

# Bob Franks Launches Campaign For Fourth Term in U.S. Congress

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Huddled in a small room in the rear of the Kenilworth Diner last Thursday afternoon, Congressman Bob Franks, of Berkeley Heights, officially kicked off his reelection bid in Union County for a fourth term to the United States House of Representatives. Mr. Franks also held campaign kick-offs at the Golden Corner Diner in Bound Brook and the Edison Family Restaurant.

The three-term Congressman is likely to face first-term Democratic Fanwood Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly in November. Today is the last day to file petitions for the Tuesday, June 6 Primary.

The Seventh Congressional District encompasses communities in three counties - Middlesex, Somerset and Union. The latter includes Westfield, Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Mountainside. Both Mr. Franks and Mrs. Connelly reside in Union County.

"The past few years have been a time of remarkable change in Washington. When I came to Congress six years ago, I could only dream of the day when the federal budget was in balance, when welfare reform was a reality, when our nation's economy was thriving and when families could finally gain a measure of tax relief."

"We've now begun to reach those goals. But make no mistake about it. There's still much more that needs to be done," Congressman Franks stated.

Among the Congressman's goals if reelected are the replacement of the current Internal Revenue Service tax code, improving transportation options for residents of Central New Jersey, working for tough new laws to keep children safe from predators - including on the Internet and preserving the long-term financial stability of Social Security.

Mr. Franks said the current system of over 475 different tax forms and 280 instruction sheets on how to fill out the complex tax forms caters to the over 67,000 lobbyists who are vowing to fight to keep the system intact.

He said the system is "riddled with loopholes that are designed to benefit only the wealthy and the powerful at the expense of hardworking families." "Most Americans are so afraid of making a mistake that they now go through the expense of hiring a tax accountant," he said.

Congressman Franks emphasized that taxpayers "must stand up for change by demanding a simpler, fairer and more honest tax system."

The Congressman, 46, standing

with his wife, Fran, and daughter, Kelly Amanda, also vowed to continue his efforts as the Co-Chairman of the Congressional Caucus on Missing and Exploited Children, to "continue leading the fight for tough new laws against those sick individuals who prey on our children whether it's on the Internet or at the playground."

"We need to make our schools and neighborhoods safe for our kids to learn and play. And we cannot tolerate any violence in our schools," Mr. Franks told his supporters.

Also on the Congressman's list of objectives if elected to a fourth term is the preservation of the Social Security system for future generations. Noting that the Baby Boomers - the largest generation in the history of America - will soon begin to retire, he said the system could collapse in the early part of the 21st century.

Although the system is currently "financially sound in the short-term," Mr. Franks said if nothing is done to keep Social Security afloat, the system's trust fund "will begin to collapse under the strain of so many retirees" within 14 years. He said Congress needs to act quickly to secure "long-term soundness" for Social Security not just for today's retirees but for the nation's youngest workers.

"The first step (to preserve Social Security) is to stop spending money from the Social Security Trust Fund to pay for other programs," he said.

The Congressman is New Jersey's only member of the House Budget Committee. He said, in this regard, that he has fought hard "to end deficit spending in Washington," noting that when the current federal fiscal year ends on Thursday, October 1, "the federal budget will be balanced for the first time in 30 years". He further noted that Congress will end the year with a budget surplus.

Getting back to taxes, he said the average American family spends more in taxes - federal, state and local property taxes - than they do on clothing, food and shelter combined. "Ladies and gentlemen, that is simply not acceptable," Congressman Franks stated.

He explained that in 1997, Congress took the first step to ease the tax burden on working families by including a \$500 tax credit for raising a child in addition to what he described as "a host of new tax breaks" to help parents pay for their children's college education.

He said he made saving the Medicare system, which was "teetering on bankruptcy," a priority while in Congress. During his tenure in Congress

Mr. Franks has also witnessed the reform of the Welfare system which now "promotes work, personal responsibility and the value of family." He noted that last year the Welfare rolls "dropped by an astounding 25 percent."

Another area the Congressman has vowed to continue to push for are federal transportation funds for New Jersey. Mr. Franks, a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, chairs the Subcommittee on Railroads.

In addition to repairing highways and bridges in one of the busiest traffic congestion states in the nation, Congressman Franks said new mass transit alternatives to single-passenger automobiles are also needed to reduce the burden on the state's infrastructure.

In this regard, he said this is being accomplished by several projects such as the restoration of passenger rail service on the West Trenton line and such as adding a new stop at Townley Station in Union Township on the NJ Transit's Raritan Valley Line.

Congressman Franks, a Berkeley Heights resident, was first elected to Congress in 1992. He replaced long-time Congressman Matthew P. Rinaldo who retired.

Mr. Franks previously served from 1979 through 1992 as Assemblyman in the 22nd State Legislative District, a four-county area which includes communities in Essex County along with the three counties in his current Congressional District.

He was Republican State Chairman in 1988 and 1989, and from 1990 to 1992.



David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
RUNNING FOR A FOURTH TERM...Congressman Bob Franks, of Berkeley Heights, holds his four-month old daughter, Kelly Amanda, prior to launching his reelection campaign last Thursday. Congressman Franks announced his drive for a fourth term in the United States House of Representatives during a stop at the Kenilworth Diner. His wife, Fran, is at right.

# School Board to Minimize Relocation Of Pre-School Handicapped Classes

By SUSAN M. DYCKMAN  
Specially Written for The Times

Board of Education members and parents seemed satisfied with the board's decision Tuesday to keep relocation of Scotch Plains-Fanwood Pre-School Handicapped (PSH) classes to a minimum for the coming school year.

Following weeks of discussion with parents, staff and administration, and revised recommendations from Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Carol B. Choye, the board ultimately voted to move just one class for the 1998-1999 school year.

The existing Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) class will move out of Coles Elementary School into McGinn Elementary.

The PDD class at McGinn will consist of older pre-schoolers who are likely to be mainstreamed into Kindergarten and first grade in their home schools for 1999-2000.

The remaining pre-school classes will remain at Brunner Elementary (one Title One class, mornings and afternoons; three PSH classes, six sections, mornings and afternoons), and at School One (one Title One class, mornings and afternoons, and one PDD class).

No pre-school classes will be housed in Park Middle School as originally proposed by Dr. Choye.

Emphasizing that the move provides a "one-year solution" only, Dr. Choye said the district would step up formation of an Enrollment and Facilities Task Force to May, rather than waiting until the fall.

In other business, seniors Allison

Zatorski and Brian Spitzer from Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHS) shared their senior portfolios.

Guidance Supervisor Karen McDermott explained the portfolios contain a personal statement of goals, a résumé and representation of achievements. These are used by students during college and job interviews.

Though the program was launched in senior English classes this year, the junior class at SPFHS will begin drafting their portfolios later this spring.

"My portfolio offered a coherent way to present everything about myself," said Alison, who will attend the University of Michigan in September. "I think it will be especially helpful for juniors going into senior year."

"Interviewers were very impressed with the portfolio," added Brian, who plans to attend Boston College.

Parents questioned the board's recent decision to eliminate second-grade standardized testing in favor of administering a district-generated

test. Lisa McNally of Scotch Plains said, "The first-grade district test (implemented last year) didn't tell me anything I didn't already know. Could the second grade test tell us where our child ranks in comparison to other students in the district?"

"I want a standardized test," said Miriam Silverman of Fanwood. "I'd like to know how kids are ranking on a nationwide basis."

Ms. Silverman also questioned the class time missed by a second-grade teacher at Brunner School who helped prepare the district test. Board President Dr. Donald E. Sheldon promised a public response to the inquiry.

Fanwood resident Gerry Vadas repeated his demand for answers regarding an October 1997 incident during which his four-year-old son was "missing for almost two hours" after being picked up by a Vogel School Bus from the Brunner PSH program.

"Five months later we are still trying to get some answers," he stated in a letter.



RECREATING THE OLD WEST...Fourth graders in Karen Kashlak's class at Washington Elementary School dressed in costumes of famous people in history from the Old West. Pictured, left to right, are: top row, Jenna Vandervort, Jennie Scollon, Emma Laird; front row, Diana Goodman, Kristina Fietkiewicz, Katherine Itz and Emily Cleaves.

## Laura Van Wyk Makes University Dean's List

Laura Van Wyk of Westfield was recently named to the Dean's List for the Fall 1997 semester at American University in Washington, D.C.

Individuals named to the Dean's List must attain a grade point average of 3.55 out of 4.0. A sophomore, Laura is majoring in International Studies.

## Colleen Spotts Inducted Into Phi Zeta Kappa

Colleen Spotts of Scotch Plains has been inducted into Phi Zeta Kappa, the junior honor society at Fairleigh Dickinson University's Florham-Madison Campus.

Eligibility for Phi Zeta Kappa is established by completing at least 60 credits toward an undergraduate degree with a cumulative grade point average of 3.20 or better out of a possible 4.0

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