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Glading not giving up against Andrews in New Jersey First District race

By James Osborne

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According to pollsters, history is likely to repeat itself next month in New Jersey's First District, where U.S. Rep. Robert E. Andrews is expected to cruise to victory over his Republican challenger, Dale Glading.

Andrews, first elected to Congress in 1990, beat the evangelical minister with 72 percent to Glading's 26 percent two years ago, despite the Democrat's potentially damaging decision to run again for the House after losing a Senate bid.

In late September, a Stockton College/Zogby poll had likely voters choosing Andrews over Glading by 59 percent to 24 percent.

But Glading, buoyed by an endorsement from Gov. Christie and a wave of outsider candidates, is confident he's got a shot. And Andrews says he isn't taking the race for granted.

The national political mood has changed greatly since 2008, when Democratic candidates rode into office with President Obama. Andrews' campaign this time focuses on scaling back government spending and encouraging the business sector to invest.

"I think we're far enough away from the cliff. The time to rein in spending is here," said Andrews, who commutes to Washington from Haddon Heights.

"I think there's a connection between the deficit and the reluctance of corporations to hire and invest," he said. "They're not confident in the country's finances."

To cut the federal budget, the 53-year-old lawyer and former adjunct law professor at Rutgers-Camden would raise the retirement age for younger workers, increase Medicare premiums for the wealthy, and cut defense spending, to some degree by changing the way the Defense Department awards contracts.

His message has similarities to the government-downsizing platform Glading has campaigned on since he decided to go after Andrews' seat a second time.

But Andrews backed the Obama stimulus plan and the health-care reform bill, high-priced pieces of legislation that Glading says typify runaway government spending.

"All we did was borrow money from creditor nations like China. We can't keep doing that," said Glading, 51, a Barrington resident who has won the endorsement of a number of tea party groups.

Glading portrays Andrews as a high-living career politician with little in common with his constituents. He has combed through his opponent's campaign-finance reports, taking note of steak dinners, expensive cupcakes purchased in Beverly Hills, and \$68,500 in donations to Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre over the last two years.

The theater, where Andrews' wife sits on the board

College, Glading asked Andrews if the lack of tort reform in the bill was the result of heavy lobbying by the American Trial Lawyers Association, which donates to Andrews' campaigns.

Seated before the crowd, Andrews said limiting malpractice suits would hurt those injured from real medical error. But he acknowledged the role of lobbying in Washington.

"Part of it is interest-group influence, no question about it," Andrews told the audience. "I don't think that's a good thing. I think that's something that happens in American politics."

Months later, Glading recited those words to lambast Andrews for voting for the bill.

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