



Mercer County campaign capsules

Mike Davis/The Times By Mike Davis/The Times

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Candidates get union, PAC endorsements

Multiple candidates in the Mercer County area received key endorsements this week from various unions, groups and community figures throughout the state.

Hamilton Mayor Kelly Yaede, a Republican seeking re-election to a two-year unexpired term, was endorsed by the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825, she announced in a press release.

The union represents more than 6,500 operating engineers who operate heavy equipment, such as cranes and bulldozers, to execute large construction tasks.

“Economic development is important for jobs, not only for our members but also for residents. We are pleased with Mayor Yaede’s record of economic development and look forward to continuing the progress that has been made,” said Greg Lalevee, Local 825 business manager.

Also in the Hamilton race, Democratic council candidates have received multiple endorsements.

The Mercer County Central Labor Council endorsed all four candidates — Daniel Keelan, Tennille McCoy, Nina Melker and Joe Santo — and the Mercer County Building Trades Association endorsed Santo and McCoy in their campaigns.

The Mercer County Federation of Democratic Women endorsed Melker, Keelan and McCoy, and the Mercer County Federation of Women endorsed Santo.

The Irish American Democrats Association endorsed Keelan and McCoy and the Hamilton Township Friends of Education, the political arm of the teachers’ union, endorsed Santo.



Voters go in and out of the entrance to the Nottingham Ballroom voting location on Mercer Street in Hamilton Township, New Jersey on the morning of Tuesday, November 8, 2011. Michael Mancuso/The Times

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"Everywhere I go, I hear people asking for a change and I truly believe our Democratic slate can provide that change," Democratic municipal chairman Gil Lugossy said in a press release.

Steve Cook, a Republican Assembly candidate in the 14th District Assembly, and Hamilton school board president Jeff Hewitson both scored the endorsements of prominent Democrats Vinnie Capodanno, a former councilman; and Connie Silakoski, member of grass-roots government watchdog group the Citizens Campaign.

Anthony Giordano, Republican candidate for the Assembly seat in the 15th District, was endorsed by the Private Enterprise Political Action Committee, an affiliate of the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey.

Assembly candidate pledges no tax increases

HAMILTON — Steve Cook, Republican candidate for a 14th District Assembly seat, pledged this week that he will not vote to raise taxes if he is elected.

He also called for the formation of a "special needs" caucus that would work to ensure that funds spent on special needs services are "coordinated, effective and consistent" to benefit the recipients.

"People with special needs should and do receive support from birth to the end of life and those services are delivered through a multitude of state departments, local governments and nonprofits and are overseen by multiple legislative committees," Cook said.

"Other than fractured oversight by various agencies, coordination comes down to ad hoc legislative committees and various governmental commissions."

Cook works as executive director of the Arc Mercer, a special needs nonprofit.

Cook noted, it does not cost a penny more to form a core group of legislators dedicated to helping those with special needs.

"It simply creates a body that will, over time, develop an expertise on these issues and make better policy for New Jersey."

Legislators visit group homes for the disabled

PRINCETON — Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli (R-Hillsborough) and Assemblywoman Donna Simon (R-Readington) last week visited two group homes on Federal Court and North Harrison Street which serve people with disabilities.

The two group homes, part of the Community Options network, house residents with disabilities as they look for jobs and explore the community.

"Every community has underserved and vulnerable populations," Ciattarelli said. "The housing provided by Community Options, which empowers people with disabilities, is a very critical element of every community's

housing plan.”

“We witnessed the high caliber of care that Community Options offer their residents and our visit proved that adults with special needs are well cared for and feel a sense of family and community,” Simon said. “Their homes are inviting, warm, well kept and an impressive sense of belonging.”

The North Harrison Street home was donated by the former Princeton Township in 2010. Community Options purchased the Federal Court home in 1994.

D-14 Republicans get legislator support

HAMILTON — In a move designed to “reinforce the competitive status of the race,” 14th District candidates will welcome multiple Republican legislators to campaign headquarters today.

Assembly Minority Leader Jon Bramnick (R-Westfield), Assemblyman Tony Bucco (R-Boonton) and Assemblyman David Rible (R-Wall) will join 14th District candidates to knock on doors and thank volunteers, in addition to recognizing legislative proposals put forth by the candidates.

The event will take place at 2 p.m. today.



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