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## Abboud launches '08 bid

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 Comments (No comments posted.)

ROCKFORD – Robert Abboud is fond of saying that news of the Iraq war, global warming and the national debt is so bad that he throws things at his TV set.

On Monday, the village president of Barrington Hills threw something else: his hat into a Congressional race in response to what he calls a desperate need for political change.

Flanked by family and supporters on the steps of Memorial Hall in Rockford, Abboud announced his intent to run as a Democrat in 2008 against eight-term 16th Congressional District incumbent Don Manzullo, a Republican from Egan.

"I've got grandchildren, and I cannot in good conscience leave

them to a crushing \$9 trillion debt fueled by an economy that has lost its strategic manufacturing base, and fueled by a misdirected military action that costs \$12 billion a month," Abboud said.

"And I cannot leave my grandchildren with a global climate threatened by ignorance and greed."

The announcement by the 50-year-old nuclear engineer and business owner ends months of Abboud's not-so-quiet testing of the political waters in the sprawling district.

Abboud blasted Manzullo's tenure during his 10-minute speech, calling him a rubber stamp for President Bush's economic, social and military policies.

"My current Congressman is not a leader – if he wanted to lead, he wouldn't be such a consistent follower of failed policy," Abboud said. "A follower of the politics of the past. A follower of big business, big money and big shots who think they can decide the direction of the country without listening to us."

Manzullo spokesman Rich Carter called the remarks inaccurate and noted that Manzullo had broken with the White House on many issues, such as the Patriot Act, amnesty for illegal immigrants, and No Child Left Behind. Carter said Manzullo had done much for McHenry County and others in the district, and was working to support health-care reform and renewable energy.

"I think he has a good record that matches up with creating jobs for the area and trying to keep taxes and spending low, which is what the people want," Carter said.

Manzullo has faced light competition in recent elections. He beat his Democratic challenger with 67 percent of the vote in 2006, 70 percent in 2004 and 71 percent in 2002.

Manzullo also had a dominating economic advantage in each election, according to Federal Election Commission data. He raised almost 10 times more than opponent Richard Auman in 2006, and more than 20 times than what was raised by opponent John Kutsch in 2002. Manzullo raised \$1.25 million in 2004 to Kutsch's \$3,650.

Democratic Party representatives from McHenry County who attended Monday's announcement said they believed that Abboud will give Manzullo real competition. At the very least, said county party Chairman Tom Cynor, Abboud's business acumen could make him Manzullo's equal in fundraising.

"I think the biggest problem for the Republicans is that this person is not an insider," Cynor said. "He's a nuclear engineer, has a degree from Purdue, with some politics as mayor of Barrington Hills. That's a deadly combination, as far as I'm concerned."

The 16th District stretches from Crystal Lake west to the Iowa border and includes all or part of nine counties. It covers much of McHenry County except for the northeast corner, which falls in the 8th Congressional District represented by U.S. Rep. Melissa Bean, D-Barrington.

# COMMENTS

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