

Demo Wins In a GOP Stronghold

Cincinnati

Democrat Tom Luken, who told voters their support would be "a signal to Washington" about Watergate, easily defeated his GOP opponent yesterday in Ohio's First congressional district.

Luken scored a 55,171 to 51,057-vote victory over his Republican opponent, Willis Gradison. The vote was a turnabout from the 1972 race when a Republican defeated a Democrat, 120,000 to 50,000.

"This is 'Turnabout Tuesday,'" said Luken. "It represents sending a signal to Washington that we want to turn things around."

The Republican party nationally had been looking to this traditional GOP bastion as a stopper against a growing Democratic tide that started in a special House election victory in Johnstown, Pa., on February 5 and continued in another for Vice President Gerald R. Ford's old House seat in Grand Rapids, Mich., on February 18.

Both seats had been in Republican hands for 25 years.

Luken is only the fourth Democrat elected from the district during this century. Previous Democratic wins

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were in 1912, 1936 and 1964.

State Republican leaders denied Watergate and the policies of the Nixon administration were the cause of their defeat.

And despite the Republican landslide in the district 18 months ago, GOP state chairman Ken McGough declared: "The seat had been misconstrued as a Republican stronghold. The complexion of the district has changed considerably over the last five or ten years... it is marginal at best.

But privately, McGough



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THOMAS LUKEN
'Signal to Washington'

was understood to have said that Watergate had an effect on the election.

Luken built his campaign platform on anti-Nixon and anti-Watergate planks. Gradison, while maintaining he "deplored" Mr. Nixon's handling of Watergate, asserted support for many of the President's policies.

Luken, 48, an attorney, is a veteran Cincinnati city councilman and a former mayor.

Gradison vowed he will again oppose Luken in November.

"This is just the end of the first round," he said. "The second round will be fought in the November elections and that one we're going to win.

Gradison, 44, a stockbroker, said he would not advise Republican candidates to change their campaign strategy.

Vice President Ford, who campaigned for Gradison here, had asked Republicans to vote for Gradison to "turn the tide" and "stop the stampede" of Democratic wins.

Luken will take the seat formerly held by Representative William Keating (Rep.-Ohio) who resigned from congress to become president of the Cincinnati Enquirer.

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