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15th District candidate is out of state, but not out of race

By LEAH BETH WARD

Yakima Herald-Republic

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John Gotts

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YAKIMA, Wash. -- John Gotts, who walked away from the state and his campaign for the 15th Legislative District, said Wednesday he's "99 percent" sure he'll come back and campaign in the general election.

Unofficial returns show Gotts holding onto second place ahead of Donicio Marichalar of Grandview in the three-way runoff for the seat, currently held by Rep. David Taylor, R-Moxee, who pulled the most votes.

Gotts and Marichalar are Democrats.

"When I saw the results last night, I had to say I was surprised," Gotts said in a telephone interview.

The primary sends the top two winners to the general election.

Gotts, 42, formerly of White Salmon, announced he was quitting the race in June to pursue an entrepreneurial venture

near Palo Alto, Calif. But it was too late for his name to be stricken from the ballot.

Even though the district has voted overwhelmingly Republican in recent memory, Gotts drew a certain logic from the votes he received without campaigning. As of late Wednesday, he was drawing 18.5 percent of the vote to 16 percent for Marichalar.

"If the people like me enough that they are voting for me over Donicio when I'm clearly not there, perhaps they want me to represent them," Gotts said.

Perhaps, though he would have to pull away thousands of votes from Taylor to win the seat in November. The 37-year-old rancher and agricultural consultant was holding more than 65 percent of the primary vote.

Gotts, who has been living in Santa Rosa, Calif., said he is running two Internet start-up companies and said he's already spoken with the controlling investors about working from Washington state. They're amenable to the idea.

One company, he said, is in the energy business and is backed by retired Idaho Sen. Larry Craig.

Gotts said he planned on returning to the area anyway in 2011 to run for the 4th Congressional District. He has said he would probably move to Toppenish.

In announcing his bid for a state House seat in the sprawling 15th District -- which straddles Yakima, Klickitat, Skamania and Clark counties -- Gotts promised to campaign on job growth.

Last year, he lost to incumbent Rep. Bruce Chandler, R-Granger.

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http://www.seattlepi.com/local/6420ap_wa_washington_legislature.html

Last updated August 18, 2009 10:41 p.m. PT

Voters advance candidates in statehouse races

By RACHEL LA CORTE
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

OLYMPIA, Wash. -- Appointed state Rep. Laura Grant will get a chance to carry on her late father's status as the only Democrat in the Legislature from rural Eastern Washington.

Grant easily advanced to the November ballot on Tuesday in the race for the 16th District, which includes Pasco and Walla Walla, getting 46 percent of the vote in early returns. An elementary school teacher from Walla Walla, she was appointed earlier this year after the death of her father, Bill Grant, who held the seat for more than 20 years.

Also advanced to the Nov. 3 election was Republican Terry Nealey, a former Columbia County prosecutor, who captured nearly 38 percent. The race was one of three open seats in the Legislature on the ballot.

"It looks very good for me going forward," Nealey said Tuesday night. Grant did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment.

Republican Kevin Young, a farmer and state Transportation Department employee, received just 10 percent of the vote, and prison guard David Roberts, running as a "Reagan Independent," received 6 percent.

Under the state's primary system, the two top finishers in each primary race face off in November general elections.

The race was one of three open seats for the Legislature on Tuesday's ballot.

In the 15th District, which includes Sunnyside and Goldendale, voters advanced Republican Rep. David Taylor of Moxee after early returns show him winning the primary election in that race with more than 65 percent of the vote in early returns.

Taylor was appointed to fill the seat of Dan Newhouse, who was appointed Gov. Chris Gregoire's agriculture director earlier this year.

Taylor said that he was surprised by the overwhelming margin.

"I felt pretty confident going into the primary, but definitely not that confident," he said.

Still undecided was the second advancement in that race. Democrat John "Jobs" Gotts had nearly 19 percent of the vote even though he had abandoned his bid to work on business ventures in California. Democrat Donicio Marichalar, a consultant and former state social worker, had more than 16 percent of the vote under early returns.

Also undecided Tuesday night was the race in the 9th District, which includes Pullman and Cheney. The open contest for that race is for the unexpired term of the late Rep. Steve Hailey, R-Mesa, who died in December of colon cancer. Appointed replacement Rep. Don Cox, R-Colfax, had previously retired from the Legislature and is not running to keep the seat.

Four Republicans are in the running: Susan Fagan, a former aide to three U.S. senators from Idaho and public affairs director for a Pullman manufacturer; Pat Hailey, a farmer-rancher and school board member who is the widow of Steve

http://www.seattlepi.com/printer2/index.asp?ploc=t&refer=http://www.seattlepi.com/local/6420ap_wa_w... 8/25/2009

Hailey; TV news reporter and school board member Darin Watkins; and farmer and former school board member Art Swannack. The lone Democrat in the race is business owner Glen Stockwell.

Early returns showed Fagan winning with nearly 29 percent of the vote, followed closely by Hailey, who had 25.6 percent. Close behind Hailey was Stockwell, with 25.2 percent. Swannack had 12 percent of the vote, and Watkins had just 8 percent.

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Fagan leads in primaries

After the first round of ballot counts, the Republican from Colfax has 29.24 percent of the votes.

Taras Zhulev
THE DAILY EVERGREEN
Published: 08/24/2009

Susan Fagan, a Republican 9th District House candidate for Washington state, leads after first ballot counts in the primary elections.

Fagan, who would succeed Don Cox, R-Colfax, with a victory in the Nov. 3 general elections, garnered 29.24 percent of the vote with 6,440 votes, Campaign Manager Jordan Vorderbrueggen said.

Trailing Fagan are Pat Hailey, R-Mesa, with 25.64 percent and 5,657 votes as well as Glen Stockwell, D-Ritzville, with 24.33 percent and 5,358 votes, Vorderbrueggen said. The two other republican candidates for the position, Darin Watkins and Art Swannack, who took in about 20 percent of the votes combined, are out of the race because of low voting numbers, he said.

The primary results were tabulated Friday afternoon with a "very small number of votes left to count," Fagan said.

Fagan hosted a primary night election party from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday at the Ridge Pointe Apartments' club house. About 100 attendees came out she said.

Pat Hailey, republican candidate for the 9th District House position, said Fagan is likely in the lead because she spent more money and had an extensive radio advertising campaign.

Hailey said about 200 votes remain to be counted, which she is confident Stockwell won't garner.

Though both Hailey and Fagan are republican candidates, Hailey said she would make a better representative because of her farming experience and ability to sympathize with local farmers.

"I have lived with the regulations that legislation passes for farmers, and I think I understand what farming means today than 30 years ago," Hailey said.

Though Fagan is certain she will battle for the 9th District position in the November election, she said she is unsure who her challenger will be because of the slim margin between the current second- and third-place vote-getters, Hailey and Stockwell.

"The top two vote-getters advance to the general election, and I have enough votes to be one of the two who advance," she said. "I don't think a winner has been declared for the No. 2 spot." If Fagan wins the general election, she would serve the counties of Whitman, Adams, Garfield, Asotin, and parts of Franklin and Spokane counties.

Fagan described the duty as important because the 9th District encompasses a geographical region larger than the state of Connecticut.

Fagan said she is confident of a victory in the general election after witnessing massive support from her followers.

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
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"We've had so many volunteers helping on the campaign, and that's really rewarding for me as a candidate, and I feel really good going into the election," she said. "We've had such a hardworking group of people, and I'm determined to win and work as hard as it takes to win the election." Fagan's background includes 15 years fighting for constituents as a staffer for three U.S. senators and 10 years at Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories, working on issues such as business competitiveness, health care and the death tax, she said.

If the voting numbers remain as they stand, a Republican-versus-Republican matchup will ensue with Fagan facing off against Hailey in the November general election.

"There are enough votes to count for me to be put into the second place," Hailey said. "I feel like we can pick up that ground really quick."

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Friday, Aug. 07, 2009
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16th DISTRICT HOUSE POS. 2: Democrat aims to hold 16th District seat

By Michelle Dupler, Herald staff writer

Eyes throughout the state will be turned to the 16th Legislative District this fall to see whether a relatively untested Democrat can hold the seat her father won for 11 consecutive terms.

Incumbent Rep. Laura Grant, D-Walla Walla, is battling two familiar Republican faces and a self-styled Reagan Independent who is a novice campaigner.

Former candidates Terry Nealey and Kevin Young -- both of whom failed to unseat her father, the late Rep. Bill Grant -- each are taking another shot at the only legislative seat in Eastern Washington held by a Democrat outside of urban Spokane.

Voters will narrow the field of candidates in the Aug. 18 primary. The top two vote getters advance to the Nov. 3 general election.

The major question before voters is whether it's to their advantage to keep a voice in the majority party in Olympia, or if a Republican, or perhaps a Reagan Independent, better represents the relatively conservative district's stances on the issues.

Grant is resting her campaign on the former idea.

Much of the work of the Legislature is done in caucuses, where members of a political party get together behind closed doors to figure out whether there are enough votes to pass a particular piece of legislation.

The Democrats currently hold a 62-36 majority over Republicans in the House -- more than enough votes to pass legislation requiring a simple majority if they vote as a bloc, but not enough to overcome the two-thirds majority requirement for approving new or increased taxes.

Grant said as a Democrat, she's been able to stop bills that would work against Eastern Washington's interests from going to a vote by the full House by swaying opinions inside the caucus room.

"I feel like we have to have someone in there to explain why these are not Republican issues coming up," she said.

Being Eastern Washington's voice in the majority Democratic caucus sometimes has meant going against the caucus's position on issues, she said.

She voted with Eastern Washington Republicans on several issues during the 2009 session, including voting against the biennial operating budget because she disagreed with cuts Democratic budget writers made.

"The perception is that things I voted for were Republican issues," she said. "They were Eastern Washington issues. ... It can't be about partisan issues. I'm there to represent Eastern Washington."

Nealey and Young disagree that the 16th District needs representation in the majority party.

Nealey said it's more important for a representative to reach across party lines and convince people to work together, and he believes he's the candidate with the experience to do that having worked on a number of committees in Dayton to accomplish local projects and promote economic development.

"I'm concerned we're pretty close to a supermajority now," Nealey said. "I think it is a problem if either party ever has a supermajority. I think it's important for a Republican to be voted into this position. I think the majority party has made some mistakes, especially in the budget."

Young said a lawmaker's character is more important than party affiliation.

He believes he has the fortitude and moral fiber to be a strong voice for the business community and against taxes and big government.

"I actually don't want to be in the majority," Young said. "Go back to biblical times and almost every great thing done in history was done by a minority of people. It never took a majority. It took people doing the right thing, having a strong backbone and a stiff neck. ... I think if you're in the majority, your vision gets clouded because you have power. You think you can bully it through."

Roberts would rather see someone fresh and independent fill the seat as he blames politics as usual by members of both parties for the problems the state faces, including a massive budget deficit.

He thinks lawmakers have been too reactive and not proactive.

"We've had the same old politicians that go around year after year and say, 'I promise...,'" Roberts said. "It's like they're complacent. ... My idea of what a politician should be is somebody who's active, not waiting for something to happen."

Though a first-time candidate, Roberts thinks his passion and concern are what the district needs.

"I'm worried and I care and I know where to look for solutions," he said.

Laura Grant

Age: 47

Family: Married with three children

Occupation: Fifth-grade teacher; incumbent state representative

Why she's running: Grant wants to continue the legislative legacy of her father, the late Rep. Bill Grant, D-Walla Walla.

"Dad left a very clear arrow to follow," she said. "I feel I have clear directions what the voters of the 16th District want. I have Dad's previous record to go by."

She describes herself as a conservative Democrat who favors fiscal responsibility and creating a more favorable climate for small businesses by reforming the business and occupations tax.

She also favors amending the state's "use it or lose it" policy for water rights for farmers so that water conserved can be used to expand production.

She opposes cuts to levy equalization for schools and imposing a cap and trade scheme on carbon emissions in the state.

Terry Nealey

Age: 62

Family: Married with two adult children and five grandchildren

Occupation: Lawyer

Why he's running: Nealey is running because he wants to curb overspending in Olympia.

He considers himself a conservative Republican who would advocate for a prioritized approach to the state budget, focusing on education first, then human and health services and public safety.

He opposes cutting levy equalization and imposing a cap and trade scheme on carbon emissions in the state.

He believes it's important to adopt an energy policy that diversifies the state's energy production to include wind, solar and nuclear. He also wants to improve the state's business climate by lowering unemployment insurance and workers compensation rates for employers and reforming health care policy.

David Roberts

Age: 53

Family: Divorced with two adult children and one grandchild

Occupation: Corrections officer at Washington State Penitentiary

Why he's running: Roberts said he's running because he's tired of politicians making promises and not delivering.

"I see things getting bad," he said. "I see the same politicians. I see the same candidates acting like politicians."

He describes himself as a Reagan Independent who would promote the same fiscal policies as former President Ronald Reagan.

Roberts said he believes in cutting taxes and reducing the size of government. He also wants to improve the state's business climate, and said he'd do so by visiting all of the businesses in the district to ask what they want and need, then delivering it in Olympia.

He wants to make state government more efficient by reducing the number of administrators.

He opposes illegal immigration and imposing a cap and trade scheme on carbon emissions in the state.

Kevin Young

Age: 46

Family: Married with three children

Occupation: Construction and farming

Why he's running: Young said he feels the yoke of government regulations and restrictions as a businessman and homeschooler, and wants to ease those restrictions.

"Every time I turn around, it's another tax, another regulation, another fee," he said. "It's another way of the government putting their thumb on me. In a free market society, there is no control. There is oversight. When I look at what's going on today, I don't see the state government here ... working to make a good business climate."

He describes himself as an ultraconservative Republican who would never vote to raise taxes or increase the size of government.

He'd look at how to cut government costs by making agencies more efficient and reducing the size of administration.

* On the net: votelaura.grant.com www.votelaura.grant.com; terrynealey.com www.terrynealey.com; votekevinyoung.com/news.php





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from Archives: Daily Editorial

Updated: Tuesday, August 04, 2009

Take the time to cast your primary ballot

Folks aren't used to thinking about politics until after Labor Day but Washington has moved its primary to August.

When the thermometer hits 100 (or more) day after day, you know it's a typical summer in Eastern Washington.

But what's unusual about this summer is there is an election and it, too, is generating some heat.

Voters owe it to themselves and their fellow citizens to take an interest in the election, become informed and cast their ballots. This is an important election as the field of candidates to serve in the state House will be narrowed to two, and the community is deciding whether to fund a new station for the Walla Walla Police Department.

Ballots for the Aug. 18 election were mailed last week and should have arrived by now.

Washington state has a top-two primary system in which the two candidates with the most votes regardless of political party are on the ballot in November.

The House seat is on the ballot to fill the unexpired term of Rep. Bill Grant, D-Walla Walla, who died in January. Grant's daughter, Laura Grant, was appointed to the position by the county commissioners from Walla Walla, Benton, Franklin and Columbia counties.

Grant, a Walla Walla Democrat, and two Republicans -- Terry Nealey of Dayton and Kevin Young of Walla Walla -- are on the ballot. Also on that ballot is Dave Roberts, a Walla Wallan who is listed on the ballot as associated with an independent party. The new primary system means that party labels mean nothing when it comes to qualifying for the Nov. 3 General Election ballot. Two candidates will be done after the August primary.

Voters are also being asked to consider approval of an \$11.6 million bond to build a new police station in Walla Walla. It takes a 60 percent majority to win approval.

While these are important decisions, this election might not be on the radar of all voters. Summer -- particularly August -- is a time when a lot of folks take vacations from their jobs and just about everything else -- including politics.

In the past, most folks didn't start thinking about elections until after Labor Day.

That has to change now that the primary was moved up a month. The primary date was changed to August to allow more time to count -- or recount -- ballots and to prepare the ballot for the General Election. Since Walla Walla and almost all the counties in Washington state have done away with polling places and conduct mail-only elections, it takes more time to prepare for and conduct the election.

You should have your ballot by now. If not, contact the county Auditor's Office (524-2530). Ballots must be postmarked by Aug. 18 to be counted if it is not turned in directly to the county Auditor's Office at the Courthouse.

Give the candidates and the issues serious thought and take the time to cast your ballot.

Election letters due by noon Aug. 11

The deadline for letters regarding the Aug. 18 primary is noon Aug. 11.

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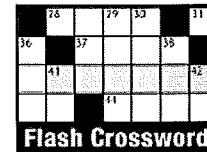
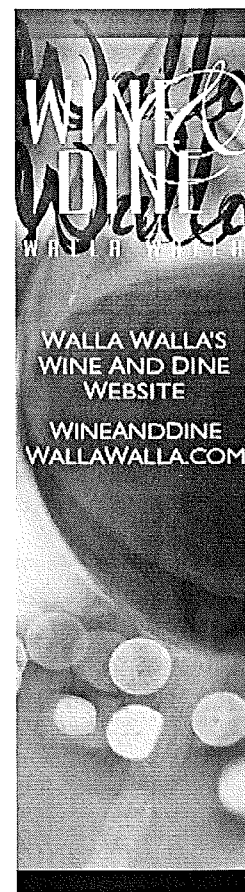
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AT ISSUE

PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

OPEN PRIMARIES

ERIC MCGHEE, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DANIEL KRIMM

As a part of the February 2009 budget deal, the state legislature placed a “top-two-vote-getter” (TTVG) primary reform initiative on the June 2010 ballot. If passed, TTVG would allow voters in all state, U.S. House, and U.S. Senate primaries to cast ballots for any candidate, regardless of their own or the candidate’s party identification. The two candidates receiving the most votes—again, regardless of party—would proceed to a fall runoff election. The most commonly cited goal of this reform is to make it easier for relatively moderate candidates to be nominated for and elected to public office.

This At Issue describes the proposed reform and places it in the context of recent primary law in California; presents some of the arguments for and against the reform; describes the legal basis for some of its provisions; and evaluates the effect the law is likely to have on voter behavior and candidate moderation.

REFORMING CALIFORNIA'S PRIMARIES

In the June 2010 primary election, California voters will consider a top-two-vote-getter initiative that would allow voters to choose any candidate, regardless of party, in the primary election for all state and national races (U.S. Senate, U.S. House, California Assembly, and so on) with the exception of the presidential race. The two candidates receiving the most votes in these races—again, regardless of party—would advance to a fall runoff election. The law would not affect local elections, which already use a runoff system similar to the one in the TTVG measure.¹

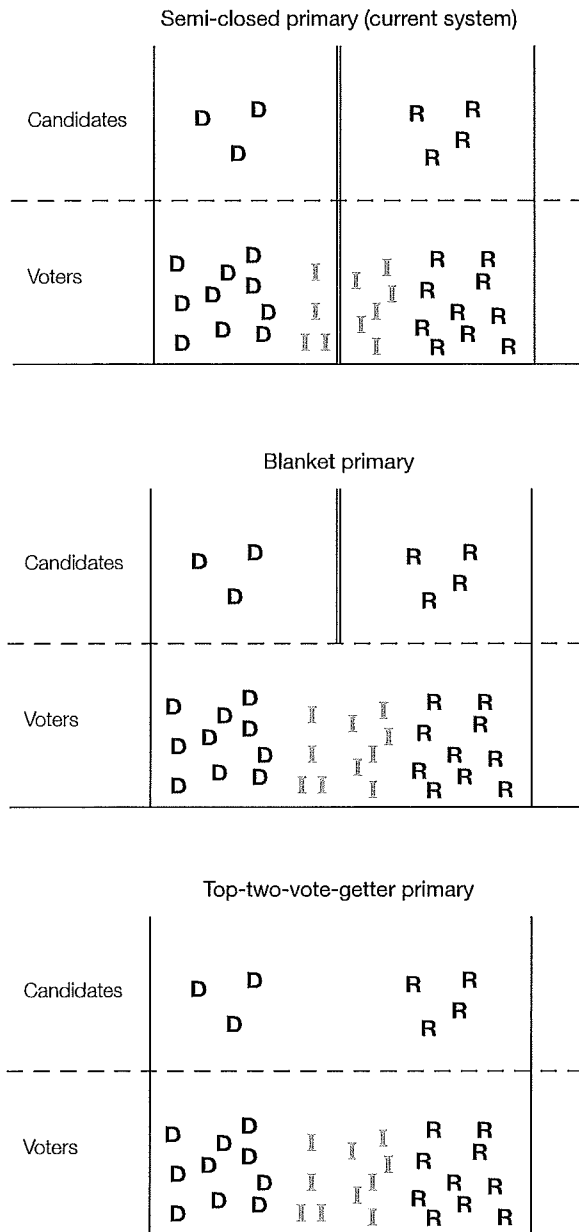
How does TTVG differ from California's existing primary system? Under the current "semi-closed" system, voters must register with a party to vote in its primary, but the parties may allow "decline-to-state" voters (California's official name for independents) to participate as well. Except in presidential elections, the two major parties have always allowed independent voters to participate in their primaries.² Independents receive information about party options before every primary election, and can make a request to vote in a party's primary at their polling place without notifying their registrar of voters in advance.³

This would not be the first time California has experimented with its primary system. In 1996, the state's voters approved Proposition 198, which established a blanket primary for all state and federal elections.⁴ Like TTVG, the blanket primary placed all candidates on the same ballot and allowed voters to choose one candidate for each office without regard to party labels. But unlike TTVG, the blanket primary advanced the top vote-getter *within each party*. In other words, candidates in blanket primaries compete only against other candidates from the same party, whereas in the TTVG system each candidate competes with all other candidates, regardless of party.

The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the blanket primary in 2000, after which California adopted the current semi-closed system. As we have seen, in the semi-closed system only independent voters can participate in the party primary of their choice, while both the blanket and TTVG systems let partisans as well as independents "cross over" to support a candidate of a different party in any or all races. But only the TTVG removes party boundaries for voters and candidates alike (Figure 1).

The TTVG reform is currently popular with California voters. A September 2009 PPIC Statewide Survey found that 68 percent of likely voters—including equal shares of Democrats, Republicans, and independents—supported the general outlines of the reform (Baldassare et al. 2009).⁵ But a similar proposal was rejected in November 2004 by a margin of 54 to 46 percent after it led in early polls. Thus, the fate of TTVG will probably depend on the campaign waged by each side and on the broader political context of the election.

FIGURE 1. TTVG ELIMINATES PARTY BOUNDARIES FOR VOTERS AND CANDIDATES



PROS AND CONS OF TTVG

What are the arguments in favor of TTVG? Its advocates most commonly cite its potential to increase moderation in the state's political parties. Currently, members of the California legislature and congressional delegation vote mostly along party lines. Many TTVG supporters feel that this partisanship prevents legislators from finding pragmatic solutions to the state's problems. They suggest that semi-closed primaries are at least partly to

blame because the primary voters in each major party tend to be ideologically extreme: Democrats are more liberal than the general electorate and Republicans are more conservative. These voters tend to nominate extreme candidates, who become the only viable choices in the fall campaign, leaving voters in the middle without a moderate alternative.

Supporters of TTVG see open primaries as one solution to this problem. They argue that if voters could cross over to support candidates from other parties, moderate candidates could build winning coalitions of their own parties' moderates and crossover supporters. As a result, candidates with moderate views would be more likely to run and donors would have more reason to support them. In the end, more of these moderate candidates would be nominated and go on to win public office in the fall campaign.⁶

In addition to bolstering political moderation, supporters argue, TTVG is likely to increase both competitiveness and voter turnout, since a broader range of voters would be able to cast a vote in each race. This argument may have special force because of the large and growing number of decline-to-state voters, who do not explicitly identify with any political party and who may feel especially constrained under the current system.

What about the cons? One of the most common objections to TTVG is that it will encroach upon each party's right to control its own fate. Open primaries give voters who have not taken an interest in the success of a party—and may even have actively opposed its goals—as much say in deciding its nominees as those who have been dedicated followers (Jones 1996). Opponents express particular concern about *raiders*: voters who seek to clear the way for their own party's nominee by voting for the weakest candidate in the opposing party. Since this weak candidate may also be more extreme, substantial raiding could undermine TTVG's moderating effect.

Another concern is that the TTVG system will limit choice. Smaller parties are likely to be excluded from the fall election, since their candidates rarely manage to finish first or second in a primary. And a TTVG primary can result in two candidates of the same party facing each other in the fall. How often has this happened in the two TTVG primary states, Louisiana and Washington? Since 1991, 17 percent of Louisiana's House primaries, 12 percent of its Senate primaries, and 9 percent of its U.S. House primaries have produced same-party runoffs.⁷ In Washington, which began using TTVG in 2008, the numbers are lower: 6 percent of its House primaries, 2 percent of its Senate primaries, and none of its U.S. House races produced same-party runoffs.⁸

Finally, some TTVG opponents argue that weakening party influence in elections will create a vacuum that will be filled by organized interests with agendas that are less transparent and public-spirited. For instance, the liquor lobby had enormous and outsized influence over the California legislature in the 1940s and '50s, when a form of open primary was in use and party control was generally weaker (Masket 2004).

THE LEGALITY OF OPEN PRIMARIES

California's adoption of the blanket primary in 1996 sent shock waves through the political community. The state was not the first to adopt the blanket primary—Alaska and Washington had been using it for some time—but it was the largest and therefore most politically consequential.⁹

The most commonly cited goal of this reform is to make it easier for relatively moderate candidates to be elected to public office.



AP PHOTO/PAUL SAKUMA

California's parties sued, and the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the blanket primary in 2000, ruling in *California Democratic Party v. Jones* (530 U.S. 567 2000) that the law violated the parties' first amendment right to free association. Of particular importance was the idea that voters who were not members of a party could help select a candidate who would be the party's official nominee and standard-bearer. The majority on the court felt that this forced the parties to associate with voters they might otherwise have excluded from their organizations.

In the wake of this decision, the California legislature adopted the state's current semi-closed system in 2001. As we have seen, this was not the final word on the subject: California voters considered and rejected a TTVG proposal in 2004. Proposition 60, a competing measure on the same ballot that simply ratified the current semi-closed system, passed with 68 percent.

At the same time, Washington voters passed a TTVG reform with 60 percent of the vote (their blanket primary had also been struck down in the *Jones* decision). In a critical 2008 case (*Washington State Grange v. Washington State Republican Party et al.*), the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of this reform. The court reasoned that since the law asks candidates to identify only a party "preference," which could differ from a candidate's actual party registration, voters would not consider candidates to be officially connected with a party organization.

Since the drafters of California's TTVG initiative have copied the Washington law in virtually every respect, the initiative's constitutionality is not in serious doubt.

CROSSOVER VOTING

Is crossover voting common? What motivates it? And does it change electoral outcomes?

First, it is important to note that most decline-to-state voters do not take advantage of their options under the current system. The PPIC Statewide Survey has asked these voters which primary they intend to choose—Democratic, Republican, or nonpartisan (with only initiatives and nonpartisan candidates on the ballot)—in every gubernatorial and presidential primary since the adoption of the semi-closed system. Since the March 2004 primary, a majority of decline-to-state voters has always chosen a nonpartisan ballot (Baldassare 2004, 2006; Baldassare et al. 2008).¹⁰ In June 2008, the Secretary of State released official estimates of crossover voting based on actual turnout that closely mirrored the earlier numbers from the Statewide Survey (see Figure 2).

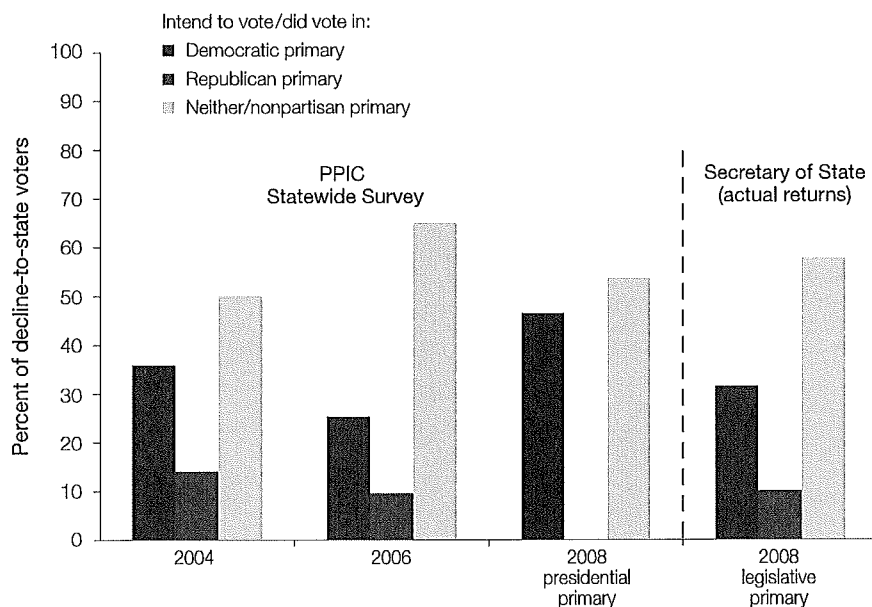
How many voters might cross over under TTVG? The best evidence on this question comes from California's experience with the blanket primary. Under that system, crossover voting was sometimes quite high, especially among Republicans in heavily Democratic districts and Democrats in heavily Republican districts (Alvarez and Nagler 2002; Kousser 2002; Sides et al. 2002). In the presidential primary of 2000, fully 27 percent of ballots were crossovers in one direction or the other. Thus, it seems reasonable to expect that crossover voting would be prevalent under TTVG, at least in some races.

Is raiding common in an open primary? Evidence from California's blanket primary suggests it is not, perhaps because successful raiding requires difficult coordination among voters (Alvarez and Nagler 2002; Sides et al. 2002). Some voters might well use their new

freedoms to sabotage another party, but the great majority would probably vote for the candidate they liked best.¹¹

Voters might be drawn to candidates they like, but they will not cross over to support a candidate they have never heard of. This basic fact has important implications. Many voters cross over to support the incumbent because the incumbent is familiar, and still more cross over in order to participate in a competitive contest (Alvarez and Nagler 2002; Kousser 2002; Salvanto and Wattenberg 2002). Candidates with well-funded campaigns are generally better known and more competitive. One can presume, then, that disparities in campaign funding will continue to matter greatly under a TTVG system.

FIGURE 2. MOST DECLINE-TO-STATE VOTERS HAVE NOT OPTED TO CROSS OVER UNDER THE CURRENT SYSTEM



SOURCES: PPIC numbers are from the last Statewide Survey conducted before each year's primary election (Baldassare 2004, 2006; Baldassare et al. 2008). Secretary of State numbers are from the official statement of the vote.

NOTES: For details about the numbers, see note 10. Republicans did not allow decline-to-state voters to participate in their 2008 presidential primary. In 2008 California held its presidential primary in February and its state legislative and U.S. congressional primary in June.

Does crossover voting change many outcomes? The evidence on this point is not as clear because we do not have data on crossover voting from a broad enough number of races. Crossover voting cannot change an election's outcome unless the gap in votes between candidates is smaller than the number of crossover voters *and* crossover voters vote differently from regular partisans. In the California races that have been studied, crossover voting rarely met both criteria. This does not mean that crossover voting never changes outcomes, only that it did not do so in the year (1998) and the races (governor, U.S. senator, and some House and Assembly districts) that have been closely examined (Alvarez and Nagler 2002; Sides et al. 2002).

INCREASED MODERATION AND OTHER POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF TTVG

Do open primaries increase moderation? Reformers clearly believe they do, but some have argued that they are just as likely to have the opposite effect: too many moderates will run and split the moderate vote, allowing extreme candidates to advance to the fall campaign (Hill 2009). Which of these perspectives is correct?

The evidence—much of it from California’s experience with the blanket primary—points toward a slight advantage to moderate candidates. Moderates were more likely to be elected to the Assembly in the blanket primary years of 1998 and 2000 (Gerber 2002; Paul 1998). Voting in the Assembly was more bipartisan during those years (see the technical appendix).¹² And it is often argued that a higher number of strongly liberal bills were killed at the committee stage.

Figure 3 shows the ideological location and range of opinions in each party on the economic and business regulation issues tracked by the Chamber of Commerce. The points represent the median opinion in each party caucus in each year, with dots closer to the middle of the vertical axis suggesting greater moderation (since legislators with higher Chamber scores tend to be more conservative). Longer vertical lines signify a broader range of opinions. The graph suggests that members of both parties, but particularly Democrats, were more moderate in the Assembly under the blanket primary. Each party—but again, the Democratic Party in particular—was also somewhat more diverse during that time, with more moderates alongside the usual partisans.¹³ However, Figure 3 also shows that apart from a slight change among Republicans there was no comparable effect in the state senate. One possible explanation is that the effect of the blanket primary depended on the circumstances of each race—its competitiveness, for example, or the partisanship of the district. But efforts to confirm this hypothesis do not turn up much evidence for it.¹⁴

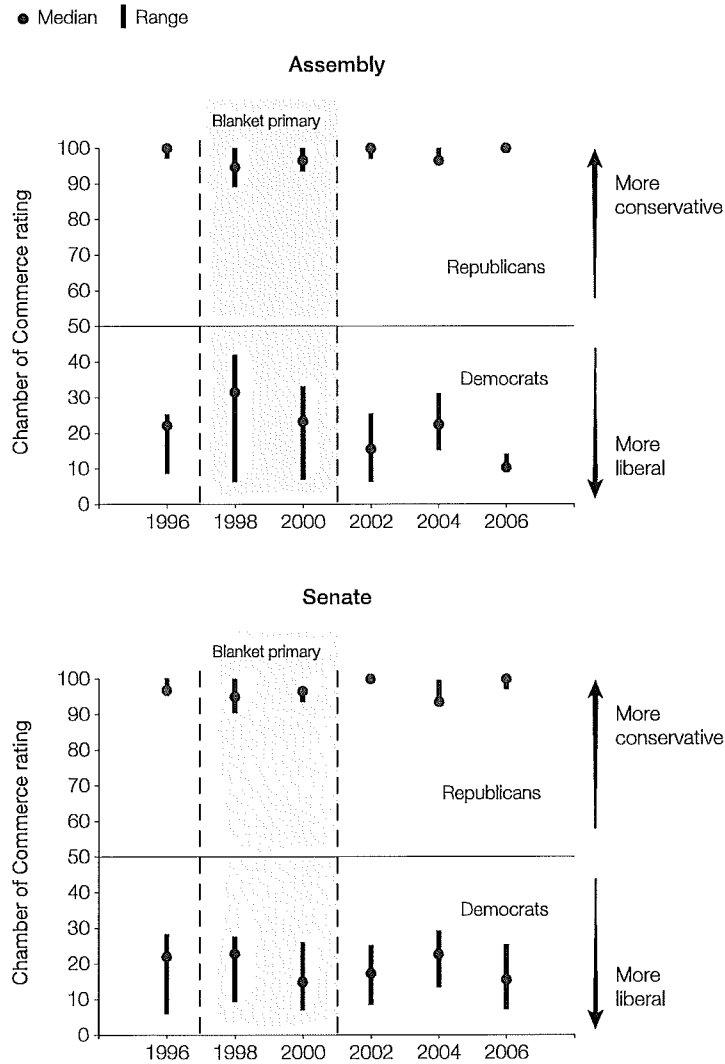
There is some evidence that California’s U.S. House delegation was more moderate during the blanket primary period, but it is not very strong (see the technical appendix). A moderate (Gray Davis) won a contested Democratic primary for governor, though it is not clear that there was a more liberal candidate so the outcome may have been predetermined. A conservative (Matt Fong) won the Republican primary for the U.S. Senate, but many considered him to be more moderate than the other candidate in the race. The 2000 presidential nominees were not selected via the blanket system.

Studies focused on the nation as a whole have found some large moderating effects from open primaries but have also identified polarizing effects in some races (Kanthak and Morton 2001; Gerber and Morton 1998). This research suffers from two weaknesses. First, it draws on elections from the 1980s, when the parties were less polarized so it was less politically costly to be a moderate. Second, it attributes any differences in political moderation between open and closed primary states to the primary system, even though there may be other factors at play. States that have adopted the open primary might have more moderates for any number of reasons.

PPIC research conducted with more recent data and better methods suggests that open primaries offer at best a modest advantage to moderate candidates, a conclusion that stands up to many important counterarguments (see the technical appendix).¹⁵ It might seem logical that the moderating effect of open primaries would be greatest in districts with a

roughly even mix of Democrats and Republicans, for the simple reason that more voters can cross over and vote in the dominant party's primary. But support for this hypothesis is also limited and weak (see the technical appendix).

FIGURE 3. MODERATION INCREASED IN THE ASSEMBLY BUT NOT IN THE SENATE DURING THE BLANKET PRIMARY YEARS



NOTE: Because the Chamber of Commerce tends to have a conservative perspective on economic and business regulation issues, legislators with higher scores are likely to be more conservative than those with lower scores. The dots in the graph represent the median (50th percentile) score of each party caucus. The vertical lines give a sense of the distribution in each caucus: for Democrats, they range from the lowest score to the 75th percentile; for Republicans, they range from the 25th percentile to the highest score.

Truly nonpartisan primaries, which do not print party affiliations on the ballot, can lead to a significant breakdown of party loyalty among elected officials (Masket 2009; Wright and Schaffner 2002). For example, from 1914 to 1959 California allowed candidates to “cross-file”—to seek nomination in more than one party primary without revealing their party affiliation. During this period party influence was weak; it began to rise again only after party affiliations were restored to the ballot (Masket 2009).

In sum, while open primaries do not necessarily foster more moderate representation, nonpartisan primaries of the sort that will be on the June ballot do sometimes have a moderating effect. A truly nonpartisan primary would probably have the strongest moderating effect of all. But, of course, it will not be considered by California voters in June 2010.

BEYOND MODERATION

Moderation is not the only effect that has been predicted for TTVG primaries. Three others are often mentioned as well. First, many supporters argue that turnout will be higher in the primaries if more choices are offered, because voters who feel left out under the current system would have a reason to show up at the polls. There is some evidence to support this claim. Turnout for the 1998 midterm election under the blanket primary was 2.9 percentage points higher than the average of the two midterms that preceded it (1990 and 1994), and 6.1 points higher than the average of the two that followed (2002 and 2006). It is not clear whether voter turnout should have been higher in 2000 as well, since crossover votes in the presidential race—which always has the highest voter turnout—did not count toward selecting the presidential nominees. Nonetheless, turnout was 4.6 points higher in 2000 than the average of 1992 and 1996, and 2.2 points higher than the average of 2004 and 2008.¹⁶

Second, supporters argue that TTVG primary elections will be more competitive because the ideological diversity of the TTVG electorate makes it harder for one candidate to build a broad base of support. But closed primaries can often host fiercely competitive nomination fights that have at least as much to do with personality as with ideology. At any rate, there is little evidence that primaries were more competitive under either the blanket system in California or the recent TTVG system in Washington (Hill 2009; Tam Cho and Gaines 2002).

TTVG skeptics often express concern about a third potential effect of TTVG. Several political consultants interviewed for this report suggested that more money would be spent on primaries as candidates sought to reach a broader swath of the electorate, which might give moneyed interests more influence in the political process. Recent experience does not support this theory: under the blanket primary, spending on primaries did grow, but at a rate consistent with the broader trend in campaign spending (Tam Cho and Gaines 2002).

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Many supporters argue that turnout will be higher in the primaries if more choices are offered.



AP PHOTO/RICH PEDRONCELLI

LOOKING AHEAD

In short, TTVG would probably have a noticeable but modest effect on voting and representation in California. Crossover voting rates could be high, but perhaps in only a handful of races. Moderates might benefit, but only slightly more often than under the current system.

Because voters often cross party lines to support incumbents, a TTVG system would be just as likely as the current system to maintain the status quo. However, incumbency helps keep officials in office whether they are moderate or highly partisan. Thus, even a small moderating effect might build over time, as past moderate winners retain office and new ones arrive to join them. Moreover, there is evidence that it took voters and candidates several election cycles to take full advantage of both the passage of cross-filing in 1914 and its removal in 1954 (Gaines and Tam Cho 2002; Masket 2009). In other words, time may offer the best test of TTVG's effect on moderation.

The same could be said for TTVG's other potential effects on voter turnout, competitiveness, and campaign spending. These effects have not yet been tested over a long period of time.

Overall, the evidence underscores the need for patience in assessing the effects of TTVG. If voters approve TTVG, it will be unlikely to change California politics overnight. There may be a long period of adjustment before the state arrives at a new, potentially more moderate equilibrium. But TTVG's overall effect on California's political landscape would probably be modest.

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Notes

- 1 Local elections differ from the TTVG measure in two ways. First, a runoff is required in local elections only if no candidate receives more than 50 percent of the vote in the first round. In a TTVG system there would always be a runoff, pursuant to the Supreme Court's decision in *Foster v. Love* (522 U.S. 67 [1997]), which required that a vote be taken in each scheduled race in every fall federal election. Second, TTVG would allow candidates to indicate a party "preference," while local elections explicitly ban party labels from the ballot. Some voters would undoubtedly factor party preference into their voting decisions, which might give parties a larger role than they would otherwise have.
- 2 See the California Voter Foundation (www.calvoter.org/news/cvfnews/cvfnews021302.html) and the California Secretary of State (www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_decline.htm#parties) for further information about the parties' decisions in each election.
- 3 Conversation with Jacob Corbin, California secretary of state, October 6, 2009.
- 4 Presidential elections were later exempted in response to pressure from the national parties. The legislature passed a bill in 1999 (SB 100) to establish a system of double counting: the results of the blanket primary would be tabulated and reported, but only the votes of party registrants would count toward delegate selection. On the Republican side, George Bush performed far better against John McCain with party registrants than with crossover voters, while there was no meaningful difference on the Democratic side in the contest between Al Gore and Bill Bradley.
- 5 The wording of the question was as follows: "Some people have proposed changing California's state primary elections from a partially closed system to a system where registered voters could cast ballots for any candidate in a primary and the top two vote-getters—regardless of party—would advance to the general election. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?" See www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=914 for more details.
- 6 It is tempting to expect that an open primary will make representatives more "responsive" in a generic sense to the district median voter. But an open primary does not make either the district or the primary median clearer to candidates; it simply moves the primary median toward the opposing party. For example, Democratic candidates to the left of their primary median might move toward the center under an open primary, as their primary median moves in the same direction. But Democratic candidates to the right of the Democratic median should not move at all—the median is already moving *toward them*. By the same token, Republicans to the right of their median might move toward the center, but those to the left should not move at all. In effect, relatively conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans have already escaped the centrifugal pressures of the closed primary, so an open primary should make little difference to their ideological positioning. Thus, responsiveness to the district median will improve only in an open primary with candidates who are too extreme.
- 7 These numbers exclude 2008 U.S. House races, because Louisiana dropped the TTVG system for House races starting that year.
- 8 The TTVG systems in Louisiana and Washington differ somewhat: Washington always advances the top two vote getters, but Louisiana cancels the runoff if one candidate receives more than 50 percent in the first round (and holds its first-round election at the same time as the fall election in Washington, pursuant to *Foster v. Love* (522 U.S. 67 [1997])). The number of same-party races in Washington is even lower if races where one candidate received more than 50 percent of the vote in the primary are excluded.
- 9 The Alaska Republican party successfully sought exemption from the blanket primary from 1992 to 1996, at which time the Alaska Supreme Court ruled that the state's blanket primary statute required participation by all parties.
- 10 These numbers exclude those who did not know how they would vote or did not plan to participate in the primary election. A majority said they would choose a partisan ballot for the March 2002 primary, but their answers may have been influenced by the way the question was worded. The question asked if respondents planned to vote in "the Republican primary, the Democratic primary, or neither," which might have created the impression that abstention from voting was the only alternative to a partisan primary (Baldassare 2002). In subsequent surveys voters were asked if they planned to vote in "the Republican primary, the Democratic primary, or on the nonpartisan ballot." The surveys since 2002 have also informed respondents that their choice of ballot does not affect their ability to vote for statewide propositions, something the 2002 survey did not mention.
- 11 Raiding is just one type of strategic crossover voting. All strategic voters prefer a candidate of their own party but cross over to set up the contest they would most like to see for the fall. But while raiders support the weakest candidate in the opposing party, *hedgers* cross over to support the other party's best candidate, in order to ensure the best possible outcome in the fall regardless who wins. In short, these voters hedge their bets. The evidence suggests that hedgers are more common than raiders, but that sincere voters are the most common of all (Sides et al. 2002).

- 12 See the technical appendix to this At Issue, which is available on the PPIC website: www.ppic.org/content/pubs/other/210EMAI_appendix.pdf.
- 13 Party leadership might have played a role in the moderation of the Assembly. Robert Hertzberg was Assembly speaker for precisely the years the blanket primary was in effect, and he was widely acknowledged to be a champion for the moderate branch of his caucus. By contrast, John Burton, who was the Democratic leader of the State Senate, is generally known as a strong partisan. It is unlikely that Hertzberg could have led his caucus toward greater moderation if they had not been willing to follow him, but he might have had a moderating effect.
- 14 Specifically, there is not much evidence that the effect of open primaries in the California legislature is dependent on 1) whether the incumbent ran for reelection; 2) the district's partisan balance between Democrats and Republicans; 3) the share of the district's voters who identify as decline-to-state; 4) whether the primary was contested; 5) if the primary was contested, how close it proved to be; or 6) whether the member in question was forbidden to run for reelection under term limits (see the technical appendix at www.ppic.org/content/pubs/other/210EMAI_appendix.pdf).
- 15 As was the case for the California legislature, the influence of open primaries appears to be about as ambiguous vis-à-vis open seats as in races where an incumbent is running. However, the number of open seats available for testing this hypothesis is usually very small, since about 90 percent of incumbents typically run for reelection. There is some evidence that the effect of open primaries was conditional on the partisan composition of the district, but this variation was not itself consistent. Democratic legislators representing competitive districts were often more sensitive to the presence of a nonpartisan primary than were those representing uncompetitive districts, but less sensitive to the presence of a semi-closed system. There was no clear effect in either direction for Republicans.
- 16 The excitement generated by an election is always a significant factor. Turnout was actually 2.4 points higher in the 2008 presidential primary than in the 2000 primary, despite the fact that only the presidential race was on the ballot, the system was more closed, and decline-to-state voters could not cast ballots in the Republican primary. The 2008 presidential nomination was still undecided on both sides by the time California held its primary, which was not the case in 2000.

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THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

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For Washington state candidates, it's put up or shut up time.

Starting Monday morning, they have five days to file paperwork and pay the fee necessary to run for one of the many elective offices on this year's ballot.

It may seem that some have been running for months, or even years, and in a sense that's true. Candidates have been jumping into the U.S. Senate race since early 2009, and jumping out as recently as last Thursday.

Candidates in Washington can announce their campaigns whenever they want. They can even say they're running for one office in January and switch to another in May. But by the first full week of June, they have to file a form and pay 1 percent of the annual salary of the office they seek to be on the Aug. 17 primary ballot.

By Friday, Washington voters will know how many Republicans, independents and third-party candidates really want to take on U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, a three-term incumbent Democrat. More than a dozen announced, the most recent being former state Sen. Dino Rossi, a two-time candidate for governor, just 12 days ago. After Rossi got in, two others who had been campaigning actively, state Sen. Don Benton and physician Art Coday, got out.

Others, including Clint Didier, a former pro football star who farms near Connell, say they are staying in.

This year's primary ballot is a mix of federal, state and local races, most of them partisan. All seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are up for election. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, a Republican representing Eastern Washington's 5th Congressional District for a third term, is seeking re-election, and as of last week had no Democratic opponent.

Randall Yearout from the Constitution Party, a crane operator and former saddle shop owner, plans to run.

Although the primary sends the two top vote-getters to the general election ballot regardless of party, that usually means one Democrat and one Republican face off in November.

Some of the more crowded races for state and local offices could reveal splits within the parties. For Democrats, that could result in challenges from activists who call themselves progressives, incumbents who didn't support more taxes and fewer service cuts to balance the state's budget, or unions unhappy with a lack of support for organized labor's key issues. For Republicans, that may mean contests between a candidate with the backing of tea party activists or more libertarian members and one with more traditional or "mainstream" supporters.

The Spokane area currently has two active Republican groups endorsing candidates for local office: the official Spokane County Republican Party, which has leaders chosen by precinct committee officers elected in 2008 or appointed since then, and the separate Republicans of Spokane County. The county party has taken the unusual stance of backing a Republican challenger, Dave Stevens, against GOP incumbent Prosecutor Steve Tucker, and the two organizations are backing different challengers for county commission and at least one legislative race.

The legislative race is in Spokane's 6th District, a traditional Republican stronghold that hadn't elected a Democrat for about 70 years – when it elected two. Rep. John Driscoll faces a challenge from John Ahern, a longtime legislator who lost to Driscoll in 2008, and Shelly O'Quinn, a manager for Greater Spokane Inc. Ahern has the official party endorsement, O'Quinn the backing from the separate GOP group. Also in the 6th District, first-term Democratic Sen. Chris Marr faces Republican Mike Baumgartner, a local businessman.

Races for some open seats are already crowded. State Rep. Alex Wood, a Democrat in central Spokane's 3rd District, is retiring, and at least three Democrats are looking to take the job: Bob Apple, Louise Chadez and Andy Billig, who has the local party's endorsement. Other races with established incumbents in strongly partisan districts may have trouble drawing challengers: Wood's Democratic seatmate, Timm Ormsby, has yet to draw a challenger; neither have Republican Reps. Matt Shea or Larry Crouse in the Valley's strongly GOP 4th District, or Rep. Kevin Parker, the lone Republican in the 6th.

County Commissioner Bonnie Mager, a Democrat, has three announced Republican challengers, Al French, Jeff Holy and Steve Salvatori. Tucker has two other challengers, Republican Chris Bugby and Democrat Frank Malone. County Assessor Ralph Baker, a Republican, faces challenges from Republicans Terry Cook and Vicki Horton, Democrat Andy Jackson and independent Lori Wick.

Some county offices have only the incumbents as announced candidates – Auditor Vicky Dalton, Clerk Tom Fallquist, Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich and Treasurer Skip Chilberg.

That's all subject to change, however, until 5 p.m. Friday when filing week closes.

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Three Clallam County commissioner candidates face off in their final campaign forum

By Jim Casey, Peninsula Daily News

PORT ANGELES — The three men who would be Clallam County commissioner appeared at their final campaign forum Monday, this one in front of the Port Angeles Regional Chamber of Commerce.

While David Fox argued the wisdom of electing a Democrat to complement the state's Democratic governor and U.S. senators, Republican Terry Roth said he'd prevail upon state officials to promote Clallam County as a location for businesses.

Mike Chapman, the incumbent who twice won election as a Republican but now is running as an independent, said voting solely by partisan labels would break up a team of three county commissioners that has held government spending in check and saved \$12.5 million for the current economic downturn.

Only voters in District 2 — most of Port Angeles and unincorporated territory eastward to McDonald Creek — are voting in the Aug. 19 primary election.

The top two vote-getters in the all-mail election will face each other for voters countywide in the Nov. 4 general election.

Each man outlined his issues and later rebutted his opponents.

Their opening remarks included: **David Fox**

An attorney for 14 years with a largely pro bono clientele, Fox said that as a lawyer he must work according to precedents and rules of procedures.

"As a commissioner, you have the capacity to look toward the future . . . and maybe change the future to make things work a better way," he said.

Fox made the strongest partisan pitch of the three.

"This is a Democratic state. We have a Democratic governor. We have Democratic senators.

His party membership "comes in handy," he said. "It's helpful if you work with the people in power."

Fox said the county's economy must grow, "but we want smart growth, we want managed growth."

If more people are to move to the North Olympic Peninsula, "the infrastructure has to be in place to meet them."

"We can't predict the future but we can anticipate what might happen," he said.

"We have the ability to set goals and decide where we want to be 10 years from now." **Mike Chapman**

While paring county employment and reducing workers' hours, the current county commissioners have denied \$4 million in proposed new spending, he said, while maintaining core services.

They resisted spending new revenues during the last boom, instead building reserves.

As for economic development, "the No. 1-rated project" was extending Port Angeles city sewers into the urban growth area east of town, a project that soon will go online.

Chapman said he was committed to other projects such as the widening of U.S. Highway 101 between Shore and Kitchen-Dick roads, and a Deer Park overpass of the same highway to foster growth east of the Morse Creek canyon.

Meanwhile, he said, Clallam County has made an \$800,000 expansion of its jail without incurring debt, added correctional officers and hired civil prosecutors to cut the expensive hiring of legal consultants.

Voters could choose among a candidate "with a track record and two who say they can do it better. Stick with a team that works really well together."**Terry Roth**

"I've lived and worked in all three [county commissioner] districts," he said, noting that he owns a business, manages another and heads the Port Angeles Downtown Association.

"I'd like to form a task force," he said, that would include the Clallam County Public Utility District, Port of Port Angeles, city of Port Angeles and Clallam County "to aggressively market the Olympic Peninsula" as a place to locate businesses.

"We need to recruit new businesses into the area," he said. "We have to market ourselves."

He said Republicans need to attack the state business and occupations tax which, he said "drove Boeing out of Washington."

As for partisanship, "when [Dino] Rossi is governor, I'll introduce Dave [Fox] to him."

Meanwhile, county government should join the effort to clean up and market the former Rayonier pulp mill site that Roth called "a gem."

"I'd hate to see anything there that wouldn't generate employment and revenue."

Moreover, polar pack ice that is melting due to global warming is opening a new trade route through the Arctic, "and Port Angeles would be a great landfall."**Rebuttal remarks**

- **Fox:** In his rebuttal speech, Fox said the Rayonier site could be a great place for a convention center, and the county could advertise day trips for conventioners to Victoria, the Pacific Ocean and Olympic National Park.

Visitors could "come here, shop for a couple of days and leave — which might be a better solution," he said, drawing chuckles from the audience.

- **Chapman:** The incumbent warned against injecting partisanship into the campaign.

"It could put our county backwards," he said of the three commissioners — two of whom are Democrats.

As for attracting business, Clallam County already has the best enticement: A debt-free government with reserves to tide its services through the economic slowdown.

- **Roth:** The Republican maintained that "the economic structure of the Peninsula is not good. The building permits are down 30 percent here in Port Angeles."

Regarding the eastern sewer, the work is progressing "but no one has hooked in." _____
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