

Fowler: no 'student candidate'

Steve Fowler, last year's ASUN president, says his "strongest area of knowledge" is education, with much of the information coming from the University. "But if I were solely a student candidate, I wouldn't have made it through the primary," he adds quickly.

Fowler, 22, is opposing incumbent William Swanson, for a 27th district seat in the Nebraska Unicameral.

The primary election saw Fowler place second in a field of five candidates. He polled 1,853 votes to Swanson's 2,325 out of nearly 7,100 votes cast.

When asked to pin point the most important campaign issue, Fowler quickly replies "Taxation."

"I disagree with his (Swanson's) votes on property tax exemption bills."

The former student government president notes that Swanson voted for LB 1315 in the last legislative session, a bill which Fowler contends is "supposed to provide a large tax savings to land developers—which Sen. Swanson is."

Swanson is a business partner in Woods Bros. and Swanson, a Lincoln real estate firm.

Fowler agrees the state must move away from using the property tax, but he advocates doing so on a "piece-meal" basis.

"The loss of revenue from the exemption has to be

made up someplace," Fowler said, and he speculates that would be done by raising state sales and income taxes.

Such a tax raise, Fowler says, would especially hurt the state's senior citizens who he thinks are getting a "raw deal in society" anyway.

"I haven't found any evidence that Sen. Swanson is actively trying to meet the needs of senior citizens," Fowler said.

Fowler said he thinks another problem of Lincoln's senior citizens is housing. Calling it a "Lincoln problem" and not just of concern to the

This special report on the 27th legislative district race was written by Daily Nebraskan staff writer Steve Arvanette.

University, he said students, low income individuals and senior citizens all are competing for low-income housing.

"One out of four voters in the 27th district is a senior citizen," Fowler said, and they are concerned about high rents and a housing shortage.

Calling on the University to recognize its impact on the community, Fowler recommended building additional married student housing and proposed financial incentives for students to set up cooperatives.

Concerning the University, Fowler thinks more capital construction funds are needed during the next several years.

"It's disturbing to find a number of buildings on the UNL campus are a fire hazard," he said. "There

has to be more money for upkeep and renovation of existing buildings."

Besides those projects, Fowler thinks there is an "equal need" for a new Law College building and life sciences building.

He advocates, however, fewer graduate programs, but "stronger ones," possibly developed on a regional basis with other Big Eight schools.

Regarding the University budget, Fowler speculates the "real budgetary decision making" is with the Legislature and not the Board of Regents.

He views the regents as more of a "citizens

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the candidates

Swanson emphasizes experience

As state Sen. William Swanson sees the 27th legislative district race, it's a question of choosing between an experienced person and an inexperienced person for a seat in the Nebraska Unicameral this January.

Swanson says he can get things done and work with other legislators better than his general election opponent Steve Fowler.

"There are certain programs I've been active in which are not yet completed," Swanson said, adding that was his reason for seeking reelection.

Swanson was appointed to the Legislature in 1967 by former Gov. Norbert Tiemann to fill Marvin Stromer's unexpired term. He was elected to office in his own right in 1969.

The 49-year-old senator serves as chairman of the Legislature's Executive Board. He said he was interested in staying on the board in hopes of providing it with experience and leadership.

One uncompleted item Swanson would like to return to work on is state aid to education.

Calling the property tax, a major means of support for public schools, a "fantastic burden," Swanson said a state aid bill would provide "better educational opportunities for all of the state's youngsters."

Using property tax to support schools causes low income regions to have lower quality education, Swanson said.

"Educational opportunities should be as equal as

possible," he said.

Another of Swanson's priorities would be a state constitutional convention.

"We ought to face the issue," Swanson said, and make the state's constitution streamlined, flexible and workable.

One of the major problems in getting such a convention, Swanson says, is its possible \$1 million price tag. But he notes it costs about \$10,000 for each constitutional amendment placed on the ballot and this year alone there will have been 32 after November's election.

Swanson also called for equalizing educational opportunities between the Lincoln and Omaha campuses of the University.

"Omaha is a long way behind and has a lot of catching up to do," he said.

Admitting it takes more and more money, Swanson said the state must work with the resources available.

"President Varner has charted a course to make Nebraska tops in the Big Eight," Swanson said. However, money is always an issue.

He cited new buildings for the Law College and life sciences as top University priorities.

"I favor the Board of Regents setting priorities," Swanson said though. Noting they are a constitutionally established board, he said they are in a better position to tell what the University's needs are.

"It is the responsibility of the Legislature to make appropriations necessary within the resources available to get the job done," Swanson said.

He said there have been instances where the Legislature has "stepped into areas of administration," and dictated how the University should be run.

Some balance must be achieved between the responsibilities of legislators and administrators, Swanson said.

"I don't think the hands of administrators should be tied so tightly," he said of appropriations. "But the Legislature can't give up all responsibility over how funds are spent."

In the ecology field, Swanson said the state is doing a fair job in controlling pollution. "We have problems," he said, and the state must remain on the alert.

"Our prime concern is to keep our environment at a good level," Swanson said, but again noted that balance is the key.

"We can't have things so strict that agriculture, business and industry can't function."

Swanson speculated that the Wyoming amendment to the state's environment law will be removed. That amendment prohibits the state from setting pollution

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27th district voters face difficult decision

by Steve Arvanette

One of the more interesting legislative races this fall is between incumbent State Sen. William Swanson and former ASUN president Steve Fowler.

The 27th legislative district race has not sparked a lot of voter interest, nor have considerable campaign expenditures been made.

The two personalities involved are not terribly dynamic, nor are the issues broad and well defined.

However, there appears to be an excellent chance that a six-year incumbent may be ousted from his Nebraska Unicameral chair by a political newcomer.

The 27th legislative district is possibly the most diverse economically of any district in the state. It

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includes the fashionable Knoll's and Lincoln Country Club regions and the Russian Bottom and low income areas of west Lincoln.

This economic diversity within the district appears to be the dividing issue of the campaign.

Fowler readily admits he will gain most of his support from middle and low income voters. "It doesn't concern me that I had my poorest showing in

the precinct comprising the Knolls," he said.

Swanson, a south Lincoln realtor, gained his strongest support from precincts in the southern part of Lincoln, which is considered a high income region.

As Fowler says, taxation is one of the important campaign issues. Low income voters will tend to vote against Swanson, an active proponent of a personal property tax exemption bill for business and farm inventories.

Such a tax exemption can only force higher sales and income taxes which would hurt individuals on fixed incomes.

The biggest problem Fowler faces in the campaign is his political inexperience. Swanson is quick to note that an incumbent who knows legislative ropes, can accomplish things more easily than a newcomer.

Swanson is well thought of in the Legislature. In the absence of Lt. Gov. Frank Marsh and Speaker William Hasebroock, he presided.

His ability to conduct sessions smoothly and his excellent knowledge of parliamentary rules prompted some senators to say he might not make a bad speaker of the body. Swanson has expressed interest, however, in remaining on the Legislature's Executive Board.

Continuity of leadership in the Unicameral is something Swanson thinks is seriously lacking and it seems to be a legitimate criticism.

The reason that the 27th legislative race appears to be so close is because Swanson polled less than one third of 7,100 votes in the primary election. The three primary defeated candidates gathered 41 per cent of the vote. All three have come out in support of Fowler.

That all their support can be transferred to Fowler is doubtful. However, only 500 votes separated Swanson and Fowler in May.

Fowler has been conducting a low key, but extensive door-to-door and mail campaign. Swanson has yet to begin his re-election bid, but has promised to use radio and TV ads before the Nov. 7 election.

As Swanson said, he wished he had the "wisdom of Solomon to push that button right all of the time."

The decision for 27th district voters is a difficult one too. It is unfortunate that on Nov. 8 one of the two candidates will be a loser.

The real loser, in the long run, will be the people of the district who must choose one good candidate over the other.