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Reports of Lewis stepping down premature: Columnist Robert Novak suggests no re-election, but local politicians disagree

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Jun. 1--In a column in the conservative periodical Human Events, Robert Novak says that Republicans in California and on Capitol Hill say that Rep. Jerry Lewis, R-Redlands, is unlikely to run for re-election in 2008.

But local Republicans and Lewis' chief of staff Jim Specht say the congressman shows no signs of retirement.

"It's our belief that Mr. Novak only talked to people he agrees with," said Specht, adding that Novak never called Lewis' office to inquire about the '08 race.

Lewis has been under scrutiny for more than a year for his ties to a lobbying firm, but no allegations have come from the investigation.

Lewis is a close colleague of Rep. John Doolittle, R-Roseville, who is under investigation for his ties to lobbyist Jack Abramoff.

"There is no parallel to the raids going on in Doolittle's office and the request for documents in Lewis' office," said Doug Johnson, a fellow at the **Rose Institute** for State and Local Government. "I think the allegation will probably make it more likely that he will seek re-election."

In Novak's article, he writes that San Bernardino County Assessor Bill Postmus may be interested in Lewis' district.

But Postmus is in the process of moving from Hesperia to Rancho Cucamonga, which is in the district of Rep. David Dreier, R-San Dimas.

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