

15th District State Senate

Election '98

Republican State Senator Willis Bullard and Republican State Representative Barbara Dobb are competing for a 6-year term in the 15th District senate during the Aug. 4 primary election.

The 15th State Senate District includes the communities of Commerce Township, Highland Township, Keego Harbor, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Milford, Novi, South Lyon, Lyon Township, Walled Lake, West Bloomfield, Wixom and the northern portion of Novi.

Name: Bill Bullard Jr.
Age: 55
Family: Children - Willis Bullard, III, Melissa Ann, and Kaila Michelle.
Occupation: State Senator and attorney.
Education: Bachelor's degree, University of Michigan; law degree, Detroit College of Business.



Community/civic involvement: Member of the following Chambers of Commerce: Huron Valley, South Lyon, Lakes Area, Novi, Farmington and West Bloomfield. Supporter of numerous community, civil and charitable causes in 15th senate district and Oakland County.

Name: Barbara J. Dobb
Age: 48
Family: Parents, sister, brother-in-law and two nieces live in district.
Occupation: State representative and certified public accountant.
Education: Master's degree in taxation and bachelor's degree in accounting from Welsh College.

Community/civic involvement: Commerce Township planning commissioner from 1989-1990. Involved in West Bloomfield Optimists, Oakland County 2000, several area Republican women's clubs, Women's Action for New Direction, American Legislative Exchange Council, and member of the following Chambers of Commerce: Lakes Area, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield and Huron Valley.

WHY SHOULD PEOPLE ELECT YOU?

Bullard: "I feel I've been an effective senator in the two years since I won the special election in June of 1996. I have a background in the legislature - now 14 years in the house two years in the senate. I believe I have a record of leadership in the tax area in particular. Of the governors 24 tax cuts, four of the 24 I sponsored."

Dobb: "I feel strongly that the legislature is not an apportionment program and that incumbents should not be using their positions to influence these races or to try to keep challengers out of these races."

With 20 years of accounting experience in the district, "I can see the impact first hand of what happens when we pass something in Lansing. I've got a record of leadership in the legislature - of being able to build consequences on both sides of the aisle, the Democrats and the Republicans, to get pieces of legislation passed." Dobb was on the original team that helped craft and put the framework of Proposal A together.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE MAIN ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT?

Bullard: High taxes, roads and education. "I have a bill that I introduced over a year ago to cut the income tax rate from 4.4 percent to 3.9 percent. To give the most people the broadest-based tax relief, I think the fairest way is an across the board rate cut in the income tax. I sponsored a bill which increased the floor of the (single business tax) to \$250,000 gross receipts so that businesses underneath that level per year don't have to file a return or pay a tax." Introduced bills calling for a repeal of personal property tax in some areas.

On roads, "I did support the four cent gasoline tax increase. Of the \$300 million that we raised in new money for roads, at the state level about \$250 million came from the gasoline tax increase." However, he said, roads funding should be based on number of lane miles, not linear miles. "Orchard Lake Road, a five lane road, is equated in the formula to a two-lane road up north."

On education, he said the expulsion law for bringing weapons to school should be toughened "though a lot of responsibility has to be on the local schools to identify children who have problems and try to address those problems." He said he's proud of the amendment to change the school funding formula to 60 percent of the current year enrollment averaged with 40 percent of the former year's student population. "That brought, in the first year, \$2.5 million more dollars to Oakland County Schools. I have a plan to bring that up to 100 percent."

WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON INCOME TAX CUTS?

Bullard: "In my opinion everybody who works needs an income tax cut. That's why I support the rollback from 4.4 to 3.9 percent." "We all know that tax cuts do have an impact and, in fact, it does help stimulate the economy so I think to stimulate the economy the broadest-based tax cut to the most people would be the best and I think that's an income tax rate cut." Also supports tax fairness for seniors on retirement income.

Dobb: Roads, safety in education, education funding, tax fairness for seniors plan and elimination of the personal property tax.

"I did not vote for the gas tax because there were no real road reforms in the gas tax package." There needs to be more cooperation between state, local and federal government to address disparity between the gasoline tax and the fuel tax. "Senior citizens, single people, young people who don't have children or additional exemptions ended up paying more at the gas pumps than families with small children who were entitled to tax credits."

On safety, "I think it's going to take all of us... to address these issues of safety. Absolutely no adult or child should have to be afraid when they're in school."

On funding, she advocates per pupil funding based on current year enrollment. She also supports changing the current single business tax to a tax that's more relative to profits and eliminating personal property tax. "I think (the personal property tax) is a huge administrative burden on most of the businesses in the state and in... a lot of the smaller municipalities, the cost to administer the tax outweighs their revenue."

HOW WILL YOU BRING MORE MONEY TO THE DISTRICT?

Bullard: "I have already brought more money to the district," through the single lump sum Durant case \$25 million payment to school districts and the change in per pupil funding. Also has worked with the public health director in Oakland County to bring more money back to the public health department. Now, he said, "I think we're going to have to work on the road funding. I think the Republican senators in Oakland County are working together to bring back more dollars to the district and we expect to be more and more successful as time goes on."

Dobb: Look at a fair distribution of money going to Lansing and coming back to districts. "I think one of the problems that we have in Oakland County is that we don't work together. We do not have a very strong unified Oakland County delegation, senators or representatives. I think there is just too much emphasis placed on who takes credit for what. There are 110 representatives and there are 38 senators. No one can single-handedly take credit for anything that gets passed by the legislature."

SHOULD ABORTION BE AN ISSUE AND WHAT IS YOUR STANCE?

Bullard: "It is an issue. I am pro-life and I voted to ban partial birth abortions. I do support the exception of abortion to save the life of a mother."

Dobb: "No, I absolutely refuse to play politics with women's lives and I think that politicians who are trying to exercise political judgment for political expediency are absolutely despicable. That is a very private issue. It should be decided between a woman and whoever else she wants to bring in on the decision." If legislation was passed to ban abortions except for health reason, she questioned how health risks would be determined and who would do that.

DO YOU SUPPORT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION?

Bullard: "Yes. One issue is the merger of DDOT and SMART. I don't support a merger until we get DDOT to a point where it does not require such a huge subsidy. But obviously we need more coordination between the two bus systems - one general manager or one entity responsible for both systems, but keep the systems separate."

Dobb: "I don't support a merger of the systems. You're talking about a suburban system and a big city urban transportation system." Supports SMART's move to tailor the system to meet the needs of the people through routes and bus sizes, but said merging is a bad idea until both companies are out of debt. However, she said, "there could be better cooperation between systems. It does not make sense to have a bus drive all the way downtown with a couple of people in it unable to make any stops on the way down there because it's a different system."

Study examines museum's future use

A detailed study is under way to document and evaluate current activities and uses of the Warner Museum.

Authorized by the Farmington city council, the study by the city's administration is expected to be ready in four to six weeks, according to City Manager Frank Lauhoff.

The report, which also is to include preliminary suggestions regarding other activities and uses for it, will be the basis of an upcoming council study session on the museum's future, Lauhoff said.

The study now under way is the next step in the council's efforts to determine how much additional revenue the cash-strapped, 16-year-old facility needs and how it might be raised.

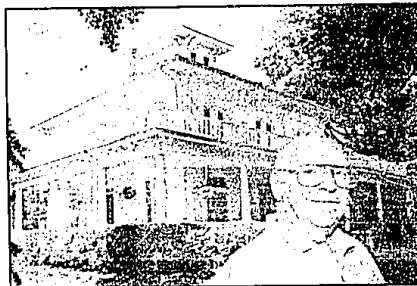
It was ordered after the council received in April the final report of the Historical Museum Development Committee, which was formed after maintenance and repairs to the facility cost the city \$20,000 to \$30,000 more than budgeted for two consecutive years.

The city owns and funds the museum, which was established in 1982 in the Civil War-era mansion that belonged to Fred W. Warner, Michigan's governor from 1905 to 1911.

The mansion and grounds, 33805 Grand River, were given to the city in 1980 for use as "an historical museum and/or as a center for community activities."

Volunteers operate the museum. A major problem is the general lack of awareness of the museum in the Farmington-Farmington Hills community and its importance to the cities, the committee said.

Lauhoff, who is overseeing the new study, said volunteers and other officials often are told, "I never knew this was here."



Historical perspective: Dick Carvell believes the Warner Mansion is a valuable learning resource.

"We need to educate the community as to why this jewel is so important," he said.

The development committee said the museum has too much potential to be sold and suggested renaming it "The Governor Warner Mansion... home of Farmington history."

The change implies "a new and expanded role in the Farmington/Farmington Hills community, rather than the somewhat restrictive use of the word 'museum'" the report said.

The committee "envisioned the Governor Warner Mansion as a focal point of Farmington and Farmington Hills history where people can see and appreciate our unique heritage."

"It should become a part of living history and a source of great community pride."

Other recommendations include outreach to both Farmington communities and area corporations, with a membership drive possibly tied to a capital improvements campaign.

Festival attracts

Dick Carvell, a study committee member and also chairman of the Farmington Historical Commission's museum committee, said Farmington Founders Festival activities attracted nearly 100 people to the museum last weekend.

"That was one of our better responses during Founders, one of our better weekends," he said. "I remember some weekends

when we wondered why we were open."

Carvell, whose interest in the museum has gotten him unofficially dubbed "curator," added that almost 400 third-graders from Farmington public schools visited the museum in May and early June as part of their local history study.

He said it's important not only "to get our history to everybody, but to teach these kids their history" and get them to appreciate it.

He said among the things the museum wants to find is a window music box from 75 to 100 years ago "to try to impress on these kids that there wasn't always electricity."

The development committee noted the mansion's use as a site for weddings - six to 12 a year in the gazebo outside the mansion - plus its use as a background for wedding and senior port pictures and visits to it by other historical societies and church groups.

In fact, according to Mike Harrison, historical commission chairman, the Eastman Kodak Company found the mansion so picturesque, it recently used it as a training site.

Such activities have helped finance the museum, but much more such financing is needed, supporters said.

Lauhoff said the museum physically "is in extremely good condition."

semi-annual clearance

now in progress

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