

Politics

Congressman Udall faces biggest challenge in 18 years

United Press International
TUCSON, Ariz. — Rep. Morris Udall, one-time Democratic presidential hopeful and a leading liberal spokesman in Congress, is facing one of the stiffest election challenges of his 18-year congressional career. The 58-year-old chairman of the House Interior Committee is running against a Republican businessman with oil-interest support who has shunned the campaign style of a long string of candidates buried by Udall and his aides.

Richard Huff, 54, is a political novice, but his well-financed media campaign and his refusal to confront the incumbent in face-to-face debate have left Udall charging "dirty" politics.

"One of the things that makes it one of his (Udall's) stiffest races is money coming in from outside the state," says Lars Pedersen, Pima County Democratic chairman. "He's been targeted by the Republican National Committee; you have oil money coming in, you have task money coming in."

Last week, Udall revealed he has suffered for five years from a mild case of Parkinson's Disease, a sometimes fatal degenerative brain illness characterized by a rhythmic tremor and muscular rigidity.

"I wouldn't run for Congress if I didn't think I could handle my responsibilities and duties," Udall said. Huff said he would not raise the illness as an issue in the campaign.

In 1976, Udall made a strong bid for the Democratic presidential nomination, but lost to Jimmy Carter. He then resolved to stick with his congressional post, and this year quickly squelched talk of making him the vice presidential nominee.

Udall went to Congress in 1961 to succeed his brother Stewart, who had been named secretary of the Interior Department by President Kennedy.

After winning nine two-year terms handily, Udall began campaigning 2½ months early this year.

Huff budgeted \$500,000, including \$150,000 of his personal funds, in the quest to represent Arizona's sprawling 2nd Congressional District, including Tucson, a city of 300,000, and widely scattered ranches, farms and small towns.

Huff, a West Virginia native who developed a successful real estate business in Tucson, has hammered at Udall's voting record, claiming he is too liberal and out of touch with his conservative Arizona constituency.

Udall's district has been battered economically by the 1980 copper industry strike and Udall and Huff have sparred in the media about unemployment, Social Security benefits, tax cuts and defense spending.

Udall's stand on environmental issues prompted contributions to Huff's campaign from at least a dozen major oil company interests, but Udall has financing from the AFL-CIO and other labor groups.

Reagan calls hostage crisis 'humiliation'

United Press International
LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Ronald Reagan Tuesday attacked President Carter's handling of the Iran hostage crisis, saying the situation is "a humiliation and disgrace to this country" and he has "some ideas" on how to gain freedom for the 52 Americans.

"I believe this administration's foreign policy helped create the situation and the fact that they've been there so long is a humiliation and disgrace," Reagan said as he left a Louisville hotel.

The Republican presidential candidate, who criticized Carter on the hostages at a rally Monday, appeared to be escalating the hostage stalemate as a campaign issue. But again Tuesday he declined to say how he would handle the problem.

"I may have some ideas but you don't talk about them in public," he told reporters. "That's been the problem all along — he (Carter) has been doing all his negotiating through the press and that's not quiet diplomacy."

The hostages, seized by Iranian militants who stormed the U.S.

Embassy in Tehran, will have been held captive for one year on Nov. 4 — election day.

Reagan made his comments as he began a campaign trip that will take him to southern Illinois, and later stops in Kansas City, Mo., and Shreveport, La.

With the election only two weeks away, the Reagan campaign is seeking to blunt two potent Carter charges — that his policies could lead to nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union and that his anti-Equal Rights Amendment position is anti-woman.

Encephalitis risk seen low

United Press International
HOUSTON — Health officials suspect a fourth death may be due to St. Louis Encephalitis but say an outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease is virtually over because cooler weather will diminish mosquito populations.

A Houston Health Department spokesman said a man, 79, who died Sept. 22 is now suspected to have died of the disease, an infection of the nervous system.

Officials so far this year have counted 41 confirmed cases, including three deaths, and 24 suspected cases of St. Louis Encephalitis.

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Carter still sure of his re-election

United Press International
WASHINGTON — President Carter said Tuesday he thinks Americans will overcome their "transient dissatisfaction" with high inflation and unemployment and elect him on Nov. 4.

He was asked on the ABC-TV "Good Morning America" program why the election appears very close with 14 days to go and why some voters say they will support him against Republican Ronald Reagan as "the lesser of two evils."

"Up until the time that people go to the polls to vote, particularly in a general election, there's an inclination to compare a candidate with perfection — a combination of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson and maybe Harry Truman and Roosevelt," Carter said.

He said voters are rightfully concerned about high inflation, unemployment and other problems.

"But being concerned about an issue does not prevent an American from making a sound judgment about his or her own future," he said.

As election day draws near, the president predicted Americans will decide to vote on how they feel the outcome will affect "the people they love, their families, the status of their whole nation, the prospects for stability and the control of nuclear weapons."

"These things are very important and I think there will be more of a consideration in the future — not just some transient dissatisfaction with exact percentages on inflation, which is too high, on unemployment, which is too high," he said.

Carter was cut off in the middle of his final response for a commercial and ABC later explained that a computer automatically cut the commercial on at 8 a.m. EDT.

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