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Republicans at Monday forum take aim at McNerney

by Cassie Tomlin

Apr 06, 2010 | 645 views | 3 | 5 | |



Four Republicans hoping to oust Rep. Jerry McNerney, D-Pleasanton, in November agree it's a good idea to suck more water from the San Joaquin Delta, shrink the federal government, repeal health care reform and of course, boot their rival out of Washington.

One of the four will make it past the June 8 primary to represent the party against McNerney, a four-year Congressman and the lone Democrat in the race. In 2006, he ousted Republican Richard Pombo of Tracy from the post.

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Tony Amador, a retired U.S. marshal from Lodi; Elizabeth Emken, an autism advocate with a background in corporate finance from Danville; Brad Goehring, a grape farmer near Lodi and David Harmer, an attorney from San Ramon, are vying for the 11th district seat, which spans four counties and both sides of the Altamont Pass.

Monday night, at a forum sponsored by the Republican Party of San Joaquin County that was peppered with Goehring posters, the candidates answered party-submitted questions, and their own questions of themselves before about 150 supporters.

At San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton, division between the Republicans came late, when Emken in her final three minutes bashed "career politician" Harmer, who two years ago lost the congressional election in the 10th district.

She cited a conflict of interest because one of Harmer's paid campaign employees helped organize the event.

Harmer's supporters countered his paid consultant for the event, Sarah Blicharz, simply recruited volunteers for the club, as she's done for nearly four years, and no knowledge of the questions ahead of time. Steve Wampler, a member of the Republican group, moderated the forum.

"Elizabeth was very, very aware of how careful I was that no one gave me the questions," Blicharz said.

Harmer, who often mentioned Ronald Reagan, who he met when he was 4, nearly every time he spoke, said he follows "the 11th commandment: Don't speak ill of your fellow Republican."

Harmer, who touted his lifelong political involvement and his work with Heritage Foundation and conservative think-tank Cato Institute, called this year's vote "the most consequential election in our lifetimes."

He said he supports drilling for oil on and off the nation's shores, to avoid pumping more money to the "nastiest, most barbarous" overseas nations.

To reduce illegal immigration, he said, the nation needs to move away from the "welfare state" and change "the national character."

Harmer lives in San Ramon, which straddles the border between the 10th and 11th districts.

Emken cited her work as a legislative consultant for autism nonprofits and said the country needs to reduce government spending, beef up national security and keep sending troops overseas. She thinks the federal education department should be abolished, she said.

Emken said her work at IBM "reducing inefficient business units" would help her get rid of "excessive, bloated" government spending.



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Amador, who also worked as a police officer in Los Angeles before retiring in Lodi, said the country needs to stop bailing out corporations and individuals with taxpayer money.

"I'm running against Obama and his flunkies that are there in Congress," he said.

Goehring called himself a "ticked off farm boy" and a staunch defender of public property rights.

He said he opposes building a canal or tunnel routing water from the Delta to Southern California, and he would work to reverse environmental limitations on water intake.

"The environmental movement almost put me out of business," he said. "The environmental movement is a slow cancer eroding our property right. We cannot conserve our way out of this problem."

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« [Ornley_Gumfudgen](#) wrote on Wednesday, Apr 07 at 06:16 AM »

TomBenigno

Uh, would that be Jerry McNerney? Don't see whair he's done much fer Tracy since he's been in office.

Kinda leanin towards th Grape farmer. Don't much cotton ta career politicians an those in particular who are lawyers and consort with think-tanks that tend ta do our thankin fer us.

Same is true fer not fer profit political consultants. Had enough of Acorn type of shenanigans fer a lifetime.

Amadore might be a good choice though. But I didn't hear his comment on th water issue. Yep I'm against a new canal but fer better water management.

Really it's just too early ta tell.

But it's a start an I'll just have ta wait fer more information.

Also I want ta see what the other party is going ta do. Might be somethin thair worth lookin at even though I doubt it.

« [TomBenigno](#) wrote on Tuesday, Apr 06 at 04:11 PM »

Concerned:

Flip a coin gang, and you won't be wrong. Who are the carpet baggers.

« [dbsaintnick](#) wrote on Tuesday, Apr 06 at 02:48 PM »

Major typo error in the first paragraph...They are not in favor of sucking more water from the delta!