

GOP congressional candidates dipping into their own pockets

FEC filings outline their campaign spending

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WASHINGTON — The three Republicans running to replace retiring U.S. Rep. Jim McCrery, of Shreveport, have tapped their bank accounts to help finance their campaigns, the latest filings with the Federal Election Commission show.

Meanwhile, the top Democrat in the race, Caddo Parish District Attorney Paul Carmouche, has received more individual contributions than any of his GOP or Democratic rivals.

Federal candidates are forced to file with the FEC once they raise or spend \$5,000 or more.

John Fleming, a Minden physician, lent his campaign \$500,010 and raised another \$120,000 from individuals and political action committees. He reported about \$359,000 on hand June 30, the end of the reporting period.

Fellow Republican Chris Gorman, a Shreveport businessman who was the first to jump into the race, lent his campaign nearly \$400,000 and raised about \$306,000 from individuals and PACs.

After spending heavily on ads, Gorman ended the reporting period with about \$347,000 on hand.

"Because of the early outpouring of financial support we received, our campaign was first on television and radio — and we have been on ever since," Gorman said in a release this week.

Bossier City lawyer Jeff Thompson is touting his ability among Republican candidates to raise money from individuals — about \$250,000.

"I appreciate every donation that has come in the door, from the lady who sent me a \$1 bill with a note that said 'God bless you' to the people who have given every other amount," Thompson said.

Thompson, who has been endorsed by McCrery and top House Republicans, ended the reporting period with about \$198,000 on hand.

But Carmouche has raised more money from individual donors than anyone running for the 4th District seat and is clearly the most successful fundraiser among Democratic contenders with about \$380,000 from individuals and about \$98,000 from PACs.

He has not made a personal loan to his campaign and ends the reporting period with more money than any of the candidates running for the seat — about \$389,000.

Another Democrat in the race, lawyer John Milkovich, has raised less than \$50,000. Retired Army officer Willie Banks, another Democrat, has raised about \$29,000. There were no federal campaign filings for Shreveport Christian Church founder Artis Cash, the fourth Democrat in the race. Chester T. Kelley, of Shreveport, has also qualified for the race.

In the heated Senate race between Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-New Orleans, and her Republican challenger, State Treasurer John Kennedy, each raised more than \$1.5 million in the last quarter.

Landrieu ended the reporting period with about twice as much on hand — about \$5.5 million to Kennedy's \$2.7 million.