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Lautenberg, Andrews pick divergent campaign trails

■ While U.S. Rep. Rob Andrews has been on the road, incumbent Sen. Frank Lautenberg has stayed mostly in Washington — and each is championing his own style.

By **DEREK HARPER**

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TRENTON — Have you seen Rob Andrews? No matter where you are, the congressman is probably coming to a town near you this month. Maybe twice.

U.S. Rep. Andrews, D-1st, who is running to knock out long-term incumbent U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg in next month's Democratic primary, has traveled hundreds of miles in the state since jumping into the race last month.

He's made as many as 10 stops per day, mixing news conferences with commu-

■ How far is Andrews going to clinch the nomination? A long way in two days.

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for regular news releases, while criticizing Andrews for missing congressional votes. While Andrews criticized him for making few appearances, Lautenberg's

nity events and several town hall-style meetings, at least 20 of which have been planned.

Lautenberg, meanwhile, has remained largely in Washington. He's eschewed the standard campaigning

campaign has formally rejected one debate invitation and has so far sat on others.

In short, Lautenberg is running an incumbent's campaign.

Name recognition is the single biggest factor in getting elected in a low-turnout primary, said Michael Riccards, of the Hall Institute. And polls show Lautenberg, who has served in the U.S. Senate for all but two years since 1983, has that in spades.

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Lautenberg "is an established elected official, so he doesn't need (appearances) as much in a primary," said Sharon Schulman, of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. Instead, he's living in his Senate role, "and he would be faulted if he didn't do this."

Debates increase name recognition, but Riccards said incumbents generally avoid them because they stand to lose that edge. Challengers such as Andrews want them for that reason. And that's one goal of Andrews' ambitious public schedule.

Besides, Riccards said, how many people know the state is holding a June 3 primary election to determine the fall candidates for every seat below president?

"Most people think we had a primary already," he said. "They'll say, 'Didn't we just have one in February where we voted for the president?'"

So for Andrews, it's back to the trail.

On Tuesday, for example, Andrews found himself talking about the environment with Camden County College biology students and teachers. He traveled to Woodbury High School in Gloucester County and planted a tree.

Two days on the campaign trail with U.S. Rep. Rob Andrews

Andrews, D-1st, often hits the road campaigning for the Democratic U.S. Senate nomination against incumbent Sen. Frank Lautenberg.



MONDAY, APRIL 28

1 8:20 - 8:45 a.m.
Woodcrest Station, Cherry Hill

2 9 - 9:40 a.m.
Edmund Scientific, Barrington

3 10:15 - 11 a.m.
Rowan University, Glassboro

4 1:30 - 2:15 p.m.
Slack, Inc., Thorofare

5 3 - 3:25 p.m.
Cumberland Advisors,
Vineland

6 3:30 - 4 p.m.
Cumberland County
Democratic supporters,
Vineland

7 4:20 - 4:45 p.m.
Cumberland County
Board of Social Services,
Vineland

8 5:40 - 6:45 p.m.
4th Annual Teal Magnolias
Evening of Fashion, Cherry
Hill

9 7 - 8:15 p.m.
AFL-CIO Central Labor,
Pennsauken

TUESDAY, APRIL 29

1 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Camden County College,
Blackwood

2 1:10 - 2 p.m.
Woodbury High School,
Woodbury

3 5 - 6 p.m.
Richard Stockton College,
Galloway Township

4 7 - 9 p.m.
Town Hall meeting,
Atlantic City

Press graphic by Krishna Mathias

Several hours later, he talked with Stockton students about education policy and wrapped up the night with two hours of questions from about 150 supporters, union members and casino workers at an Atlantic City union hall.

"I would say this, the senator is hiding," Andrews told reporters in a conference call two days later. "The senator is unwilling to go before the people of this state and answer questions."

"I don't think (Lautenberg)'s avoiding," Schulman said. "In New Jersey, it appears that he's on in his Senate capacity and is using the mass media to get his message out to the voters of New Jersey," Schulman said, adding, "He can make appearances, but what he is doing right now is maintaining his Senate profile he's built up over years."

Running against Andrews, Lautenberg's message has been the Iraq War, the Iraq War and the Iraq War.

The campaign has pounded Andrews on his early support of the now-unpopular war as well as his assistance in getting congressional approval for President Bush.

The Lautenberg campaign fired off its first news release linking the conflict and the congressman within hours of Andrews' announcement.

And Friday, 32 minutes before Andrews joined two oil distribution experts to say questionable Wall Street speculation unfairly boosted prices, the Lautenberg campaign issued its latest statement, headlined "Rob Andrews' Energy Policy: Invade Iraq."

Campaign spokeswoman Julie Roginsky said Lautenberg has focused on Washington instead of the trail.

"This election is about two members of Congress, and one of them has been showing up for work and another has said publicly his top priority has been campaigning."

But she said the senator has kept up a vigorous schedule that this weekend included festivals, groundbreakings and breakfasts.

She said there were stops in Atlantic, Cape, Burlington and Ocean counties, but three influential Democrats said they were unaware of any public campaign schedule.

The Lautenberg campaign provided a list of 22 events in April that included no stops closer to the region than Cherry Hill, Camden County, or Long Branch, Ocean County.

By not letting the media or public know about Lautenberg's travel plans beforehand, it's unclear if these are routine visits or campaign stops.

"It's a very amorphous thing because he regularly meets with constituents, and I don't know if you want to term that an event," Roginsky said.

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Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., center, lights a candle Thursday during a Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony at the U.S. Capitol as Navy Midshipman Justin Bardin, left, and Irene Katz watch. The senator has remained largely in Washington during his campaign for the Democratic U.S. Senate nomination.

Associated Press photo
by Susan Walsh