

Lundine Assesses His Election Chances

Labor union support, Jimmy Carter's popularity and the priorities of national Republican strategy all could play roles in Lundine's upcoming November election, the congressman admitted.

With the political season coming up soon, Lundine took time out from discussion of other issues to assess the effect of these three forces on his election chances.

While admitting it might be hopeful thinking, Lundine answered that even a continued slip in Carter's popularity might have little effect on his own election chances.

"Many of us come from districts where we hardly rode on the president's coattails," Lundine understated. For instance, Carter lost the 39th District by almost a 2-1 margin, while fellow Democrat Lundine garnered more than 60 percent of the vote.

Eyeing the other side of the question, though, Lundine conceded that voters could take out all their frustrations with federal policies (or the lack of them) on himself and other incumbents.

Next, Lundine was asked whether the national Republican kingpins have pinpointed his district as a high priority seat to regain in November.

"That district has to be a prime target district," Lundine said. "It's a very heavily Republican district (about 3-2). From some aspects, it's the most Republican district in the country represented by a Democrat."

But Lundine's district has not been mentioned in some Republican targeting information he has seen, partly because of his record in piling up more than 60 percent of the vote two years ago.

Lundine still concluded that some Republican and right-wing groups will probably pour considerable effort into beating him, although that would depend partly on the identity of his opponent.

Having piled up strong labor union support and money in his first two election bids, Lundine has been nationally cited recently for abandoning labor on a few key votes.

"I don't think I'll have any trouble getting union people from the district to understand my voting record," Lundine predicted.

But he anticipated less in contributions from national labor groups, partly because they may think he's well entrenched and partly because they could be vindictive about his record.

"I can't believe," he added, though, "that any labor union leader who has any political moxie at all would have ever thought that I would be worth more than 7 out of 10 votes or something like that. (If that were the case) I don't think I'd be faithful to the people who elected me."