

Democrats hope to gain clout in Congress

By JEANNIE FARIS
Staff Writer

With five Republicans and six Democrats representing North Carolina's 11 Congressional districts in the U.S. House of Representatives, both parties are struggling for support before the Nov. 4 elections to gain a partisan stronghold.

Democrats are optimistic that they will gain control of Congress in the upcoming elections because there will not be a strong Republican incumbent running for president as in 1984, when President Reagan's candidacy helped other Republicans into state and national offices.

"They swept into office on Reagan's coattails, but without Reagan in office we don't think they can do it again," said Ann Hubbard, spokeswoman for the N.C. Democratic Party.

Thad Beyle, a UNC political science professor, agreed, citing Gov. Jim Martin and Sen. Jesse Helms as examples of beneficiaries of Reagan's campaign.

"The party out of power usually gains in the off-year elections," he said. "Some people might argue that this is not necessarily true, so this will be the election that will prove if it's true or not."

But the N.C. Republican Party is also optimistic about its chances for success in the November elections. "We expect to hold our own and possibly gain some (seats)," said Chris Shields, communications director for the party.

Shields said Republicans would take control of the 5th and 7th districts, seats now occupied by Democrats Stephen Neal and Charlie Rose.

Hubbard said she disagrees, because all Democratic incumbents would hold their seats, and three or four Democratic challengers would defeat Republican incumbents. She would not specify which incumbents she expected to lose, but said that the remaining four are extremely vulnerable Republican freshmen.

Beyle also named Neal and Rose as Democratic candidates who may have trouble.

The fifth Republican incumbent, Jim Broyhill, left his 10th District seat to Les Roark and took the seat of the late Sen. John East.

"They all won by less than two percent in a year when Ronald Reagan had very long coattails," Hubbard said, referring to incumbents Bill Cobey, Howard Coble, Alex McMillan and Bill Hendon

from the 4th, 6th, 9th and 11th districts, respectively.

Beyle also said that these are vulnerable candidates because they ran in very close races in 1984 and will have strong challengers in November.

But the N.C. Republican Party's polls indicate that the incumbents are ahead in their campaigns, Shields said, although he would not discuss the polls because they were private.

Shields said he did not think public disappointment from the pre-submit talks in Iceland would hurt Republican candidates in the elections.

"Insomuch as foreign policy is concerned, we don't expect to see any reflection on this election," he said. "The president and the administration from day one told the American people not to expect much to come out of this hastily put-together meeting."

Beyle said public reaction to the Iceland talks could tip the political scales in the House, depending upon how voters individually viewed the situation and what they had expected of the meetings.

"Some could say, 'Reagan went to Iceland and really stood his ground. Atta' boy,'" he said. On the other

hand, he said, "People could also say, 'Look at how close we got. Look at what happened. The Soviets were ready to make a deal and we blew it.'"

Hubbard agreed with Shields that Republicans would probably not suffer from the meeting, but added, "The people are disappointed that he came away empty-handed." She said she thinks Republicans would be hurt more by Reagan's veto of the textile bill last December, and the failure of the House to override that veto in August.

"The House failed to override the veto because a majority of the Republicans voted to uphold the veto," she said.

Beyle said voter turnout among certain segments of the population will be important in this election. For example, blue-collar workers who are angry at the Democratic Party for not protecting their interests against the textile veto might decide the election in certain districts.

"This is a low-interest, low-excitement set of races," he said. "You don't really have anybody who comes out in these sort of races. There's nothing energizing people, telling them they have to go out to the polls or they can't go home."

Nazi death camp survivor receives Nobel Peace Prize

From Associated Press reports

OSLO, Norway — Elie Wiesel, who survived the Nazi Holocaust to become the voice of its victims and a champion of dignity for all people, was chosen Tuesday to receive the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee praised the naturalized American author as a spiritual leader in an age of violence and hatred.

"Wiesel's commitment, which originated in the sufferings of the Jewish people, has been widened to embrace all repressed peoples and races," its citation said.

Wiesel, 58, lost his parents and younger sister in Nazi death camps during World War II. He has chronicled the suffering of the Jews under Hitler and their problems in the Soviet Union today.

In 1944, he was among 15,000 Jews deported by Germans and Hungarian fascists from his native town of Sighet in what is now Romania.

Israel power swap delayed
JERUSALEM — Wrangling

State & National

over political appointees delayed the long-planned job swap Tuesday between Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

The two leaders failed to resolve their differences at a 45-minute meeting, and it was unclear when they could go through with their agreement to rotate positions.

The surprise delay appeared to be an effort by Peres' left-leaning Labor Party to wrest what concessions it could from Shamir's right-wing Likud bloc before ceding leadership of the government.

Shamir had been scheduled to present his Cabinet to Parliament to be sworn in as Israel's ninth prime minister. He was to hand over the foreign ministry to Peres in keeping with a September 1984 accord which followed an electoral stalemate leaving each party too weak to govern without the other.

Organization combats religious bigotry

By TIMOTHY HARRISON
Staff Writer

A 250,000-member organization calling itself a "national citizens" group is in hot pursuit of religious bigotry and its effect on American politics.

People for the American Way recently announced a national television campaign to combat religious intolerance in many facets of American life. The campaign consists of one- and two-minute spots that condemn acts such as the censorship of books in public schools.

The Raleigh-based N.C. chapter of the organization is also attempting

to counteract those candidates who claim to be endorsed by God. Most recently, members were concerned over a letter that Rep. Bill Cobey, R-N.C., sent to constituents that began, "Dear Christian Friend."

The letter implied that Cobey represented God and the "right" or "true" beliefs. Pressure from PFAW resulted in an apology by Cobey for his letter, said a press release from the organization.

Jim Scarborough, spokesman for the N.C. chapter, said the national organization was founded in 1980 by television producer Norman Lear. The organization was originally

founded in an attempt to counteract the extreme political and religious views of the far right.

"We are a First Amendment group," Scarborough said. In particular, the group is concerned with freedom of speech and the press, he said.

Lear formed the group after

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go away," Reagan said, but he also said the Soviet Union "has long been engaged in extensive" efforts to devise its own strategic defense system.

Reagan said the Soviet proposal to confine Star Wars research to the laboratory "would have given them an immediate one-sided advantage, and a dangerous one."

Gorbachev talked of possibly having to counter the Star Wars program.

"Soviet people know this, and all people around the world should know this as well," he said. "But we are opposed to a power play. This is an extremely dangerous undertaking in the nuclear missile age."

viewing several hours of fundamentalist programs. The programs upset him so much that he decided to form an organization to combat these extremists, Scarborough said.

The organization has state offices in North Carolina, New York and California, as well as the national organization headquartered in Washington.

"Our organization exists through contributions from individuals from North Carolina, individuals from out-of-state, and from grants, mainly from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation," Scarborough said.

"The organization is non-partisan, however, most of its activity is aimed at the right-wing influences in America. The group feels it is important to inform the public of right-wing activities because their activities are a big threat to liberty," Scarborough said.

"They (the right wing) imply that we are governed by the Bible rather than the Constitution; they want a theocracy," Scarborough said.

The PFAW will continue to monitor the attacks of freedom from the far right, he said. He added that Lear hoped there would be no need for the organization within ten years.

Justice candidate advocates non-partisan appointments

From staff reports

The single most important quality for a judge is impartiality, James Exum, the Democratic candidate for chief justice of the N.C. Supreme Court, told about 35 people during a meeting of the UNC Young Democrats Tuesday.

Exum said judicial candidates are bound by a code of conduct which bars them from expressing opinions about something that might come up in court.

"My opponent has been critical of the code," Exum said. "I think it's a good thing."

Candidates can be judged by experience and judicial voting record, Exum said. Voters can also rely on the opinions of legal professionals who have read the records, Exum said.

He said judges must make decisions based on constitutional law.

"We have to decide whether the trial judge tried the defendant properly, not whether the defendant is guilty or innocent," he said. "The decision to overturn a case is based on some legal error. Courts have to

follow the law. Appellate judges have a duty when something goes awry in the legal process."

Making judicial decisions based on what is politically expedient threatens the independence of the judicial system, Exum said.

"The greatest protector of rights has been a strong, independent and courageous judiciary," he said.

Partisan elections are not the best way to select judges, Exum said. North Carolina has been electing its judges since 1868, he said.

Partisan elections discourage some lawyers from running for judicial positions, he said.

"It removes a great number of lawyers who would be able judges but who don't want to get involved in the partisan political process," he said.

Exum said he favors the merit system as a possible alternative to partisan elections. He said in the merit system a non- or bi-partisan group recruits and screens candidates and then recommends them to be appointed.

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