

Pardon Blasted in Ford's District

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Three of the four men seeking President Ford's former seat in Congress have denounced his pardon of former President Richard M. Nixon.

The pardon "puts Watergate back on center stage," said Representative Richard VanderVeen (Dem-Mich.), who had emphasized the Watergate scandal in winning a special election to Congress earlier this year. VanderVeen's triumph marked the first time since 1912 any Democrat won the Fifth District seat Ford held 25 years.

But Paul Goebel Jr., the Republican candidate, said: "I don't see any political implications. The pardon was

simply a humane and compassionate gesture." Goebel conceded that he would have preferred "the legal process to be carried through" before granting any pardon.

"Nixon wouldn't have resigned at all if he hadn't made this deal," was the comment from Dwight Johnson, the Conservative and American Independent parties nominee, "A supposedly honest administration is starting out with a double standard: One standard for Nixon and one for John Dean."

Frank Girard, the Socialist Labor candidate, said, "Nixon looked after capitalist interests throughout his career, now the capitalists are looking after him."

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