



Candidate makes bid for Jenkins' Senate seat

By [Mike Hixenbaugh](#)
Rocky Mount Telegram

Sunday, November 29, 2009

N.C. Sen. Clark Jenkins will face at least one challenger in the 2010 Democratic primary election.

Frankie Bordeaux, a Greenville businessman, announced last week his plans to seek the Democratic nomination for the N.C. Senate seat held by Jenkins, D-Edgecombe. Two others, including a former Edgecombe County school board member, are rumored to have interest in the seat, but neither potential candidate has confirmed it.

Bordeaux, owner of Cambridge Behavioral Health Services in Greenville, has been critical of Jenkins' record in the legislature. The former executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of Nash/Edgecombe Counties so far has attempted to cast himself as the change candidate taking on a state government insider in Jenkins.

"People are angry and frustrated because they know that the bureaucrats and politicians in Raleigh don't listen," Bordeaux said. "Voters are angry because they know Raleigh isn't paying attention to the men and women who are working 60 hours a week just to make ends meet and to provide a decent life for their children,"

Jenkins was appointed last session as one of three co-chairmen on the powerful N.C. Senate Finance Committee, giving the fourth-term lawmaker a key role in crafting the state's budget and tax plan. Jenkins said Friday he was surprised with how early Bordeaux launched his campaign and questioned the validity of some criticisms leveled against him.

"I don't think he's done his homework," Jenkins said.

Bordeaux chided Jenkins for his support of multi-million tax incentive packages for major companies that, Bordeaux said, "leave working families holding the bill." Bordeaux said Jenkins' support of a \$200 million economic incentive to lure a Dell Computers production facility earlier this decade showed poor judgement.

"In less than four years, Dell has closed the plant and taken the jobs to Mexico," Bordeaux said. "I believe if we had provided \$200 million in job grants to small businesses, we could have created more jobs and done a better job of weathering today's recession."

Jenkins accused Bordeaux of overstating his role in the economic package and leaving out important details.

"Sure, I voted for (the incentive package)," Jenkins said. "For the record, I'll vote for any economic incentive package that comes before us. (Bordeaux) failed to mention that the state has recouped all that they have invested in that package. Dell has to repay it all."

Bordeaux said the state should focus its incentive programs on promoting small businesses that won't outsource jobs when the economy tanks. He also said he will focus his campaign on fighting for low-wealth school funding.

"There is not a single excuse for the state of North Carolina to ignore a judicial order to fund our low-wealth school systems — we must fully fund our low-wealth schools," Bordeaux said. "We haven't heard a whisper out of our current leadership about this. If I am elected, that will change."

When asked for his response to Bordeaux's candidacy, Jenkins said, "I don't really have a response. It's not even Christmas."

Filing for the 2010 election opens Feb. 8.

The primary is scheduled for May 4. General elections are Nov. 2.

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