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Mills, Wilson vie for Senate

Will fight for shot at Reynolds



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Two Republicans say they will run for the 32nd District Senate seat held by Democrat Mike Reynolds.

Mike Wilson, general manager of WCVK, a Christian radio station, and Ed Mills, chief financial officer of Hit Cents, have filed with the Kentucky Election Registry and Finance Commission to begin raising money for the May primary. Reynolds, who won a special election earlier this year for the seat formerly held by Republican Brett Guthrie, said he would seek re-election.

Both Mills and Wilson sought the Republican Party nomination in January when Guthrie resigned, but lost to attorney J. Marshall Hughes, who in turn was defeated by Reynolds in a special election.

"I don't know that Mr. Reynolds has had much of an opportunity to prove himself one way or the other," Wilson said. "But I think we need to get our budget under control. Without the federal stimulus money, we wouldn't have a balanced budget without deep cuts.

"I feel like the governor did some wrangling with the special session to try to get gambling with a \$1.3 billion enticement (for schools) to get conservative Democrats to vote for," Wilson said. "I just don't believe (gambling) is the issue we need to focus on."

Mills, who goes to church with Reynolds at St. Joseph Catholic Church, said the two have many of the same family values.

"I just have a few more Republican conservative values than he does ... and I just feel like my experience in small business can help," he said.

It's not clear how Mills and Wilson will distinguish themselves from each other, with both touting their conservative philosophies.

"We need to be focused on expanding the tax base by working with local government and national leaders ... to see how we can bring jobs to our community," Wilson said. "The people I talk to are really hurting. There are a lot of families who have lost jobs."

Mills said job creation is important.

“Economic development is high on my list,” he said.

A key factor in expanding economic development will be to find “practical ways” to improve the educational system and continue to support the success at Western Kentucky University, Mills said.

Mills said he also wants to make sure veterans are welcomed back to Kentucky when returning from deployment, with continued legislation to offer them training, job placement or other services.

Wilson said while campaigning he wants to get across to voters that he is a social conservative, pro-life, a sportsman a gun owner who is a member of the NRA, is for freedom of religious expression and is a fiscal conservative favoring less government and allowing people to keep more of their money.

Mills, who spent 30 years of his life at General Motors, said he has had the earning and learning phases of his life and now it’s time for his serving phase.

“A lot of people talk about politics and what’s going on in different pockets of government, but I felt like I wanted to try to make a difference,” he said.

As for campaigning and fundraising, Wilson said he’s been advised to raise about \$50,000 for the primary.

“That would only be a small fraction of what you would need to run in the general election,” he said.

Mills thinks he can run an effective campaign, using his skills with social media (he already uses Twitter and has a Web site at edmillsforsenate.com), for \$25,000 to \$30,000.

“I really think Obama did a great job using social media and tilted the campaign in his favor,” he said. “I feel like I can run a strong campaign through social media.”

As for Reynolds, who currently faces no Democratic opposition, he said he continues to get around Butler and Warren counties, talking to residents and getting their sentiments on the issues.

“I’ve worked really hard at doing what I think is best for this district,” he said.

“We’ve passed three bills in the special session that all dealt with economic development,” Reynolds said. “Now we’ve just got to land the jobs.”

Reynolds said he believes there are prospects on the horizon for the region.

“But I will leave that up to (Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce President) Jim Hizer and Eva Hawes to talk about,” he said.

Hawes, the mayor of Morgantown, has previously declined to comment about a deal that would involve a former industrial building in the community that the city plans to renovate.

“The governor just moved Larry Hayes to be the head of the Economic Development Cabinet and that’s one good move that’s been made,” Wilson said. “And when you see that the stock market has gone up 30 percent since we got out of the regular session in March, it says to me good things are on the horizon.”