

election '86

It's the Democrats vs. Reagan

By PHIL GALEWITZ
Collegian Staff Writer

President Reagan is noted for his communication skills, persuasive powers and exceptional management style in running a national government from the top. In this 1986 mid-term election, Reagan could add another remarkable achievement to his political career by winning big in an election where his name does not even appear on the ballot.

news analysis

The president's popularity has dropped only slightly since his landslide victory over Walter Mondale in 1984. The Republicans will be counting on that popularity to maintain control of the Senate and keep from suffering major losses in the House of Representatives. Democratic Party leaders have said that without Reagan on the ballot and given the history of past mid-term elections, they will gain in both chambers on Capitol Hill and win in state party elections. Last week, while President Reagan began a 13-state political blitz in the closing days of the campaign, he told voters that they can cast their ballots for him "one more time" by electing Republican senators on Nov. 4.

Trying to transfer his popularity to GOP candidates, Reagan coupled the personal note with a patriotic appeal, saying retention of a Republican Senate would be important not just to him but to the country.

Republicans have held the Senate since Reagan's first election as president in 1980 and now have a 53-47 majority.

The congressional race in central Pennsylvania, pitting incumbent Republican William F. Clinger against Democratic challenger Bill Wachob, is typical of many House races across the country that President Reagan will play a strong role in determining the outcome.

Over the last few weeks Centre County has become a new hot spot in the political landscape for both parties as increased attention has been focused on converting a once heavily Republican-dominated area to the Democratic side.



President Reagan waves as he leaves the White House last week on his way to a nationwide sweep campaigning on behalf of Republican candidates.

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and Vice President George Bush have appeared in the Republican corner of the 23rd District while House Majority Leader Jim Wright and Presidential hopeful Gary Hart have made appearances for the Democratic team.

Bill Wachob's showing in 1984 election has turned heads in Washington at the national Republican headquarters after he came within 6,000 votes of upsetting Clinger in the election.

In 1984, U.S. Rep. William F. Clinger enjoyed the popularity of most Republicans as Reagan was winning every state except Minnesota. The nation was enjoying a time of economic recovery and peace at home and abroad. Young voters especially identified with the chief executive and the party as one with upward mobility.

Two years later, GOP popularity remains strong but terrorist attacks on Americans abroad, cuts in student aid and a \$220 billion budget deficit will hurt the party's chances for victory next week.

During Dole's visit, Clinger said Reagan's popularity won't hurt his chances against his Democratic opponent. Many state and federal political officials believe this could be the understatement of the campaign. GOP congressmen suffered a scare earlier this month after the Iceland pre-summit negotiations failed and many observers blamed Reagan's insistence on keeping alive plans for a Star Wars system despite a lack of scientific knowledge about the technology.

However, the administration's full-scale public relations campaign, which started with an address to the nation the day following the talks, has influenced public opinion. In the past

week, Reagan has argued that the Reykjavik meeting was a broad success. His direct appeal has appeared to work.

According to an ABC news poll, 78 percent of those polled last week said the summit would make no difference in how they will vote in the congressional election. The poll also showed that 69 percent of Americans approve of Reagan's policies toward the Soviet Union.

Absence at voting times, funding from questionable sources and voting on higher education funding are being debated by both candidates but Clinger's support of Reagan's second term may be the most vital determining factor in the outcome next Tuesday.

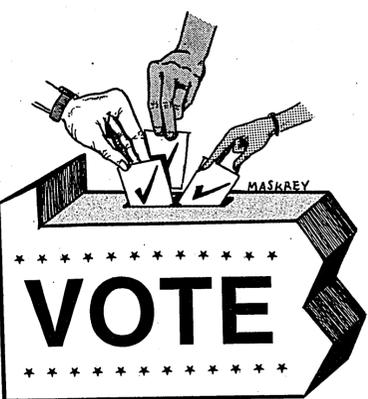
With a strong support of the national Democratic Party, Wachob has said the renewed interest in the central Pennsylvania district may detract from Reagan's popularity.

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Singel said Republicans will face a rude awakening in two weeks because the majority of the people have negative feelings toward the GOP's negative state, federal policy and slick media advertising.

Although the Pennsylvania state senator recognizes Reagan's popularity as a force to be reckoned with, he said that with the Democrats gaining 78 percent of the vote last year, popularity cannot be transferred from one level to another.



Wachob and Democratic Senate candidate Bob Edgar are counting on the young vote again this year because they said the Republican Gramm-Rudman bill has brought savage budget cuts to student aid.

One irritant to Specter was removed last week when Robert Smith of Harrisburg dropped his independent-conservative write-in campaign for U.S. Senate.

Smith, former Dauphin County Republican chairman, had criticized both Edgar and Specter as being too liberal for Pennsylvania and complained that Specter had not supported the president enough.

Specter said he has always had the best interests of Pennsylvania in mind and was never afraid to differ in opinion with President Reagan. He said the president is supporting his re-election bid.

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Wright has accused Clinger of going along with all of Reagan's policies even if they are not good for his home district. The senior House member from Texas compared the manner that Clinger follows Reagan's ideas to the way "a clown pulls the prize ball across the ring at the county fair."

Clinger's supporters disagree. Vice President George Bush said at a Clinger rally in Dubois that the Pennsylvania congressman does not always vote with the president. Bush admits, though, that President Reagan does count on Clinger's vote on

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Congressional contest pits two old rivals

Education a priority for Wachob

By PHIL GALEWITZ
Collegian Staff Writer

Bill Wachob will try for a second time next week to take away incumbent William F. Clinger's 23rd District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Johnsonburg native is ardently opposed to the Gramm-Rudman budget balancing law because it has brought cuts to student aid and will enable only the wealthy to get a college education.

Wachob was a state representative from Clearfield County from 1979 through 1984. The 33-year-old challenger considers education a major priority for the future of the country. He has accused Clinger of not supporting education and placing too high a price tag on national defense.

Wachob said he will work to restore any financial aid cuts and assure that public schools do not have to use outdated textbooks. He supports a minimum salary for teachers to help the state compete with private industries for the best young



Bill Wachob

people in the Commonwealth.

In the state General Assembly, Wachob voted to increase funding to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency to ease the strain of federal cutbacks.

"I will thwart any opportunities that will only let the very poor and very rich go to college," Wachob said.

The economic recovery that has restored many areas of the country has not taken place in the 23rd District, he said.

Wachob's employment plan includes \$5 billion in federal funding for road and bridge construction, the creation of a development bank to provide low-interest loans to business for retraining and expansion, and a tougher foreign trade policy.

Clinger says he'll focus on economy

By PHIL GALEWITZ
Collegian Staff Writer

Republican William F. Clinger is seeking his fifth term as U.S. representative for the 23rd Congressional District, composed mostly of central and northwestern Pennsylvania including Centre County.

Clinger said he wants to continue to improve the economic climate of the country and reduce the \$220 billion national deficit. He is a stern supporter of the Gramm-Rudman budget-balancing law.

The Warren County native, with degrees from Johns Hopkins University and the University of Virginia, sits on the House Committee on Governmental Operations and the Committee on Public Works and Transportation.

The 58-year-old congressman said he has promoted education by supporting the Higher Education Reauthorization Act, which amends many student aid programs that began in the 1960s.

"The district has received 322 percent of the national



William F. Clinger

average in college aid," Clinger said. Education funding rose from \$14 billion in 1980 to \$17.8 billion in 1986.

Clinger said he is aware of student concerns and has established a solid voting record by supporting maintenance of funding for education.

The Republican congressman introduced legislation this year that would protect student aid

programs from being cut under Gramm-Rudman. Clinger has fought to save embattled federal agencies like the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Economic Development Administration, which have provided grants and loans to create industrial growth. He has also supported federal funds for elderly housing, toxic waste cleanup, transportation and clean water.



Colorado Sen. Gary Hart speaks to reporters at a campaign rally for Bill Wachob in the Congressional challenger's hometown of Johnsonburg.



Vice President George Bush speaks at a campaign luncheon on behalf of U.S. Rep. William F. Clinger in Dubois. Clinger is a Republican running for re-election in the 23rd District in 1986.

The presidency may ride on outcome of '86 race

By MEGAN O'WATZ
Collegian Staff Writer

Dust from this year's congressional and state campaigns has yet to settle, but already certain names are being whispered as possible contenders for the 1988 presidential nomination.

news analysis

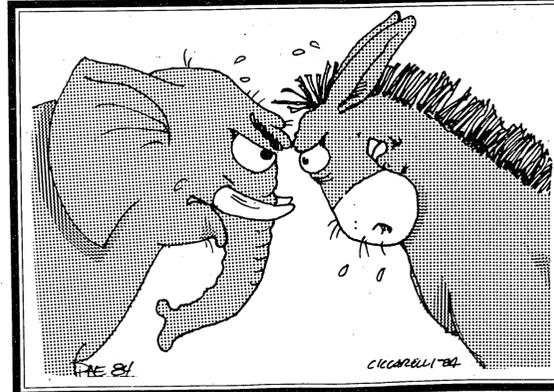
Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware, New York Gov. Mario Cuomo and Sen. Gary Hart of Colorado look to be the Democrats' most promising prospects.

Meanwhile, the Republicans, hard-pressed to find a contender equaling Ronald Reagan's popularity, are left with the bland Vice President George Bush, evangelist Pat Robertson and Rep. Jack Kemp of New York.

It's not unusual for political groups to begin looking toward the next presidential campaign moments after the newly elected president takes the oath.

Says Jeffrey Lord, White House associate director for political affairs, "I guarantee that after the 1988 election the political community will shift its eyes to 1992."

What few realize when prematurely bandying these names about is that the upshot of this year's political polling, fund raising and



muslinging may have great bearing on who becomes the nation's next president, experts say.

If the Democrats, who already command a 53-182 majority in the House, capture control of the Senate, they will be in the position to make a number of policy proposals that could form the basis of a 1988 presidential campaign, says American politics expert James Eisenstein.

Todd Bernstein, press spokesman for the state Democratic Party, calls the quest for Senate control the "64,000 question."

the 100 seats, only need to gain four. This may not be too difficult considering that out of 94 Senate races, 22 seats are held by Republicans, Bernstein said.

"The law of averages says we're not going to win all 22," Lord, a Republican, said. "But we're putting on a full-court press for those races."

Republicans realize they must do something to protect the Reagan administration from paralysis during its last two years. A Democratic victory in Congress could relegate Reagan to lame duck status and seize some of the GOP's fervor.

It also could elevate several Democrats to chairmanship status, giving prominence and greater public display to presidential-seeking senators, said Robert Friedman, University professor of political science.

But controlling a committee is not necessarily an advantage to aspiring presidential candidates, he said. Serious-minded committee chairmen have difficulty finding time to campaign while holding responsibilities on Capitol Hill.

"It's one of the great ironies of American politics," Friedman said. "You used to have to hold political office to get elected. Now you almost have to be out of office."

Both Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan captured the presidency after completing their years governing Georgia and California. Nevertheless, Democratic sen-

ators, such as Biden, would gain visibility if the GOP lost control of the senate. And Republican senators, such as Dole, would relinquish center stage.

"But there's no assurance the candidate will come from the senate," Friedman said. "And there's no assurance a Democratic takeover of the senate would aid the party in its quest to control the White House in 1988."

In 1986, America had an incumbent Democratic president, but Republicans controlled both houses of Congress.

"Truman ran against the do-nothing congress, and not only did he win, but he carried congress with him," Friedman said. "So some argue that controlling congress could be a mixed blessing."

If the Democrats captured the Senate and an economic recession hit in 1987 or 1988, the Republican controlled executive branch and the Democratic congress would accuse each other, he said.

"On the whole voters are likely to blame the people who control the executive branch," Friedman said. "If we have a recession it would probably hurt the Republicans, but they could make a stab at blaming the policies of the Democrats for the problems."

But regaining control of the Senate would put the Democrats in control of the congressional agenda, creating legislation for Reagan to accept or veto, Bernstein said.

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