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NEWS OF SOUTH LOOP, NEAR WEST AND WEST LOOP

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They want your votes

Several local house seats are among those up for grabs Feb. 2

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Editor

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Near South and Near West Side neighborhoods are home this year to a series of hotly contested campaigns in the Democratic Party primary election, particularly for seats in the state House of Representatives.

The winner of the Feb. 2 vote is nearly assured of being elected this fall in heavily Democratic local precincts, sent to Springfield to grapple with state government's staggering galaxy of problems, an estimated \$13 billion budget deficit among them.

In the 5th and 10th districts, challengers are hoping to capitalize on what they see as an anti-incumbent mood.

More than one used a famous political adage, telling Chicago Journal they want voters to consider if they are better off now than when the incumbents first took office.

Longtime 9th District Representative Art Turner, meanwhile, appears to be the Democratic frontrunner in his run for lieutenant governor, having piled up a long list of endorsements, from labor unions to the Chicago Tribune.

Whether Turner ultimately wins that statewide race, voters in the 9th District will elect a new official to Springfield. But the Turner name isn't out of the picture here either.

Along the lakefront, meanwhile, two other Democratic incumbents face no primary challengers.

The primary election will be held Tuesday, Feb. 2. Visit the Chicago Board of Elections Web site at www.chicagoelections.com to find polling places.

Primary challengers in the 5th

Incumbent Ken Dunkin has represented the 5th District, which cuts a narrow band from Near North Side to 64th St., in Springfield for the last

The money race

Below are the cash balances in the funds for candidates running for the 5th, 9th, 10th and 26th house races and the 13th state senate district.

All candidates with established funds are listed. The date listed is the last time the candidate reported their fundraising to the Illinois State Board of Elections, which is where this data comes from. Candidates have until Jan. 20 to turn in their latest six-month report to the elections board, for the period between July 1, 2009 and Dec. 31, 2009. This data was unavailable by the Chicago Journal deadline.

The balances listed below do not include any 2010 contributions of \$500 or more, which must be reported to the elections board within two business days of being received between Jan. 1 and Feb. 1.

5th House District

Candidate - Balance - Current as of
Ken Dunkin - \$72,197.47 - 6/30/2009
David Schroeder - \$17,311.98 - 6/30/2009
Gwendolyn Drake - N/A - Created, no report

9th House District

Candidate - Balance - Current as of
Dorothy Walton - \$19.89 - 6/30/2009
Art Turner Jr. - N/A - Created, no report
Keith Jackson - N/A - Created, no report
John Burros - N/A - Created, no report

10th House District

Candidate - Balance - Current as of
Annazette Collins - \$53,644.41 - 6/30/2009
Jonathan Goldman - N/A - Created, no report
Joseph Sneed - N/A - Created, no report
Eddie Winters - \$0.00 - 12/31/2008

26th House District

Candidate - Balance - Current as of
Will Burns - \$65,598.42 - 6/30/2009

13th Senate District

Candidate - Balance - Current as of
Kwame Raoul - \$71,238.15 - 6/30/2009

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seven years. And for the first time in three election cycles Dunkin faces challengers in the primary.

"I'm running on my record on jobs, education and capital investment in this state," he said.

To that end, Dunkin touted his support for a \$31 billion capital bill the General Assembly passed and Governor Quinn signed into law last summer. These funds will pay for school infrastructure, park district programs in the South Loop and social services, Dunkin said.

Some government bodies have voted to ban video poker, however, the method by which the capital bill bonds are funded, giving the program a slow beginning. "This is a five-year capital plan," Dunkin said. "If you look at history, a number of capital projects have taken a little bit of time to jump start."

He named road work on State Street from Congress to Roosevelt and between 47th to 79th, rehab of the Red Line Grand station and the work on the Wells Street Bridge over the Chicago River as specific projects bringing jobs and economic activity back into the 5th.

Dunkin grew up in Cabrini-Green and has a background in social work.

Of the state's fiscal crisis, he would support raising the income tax rate only "if it is required to keep needed services for our most vulnerable citizens," like the disabled, mentally ill residents and seniors receiving in-home services.

Dunkin voted last year for an income tax hike Governor Quinn wanted.

David Schroeder, a lawyer who lives in the South Loop, is challenging Dunkin, making his first run for elected office after years of volunteering for others' campaigns, from the late Mayor Harold Washington to Ald. Helen Schiller.

Schroeder said he decided to challenge for the 5th District seat after reading that Dunkin missed the vote to impeach Rod Blagojevich, the former governor now facing a range of corruption charges.

"My state representative, Mr. Dunkin, was the only member of the entire General Assembly who didn't show up for that vote. He went on vacation. I was incensed by that," Schroeder said.

Schroeder accuses Dunkin of being an unproductive legislator and failing to reach out to his constituents until a recent barrage of mailings, a charge Dunkin disputes.

Had he been in the House last spring, when lawmakers were trying to address the gaping budget deficit, Schroeder said he would have pushed for freezing spending until the recession ended, cutting middle managers hired by Blagojevich and then amending the state constitution to allow for a progressive income tax.

Dunkin was out of the country, on vacation with his family, for one of the Blagojevich impeachment votes, but the representative said he made another. He accused Schroeder of "talking about issues that don't matter. Rod Blagojevich is gone. He's passé."

Gwendolyn Drake will also appear on the Feb. 2 5th District ballot but she could not be reached for an interview by Chicago Journal's deadline.

The 9th: open seat is a proxy war

The 9th House District is a rare open seat, as the longtime incumbent, Representative Arthur Turner, shoots for statewide office with a run for lieutenant governor.

But the Turner name still hovers in this race — the name Arthur, too, as a matter of fact.

Arthur Turner II, the son of the incumbent, is one of six Democratic candidates challenging for this seat Feb. 2.

The younger Turner, 27, will finish law school at Southern Illinois University this spring but said he has maintained an address in the district.

Web sites

5th District

Rep. Ken Dunkin - www.repkendunkin.com
Gwendolyn Drake - www.gwenin2010.com
David Schroeder - www.peopleforschroeder.com

9th District

John Burros - www.johnburros.com
Bruce Jackson - www.9thneedsbruce.com
Keith Jackson - Visit [Facebook.com](#),
[search Friends of Keith Jackson](#)
Dorothy Walton - www.waltonfor9thdistrict.com

10th District

Annazette Collins - www.annazettecollins.com
Jonathan Goldman - www.jonathanforillinois.com
Eddie Winters - www.eddiewinters.com
Joseph Sneed - www.weneedsneed.com

26th District

Will Burns - www.friendsofwillburns.com

13th Senate District

Kwame Raoul - www.kwameraoul.com

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Between undergraduate studies and Southern, the younger Turner worked one-year stints as an organizer for the Lawndale Christian Development Corporation, as an underwriter for the Illinois Housing Development Authority and then as a mortgage underwriter for a subsidiary of Deutsche Bank in New York City.

Turner says his learning curve in Springfield won't be as steep as other first-time legislators, since a call to dad will be a "a phone call away, a walk up the stairs away."

The 9th District includes a wide-range of neighborhoods, including swaths of the West Loop and Near West Side, Little Italy and a small section of Pilsen. Much of its western portion covers North Lawndale.

The race is shaping up as a proxy war between the elder Representative Turner and State Sen. Rickey Hendon, who is backing Dorothy Walton's campaign for the seat.

Hendon, an assistant majority leader and influential personage in Springfield and on the West Side, is also competing in the lieutenant governor's race versus Turner and other candidates aiming for that seat.

He called the younger Turner's run "just straight nepotism."

The younger Turner downplayed his own entry into the long history of family dynasties in Illinois politics, comparing his run to a doctor's son going into medicine.

Walton, a Realtor for the past 25 years, challenged the senior Turner in the 2008 race for the 9th District seat with the support of the Hendon organization, losing then 11,985 to 8,139.

Walton, who grew up in Cabrini-Green, said she fought eminent domain abuse in that area in the 1970s and '80s, and would bring that spirit as a representative in Springfield.

"When it comes to standing up for people, I was already doing it without any political aspirations," she said.

Other contenders include Near West Sider Keith Jackson, who is holding up his 35 years as a community organizer and grassroots activist to make the case he should be the next person to represent the 9th.

Jackson, who grew up in the Henry Horner Homes and still lives in public housing, has taken a leave of absence from a job at the Chicago Area Project to carry out his campaign. He's helped create groups like the Major Adams Community Committee and the Horner Association of Men.

"The power has to go back to the community but the community has to organize, develop and will its own power," he said. "How many legislators have really empowered the community to control them?"

Jackson wants to ensure grant money from Springfield and the federal government gets down to organizations able to truly assist residents in need.

River North resident John Burros believes his experience working as a unionized banquet waiter and as an investor will allow him to successfully reach out to both the rich and poor parts of the 9th.

Candidate Bruce Jackson did not respond to a request for an interview.

Contact information for Jerry Patton, who will also be listed on the ballot in the 9th, could not be located.

Congressman's calculations impact the 10th

Late last year, incumbent 10th District Representative Annazette Collins was one of several elected officials who collected petitions for a run at the 7th District congressional seat — a position that Danny Davis had talked of abandoning to campaign for president of the Cook County board.

Instead, Davis switched his ambition, and is widely expected to win the 7th District primary next month and return to Washington for another two-year term after the general election this fall.

When Davis decided to remain congressman, Collins, Ald. Fioretti and Senator Hendon, among others, dropped out of the race.

The 10th District includes Bucktown and Wicker Park and a sliver of Lincoln Park on the east, chunks of the Near West Side and Humboldt Park in its middle and Garfield Park and the edge of Austin on the west.

Collins says she wants to go back to Springfield to represent the district's low-income constituents.

"It's about being fair about our district. A lot of things are happening in Springfield that we don't have a voice in — the people in poor communities," she said. "They don't have a voice. I have to stay there to make sure our voice is heard, especially on issues that don't affect the rich."

Raising the income tax to plug a \$13 billion budget gap in Springfield is unavoidable, according to Collins, and she said she would support an increase.

“When more and more people ... need public services, the state needs to step up and give them those services,” she said. There’s nothing left to cut, Collins said, in the budget.

She cited her support of the statewide smoking ban and creating a Department of Juvenile Justice as accomplishments.

Collins accused her opponents in the primary of twisting her positions. “I’ve got challengers in the race mainly because I was going to run for Congress, and all these people got in the race,” she said.

Jonathan Goldman said he hadn’t considered running until learning that Collins would be going for Congress.

But when she dropped her Washington run to campaign again for Springfield, Goldman said it was an easy decision to stay in the mix — the longtime nonprofit director and environmental lobbyist claims Collins is failing as a leader.

“Her constituents never hear from her. I go out knocking on doors, talking to voters — 90 percent of the people I talk to have no idea who their state rep is,” Goldman said. “She doesn’t communicate with them. She’s not trying to involve constituents in the process.”

Goldman said he knows how Springfield works, having tracked and weighed in on legislation as the executive director of the Illinois Environmental Council.

“I’ve been around the legislative process for a long time, and I’ve built a strong track record from the outside,” he said.

Near West Side resident Eddie Winters is making his third run at elected office and his second for the 10th District. A Chicago police officer for 10 years and sergeant for five, Winters said he’s campaigning hard on education and public safety — an issue he knows well from his time with the police.

“This campaign is about bringing people together, empowering them, educating them, because that’s the only way you’re going to accomplish what needs to be accomplished,” Winters said.

He promised to support South Side State Sen. James Meeks’s educational funding reform bill and vote for gun control legislation.

Both Goldman and Winters said they want to start taxing services to expand the state’s tax base.

Joseph Sneed, a lifelong resident of the West Side, was skeptical of any tax increase to address the budget deficit.

“We need to start getting away from taxing and start progressing, building up our neighborhoods,” he said.

Asked for specifics, Sneed answered by calling for more homeownership and an increased focus on small businesses, generators of new jobs.

Sneed, 41, works as a supervisor in the city of Chicago’s Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Services. He ran unsuccessfully for 27th Ward alderman in 1995 and the 10th District rep seat in 2002.

The remaining candidates, Mable Taylor and Keith Muhammad, could not be reached for comment.

Burns alone in the 26th

Incumbent State Rep. Will Burns will run opposed in the 26th District, a rectangular-shaped territory that covers Grant Park and the eastern side of the South Loop on the north. Further south, the district includes the neighborhoods of Kenwood and Oakland, as well as Washington Park.

13th district petition brawl

State Senator Kwame Raoul’s district, the 13th, hugs the lakefront, from the posh towers of Streeterville to South Shore’s diverse blocks. The district is famous for once sending President Barack Obama to Springfield, his first elected office.

Raoul will run unopposed in the primary, as Hyde Park lawyer Al Hofeld Jr. dropped off the ballot in the face of challenges to his nominating petitions mounted by the Raoul camp. The petition fight sparked a war of words and letters between Raoul and Hofeld in the Hyde Park Herald and the Chicago Reader.

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