for the principal residence of a veteran, or his or her surviving spouse, if the veteran has a 100 percent service-connected, permanent, and total disability?" This would mandate the veteran's exemption as a constitutional right.

The final question addresses the state's "Rainy Day Fund" and asks, "Shall Section 8 of Article X of the Constitution of Virginia be amended to increase the permissible size of the Revenue Stabilization Fund from 10 percent to 15 percent of the Commonwealth's average annual tax revenues derived from income and retail sales taxes for the preceding three fiscal years?" The change is intended to provide the assembly with the ability to create a larger financial cushion against economic downturns.

Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 2. Visit www.loudoun.gov/vote for more information, and to view a sample ballot.

More On The Candidates

Frank R. Wolf

Party: Republican

Age: 71

Location: Vienna

Education: B.A. Penn State University, 1961, law degree, Georgetown University, 1965.

Experience: Represented the 10th district since 1981; serves on the House Appropriations Committee and is the co-chairman of the bipartisan Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission; prior to be elected worked on congressional staffs, at the Department of the Interior, and as an attorney.

Wolf Highlights Familiar Issues In New Campaign

Jeffrey R. Barnett

Party: Democrat

Age: 60

Location: McLean

Education: B.A. History, College of the Holy Cross, 1972; Air Force Squadron Officer School; Air War College

Experience: retired U.S. Air Force colonel; worked at Pentagon beginning in 1986; campaign planner during the first Gulf War; military assistant to the Pentagon's Director of Net Assessment, the strategic planner for the Secretary of Defense; four years as a government consultant with Booz-Allen-Hamilton.

Barnett Seeks Quick Impact, Leadership From The Middle

William Redpath

Party: Libertarian

Age: 52

Location: Leesburg

Education: bachelor's degree in economics and political science, Indiana University; MBA, University of Chicago.

Experience: certified public accountant and chartered financial analyst; vice president for BIA/Kelsey, a Chantilly financial consulting and valuation firm; senior financial analyst with NBC in New York; an internal auditor with ABC in New York; assistant financial manager of WISH-TV in Indianapolis.

Redpath In Race For 10th District

Reader Comments

The following are comments from the readers. In no way do they represent the view of Leesburg Today.

Total Comments: 1 comment(s)

xyz123 wrote on **Oct 29, 2010 12:01 PM:**

" The problem with a whole-sale/large-scale shift to states setting all/most policies and rules on how our society operates is that you then create 50 competing entities. And with any competition, there are winners and there are losers. But in this case, we're talking states. There are already many things that states regulate themselves which are used as incentives to lure people (ie, FLA has no income tax, so that's why so many pro athletes have FLA as their main residence, it's a tax shelter). The US is already in the midst of a major population shift from the traditional manufacture states in the north and midwest to the sunbelt states in the south from coast to coast. Those states, with new powers to use competitively, would only lure more folks, thus densifying the US population there and making voids in previous populated areas. Businesses and services would shift to serve the population (that is the essence of free markets, right?). The US would become even moreso a ring of people on the 3 coasts and south of latitude of Tennessee, Oklahoma, etc.

Another example: if states regulate abortion independently, you'll just have people driving all over the country to the nearest state that allows it. Is that really the kind of nation we want, where our citizens must travel around state by state for the services they wish for? You might also see states swinging back and forth based on their elected ideology - abortion made legal, then 4-8 years later, political winds shift, anti-abortion legislators get elected, they repeal that law and ban abortions...and so on. Yes, the same could occur at the national level, but we don't see such philosophical flip-flopping in actuality now.

Just some stuff to think about. "