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Florida Republicans Urge Indicted Gurney Not to Run

By Frank Beacham

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JACKSONVILLE, July 12—Florida Republican leaders today called for indicted Sen. Edward J. Gurney (R-Fla.) to withdraw his candidacy for re-election. They warned if he does not, a meeting of the party's state executive committee will be called next week to consider asking him to withdraw.

"My advice to him would be not to run," said state Sen. Kenneth Plante, minority floor leader. "I don't think he can win. It would have been an uphill battle even if he hadn't been indicted."

Rep. J. Herbert Burke (R-Fla.) said there is no question the indictment ended Gurney's political career.

"Many of us felt he ... shouldn't have run," Burke said. "But he didn't consult any of us before he decided to do it."

Gurney, who was indicted here Wednesday by a federal grand jury on charges of bribery and conspiracy in a fund-raising scandal, has refused to comment on whether he will stay in the race.

John Gardner, Gurney's press aide, said, "He's filed and is a candidate now. I don't think anybody can predict what he'll do."

Florida Republican Party Chairman L. E. (Tommy) Thomas said he will call a meeting of the state executive committee next week if Gur-

ney has not withdrawn by then.

Thomas said he would not act on his own but if the committee votes overwhelmingly for Gurney to withdraw, he would then ask him to do so.

Florida House minority leader Jim Tillman said Gurney should concentrate on clearing his name and forget about running for re-election.

"I think he should spend his time defending himself on the charges made against him," Tillman said.

Dade County Republican Chairman Robert Rosasco, a South Florida GOP leader, said he has called many Republicans in the state and the consensus is that Gurney cannot win the September primary.

"The party would be better off if Sen. Gurney doesn't run," Rosasco said.

A North Florida Republican leader, Rogers Holmes of Jacksonville, also called for Gurney to get out of the race. "I think he's innocent, but I would like for him not to seek re-election," Holmes said.

With the dump-Gurney movement gaining momentum, two Republicans have announced they are considering running for Gurney's seat.

Rep. Lou Frey Jr. (R-Fla.), who once served in Gurney's law firm, is expected to announce next week whether he'll run for the Senate.

Frey's press aide, Dennis Beal, said the Winter Park representative will spend the

weekend talking with state Republicans about running.

Another possible contender is Paula Hawkins of Maitland, one of three members of the Florida Public Service Commission and the only Republican holding a statewide office in Florida.

Mrs. Hawkins, also a vice chairman of the Republican National Committee, has promised a decision within two weeks.

The Republican nominee will face one of nine announced Democratic candidates for the Senate, including Glenn Turner, the Orlando millionaire whose second trial on mail-fraud charges begins in August.

Meanwhile, Gurney's arraignment has been scheduled for Aug. 1 in Jacksonville. Six other defendants indicted with Gurney will also be arraigned that day.

They are: Earl Crittenden of Orlando, former Florida Republican chairman; George Anderson of Orlando, former Florida Republican treasurer; James L. Groot of Washington, D.C., Gurney's former administrative assistant; Joseph Bastien of Winter Park, Gurney's former executive assistant for central Florida; Wayne Swiger of Tampa, director of the Tampa insuring office of HUD; and Ralph Koontz of Jacksonville, special assistant to the Jacksonville area HUD director. There were also 42 unindicted co-conspirators named.