

P o l i t i c s

Lampson, Poe compete to represent District 2

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Contributing Writer

Due to redistricting, the Humble-Kingwood area now lies within Congressional District 2, which also encompasses parts of Jefferson and Liberty Counties. In what has already been a highly competitive race, Congressman Nick Lampson and Judge Ted Poe will vie for the newly created position in the November 2 election.

Meet the Candidates

The son of Italian immigrants, Congressman Lampson is a native of Beaumont, and received his bachelor's degree in biology and his master's degree in education from Lamar

University. A former teacher of high school science and university real estate and management courses, Lampson went on to successfully run for Jefferson County Tax Assessor in 1976, and stayed at that post for nearly 20 years. In 1996 he was elected congressman for Texas's 9th District, and has proven to be a strong advocate for veterans and seniors in his eight years in office, serving as a director of the Area Agency on Aging and as a delegate to the 1995 White House Conference on Aging. Lampson serves as the ranking member of the science committee's Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics, and strongly supports NASA. He also serves on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and, in response to a tragedy affect-

ing constituents in his area, Cancer, Asian and Pacific established the first-ever American, and Arts. The Congressional Caucus on Missing and Exploited Children, which now includes more than 140 members from both parties. Lampson is active in other issue-oriented congressional caucuses, including Manufactured Housing, Correctional Officers, I-69 Highway, Coast Guard, Coastal, Human Rights, India and Indian-Americans, Spina Bifida, Democratic candidate also served as a delegate to the

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NATO Parliamentary Assembly and on the House Water Resources and Development Subcommittee, and cites clean air, clean water, and healthy and plentiful forests as environmental priorities.

Judge Poe has lived in Humble for the past 20 years. He received his bachelor of arts in political science from Abilene Christian University and his J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center. He was a felony court judge in Houston from 1981 until retirement in 2003, and was elected to that position six times, running without opposition since 1986. Prior to becoming a judge, Poe served in the Air Force, and then spent eight years as the chief felony prosecutor for the District Attorney of Harris County, during which time he never lost a jury trial. He has gained national and international attention for the non-conventional sentences

he has given to criminals in his courtroom. Dubbed "Poetic Justice," many of his punishments involve public humiliation of the convict, which Poe believes is "the greatest deterrent to criminal conduct." In addition to his legal work, he has lectured at many organizations and citizens' groups, and has taught at the University of Houston, the FBI National Academy, and at West Point. Poe, a Republican, has "a passion for protecting abused, assaulted and neglected children," and has served on many related boards and committees, including that of the National Children's Alliance in Washington, D.C. and Christian School of Kingwood, which he co-founded. He supports requiring federal judges to be confirmed by the Senate every 10-15 years, and feels that they must be kept in check so that they do not begin to make laws in lieu of simply interpreting them.

Key Issues and the Candidates' Positions

The Economy, Taxes, and Business

In Lampson's opinion, "The current policy of tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans and large corporations has not had the intended trickle-down effect — it has not created jobs or opportunity for working Americans." However, he feels that targeted tax cuts for small business owners and their families are important to strengthen American jobs, and over a 10-year period has voted for \$213 billion of these tax cuts. He feels that a balance between controlling federal spending and maximizing the federal funds coming to support the state and community must be found.

Poe supports limited government and lower taxes, and says that "President Bush's tax cuts, which are set to expire in 2010, should be made permanent," because "working families in our country deserve to keep more of their money." He supports a "simpler and fairer" tax structure, consideration of a consumption tax, and permanent elimination of the estate

tax.

Education

Lampson supports the No Child Left Behind Act, and while he deems it "imperfect," he feels that it includes good accountability features and gives local school districts more control over their policies. He supports increasing funding to the education budget so that schools are better able to deal with their increasing challenges and every student gets a quality education.

Poe opposes legislation that imposes "costly, unfunded mandates" on schools, and believes that parents and local educators know their children's needs best. He supports overturning court decisions that limit the control teachers have over students' behavioral problems. He also feels that additional tax breaks and tax-free educational savings accounts should be considered to help middle-class citizens afford college and post-high school technical training.

Health Care

Lampson has spent his time in Congress fighting for a Patient's Bill of Rights to ensure that all Americans enrolled in Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) receive the highest quality of care. He has also worked with his colleagues to create a "real" Medicare prescription drug plan for seniors, and calls the Medicare Prescription Drug Bill Congress passed late last year "nothing but a false hope for America's seniors," adding that "[w]e cannot afford to play political football" with this issue.

Poe believes that "[e]very American should have the right to affordable healthcare and the freedom to choose their own doctor," and feels that finding "ways to bring quality healthcare to our citizens while helping to ease the burden of the ever-rising costs" is important. He calls the recent prescription drug plan "real progress."

Homeland Security and Immigration

Lampson supported President Bush's request to authorize force in Iraq, but says that we have now learned how important it is for Congress to have "the most accurate intelligence available" before we send our armed forces into danger. He says more must be done to protect our nation's ports and borders, and advocates for more funding for the many such areas in Southeast Texas.

Poe says that as our nation is one that was built on immigration, its lawful continuation is appropriate. However, he states that "[t]he security of our borders and security of our citizens should be first and foremost with regard to all immigration policy," adding that immigrants "should be evaluated first in terms of our public's safety and then with regard to any economic considerations." He eschews blanket amnesty for illegal immigrants in favor of a national work program with rigorous controls.

The election will be held Nov. 2.

For more information on the candidates and their platforms, go to www.lampson.com and www.tedpoe.com.