

SENATE

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make decisions on budget and personnel without always having to come to the legislature for permission."

Lee said he also supports expanding financial aid packages and increasing teacher salaries in N.C. public schools.

Kinnaird said her other major campaign issues are the environment and health care.

"My top three issues (education, the environment and health care) all tie in to one overriding issue, which is campaign reform."

Kinnaird said she supports public-

ly financed campaigns to eliminate the influence of special interest groups in elections.

Lee said the ideal situation would be for him and Kinnaird to both be re-elected because having two Democrats represent the 16th district in the Senate has been effective for the county.

But Republican candidate Bill Boyd said having two Democrats in the Senate was limiting.

"There are so few Republican senators, and the Democrats are being sold out to (President Pro Tem) Marc Basnight," Boyd said.

"That means Basnight is the only person calling the shots right now — we need a Republican voice to have bal-

ance in the Senate."

Hargrove also said the Republican voice in the Senate needs to be enhanced.

"We need to have a true two-party system," she said. "That's how we stretch our minds."

While Boyd said he agrees with the two incumbents that education is a key issue in the election, he added that health care and preventing new taxes are other major planks of his platform.

He said he became more aware of the health care issue a few years ago when he faced some personal health problems.

"North Carolina has some great hospitals — probably some of the best in the

nation — but when drugs are being manufactured right here in our area, and you can go to Canada and get them cheaper, there is a problem with the system," Boyd said.

Another issue Boyd said he wants to address is discipline within the N.C. public school system.

"We need more discipline and more values in our classrooms," he said. "We can raise teachers' salaries to \$100,000 a year, but if the discipline problems with students continue, not many good teachers will want to stay."

But Hargrove said her main education priority is giving parents choices in their children's schooling.

"Parents should be able to choose

between public schools, charter schools, vouchers or tax cuts for families whose children go to private schools," Hargrove said.

She added that while funds are needed to improve N.C. universities, she would like to create a plan ensuring the current university problems don't persist in the future.

"We need to develop things, such as distance learning so we don't turn away students who aren't traditional college students," Hargrove said. "This (program) will help students while helping to increase state revenue."

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HOUSE

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Insko, Hackney and Towne share similar views on several issues, including education. All three included education and support for the \$3.1 billion higher education bond referendum in their campaign issues. If the bond passes, it will fund capital improvements for UNC-system and N.C. community college facilities.

Hackney, who has served in the House for the past 20 years, said education is the top issue in his campaign, in addition to combating domestic violence and promoting environmental protection. "I have a strong support for the University, faculty salaries and public schools in North Carolina," said Hackney, who is also speaker pro tem.

Insko, a former junior high school science teacher looking to win her third term in office, also said education is her biggest focus because it provides solutions to many other state problems. "Education makes people more self-sufficient, which in turn improves the economy," Insko said. "It is the most effective service the government can provide."

Towne also listed education and the bond as top priorities. "The bond is the most important thing for our system right now because it will allow us to get up to speed and give students a 21st-century education," he said.

Republican Rod Chaney is also seeking a House seat but could not be reached for comment.

But Libertarian candidate John Bauman said education is important but funneling money into the system does not solve problems. "We've been pouring money into education for years and haven't seen any better results," Bauman said, citing that the state's SAT scores are still among nation's lowest. He said boosting competition among schools would better improve education.

Bauman said that before he could support the bond, he would need assurance that N.C. colleges and universities would responsibly maintain facilities in the future. "I feel the university system has shown very bad management by getting to the point that they have."

But Bauman said his main campaign focus is to lessen the government's role in people's lives. "Every time a problem comes up, we look to the government for help," Bauman said. "But giving the government more power is taking away freedom from the citizens and their choices."

Other components of Hackney's campaign are environmental protection by means of clean water and clean air acts. He is also focusing on health care. Insko said health care is also one of her top priorities, particularly the area of mental disabilities. But Towne said he is different from his opponents because he is focusing on preventing tax increases by cutting spending.

But Beyle said the main issue in this election is not the environment, health care or taxes — it is which party will dominate the House and help draw new district lines. "The fact that the majority party will redraw these lines has become very important — it's what's driving most of the politics in this election."

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