

BIG-NAME POLITICS, ACCUSATIONS OF CORRUPTION MARK



State Sen. Donald Norcross (D-Camden)



Republican Garry Cobb is fighting Donald Norcross to fill the congressional seat vacated in February by long-time Democratic congressman Rob Andrews.

"The Norcrosses have turned (Camden) into a moneymaking machine," Cobb said. "You've got companies associated with them getting these huge tax breaks and the people in Camden aren't getting any of those jobs. It's pay to play. To do business in Camden you have to cater to the (Democratic) machine."

Not true, retorts Norcross, pointing to a badly needed grocery store that just opened in the city.

"Seventy-seven percent of the jobs there are held by Camden residents," he said. "Anybody can throw hand grenades when you have no vision. This is exactly the type of rhetoric that we don't need in Washington."

Camden is the biggest city in a district that covers all of Camden County and parts of Gloucester and Burlington counties. Despite being 70 percent white with a median annual household income of \$62,141, according to the U.S. Census-American Community Survey in 2012, the district is fairly diverse.

The candidates themselves demonstrate this: Norcross is a white union leader and politician who

Cobb says he wants to give hardscrabble urban children, teens, and adults the ability to create a vision for themselves by providing them with job training and intensive internships that could expose them to professionals in all fields. But to do so, says the candidate who's spoken out against raising the minimum wage, he has to yank people out of their comfort zones by practically requiring them to show up at jobs and attend school.

For his ideas on how to improve the lives of poor people in the district, Norcross touts his participation in the creation of the Economic Opportunity Act, which provides significant tax incentives to businesses locating in Camden.

However, during an interview with NJ Spotlight, he repeatedly answered questions about Camden by referring to issues that affect other parts of the district, such as the recent appearance of job fairs in its aging inner-ring suburbs. In his campaign materials he emphasizes his commitment to the region's ports, some of which are located in Paulsboro and Gloucester City, and calls for expanded light-rail service to the southern and eastern reaches of District 1.

On national issues, the two align with their parties. Norcross favors public school support, tax credits for caregivers, and mental health background checks for gun buyers. Where he addresses issues of public safety on his website, he discusses the passage of his bail-reform bill and the need to protect first responders, while Cobb takes on safety through the lens of national security and the need for a well-funded military. Cobb supports school choice, limited government, a flat tax structure and an overhaul of the Affordable Care Act.

The two men nod to the constituency supported by the Joint Base MDL, part of which lies within the district, by pledging support to veterans. Norcross approaches it from the perspective of tax credits for their education while Cobb says he would seek to completely overhaul the struggling VA system. They do agree on an issue that's dear to the heart of another constituency -- the significant Jewish population in and around Cherry Hill: They both stand with Israel.

But while Norcross proclaims that what the district needs is continuity and a proven record in office, Cobb and the five minor-party candidates insist that what the district needs are fewer entrenched Democratic interests.

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