



GOP rallies in Hamilton

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By SULAIMAN ABDUR-RAHMAN Trentonian

HAMILTON — Gov. Jon Corzine's declining popularity yesterday served as a rallying call for the local candidates who are hoping to get elected to state office.

Rob Calabro and Bill Harvey, the Republican challengers running for the 14th Assembly District, yesterday kicked off their campaign with an entourage of GOP bigwigs comprising the likes of Mayor John Bencivengo, state Sen. Bill Baroni and state GOP Chairman Jay Webber.

"New Jersey is in desperate need of change," Harvey said, citing the state's excessive property taxes that are the "highest in the nation."

Harvey is a 31-year-old attorney who owns his own law firm. He's lived with his fiancée in Hamilton since January 2008, but Harvey said that was long enough for him to identify with the concerns of Hamiltonians and other voters who reside in the Mercer-Middlesex 14th District.

"I'm going through the same thing as all of the taxpayers," Harvey said, adding, "It's coming to a point where people can't afford to live here anymore."

Running alongside Harvey is Rob Calabro, a lifelong Hamiltonian who owns the Porfirio's Italian Food Market here on Route 33.

The 42-year-old Calabro, who also serves on the township's Planning Board, said the voters need to oust 14th District Democratic incumbents Linda Greenstein and Wayne DeAngelo, whom he accused of being unknown politicians who follow Jon Corzine's lead.

"People ask me, who are the Assembly people in the 14th District?" Calabro said. "If the people don't know them, they must not be doing a great job in meeting the public."

"The sun is shining on us today, and I also believe it is shining on these candidates running for the 14th Assembly District," Mayor Bencivengo said yesterday at the kickoff rally out in front of the Mercer County GOP Headquarters on Whitehorse Avenue.

Sen. Baroni said Calabro and Harvey are "part of the Chris Christie tide" that will revamp New Jersey with Republican principles come Election Day. "These are two people we desperately need in Trenton fighting for our district," Baroni said of Calabro and Harvey.

"It's a great day to be a Republican in New Jersey," said New Jersey State GOP Chairman Jay Webber, also an assemblyman from Morris County. He cited yesterday's

Quinnipiac University Poll that showed GOP gubernatorial hopeful Christie with 53 percent support among likely voters to Corzine's 41 percent.

"We do expect a coattail effect with Chris Christie," Webber told The Trentonian, predicting that a majority of voters will select Christie and vote for all of the other Republicans on the ticket.

Webber and the Republicans at the rally blasted Corzine's "failed" policies, saying the Assembly Democrats passed Corzine's 2010 budget that they said was laced with \$2.8 billion in tax increases.

Calabro and Harvey expressed confidence in their chances of winning the election against the incumbents Greenstein and DeAngelo, although they conceded that the Democrats have a fundraising advantage.

"It's no secret that Republicans will be outspent by the Democrats," said Mark Duffy, the executive director of the Calabro-Harvey Assembly campaign.

But he said the GOP has a message that resonates with the public and that "we have very strong messengers in Rob Calabro and Bill Harvey."

"The voters are smart," Harvey said, adding that the voters "realize" how the Democrats' policies are "hurting them."