

# Neal

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vote from the black precincts went heavily in my favor."

Neal, who is seeking his seventh term, narrowly defeated Epperson in November 1984. Neal received 51 percent of the vote, while Epperson had 49 percent. Neal received 90 percent of the black vote in that election, he said.

In fact, Neal has received 90 percent of the black vote in every primary and general election since he first ran for Congress in 1974, he said.

"I have tried to earn support in the black community," Neal said. "I have treated everyone with respect, regardless of their skin color. I have tried to do what is fair and reasonable for all people."

Ronald T. Butler, Epperson's press secretary, said that Neal doesn't deserve to receive 90 percent of the black vote in the November elections. "What has Steve Neal done for the black community, aside from sitting up there in Washington and voting for things to appease someone?" Butler said.

Neal has taken the black vote for granted, Epperson told the *Chronicle* on July 31. "They (blacks) have kept him in office for 12 years."

Neal denied that he has taken the black vote for granted. "If that was true, I would not have had the support from black people over the last 12 years," Neal said. "Epperson's statements are obviously untrue."

Neal says he will campaign in the black community. His campaign time will be limited because Congress will be back in session on Sept. 8, he said.

Neal said he expects Epperson to try to split the black vote between the two candidates in November. "I can't read his mind, but I expect him to try to

do this," he said.

Neal cited Epperson's recent news conference in Happy Hills Gardens as an attempt to get black support.

Epperson announced the creation of a drug abuse task force at the predominantly black housing project near Old Salem last month. Four Winston-Salem police officers accompanied Epperson at the news conference.

"I never felt the need for police protection when I go into the black community," Neal said.

"We didn't request the police protection," Butler said. "We told the police about the news conference, and they just appeared."

The police officers were at the corner of Liberia and Free streets to maintain traffic control and prevent drug dealers from interrupting Epperson's news conference, Butler said.

"When we have a press conference in the white or black community, the cops will be there," Butler said.

Despite Epperson's attempt to sway black voters, Walter Marshall, president of the city's NAACP chapter, said Neal has solid support in the black community.

"Most poor and black people in the district who follow Neal's voting record know he is a person that they can depend on," Marshall said. "He is a sincere politician and very close to the people."

Neal has supported many issues and legislation in Congress that have been important to blacks, he said.

Among these have been the creation of a national holiday for the late Martin Luther King Jr.; the extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; economic sanctions against South Africa, a bill he co-sponsored in the U.S.

House; the allocation of federal funds for legal aid to poor people; support of affirmative action and opposing tax credits for private schools.

The King holiday was "an important issue to many black constituents," Neal said. "The honor and significance of it to many American citizens made it worth the cost."

Neal co-sponsored an economic sanctions bill against South Africa because he is opposed to apartheid, he said. "We have to keep putting pressure on the South African government," he said.

Epperson said in July that he opposes American economic sanctions against South Africa. He says sanctions will destroy the economic base of the country and hurt blacks.

Poor blacks have benefited from federally funded legal aid in civil cases such as landlord-tenant disputes, Neal said. "Legal aid is for poor people regardless of their race," he said.

Neal supports affirmative action because it redresses past discrimination against blacks and other minorities, he said.

"I don't believe in quotas," Neal said. "Affirmative action policies should set goals for employment, not quotas."

Neal opposes tax credits to private schools because he says federal funds should help public schools.

"We should not take funds from public education to help private education," Neal said. "That would only weaken public education. The strength of our country will be determined by the quality of our public education system."

However, Neal voted in 1982 to deny federal funds to bus schoolchildren. "I am opposed to busing, but I do favor school in-

tegration," he said.

Neal opposes busing because, he says, it is "coercive." Busing denies the rights of parents to choose the school for their children to attend, he said.

"I was opposed to busing when I first ran," Neal said. "And I had strong black support in that election. This is not a burning issue now. We can't always agree on every issue."

Neal favors replacing busing with a magnet school concept. "Magnet schools offer a first-rate education," he said. "Transportation could be provided for those students who wanted to go to schools outside of their neighborhoods, but it would not be forced on them."

Magnet schools are public

schools which offer innovative courses, specialized training and other educational benefits in order to attract students from a broad urban area and thereby

help to bring about desegregation.

Neal has also supported preserving social security, the Women, Please see page A12

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