

Candidates concerned about health care, education, transportation

State House of Representatives 45th District

The Sun asked area candidates, in uncontested races, to submit a short profile and to list the top three issues important to them. As the March 21 primary approaches, The Sun offers some of their comments.

U.S. Representative 6th Congressional District

DEMOCRATS

Christine Cegelis

Age: 53

Residence: Rolling Meadows

Family: Two sons: Christopher, 25, and Ted, 24

Education: Graduated from Miami Coral Park High School in Dade County, Fla.; bachelor of science in international relations and public administration from Florida State University, 1975.

Employer: Self-employed as a technology consultant in Rolling Meadows

Political experience: Democratic challenger to Rep. Henry Hyde for 6th District Congressional seat in 2004.

Community involvement: DuPage Democrats; Addison Township Democrats; Elk Gove Democracy Club; Elk Grove Democracy for America; Illinois Progressive Democrats of America; Sierra Club; Mother Cabrini Secular Franciscan Order; St. Bernadine, scout leader and bereavement counselor.

Issue 1: Education: A good education should be accessible and affordable for all. Our economy cannot sustain growth until we prioritize education and the retraining needs of our workforce. Expand Head Start, which has been proven to make a positive difference in the preparedness and performance of children. Fix and adequately fund the No Child Left Behind Act, stopping the unfunded federal mandates that have caused property taxes to rise but have not improved our schools. Curriculum decisions should remain local, but as local tax bases are stretched, the gap between rich and poor districts grows. Without additional federal funding, our students and our workforce are increasingly ill-prepared to take on complex jobs.

Issue 2: Economy and Jobs: America's economic stability rests on the strength of hard-working, middle-class Americans. At a time when we are competing with ever-increasing numbers of people around the world, we are weakening middle-class America. Gas prices, taxes, college, rent, health care; the costs of living for the average American are increasing while job security is falling. ... Stop the export of American jobs brought about through trade agreements like NAFTA and CAFTA. Work to create jobs through small businesses, restoring funding for the Small Business Administration and the SBA loan programs. Target tax cuts for working Americans, not the richest few. Reduce the national debt and bring fiscal responsibility back to government.

Issue 3: Health care: I believe that health care is a human right, and I will fight to secure that right for all Americans through a universal, high-quality, affordable, single-payer national health-care system. Patients would still choose their own doctors and hospitals, but overall costs would be significantly lower; and the maze of HMOs, PPOs and other plans, forms and rules would be simplified so doctors and nurses could concentrate on treating patients instead of doing paperwork. ... We also need real prescription drug benefits for seniors who have spent their adult lives working and paying taxes.

Lindy Scott

Age: 12-26-51

Residence: 103 S. Prospect St., Wheaton, IL 60187

Family: Wife, Dinorah (married 27 years); children, John, Jenny, Stephanie

Education: New Albany (Ohio) High School, valedictorian 1969; Ohio University (Honors College) sociology 1973; Trinity University 1975, 1976 M.A., M. Div.; Northwestern University 1991 Ph.D. Latin American studies.

Employer: Wheaton College, associate professor of Spanish and director of Wheaton's Ethics Center.

Political experience: Political consultant in Mexico (various national and state races)

Community involvement: Pastor at Des Plaines Evangelical Free Church 1973 to 1976, 1984 to 1988; currently Ministry Leadership Team member at Lombard Mennonite Church; involvement in PADS, affordable housing; member of Board of Directors of Lydia (an agency serving foster children and single mothers).

Issue 1: Health care: Adequate health care is a basic necessity for all people. It is immoral that the wealthiest country in the world has more than 40 million citizens who do not have access to basic health care. I will promote legislation that enables small business owners to obtain the same insurance rates for their employees that big business owners currently have. ... We should move in the direction of a Medicare-style, universal health-care program. Employers, employees and the government would contribute to make our country a leader in this area. Such a plan is more efficient and more just.

Issue 2: Education: I have been a teacher for more than 27 years. The No Child Left Behind Program sounded good in the beginning but has resulted in many failures. It has been underfunded. It has been very intrusive with conditions and requirements imposed by Washington. This has reduced local authority of school leaders and parents. Although math and reading are emphasized, social sciences, the arts, humanities and natural sciences are suffering. I will urge that we overhaul the program and restore authority to districts, greater involvement by parents in the education of their children and a more holistic approach to education with greater emphasis on the social and natural sciences and humanities.

Issue 3: O'Hare expansion and eminent domain: Those most affected by eminent domain issues should have their voices heard. The quality of life should be a top priority for public servants. The residents of Bensenville, Elk Grove Village and Des Plaines did not have their concerns adequately addressed in the process of O'Hare expansion. ... I continue to (support them) as they battle in the courts to save their homes and the sanctity of their cemetery. If the legal actions eventually go against them, I will fight to make sure they obtain sufficient compensation for their homes so they can relocate to similar housing within the area.

L. Tammy Duckworth

Age: 37

Residence: Hoffman Estates

Family: Husband, Bryan Bowlsbey

Education: McKinley High School in Honolulu, Hawaii; bachelor of arts degree, with honors, in political science from the University of Hawaii, 1989; master of arts from George Washington University, Elliott School of International Affairs, 1991; doctoral candidate at Northern Illinois University.

Employer: Most recently staff supervisor for Rotary International World headquarters in Evanston

Political experience: None

Community involvement: U.S. Army Reserves and Illinois Army National Guard for 14 years, with a current rank of major

Issue 1: Jobs: Maintaining and promoting good-paying jobs is a key priority for our area. We need to take full advantage of the potential economic benefits of major job-generating facilities in or immediately adjacent to the 6th District. To carry out these goals, I would utilize my Congressional office as a clearinghouse to promote business development loans and other programs offered by the Small Business Administration. Additionally, I would bring together a consortium of local mayors and business leaders to discuss how to retain and attract new businesses.

Issue 2: Retirement benefits: Ensure greater retirement security for 6th District residents. As the home to United Airlines, and many of its employees, the issue of pension security is especially important in this community. Many area residents of other firms — such as Sears — have experienced the same hardship. ... I will fight in Congress for new guidelines to stop companies from using the bankruptcy code as a mechanism to dump their pension plans. ... Congress should also work toward a system allowing workers to carry their pensions from employer to employer. This would better reflect the new economy, in which workers change jobs often rather than sticking with one employer for life.

Issue 3: Taxes: A third priority is a pending matter of federal tax policy: the Alternative Minimum Tax. It was originally designed to ensure that the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share. Largely because it was not indexed to inflation, a growing number of middle-income families are becoming subject to the AMT. ... A recent analysis conducted by economy.com reported that DuPage County is one of the areas of the country with the largest concentration of taxpayers who will feel the sting of the AMT for the first time this year or next. According to U.S. Census figures, nearly four in 10 taxpayers in DuPage County fall into this category. ... Before providing more tax relief to those who don't need it and weren't even asking for it, I would protect middle-class taxpayers from the increased liability of the AMT.

REPUBLICANS

Franco A. Coladipietro

Age: 38.

Residence: Bloomingdale.

Family: Wife, Amy, and their two children, Alyssa and Joey.

Occupation: Managing partner of the firm Amari & Locallo's Bloomingdale office.

Political experience: Scholarship chairman for Sen. Carole Pankau; commissioner, Bloomingdale Fire Protection District No.1; Bloomingdale Township Republican organization; associate committeeman Bush/Cheney 2004; Bloomingdale Township coordinator; DuPage Republican Party, Bloomingdale Township coordinator, 2005 chairman; literature distribution, Bloomingdale Township Republicans.

Community involvement: Board of directors, DuPage County Area Project; board of directors, Glen Oaks Hospital Foundation; board of directors, Bloomingdale Chamber of Commerce; member, Bloomingdale, Carol Stream, Roselle, Glendale Heights and Wheaton Chambers of Commerce.

Education: Graduate of Joliet West High School; bachelor of science in finance, Northern Illinois University, 1990; J.D., The John Marshall Law

School, 1993; admitted to the Illinois Bar, 1993.

Issue 1: Better representation: I believe strongly we need fresh new representation in this district. The people of the 45th District deserve a representative who is attentive to their needs, who will bring a strong sense of ethics to Springfield, and someone who will never forget to fight for their families. I am running out of a sense of duty. Time and time again as I met people through my civic activities and during my job duties, I learned of dissatisfaction with the current state representative. I think we can do better. I will do better. I will make sure that people of the 45th are happy they have someone in Springfield who listens to them and produces results.

Issue 2: Ethics: The problem in Illinois is that we continue to elect leaders who are not serious about ethics. We, as a legislature, must show that we are serious by toughening our ethical standards in the places where transgressions continue to occur. But the most important factor is not the number of the laws that we pass, it is the sincerity of the public officials. I plan to set a strong example on ethics and will make the citizens of the 45th District proud of their representative.

Issue 3: Fiscal responsibility: We obviously have a fiscal crisis in Illinois. Our current governor, rather than make the tough choices, has borrowed excessively, skipped pension payments, raided dedicated funds and wasted millions of dollars on insider deals. I believe in getting back to the basics. We should only pay for things we can afford, and we must make tough choices on spending. Under the Democrats the past few years, spending has increased despite the rhetoric coming from the governor's office. We have to hold the line on spending increases and cut programs that don't deliver the services they promise.

Roger A Jenisch

Age: 41

Residence: Bloomingdale

Family: Three children, Stephanie, Roger II and Amanda

Political experience: Incumbent to Illinois House District 45 since November 2004; DuPage County Board member, 1st District, from June 1997 to December 2004; DuPage County Forest Preserve commissioner, 1997-2002; Bloomingdale Plan Commission chairman, 1996-97; Bloomingdale Plan Commission vice chairman, 1993-96; Addison Substance Responsibility Commission member, 1985-89; Addison Police and Fire Merit Review Board member, 1984-88; Republican National Convention alternate delegate, August 2004; Illinois Federation of Young Republicans parliamentarian, 1998-2003; Bloomingdale Township Republican committeeman, 1996-2005.

Occupation: Small-business owner as an independent insurance agent for 22 years, Humbert Insurance Agency.

Community involvement: Northwest DuPage Walk-in Ministry (multiple church food pantry) from 2005 to present; logistics chair, Operation Hope (hurricane relief mission) at St. Isidore Church in Bloomingdale, 2005 to present; DuPage County area project board member, 1997 to present; Bloomingdale basketball assistant coach, 2004; Bloomingdale Cub Scout Pack 57 committee chair, 2001-03; GlenOaks Hospital Foundation founding president and board member, 1992-2002.

Education: Addison Trail High School; College of DuPage.

Issue 1: Senior citizens: Seniors are valuable members of our community. It is important that we continue to make it affordable to live here. As your state representative I will continue to work to increase senior property tax exemptions, explore affordable housing options for seniors and ensure prescription drugs are available and affordable for seniors.

Issue 2: Ethics in government: It is critical that elected officials maintain and regain the trust of the families they represent. Elected officials must be responsive to the voters, and not some special interest or political party boss. As state representative, I will continue to support legislation that ensures elected and appointed officials are held to the highest ethical standards and work for campaign finance reform.

Issue 3: Education: The future of our community relies on an educated and productive work force. Educating our children always has been and will remain a top priority. It is vital to our community. As your state representative, I will continue to work to preserve high-quality schools by maintaining local control and balance overall student needs with available revenues to ensure we are maximizing the effectiveness of education dollars.

DuPage County Board District 4

REPUBLICAN

Grant Eckhoff

Age: 46

Residence: Wheaton, 41 years

Family: Wife Sheila, brother Ralph, sister Erica, and parents Ralph and Virginia Eckhoff.

Political experience: Wheaton City Council (1989-2002); ran for state representative (1992); ran for county board (1994); campaign volunteer for Vince Persico (1988 and 1990).

Occupation: Owner of Eckhoff and Massarelli P.C.

Community involvement: St. Paul Lutheran Church member, DuPage County Historical Museum board member, DuPage Biz board member, DuPage County Fair and Exposition board member, DuPage County Board liaison to the committee monitoring expansion of O'Hare Field.

Education: Graduated from Chicago Kent College of Law (1985); bachelor's degree from Michigan State University (1981); graduated from Wheaton Central High School (1977).

Issue 1: Leadership: The key distinguishing difference between my opponent and myself is experience. Between my years on the Wheaton City

Council and the DuPage County Board, I have had 17 years of public service. I have lived in the district for 41 years. I know the issues in the district, and I know how government functions.

Issue 2: Taxes: The county always needs to deliver essential county services in the most cost effective manner possible (i.e. keeping taxes low). Everyone wants to maintain/increase our quality of life in DuPage County. Since approximately 75 percent of the corporate fund is involved in public safety, through the sheriff's, circuit clerk's and judicial offices, our primary goal is to maintain those services. We have made great strides in stormwater management. We will need to continue to address the additional demands on our transportation system. This will be in the form of roadways, but also public transportation and buses and rail systems like the possible use of the "J" line and the "Starline."

Issue 3: Jobs: The overall goal (for economic growth) is the creation of jobs for our residents. To accomplish that goal, we need to continue to encourage new businesses in our area. The main way to do that is to maintain a high quality of life and infrastructure in the county. Much of obtaining that objective is accomplished through cooperation with municipal and business leaders. The county has created DuPage Biz to assist in the attraction, retention and expansion of new and existing businesses in DuPage County.

Jerry "J.R." McBride

Age: 38

Residence: Glen Ellyn

Family: Wife, Becky; four daughters Lauren, Molly, Abigail and Sara; one son, Marty

Political experience: Precinct committeeman for Milton Township Republican Committee; worked on campaigns for DuPage County State's Attorney Joe Birkett and DuPage County Circuit Judge Ken Popejoy.

Occupation: McBride Insurance Agency.

Community involvement: Glen Ellyn Architectural Review Committee member; Misericordia Heart of Mercy volunteer and fundraiser; founding member of Jubilee Board for Outreach Community Ministries in Wheaton; DuPage Chapter of the American Cancer Society, board of directors; member of the Site Committee for Ben Franklin School in Glen Ellyn; Meals on Wheels volunteer; Glenbard West High School Booster Club board member; Glen Ellyn Rotary Club board member.

Education: Degree in business administration from Loras College; graduated from Fenwick High School.

Issue 1: Fiscal Responsibility: Given the rapid growth in our suburban area, it is of the utmost importance to address the impact it will have on the community and concentrate our efforts on creating additional sources of revenue and promoting business opportunities. The county must formulate both short- and long-term plans incorporating and anticipating the needs of the various municipalities within DuPage County to ensure we have the financial wherewithal to meet those needs.

Issue 2: Transportation: With future growth and development, transportation issues will be of primary importance. We should investigate and avail ourselves of all state and federal assistance programs to maintain and improve our roadways and public transportation systems, while focusing on easing traffic congestion.

Issue 3: Aging population: As our population ages, we must address the myriad needs of our seniors to ensure those needs are being met and that they are aware and availing themselves of all benefits, resources and assistance to which they are entitled.

DuPage County Forest Preserve District 4

Republicans

Mike Formento

Age: 71

Residence: Glen Ellyn

Family: Wife, Karin; five children and six grandchildren

Employer: Owner of small home-design business

Political experience: DuPage County Board from 1989 to 2001; president of the village of Glen Ellyn from 1980 to 1988

Community involvement: President of the Glen Ellyn Chamber of Commerce; Jaycee Citizen of the Year, chairman of Jaycee scholarship committee; St. Petronille men's ministry; community service honoree by the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association and the Illinois Association of Park Districts; founder of St. Joseph's Day celebration at St. Petronille Church

Education: Mundelein High School; two years at University of Illinois; graduate of Vogue School of Design

Issue 1: Land acquisition: I strongly support (the pending referendum to raise money for land acquisition) because voters should determine if they want to spend money on the forest preserves. And they should know how their money would be spent — as far as this is possible without driving up the cost of desired property. Similarly, a master plan must be developed covering the kinds of land to be acquired by the commission. Land should be acquired only for specific purposes: connecting existing preserves with usable trails; protecting wetlands and water quality or blocking urban sprawl. A citizens' advisory committee would certainly be helpful in this effort.

Issue 2: Archery range: I disagree with proposals (to build) archery and gun ranges on forest preserve land. It seems to me that these would be basically commercial enterprises and should be built on commercial property. I know that grant seed money is available for the archery range, but more funds would be required to actually build and maintain the facility. Both ranges present cost and safety problems that I believe are far beyond the commission's ability or proper jurisdiction.

Issue 3: Preserve use: A survey has shown that DuPage County residents widely appreciate the forest preserves. But, the survey also shows that the preserves are underused. I would like to see a concerted effort directed toward spreading the word about the open space treasures that beautify our community and their recreational and educational potential.

Kaaren Oldfield

Age: 59

Residence: Glen Ellyn, 28 years

Family: Husband, E. Lawrence (Larry); and two daughters, Kimberly Jo and Lauren Elizabeth.

Political experience: Campaign manager and media consultant for DuPage County State's Attorney Joe Birkett.

Occupation: Realtor with Koenig and Strey GMAC in Glen Ellyn.

Community involvement: The Conservation Foundation trustee; DuPage Airport Commissioner, ethics chairperson, finance and budget, policy and development committees; Illinois Excellence in Public Service Series, governor; Friends of Family Shelter, founding board member; Glen Ellyn Republican Women's Club, president; Glen Ellyn Kiwanis Club member; Glen Ellyn Woman's Club member.

Education: Master of management degree from National Louis University; graduated from Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University; bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from University of Illinois; graduated from the Institute of Advanced Advertising Studies.

Issue 1: Fiscal responsibility: I will be a fiscally responsible steward of taxpayer money and fight against tax increases unless they are approved by voters.

Issue 2: Constituent representation: I will be available to listen and act on the concerns of the people I represent, as their public servant. I will never be swayed by political pressure to do anything that is not in the best interest of the Forest Preserve District and the taxpayers.

Issue 3: Land preservation: I will support efforts to protect our natural areas, native flora and fauna, and restoration programs for wildlife habitats. I will support efforts to preserve open space and complete the vision of early settlers in our county by leaving a legacy to future generations.

03/10/06