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## Meet the also-rans: a gumbo of candidates with lots of spunk and little hope

**By Bruce Ramsey**  
*Syndicated columnist*

You don't hear from the political candidates with little or no money, but at The Seattle Times editorial board, we do interview them. These are the folks who have few donors, cannot buy ads and are not going to win. But they paid their filing fee, which for congressional races is \$1,740. And they are on the ballot.

Among the candidates for Congress is one that came to the Times packing a gun. Another claims to be an archbishop and the CEO of an international association of churches and makes his living as a bus inspector. Another stocks shelves at Fred Meyer.

Together they make up a self-selected focus group, a gumbo of current political flavors.

It was the folks on the left who were most eager for a health-insurance law, but ask them about it now. Larry Kalb, running against Rep. Rick Larsen in the 2nd District, says the law has no cost containment and "will devastate the economy." Conservatives have been saying that for months, but Kalb is a Dennis Kucinich Democrat and for a single-payer system.

In the 3rd District the seat vacated by Rep. Brian Baird Green Party candidate Roy Olson, an actuary for the state insurance commissioner, opposes Obamacare because it pays for-profit hospitals.

And in the 7th District Rep. Jim McDermott's filmmaker and Democrat Bill Hoffman says he was for Obama's plan, but has changed his mind about it. "I want single-payer," he says. "I think we're going to institutionalize what we have, and I don't want what we have."

Making a point about McDermott straying from his district, Hoffman pulled out a Cato Institute pocket Constitution and said his congressman had been "unconstitutionally knighted."

Indeed, on Aug. 22, 2007, on a trip to Africa, McDermott was made Knight Commander of The Most Dignified Order of Moshoeshoe. This act by King Letsie III of Lesotho was done in appreciation of McDermott's help to Africa. It was a surprise to the Seattle Democrat, and for the ceremony he had to borrow a clean shirt. And, yes, the Constitution does say that no officeholder under the United States "shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince or foreign State."

The crucial words are "the Consent of the Congress." That body has passed a law a very unrepugnant law granting blanket consent for honorary knighthoods.

The big foreign issue is the wars. Those on the left are against them, as they have been for years. The

interesting change is happening on the right.

In the 2nd District, Republican John Carmack said of Afghanistan, "I would disengage. It is unwinnable." But he would keep "a listening post" there.

In the 1st District, Republican Matthew Burke, running for Rep. Jay Inslee's seat, said, "I'm for giving the military everything they need. But I am losing patience with it. I don't think we need to be in 130 countries. We can't afford to be the world's policeman."

I heard doubts also from more mainstream, better-funded Republicans. In the 1st, James Watkins said "no way" he would have voted for the wars "without knowing what victory really means" and that America is "wildly overextended in our military."

In the 9th District — Rep. Adam Smith's — Republican Dick Muri said, "In Afghanistan, we should have declared victory and got out."

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