



Top concerns: Education, corrections

Regina Goodwin, J.J. Dossett want to boost education as lawmakers

Goodwin, Dossett ready to represent Tulsa



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Matt Barnard

New state Rep. Regina Goodwin of Tulsa shakes hands with another lawmaker before Gov. Mary Fallin delivers her State of the State address. MATT BARNARD/Tulsa World



By MICK HINTON World Correspondent | Updated 9 hours ago

OKLAHOMA CITY — Two new Democratic lawmakers from the Tulsa area say they are reminded repeatedly that the next state budget will be short by as much as \$1 billion.

But that isn't keeping them from sharing the needs, particularly in education and corrections, with the majority Republican legislators.

Former teacher J.J. Dossett, 32, is a new state senator from Owasso. In a mid-January special election, Dossett won the Senate District 34 seat to fill a vacancy created by last summer's resignation of Republican Rick Brinkley.

Last summer, Regina Goodwin, 53, won the House District 73 seat, defeating six other Democrats. The seat came open when Tulsa Democrat Kevin Matthews resigned to run for state Senate.

Goodwin was born and raised in Tulsa's historic Greenwood neighborhood. A longtime community activist, Goodwin said she is glad to be representing an area where her family has been a prominent presence.

The Goodwin family has been active for decades in running the Oklahoma Eagle newspaper.

Goodwin said education and corrections are high on the list of needs. She has been helping those in the community dealing with crimes.

Goodwin said that when she was campaigning in the neighborhood, she encountered a man sitting on his front porch who said he had successfully completed a 35-year prison term. But he didn't know why he still wasn't able to vote.

Goodwin looked further into the law's intent. She has filed a bill to clarify that those who have successfully completed prison sentences are entitled to vote.

"I'm not for passing a brand-new law," said Goodwin, whose intent is to make sure that the law makes it clear that voting rights are assured.

Goodwin is an artist who loves to work with those who want to learn more about painting. She is also known for creating greeting cards that she sends to friends and relatives.

Goodwin has worked on a dozen or more projects where those attending her classes learn the techniques of drawing. She also has spearheaded a move to paint a mural on the outer wall of a longtime grocery/convenience store.

The African-Americans in the mural are united to show the love for the community where longtime black families still live.

Dossett's victory a few weeks ago has prompted some Democratic leaders to speculate that the party is on the road to eventually winning a majority in the House or Senate, or taking the governor's office.

Dossett was a teacher and coach at Owasso High School. He resigned his post because he was no longer eligible to be paid both as a teacher and legislator.

Dossett noted that his wife, Ashley, teaches second grade in the Owasso system, and both his parents and several of his in-laws have been teachers.

He and his wife have two sons: Kain, 7, and Kash, 5. Dossett is a member of the 219th Air Guard military unit out of Tulsa and has served two six-month tours of duty overseas, including one in Afghanistan.

Five years ago, Dossett was on duty in Iraq when his second son was born.

He and his wife are expecting the birth of their third son in late February. The due date is Feb. 25, a Thursday when the Legislature will be meeting.

Dossett said his wife has made it clear that she expects him to be present for this birth.

Even if the Legislature is meeting, "I'm gonna have to go home," Dossett said.

Dossett and Goodwin agree that lawmakers must help the children of Oklahoma in educational pursuits.

"If we don't take care of education, we don't take care of Oklahoma's future," Dossett said.



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