

Cummings the clear choice

■ **No one close:** *Margin of victory leaves little doubt about voters' preference.*

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FROM THE BEGINNING, it was suspected that the race for the Democratic nomination in the 7th Congressional District might become a duel between state Del. Elijah E. Cummings and Rev. Frank M. Reid III. There were some wild cards that could have upset that possibility — veteran legislators such as state Sen. Delores Kelley and Del. Ken Montague or the well-known lawyer A. Dwight Pettit. But the two candidates with the most potential for raising money and appealing to voters were Messrs. Cummings and Reid.

That Mr. Cummings won the election so decisively, with 37 percent of the vote compared to Reverend Reid's 24 percent, indicates he may have been the favorite of voters all along.

It is very disappointing that less than a quarter of the eligible voters chose to participate in this election, which offered the most exciting Democratic match-up on the Maryland ballot. But Mr. Cummings' margin of victory certainly indicates a bigger turnout might not have changed the outcome. Like any other poll, an election is a good reflection of general opinions.

The low turnout probably had less to do with Tuesday's light rain than it did the indecisiveness of voters who had trouble choosing from among so many candidates. That large field, however — 27 Democrats and five Republicans — is something that the 7th District should really be proud of.

It is a testament to the number of people who live within its boundaries and want to fill a position of leadership. Many are already giving back to the district, as legislators, as ministers, as civil servants and community activists. It is heartening to know they will continue in those roles long after this election is forgotten.

The Republican primary winner was Kenneth Kondner, who owns an orthodontic appliance company. This will be the fourth time Mr. Kondner has run for the 7th District seat, having previously been defeated three times by former Rep. Kweisi Mfume, who resigned this year to become head of the NAACP.

Mr. Kondner easily won his primary, but only 5,550 votes were cast in that election. He has little chance of successfully challenging Mr. Cummings in either the April 16 special election to complete the remainder of Mr. Mfume's term or the Nov. 5 general election. Both winners, though, deserve congratulations.