


Partly Cloudy 
Lows near 70, highs mid 80s. SE winds 10 to 15 m.p.h. A 40% chance of rain today. Map, data 2-A.

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Mrs. Saunders leads Kelly in 5th District race: Poll

By DAVID M. SNYDER
Pasco Times Staff Writer

NEW PORT RICHEY — JoAnn Saunders, Democratic candidate for the 5th District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, is leading the incumbent, U.S. Rep. Richard Kelly, R-Port Richey, according to a poll paid for by the National Democratic Party, Mrs. Saunders' assistant campaign manager said Thursday.

Larry Sharp said the poll, taken two weeks ago, showed Mrs. Saunders leading Kelly by 4 percentage points among 5th District voters surveyed by a Washington, D.C. opinion research firm.

SHARP DID not supply a breakdown of what percentage preferred Mrs. Saunders to Kelly, but he said that, in a name recognition survey conducted by the same firm, 30 per cent of those questioned recognized Mrs. Saunders' name while 27 per cent identified Kelly as their congressman.

Mrs. Saunders, in a speech at the opening of her West Pasco campaign headquarters, jabbed at Kelly on the recognition factor, asking the audience "Do you know who your congressman is?"

"I didn't know we had one," replied a man in the largely partisan audience at the Holiday Inn on U.S. 19 in New Port Richey.

Mrs. Saunders, who lost to Kelly in the 1974 general election, told the audience that she is "not going to take that 4 per cent lead for granted."

"I'LL BE happy with 51 per cent (of the vote in the Nov. 2 general election), and anything we get beyond that we're going to be jubilant about," she said.

Mrs. Saunders defeated four fellow Democrats to win the party's nomination in the 5th district. Her runoff primary battle with Pasco Circuit Court Clerk Miller Newton was particularly heated because Newton unsuccessfully attempted to have her name removed from the ballot in a court challenge.

"The Democrats are united, not just in Pasco County, but throughout the 5th District," Mrs. Saunders said Thursday.

She said three of her former opponents — Sid Vihlen, Don Reynolds and Jim Sursely — have agreed to help her win in the general election. She did not mention Newton.

After Mrs. Saunders' speech, Sharp told the Pasco times that the State Democratic Committee has shown a great deal of interest in the 5th District race. The committee has donated \$5,000 in cash and \$4,000 in "in kind" services to Mrs. Saunders' campaign, he said.

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