

What to watch for in the

Bush, Clinton, ads and the economy could all be important.

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U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter has the money. He has the endorsements and he's been on the attack. His campaign staff is the more experienced. And for months he, not opponent Lynn Yeakel, has controlled the terms of the campaign.

But other elements are also at play. They carry far more influence than the endorsement of any Democratic politician who has switched sides, and they are more powerful than any attack Specter, the Republican, has yet made on Yeakel's credibility.

Many are elements that should benefit Yeakel, the Democrat.

Consider that there is high unemployment in Pennsylvania, an unpopular Republican president, anti-incumbency fever throughout the nation and a call for more women in Congress. And although Specter did control the public dialogue during the summer, many voters probably were not paying attention.

So good luck guessing who is going to win.

Here are the forces to watch for in the weeks leading to the Nov. 3 election. Particular attention should be paid to television ads. Specter has been on the air since July 24, while Yeakel has not aired a single commercial.

One caution. Politics is unpredictable, and something unimagined could skid the race into the unex-

pected.

The economy. With Pennsylvania suffering from a 8.2 percent unemployment rate, the Specter camp is worried. During Specter's victorious race against Democrat Pete Flaherty in 1980 — in the midst of a recession blamed on Jimmy Carter — the state unemployment rate was 8.5 percent. Yeakel is working hard reminding voters that Specter was in Washington while tens of thousands of steel jobs disappeared in Western Pennsylvania and federal urban funding dried up.

Pennsylvania's voter registration is another factor. Democrats outnumber Republicans, and when times get tough, voters may turn to the party historically considered the economic lifesaver for regular folks. The last reading on unemployment before the election will come on Oct. 2. If the jobless rate goes up, watch for a reaction — maybe a new barrage of attack television commercials — from Specter.

The presidential race. This turns on the economy, too. There are 100 senators, but only one president, and

it is to him Americans look when the economy ails. If Bush offers no credible solution, he stands a good chance of losing Pennsylvania, where the state Republican campaign has gotten off to a slow and disorganized start.

Yeakel has sought Bill Clinton's help for her campaign. She joined his recent bus tour in Western Pennsylvania and will soon campaign with Hillary Clinton. A Clinton victory could help propel Yeakel past any roadblocks Specter throws up. If Clinton wins the state by a significant margin — say 300,000 or 400,000 votes out of four-and-a-half million cast — Yeakel's chances are enhanced.

Women. The media have done story after story about this being the year of the woman politician. It's been heralded before, only to disappear on Election Day. Still, this year could be different. Anita Hill may prove a symbol of all the slights and aggravations women feel they have suffered at the hands of ignorant males. To put it more bluntly, Specter could become a lightning rod for anger over every unwanted dirty joke and lewd remark.

Last Thursday, Terese Tiboni, 55, a substitute teacher in Wilkes-Barre

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who was attending a rally where Yeakel appeared, wasn't sure whether the candidate was a Democrat or a Republican and was uncomfortable about supporting a woman just because she was a woman. "I don't like to be prejudiced," she said. But, she went on, "There are a lot of needs to be met, and men can't conceive of them all." That attitude could spell danger for Specter.

Change. The word has already become a cliché, what with Clinton promising it, Bush assuring voters he knows they want it, and Yeakel offering the campaign slogan "Courage for a change." Do voters really care? Ask Lt. Gov. Mark Singel, whom Yeakel beat in the April primary.

But not every incumbent is going to be tossed out of office, and Specter is betting he can separate himself from Bush, Ronald Reagan and the stumbling economy. On television, he has stressed that he has used the system for Pennsylvania's benefit, but some Democrats argue it's an error for Specter to remind voters that he is a Washington insider. Others ask what else a two-term incumbent can do.

Specter could find himself representing everything the voters supposedly don't want — older, white guy, professional politicians.

Jews. Jews were part of Specter's base in the past. Specter is fighting to keep them there with an attack that questions Yeakel's commitment to Is-

rael, a tactic that plays on Jewish fears and worries.

Although only 3 percent or less of the state's population, Jews vote at a high rate and are major donors to the Democratic Party. If Specter can persuade them to sit on their hands — or even better, raise money for him — he will deprive Yeakel of crucial support. Yeakel, who is expected to be heavily outspent by Specter, needs all the cash she can get.

African Americans. Specter hopes to get at least 25 percent of the black vote, maybe more. The question is, how large will black turnout be this year? And will blacks be swayed by attacks intended to question Yeakel's commitment to racial equality? Those attacks anger Yeakel, who says she'll go to Washington to "represent the underrepresented."

The black community goes to the polls recalling 12 years of Republican presidents, Willie Horton ads and lost inner-city jobs, so don't expect Specter to let up. Last week his staff released copies of a membership list from the Waynesborough Country Club, where Yeakel and her husband, Paul, have played golf and tennis since 1973, and which has no African American members.

In interviews, Yeakel has typically called it "Paul's membership," although conceding she used the club. The documents show Yeakel and her husband have a family membership — at a higher price than the "single golf" membership. Under the family

membership, Paul Yeakel — not Lynn — has club voting rights, said Yeakel aides.

Television advertisements. The question is whether Specter will go negative. Everyone thinks so, if only because the ammunition is so irresistible — taxes. The day before Yeakel announced her candidacy, she paid \$17,856 in back taxes, including \$11,059 in Philadelphia wage taxes on the salary she earned at Women's Way, the Philadelphia-based women's charity.

Yeakel says she never knew she owed the wage taxes, which may strain the credulity of city residents who have paid the tax for decades and the suburban commuters who pay it and hate it. It is also an attack ad Specter can run without facing charges of dirty politics.

The power of advertising was proved last April by Yeakel, who won the primary election with a three-week television campaign. But this time she is running in a general election against a well-known incumbent, and political professionals of both parties say she should not be allowing his ads to go unchallenged.

Specter started advertising in July. Yeakel aides won't say when she'll start. She may be having trouble raising money. While last month Yeakel was promising a campaign that would cost \$3.5 million to \$4 million, last week she dropped that to a straight \$3.5 million. Specter will easily spend twice that.