



Primary elections to decide winners

Many races in state are determined early

RANDY KREHBIEL
Tulsa World

In Oklahoma, more elections are decided between April 1 and the end of June than ever make it to November.

Besides regular school and municipal elections, April of even-numbered years brings filing for state and federal offices. A large share of those races — 50 of 133 this year — end without ever really starting, won by unopposed candidates.

Of the rest, many go no further than the June party primaries. Thirty-four seats, including the 3rd Congressional District, will be decided by primaries this year because the only candidates are from the same party.

That means only 46 of the 133 offices will go to the general election. Barring state questions, the only two November ballots for which all Oklahoma voters will be eligible are president of the United States and Oklahoma corporation commissioner.

In the Tulsa metro area, a dozen legislators are unopposed for reelection. Nine more — six Republican, three Democrat — will be chosen in the June 18 primaries. That doesn't include the 3rd Congressional District, for which 16-term incumbent Frank Lucas has two GOP opponents.

The winners of five of the half-dozen other area Republican legislative primaries are likely to be heavy favorites in November. The winner of the sixth will meet a Democratic incumbent in one of the state's most competitive

Primaries

From AI

districts.

Here is a quick preview of the 10 Tulsa-area elections to be decided by primaries just over two months from now.

CD 3: Lucas, who came to Congress via a 1994 special election, would pass the late Tom Steed as Oklahoma's longest-serving House member in the midst of one more term.

Lucas' primary opponents are Robin Carder, a Sand Springs accountant with ties to election denier Mike Lindell and who was the subject of an FBI investigation because of her actions toward local and state election officials, and Darren Hamilton, a communications specialist from Fort Supply.

CD 3 covers nearly half the state's land area, reaching from the tip of Panhandle to the Red River to downtown Oklahoma City and to within less than a mile of downtown Tulsa.

SD 11: This Democratic primary for a vacant north Tulsa seat matches two candidates well-known to the district: state Rep. Regina Goodwin and former City Councilor Joe Williams.

Goodwin is giving up a safe House seat for a shot at the Senate, while Williams is coming out of semi-retirement.

Williams retired from ONEOK after 36 years. After leaving the Tulsa City Council, he's mounted several unsuccessful campaigns for other

offices, including the House of Representatives in 2015, when Goodwin won a crowded special election.

Goodwin is known for speaking out, especially on civil rights issues. Before winning the House seat, she was an unsuccessful candidate for SD 11.

SD 29: Although generally regarded as a staunch conservative, two-term Republican incumbent Sen. Julie Daniels of Bartlesville is being challenged from the right by former state Rep. Wendi Stearman of Collinsville.

In her campaign material, Stearman claims that Daniels is soft on immigration for showing interest in allowing people to obtain state-issued identification without proving citizenship. The IDs could not have been used to register to vote.

Stearman defeated a Republican in a 2020 House primary but lost two years later to Rep. John Kane, who went unopposed this year.

Historically associated with Bartlesville, SD 29 includes Washington, Nowata and northern Rogers counties and comes within a few miles of the Tulsa city limits.

HD 10: Republican incumbent Judd Strom of Copan is also feeling some heat from the right. Elected as a friend of public education in rural Oklahoma, Strom is being tagged a "lemming" by challenger Chad McCarthy of Dewey.

HD 10 includes parts of Washington, Nowata and Osage counties.

HD 13 – Muskogee Public Schools Superintendent Jarod Mendenhall, who formerly led Broken Arrow Public Schools and was a Union assistant superintendent, is trying to knock out first-term Republican incumbent Neil Hays of Checotah.

HD 23: Republicans Derrick Hildebrant of Catoosa and Connor Whitham of Tulsa are the only contestants for this vacant seat.

A retired Air National Guard master sergeant, Hildebrant is associated with Equipping Pastors International, which trains "indigenous pastors to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Hildebrant has been a Catoosa city councilor and been involved in activities surrounding the Route 66 centennial.

Whitham is a teacher and coach at East Central High School, where he was also a standout student and soccer player. His social media says he's "working daily to introduce students to Jesus" and is endorsed by the Tulsa Fraternal Order of Police.

HD 67: A four-way GOP fight in this southeast Tulsa district to succeed Republican incumbent Jeff Boatman, who is running for state Senate, means a runoff is not unlikely.

The entrants are Kane Smith, a businessman and former Army infantryman, medic and military contractor; Ryan Myers, a businessman who, at 6-10, would undoubtedly be the tallest member of the Legislature; therapist and Christian counselor Bowden

McElroy; and Rob Hall.

HD 68: Republican incumbent Lonnie Sims' decision to run for the Tulsa County Commission leaves this Tulsa and Jenks district west of the Arkansas River to GOP candidates Mike Lay and Jonathan Grable.

Lay has been president of Layco Electronic Innovations for 20 years.

Grable has worked in several fields, including six years in the state Senate and several years as jury coordinator for Tulsa County district courts.

HD 72: Former CD 1 candidate Adam Martin and Tulsa Public Schools educator Michelle McCane are contending in the Democratic primary for this odd-shaped district that reaches from far north Tulsa down to 15th Street, then west across the southern half of downtown to 57th West Avenue.

The winner will replace Democrat Monroe Nichols, who is running for Tulsa mayor.

Martin was the Democrats' entry against 1st District Congressman Kevin Hern two years ago. McCane has been Teacher of the Year at TRAICE High School, an alternative school in the TPS system.

HD 73: This Democratic primary to replace Goodwin matches Ron Stewart, a firefighter and paramedic, and restaurateur Darrell Knox, owner of Sweet Lisa's Cafe.

HD 73 encompasses northwest Tulsa, including Greenwood and Gilcrease Hills.

randy.krehbiel@tulsaworld.com