Dems make pick

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M-L mayor replaces Troy on Nov. ballot

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Mentor-on-the-Lake Mayor John Rogers will be the Democratic candidate for the Ohio House of Representatives District 60 seat on the Nov. 6 ballot.

On Thursday, Lake County Democratic Party Central Committee members from the newly shaped district met at the Bricklayers Hall in Mentor to select a nominee to replace Lake County Commissioner Dan Troy in the race.

Video online

Nominees make their pitch, votes tallied at **www.News-Herald.com**

Troy, who won the party nomination in the March 6 primary, announced last week that he changed his mind and will serve the remaining two years on his term as commissioner. He then recommended Rogers for the opening.

At the meeting, Rogers won a majority vote against two other prospective candidates: James Helmink, an attorney from Willowick, and Eastlake Councilwoman Laura A. DePledge.

Addressing the committee members, Rogers said he had the experience necessary for the position and vowed to stand by his beliefs while working cooperatively with fellow House members, if elected.

"We've gotten to a point in this country that when we're down, we're kicking each instead of extending a hand and saying me help you back up,' " he said.

Helmink, meanwhile, said his ability t the youth vote made him a better candi He also pointed out that he and DePledg against Troy in the primary, proving a gr

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desire for the job than Rogers, who did not run for the seat at that time.

"I am the candidate who truly wants to be state representative and I am the candidate who's commitment to this seat cannot be questioned," Helmink said.

DePledge went a step further by claiming Troy's dropout was a premeditated move so he could handpick a candidate.

"If you think for one minute the decision not to seek election in November was made last week, or was made the week before, I think you're mistaken," she said. "I think it was part of a plan."

Rogers won the nomination with 24 votes. Helmink received 17, while DePledge got two.

Troy said he would move $10,000 from his political account to help finance Rogers' campaign and said his decision to drop out of the race was not underhanded.

"Contrary to what might have been said tonight, this was a decision that I was torn on," he said. "In the last couple weeks, a lot of people in Lake County told me 'You really need to say here because you can make more of a difference.' "

After his victory, Rogers thanked the commission and vowed to continue his efforts to bring people together.

"I will work my tail off on behalf of this district and to carry it Democratically," he said.

The 60th House District is a newly shaped district with boundaries created by reapportionment that will take effect in 2013.

Communities within the district are Eastlake, Fairport Harbor, Grand River, Lakeline, Mentor Ward 4, Mentor-on-the-Lake, Painesville, Painesville Township Precinct J and part of Precinct D, Timberlake, Wickliffe, Willoughby and Willowick.

Rogers faces Painesville Councilwoman Lori DiNallo, who won the Republican Party nomination.