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Dist. 64 Primary: 'Members Only'

By [Bill Ruffy](#)

Published: Monday, July 21, 2008 at 1:00 a.m.

Last Modified: Monday, July 21, 2008 at 6:29 a.m.

The Republican primary for Florida House District 64 is shaping up to be THE race of the Aug. 26 primary. That's in spite of the fact that only the 31,986 registered Republicans in the northern county district will be able to vote.

There are 86,163 total voters in District 64 and 313,045 voters in the entire county. But the race is shaping up to be an interesting fight for business supporters between **Phillip Walker**, who has the backing of the Lakeland Chamber's political action committee, and **Kelli Stargel**, who received the endorsement of the National Federation of Independent Business last week.

Walker is an insurance executive who has the backing of many businessmen in Lakeland. Stargel is the wife of former state representative and now Circuit Judge **John Stargel** and one of his close campaign strategists while he was in the Legislature. She has the backing of women Republican activists and many businesswomen.


Both Stargel and Walker have other endorsements as well, but proving they are the choice of business seems to be a strong goal for both.

There is a third Republican candidate, former School Board member and recently retired insurance executive, **Jack English**. English, too, is hoping that many of his business associates and contacts during his years as head of his own agency will support him. He has said that subsequent campaign finance reports will show an increase in support.

The district is now represented by Rep. **Dennis Ross**, R-Lakeland, who can't run again because of term limits.

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This is the story of a smart kid - a member of the current crop of outgoing graduating seniors. For the purposes of protecting the student's identification, I'll refer to the student as SchoolPride (SP for short.) This week, SP will walk proudly...

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