



The Huntsville Times

Constitutional posts

Tuesday, May 30, 2006

Huntsville Times

Here are the Times' recommendations in contested primaries

In addition to electing a governor and all 140 members of the Legislature, voters this year will also fill a long list of the state's constitutional officers.

Not all candidates have primary opposition. Those without opposition are not listed on the June 6 Democratic and Republican primary ballots. All candidates, opposed or not, will be listed on the general election ballot in November.

Lieutenant governor

After governor comes lieutenant governor. Among Democrats, there is only one candidate, former Gov. Jim Folsom Jr.

Republican voters have four choices for the post - Hilbun Adams, a Birmingham-area cabinet maker; Mo Brooks, a member of the Madison County Commission; Luther Strange, a Birmingham lawyer in private practice; and George Wallace Jr., the son of the late former Gov. George Wallace. The younger Wallace now serves on the Public Service Commission.

Much of the power of the lieutenant governor has been stripped away in recent years. In choosing candidates we had to consider other factors, mainly the interests of the community at the state level.

The Times' editorial board recommends Mo Brooks and Luther Strange. Brooks is a former member of the state House of Representatives. As a current county commissioner, he knows this community, and winning the lieutenant governor's job could increase local influence over much-sought-after road dollars and other state help.

Strange, too, has a local connection. In his capacity as a lawyer, he helped bring to realization the state package of assistance that led to the Hudson Alpha Institute for Biotechnology now under construction in Research Park.

Attorney general

For attorney general, Democrats and Republicans will choose from two candidates each in their primaries.

Democratic candidates are Larry Darby, a Montgomery attorney, and John Tyson, district attorney for Mobile County.

The Times recommends John Tyson in the Democratic primary. He is hard-working and determined. His experience in criminal law fits the duties of the attorney general.

Republican candidates are the current office-holder, Troy King, and Montgomery attorney Mark Montiel.

King was appointed attorney general by Gov. Bob Riley after his predecessor, Bill Pryor, became a federal judge. Montiel has been active in Republican affairs and has played a key role in lawsuits having to do with election methods and election districts.

The Times recommends Troy King. He was a key figure in the updating and upgrading of Alabama's antiquated and inadequate open-meetings law. He could play a similar role when the Legislature gets around to taking a look at the public-records law.

Secretary of state

Democrat Nancy L. Worley has one primary opponent, Ed Packard, who works in the secretary's office.

The Times recommends Nancy Worley. Worley's tenure has been the subject of recent news stories - not all of them favorable - but the end of the primary campaign could enable a thorough airing of the problems and determine who, if anyone, is to blame.

In November, the winner will face current state Auditor Beth Chapman, a Republican.

(The Times ceased recommending candidates for state auditor several elections ago. The editorial board believed - and still believes - the office serves no useful purpose.) On the June 6 ballot, four Republicans and three Democrats are seeking their parties' nominations.

State treasurer

Republican incumbent Kay Ivey is unopposed in her party's primary. Two Democrats are seeking the post - Steve Segrest and Keith Douglas Williams. The Times did not interview either Democratic candidate and makes no recommendation. The editorial board plans to talk to the two nominees and state a preference before the November election.

Public Service Commission

For Place 2 on the Public Service Commission, the seat being vacated by George Wallace Jr., former state Auditor Susan Parker of Rogersville is seeking the Democratic nomination along with Debbie Murphree of Prattville, who has twice sought local office there without success.

The Times recommends Susan Parker. She did a highly credible job under difficult circumstances as auditor, and in 2002 she ran a spirited but dignified campaign for U.S. senator against Republican incumbent Jeff Sessions.

Republicans running for Place 2 include former legislators John Amari and Perry Hooper Jr. and retired PSC staff member Jack Hornady.

The Times makes no recommendation in the Republican PSC primary.

Wednesday: the state judiciary

By John Ehinger, for the editorial board. E-mail: johne@htimes.com

© 2006 The Huntsville Times

© 2006 al.com All Rights Reserved.