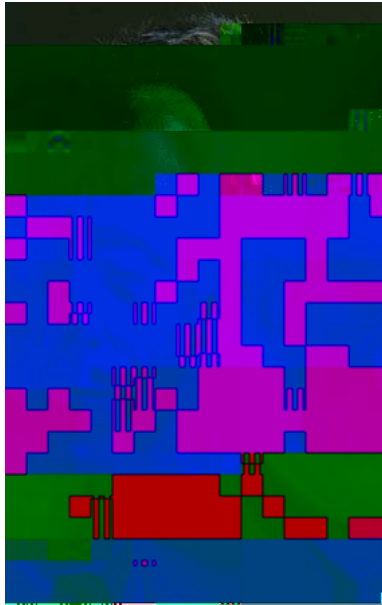


In N.J.'s First District, economics drives campaigns



State Sen. Jeff Van Drew



GALLERY:
Assemblyman
Nelson Albano

By Maddie Hanna, Inquirer Trenton Bureau

POSTED: October 28, 2013

SOUTH JERSEY Democratic incumbents and Republican challengers agree strengthening the economy is the priority in the First Legislative District, which spans parts of Cape May County and two other counties that have the highest unemployment rates in the state - Cumberland and Atlantic.

But who is better equipped to do it?

The Democrats, Sen. Jeff Van Drew and Assemblymen Nelson Albano and Bob Andrzejczak, say they have a record of fighting for a region at risk of being overlooked by the state - "deep, deep South Jersey," Van Drew says - touting efforts to save jobs and win the district its share of benefits.

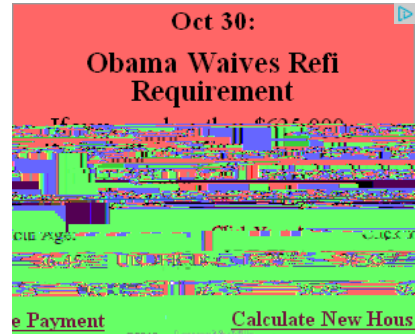
In a district where registered Republicans outnumber Democrats, the incumbents emphasize cooperation with the Republican governor, citing the 2 percent property-tax cap Democrats helped pass in 2010 and votes in support of the governor's budgets.

During a debate last week in Cape May, Van Drew held up a letter he said Gov. Christie sent to thank him for supporting the governor's first budget.

"This is from 2010, ladies and gentlemen. This is when he wasn't that

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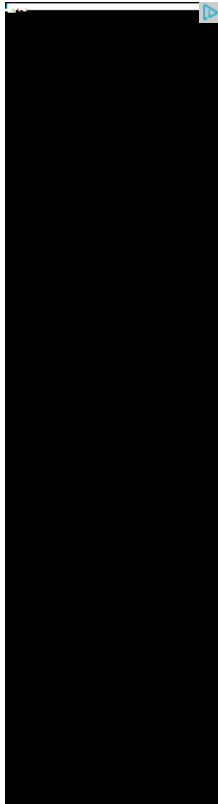
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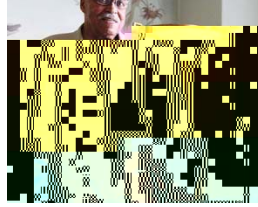
According to recent polls, she faces a steep challenge. Van Drew, a dentist who served three terms in the Assembly before becoming a state senator in 2008, led Adelizzi-Schmidt by 29 points in a Stockton Polling Institute poll released Oct. 15.

For the Assembly seats, the same poll showed Albano, an assemblyman since 2006, leading with 25 percent, with running mate Andrzejczak - who was appointed this year after Democrat Matthew Milam resigned - next at 22 percent. Fiocchi, who ran for Assembly in 2011, polled at 18 percent and Gabor, 17 percent.

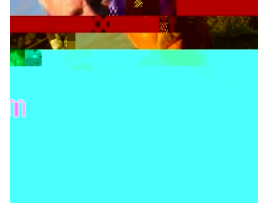
The Republicans have been on the offensive, calling on Van Drew to denounce an ad attacking Adelizzi-Schmidt's business practices that was produced by a Washington super-PAC. They are also drawing attention to a complaint a state ethics committee is investigating against Albano, who said he was mistreated by police when ticketed for speeding last year.

Video from a camera in the trooper's car obtained by the Newark Star-Ledger appears to cast doubt on Albano's version.

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