



Topsy-Turvy

boston.com News

your connection to

News A&E Business Sports Travel Your Life Cars Jobs Personals Real Estate

Today's Globe | Latest News: Local Nation World | NECN | Education | Obituaries | Special sections

[HOME](#) > [NEWS](#) > [LOCAL](#) > [MASS.](#)

POLITICAL TRAIL

The Boston Globe

For Toomey, another Green opponent

By Michael Jonas, 12/14/2003

Tim Toomey is accustomed to running for reelection. As a Cambridge city councilor and state representative, he's on the ballot for one seat or the other every year. But Toomey is now having to get used to something that he and many Beacon Hill colleagues rarely experience: a reelection challenge.

For the second straight election, the East Cambridge Democrat has drawn an opponent for the House seat he first won in 1992, and this could be his toughest challenge yet. Avi Green, a 30-year-old Cambridge resident who has been a consultant and campaign manager for several winning races, is jumping out from behind the scenes to vie against Toomey in next September's Democratic primary.

"I'm running," said Green, "because I think too many people are being ignored and excluded by the government of Mitt Romney and Tom Finneran, and I think Tim Toomey is part of that." Green managed state Senator Jarrett Barrios's winning run for state representative in 1998 and served as a consultant this year to Boston City Councilor Felix Arroyo's successful campaign.

As House chairman of the Legislature's Public Safety Committee, Toomey is a member of House Speaker Tom Finneran's leadership team. It's an association that could prove to be a double-edged sword in a district that has plenty of needs that such extra clout can help address but is also home to liberal-leaning voters who are no fans of the iron-fisted, conservative House leader.

"I'm always very independent," said Toomey, who seems to be anticipating an effort to link him to Finneran. "The Speaker and I have very different views of some issues," he said. One he pointed to was an amendment in last year's budget that would have raised the state income tax from 5.3 to 5.6 percent, a measure Toomey says he was one of only 37 lawmakers to support.

ADVERTISEMENT

TOOL

PR

IC

SEAI



P

L:

Advar

S F

Get the

L.L.E

Pr

See

Your money just lying around?

Put it to work for you!

2.00%
Annual Percentage Yield



Open an Orange Savings Account

**Great Rate
No Fees
No Minimums**

ING DIRECT
Member FDIC

In 2000, Frank Smizik defeated Ronny Sydney in the Democratic primary for a Brookline House seat by hammering away at her ties to Finneran. It remains to be seen whether such a tack will gain traction in Toomey's more working-class district, which includes his home base in East Cambridge as well as Inman Square and areas of East Somerville.

Green, said former Cambridge School Committee member Glenn Koocher, is clearly hoping to "challenge Toomey from the left and mobilize the constituency that doesn't support Toomey on issues like choice and Speaker Finneran." Though the district is less liberal than other areas of Cambridge, Koocher said Green could still prove to be a formidable foe. "What might get Toomey concerned is that Avi is a very skilled political strategist and would not rush into a race just because he's decided it would be nice to be in the Legislature. I think he's studied this race and developed a campaign strategy."

Green has also managed to raise about \$20,000 already, and has won an early endorsement from former Democratic gubernatorial candidate Robert Reich.

Last year, Toomey faced a Green Party challenger who managed to pull 37 percent of the vote. While that might suggest that a Democratic challenger positioned just to his political left could run even stronger, Toomey's Green Party opponent, Paul Lachelier, was able to tap the huge turnout in last November's gubernatorial race, an election that may have drawn a more liberal electorate.

In contrast, with no statewide posts up for grabs, next September's primary will be a very low-turnout affair, with the organizational strength of the local candidates playing a decisive role.

Michael Jonas can be reached at jonas@globe.com.

© Copyright 2003 Globe Newspaper Company.

 [PRINTER FRIENDLY VERSION](#)

[feedback](#) | [help](#) | [site map](#) | [advertising](#) | [globe archives](#)
© 2003 The New York Times Company

Save 50% on home delivery!

