

South and east Tulsa County have long been a Republican stronghold. Since Oklahoma began electing legislators by districts instead of counties in 1964, those regions have rarely sent anyone except Republicans to the Capitol. That's unlikely to change this year, although Democrats are putting up more of a fight here than perhaps they ever have before.

Seven Republican House seats in the area — 67, 69, 70, 76, 79, 80 and 98 — are on the ballot, including three in which the incumbent lost in the primaries. Two are open seats, and the other two are held by incumbents of one term or less. A rundown of six of them follows. The seventh — HD 79 — was covered in a previous story.

HD 67: Businessman Jeff Boatman took out first-term incumbent Scott McEachin in the GOP primary, which made an upset by Democrat Carly Hotvedt in this southeast Tulsa district even more unlikely. McEachin's opposition to new taxes to pay for raises for teachers and public employees put him on the wrong side of a lot of constituents — and House leadership. Boatman, co-founder of payment processing provider Global Holdings, has received broad support from education and business interests. Hotvedt has a strong resume — she and her husband are foster parents for teenagers, and she has a law degree and is finishing a master's degree in public administration while working full time as director of Agriculture and Natural Resources for the Creek Nation — but Democrats are outnumbered in the district three-to-one.

HD 69: It's a similar situation in this district, which stretches from Jenks across south Tulsa to Bixby. Republicans outnumber Democrats three-to-one, and the defeat of an unpopular incumbent in the GOP primary means the seat will likely remain in Republican hands despite a credible Democratic candidate. Sheila Dills, who in recent years has worked mostly with programs for disadvantaged youth, carries the Republican banner, having defeated Chuck Strohm in the primary. Strohm, like McEachin, opposed this year's tax increases and was accused of being unresponsive to constituents concerned about their suburban schools and other government functions. Dills's opponent is Andy Richardson, an attorney who makes a good candidate —

but probably won't win in this district. HD 70: First-term Republican incumbent Carol Bush did not draw a primary opponent, which surprised her and a lot of other people. Quite a few Republicans grumble that she's not conservative enough and has too many Democrat friends, but no one filed to run against her in the GOP primary. Now the question is whether they'll show up to vote for her on Nov. 6. Although the midtown district tilts strongly Republican, it is not as Republican as the others on this list. Democrat J.J. Burnam, a vocal Tulsa Public Schools parent, has been working hard and might have a chance if Republicans don't turn out for Bush. HD 76: Republican Ross Ford won this Broken Arrow seat by 36 percentage points in a special election a year ago and there's not much reason to think he won't again in November. If the Republican-heavy electorate hadn't liked him, he would have been voted out or at least forced into a runoff during this year's primaries. Ford is a former law officer and Union School Board member and is well-known in the community. His Democratic opponent is Forrest Mayer, who lost in the special election primary last year. Mayer describes himself as an "informal science educator" who speaks and gives demonstrations at schools. HD 80: Tulsa firefighter Stan May ousted five-term incumbent Mike Ritze with the backing of many educators and House leadership, and all things being equal should win in November. His Democratic opponent, Janice Graham, is a retired special education teacher and school psychologist who now runs a real estate business. She seems a good candidate but, again, the district is three-to-one Republican. HD 98: Broken Arrow teacher and coach Dean Davis emerged from a crowded Republican field to win the GOP nomination for this vacant seat. The district is not quite three-to-one Republican, but it's close. Davis actually has two general election opponents, Democrat Kilmyrn Easley-Graf and independent Sean Parrish. Easley-Graf teaches performing arts at Tulsa Central High School and is trying to be the third generation of Easley to serve in the Legislature, following her grandmother and father. Parrish describes himself as a "blue

collar education advocate.â€• Randy Krehbiel 918-581-8365 randy.krehbiel@tulsaworld.com Twitter: @rkrehbiel Ge

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