

LoBiondo has \$1.1 million for primary; Adler has \$1.7 million, campaign reports show

By JULIET FLETCHER Statehouse Bureau | Posted: Wednesday, April 21, 2010 |

Two of the region's incumbent congressmen facing re-election this November have each amassed more than \$1 million in ready cash, dwarfing their opponents' campaign war chests.

However, Republican 3rd District challenger Jon Runyan has shown a willingness to spend his own money to win a U.S. House seat, newly released Federal Election Commission campaign finance reports show.

U.S. Rep. Frank LoBiondo, R-2nd, declared more than \$1.1 million in available campaign funds, an FEC filing made by his campaign April 15 shows.

U.S. Rep. John Adler, D-3rd, started the quarter beginning April 1 with close to \$1.7 million in similar funds. Opponent Runyan has \$137,000 on hand.

Political experts say the incumbents hold a sizable financial advantage over their primary opponents and possible general election competitors, but neither campaign says th

shows.

"As soon as we start to bring in money, I'll look to pay those loans back," Biamonte said, adding that her campaign has set up fundraisers for April. She said she was reaching out for money statewide but blamed LoBiondo for "causing people to shy away from funding us."

Gary Stein, a former independent candidate, filed one month ago as a Democrat looking to challenge LoBiondo in the district. But he has received no backing from county organizations and no campaign filings are available from the FEC.

"I'm not looking to raise money," Stein said late last week, explaining that he would use his candidacy to highlight issues facing Mexican immigrants, a platform that grew out of a series of personal friendships.

LoBiondo, who has been holding fundraisers, including one for 400 guests two weeks ago at the Mays Landing Country Club, said last week that he would actively fundraise despite his current advantage.

"I don't take any election for granted," he said.

In the 3rd District, which includes portions of Ocean and Burlington counties and Cherry Hill in Camden County, two Republican candidates are competing to challenge Adler: Runyan, a former Philadelphia Eagle, and Justin Murphy, who also ran in the 2008 Republican primary.

"We only opened the account 30 days ago, so that's a partial number," said Chris Russell, a consultant with the Runyan campaign, referring to Runyan's \$137,000. "We know we have some catching up to do on fundraising, but looking at the race, we feel good about the numbers and good about our candidate."

Adler's filing showed he outdid Runyan in donations from political action committees alone, totaling more than \$168,500 this quarter from groups representing corporations and interests including Bank of America, AT&T and Continental Airlines.

But Adler's campaign manager, Geoff Mackler, said those committees were not Adler's only fundraising base. "John Adler has had over 2,000 individual donors to his campaign," he said.

Murphy said by phone that he had filed his campaign disclosure in time for the April 15 deadline but said he expected it would be slower to appear online.

He could not say exactly how much cash he had on hand, but he said he could not match Runyan's total.

"Runyan has been recruited by the party bosses to bring in his war chest," Murphy said.

Runyan loaned his campaign \$100,000, his campaign's filing showed.

"I am not attempting to keep up with that," Murphy said. "I can't, and I don't think that's what voters need me to do. I'm concentrating on delivering a clear conservative message and reaching that base."

Schulman said Runyan's personal wealth could mean a steady stream of cash in the primary and beyond.

"If the polling finds that John Adler is vulnerable, you can bet that the dollars from the RNC (Republican National Committee), the RSC (Republican State Committee) and private sources will come rolling in," she said.

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