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EDITORIAL: District 10 GOP — Goldstein | **He's best-qualified of three hoping to oppose Cowan**

Posted to Web: **Friday, Apr 23, 2010 05:00AM**

Appeared in print: **Friday, Apr 23, 2010, page A6**

Of the eight state House districts that lie wholly or partly in Lane County, only one has a contested primary race. It's on the Republican side in House District 10. The district's population center is Newport, but it stretches to cover a big chunk of western Lane County. Politically, it's a swing district — Democrat Jean Cowan defeated a Republican in 2006 and is seeking a third term. Three candidates are seeking to oppose her in the fall, and **the one with the best chance of reclaiming the seat for the Republicans is George Goldstein.**

Goldstein, 65, lives in Swisshome and spent his working life managing the construction of municipal water and wastewater systems, a field in which he still provides consulting services. **He's distinguished from his two opponents by his experience in public service:** Goldstein is a member of the Lane County Planning Commission and the county's Board of Property Tax Appeals, and he has worked with committees in Florence dealing with parks and stormwater issues.

Goldstein has a couple of handicaps. One is that he entered the race late, isn't running much of a campaign and didn't get a statement into the Oregon Voters' Pamphlet. The other is that he's regarded with suspicion by some in the Republican Party. Goldstein describes himself as a "Massachusetts Republican," which used to mean something like an Oregon Republican — pragmatic, fiscally conservative, socially progressive. These days, someone with Goldstein's views is prone to being labeled a RINO: a Republican in Name Only.

Goldstein views state government as unresponsive, inefficient and an impediment to job creation and development. He opposed Measures 66 and 67, the tax increases approved by voters in January, on the basis that they "rewarded bad practices" by giving state government more money after it had created a revenue problem through waste and indiscipline. **"Taxes are a parasite that consumes its host,"** he warns, saying that Oregon can expand its revenue base by reducing regulations that strangle job growth in the agricultural, natural resources and tourism industries.

Goldstein's most plausible opponent is Becky Lemler of Elmira, a 51-year-old sonographer. Unlike either of her opponents, Lemler will have a statement in the Voters' Pamphlet, which could lead some voters to conclude she's the only Republican seeking the District 10 nomination. Lemler was active in the campaigns against Measures 66 and 67, and she has served as a party precinct committee representative.

Lemler is concerned, even alarmed, by the directions being taken by the federal government, with its recent approval of legislation reforming the health insurance system, and the state, with the adoption of taxes she says already are driving businesses out of Oregon. Like Goldstein, she favors a comprehensive rollback of regulations affecting small businesses and natural resources industries. But she lacks Goldstein's experience in positions of public responsibility and his understanding of how state and local governments work.

A third candidate is Edward Johnston, 48, who suffers a job-related disability and lives in Toledo. Johnston has lobbied the Legislature on matters related to workers' compensation and other issues, and he has been involved in Toledo municipal and school elections and recall movements. He strongly opposes marine reserves, illegal immigration, land use planning and public employee unions, which he says are out of control. Johnson favors a five-year state hiring freeze and a 30 percent reduction in administrative costs. His statements tend toward hyperbole, with references to Adolf Hitler's Germany, official cover-ups and widespread corruption. His campaign is low-profile.

Of the three candidates, it's easiest to imagine Goldstein standing opposite Cowan and holding his own in a debate. Republican voters in District 10 won't find Goldstein in their Voters' Pamphlet, but they will find his name on the May 18 ballot, and he's their best choice.

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