

Ex-Senate aide wins Republican runoff for DeLay's old congressional seat

Voters make picks in congressional, Railroad Commission races.

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An ex-Senate aide defeated a former city councilwoman in a runoff election Tuesday as Houston-area Republicans chose a nominee for former U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay's old congressional seat in District 22.

Pete Olson overpowered Shelley Sekula Gibbs with 68 percent of the vote to her 31 percent in unofficial, complete returns.

Olson will face first-term Democratic Rep. Nick Lampson in the November election for what has been a traditionally Republican seat.

Sekula Gibbs got the most votes in March in the 10-candidate Republican field.

Both GOP candidates have ties to Washington.

Olson was an aide to former U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm and current Sen. John Cornyn of Texas.

Sekula Gibbs, a former Houston City Council member, temporarily held the congressional office after DeLay resigned his seat in 2006 following his indictment in a Texas campaign finance case.

Harris district attorney

In the race for district attorney of Harris County, which includes Houston, Pat Lykos, a former police officer and judge, defeated Kelly Siegler, a flamboyant prosecutor, with 53 percent of the vote to gain the Republican nomination.

Chuck Rosenthal resigned as district attorney amid a contempt of court charge and a scandal involving racist, pornographic and political e-mails found on his county computer.

Some were sent by Siegler's husband, physician Sam Siegler.

Kelly Siegler had attempted to distance herself from the e-mails, but she also took heat for her unorthodox, rule-bending courtroom style.

Lykos, who says the office needs a leader who's not connected to the scandals, will face Democrat C.O. Bradford, a former Houston police chief whom Rosenthal once charged with perjury.

Bradford was accused of lying under oath about chastising a subordinate, but a judge summarily acquitted him after prosecutors laid out their case.

U.S. House District 32

In another congressional race, Democratic lawyer Eric Roberson beat retired businessman Steve Love for the District 32 seat in Dallas. The incumbent, Republican Pete Sessions, faced no opposition in the primary.

Statewide turnout

A trickle of voters cast ballots Tuesday.

By contrast, a record 4.25 million Texans voted in the March 4 party primaries as Illinois Sen. Barack Obama and New York Sen. Hillary Clinton battled in the Democratic presidential race and Republican John McCain sought to seal the GOP presidential nomination.

Railroad Commission

The only statewide runoff was on the Democratic side, where therapist Mark Thompson beat retired petroleum engineer Dale Henry for the Texas Railroad Commission nomination, with more than 58 percent of the vote.

During the campaign, Henry, who ran unsuccessfully for the position in 2004 and 2006, said he could "speak the language of the industry."

Thompson, a therapist for the blind, said the Railroad Commission has been a place of "political patronage," and called for change.

Thompson will face Commission Chairman Michael Williams, a Republican seeking a third term on the three-person panel that oversees the state's oil and gas industries.