

District 2: candidates address issues

INTERVIEWS BY BRENNA MCDERMOTT
Editor in Chief

This week, the Index separately interviewed District 2 incumbent State Rep., D-Kirkville, Rebecca McClanahan and republican opponent Zachary Wyatt on relevant issues pertaining to the Nov. 2 election. Here are their responses:

Index: How do you plan to represent student interests when confronted with cuts to higher education funding?

McClanahan: I spent 30 years as a professor at Truman State University, as I'm sure you know. And so I have not only a deep appreciation for students and for higher education and specifically for Truman State University, and I've carried that with me since day one in my four years of service in the state legislature to date. I sit on the higher education committee as well, and so we really address policy issues related to higher education. But, I'm on the budget committee as well, the house budget committee, where we consider funding issues. You know, when I first was sworn in as state representative, Missouri ranked 47 on per capita funding for higher education. My understanding is that we've actually moved up a couple of points to 45, which is really based on this initiative that we've been able to do these last couple of years, of holding funding more stable, and in this current year we weren't able to actually hold funding stable, but we actually were able to hold higher education harmless, if you will. So that higher education didn't take as deep of cuts as other areas of state government.

And so I've been very gratified that we've been able to kind of hold the line on funding of higher education, and that is, of course, allowed us to move up in the rankings, because other states have not been as fortunate as we have to hold the line on that funding.

I have been working tirelessly, and I will continue to work tirelessly to assure that we reinvest in higher education in the state of Missouri. I think that is critical to having a well-educated workforce for in-demand, high tech jobs in particular, and many service jobs. And so I believe that's really critical for economic development and for job creation in the state of Missouri, to make that investment in higher education. So I'm absolutely

committed to that. I was very pleased that we were able to take action to equalize the Access Missouri Scholarship funding this last session, and that was something I have been working on since day one. So we've taken a situation where private students going to private institutions got twice as much scholarship money as students going to public institutions. And so we've been able to re-equalize that scholarship so that everyone will receive an equal amount. And when that program is fully funded, then students going to public institutions have the potential of increased funding. I just feel really strongly about that. I think it puts our commitment as a state where it should be, that is, in supporting our public institutions.

Wyatt: I think I'll be able to represent you guys quite well because one, I'm of a lot of you guys' generation, and I know the hardships that come upon you guys when you go to school or are away from home. I just went through that phase of my life, as you guys are going through right now, and I think I'll be able to put a better perspective on what needs to be looked at within the budget.

Index: How do you plan to kickstart local business?

McClanahan: Well, I've been working really hard with local businesses to help kickstart those businesses. I had a meeting just within the last couple of weeks with a wind energy company that is working here in the area. There are some regulations or a regulatory process that is kind of holding up their effort to begin building wind turbines here in Adair County and across Sullivan County, and so I am working hard on trying to help resolve some of those regulatory issues that would allow that kind of initiative to come. So that's really a win-win. If we can bring jobs to the area, especially during the construction phase of a wind-energy project, and it can bring green jobs to North Missouri, then I see that as a win-win. So that's just one example, and something that I am currently working on.

I'm still working very closely with the folks that are working on the DNA forensics lab and that initiative, although working quietly behind the scenes, is still very much alive and well, and they are continuing to put together the funding that they need to start that initiative. I've

been working very closely with them. So there are a number of other ways I've been working on those kinds of business efforts that will just make a huge difference in economic development in North Missouri.

Another thing that's kind of an indirect effort is even just my strong support for Caring for Missourians funding. And Truman has benefited from some of that funding, and it's allowed the expansion of the capacity of programs to prepare health care professionals. So the nursing program at Truman has benefited from that funding, and the communication disorders program has benefited. So that's really training for the workers of tomorrow. And those are high-demand jobs. We have critical shortages of health care professionals in the state of Missouri, so that funding is something that I have worked really hard to retain in the budget. Also, Moberly Area Community College just received one of the Training for Tomorrow grants, and that will allow them to sit practical nurses in transitioning to a, what is called a bridge program, toward preparation as a registered nurse. And so those are things that are providing the sort of training opportunities for high-demand jobs, right here in North Missouri. So that's a couple of other initiatives that I've worked really hard on.

Wyatt: Well, I think first we need to be able to cut all the red tape in order to start a business. There's so many different fees in order for them to start up that most of them can't even afford the start-up fee. You also have to look at the taxes as well, because you can't have a small business that is paying in so much more in taxes than they are making. You're not going to succeed in the business sector.

It comes to a point where you have Obama Care and everything and that's going to play a factor, and hopefully we can uphold Proposition C that we passed with 72 percent of the Missouri voters and be able to say, 'Hey, look, this is going to take a burden off of the small businesses.'

Index: If elected, what will be your main focus in office?

McClanahan: I feel like my main focus since day one, and what my focus would continue to be, is representing the people of North Missouri in the best way that I possibly can. Many legislators talk about representing a district. I'm very intentional

in talking about representing the people of House District 2. And that has been what I have been committed to doing.

I work hard to stay in direct contact with lots of local people. I attend public events and a lot of private events, year-round, and year-in and year-out, whether it's an election year or not. I participate in every parade in every little community that I'm available for, because I find that keeps me in touch with the people. And not only can I talk with individuals, but they can talk with me.

And I never go to a local event that someone doesn't approach me with a piece of information that helps me do my job better, or that they share a problem with me that I can help them work on. So I just find being accessible to people is really important, and that allows me to work on the priorities that people have from here in North Missouri. And of course, the top of everyone's list is jobs and the economy.

Wyatt: My main focus is going to be jobs. We, in Northeast Missouri, have for too long been losing jobs in the area. I think that we need to pretty much get back to the basics. We need to start selling Northeast Missouri to get more businesses in here. That's going to be done through the tax bases that we have, and that's going to also be done through cutting a lot of the red tape they have to do in order to start up.

Index: What is the one thing you'd like to accomplish in office?

McClanahan: If I could only accomplish one thing, it would be putting North Missouri back on the map in Missouri. People north of I-70 sometimes feel forgotten and feel that so much of the investment of state dollars and of private business dollars occurs along the I-70 corridor and south. And so bringing that kind of long-term investment that will make a difference in our infrastructure and our ability to sustain economic development into the future would be the one thing. And, of course, that's a very broad initiative.

Wyatt: My one thing I want to accomplish is get Northeast Missouri to be known as a place that is business friendly, and every single company that looks at Missouri is going to be looking towards us, because we're the ones that have the ability to sustain their company.

For more questions with the candidates visit trumanindex.com

ELECTION | McClanahan says she is committed to a positive campaign and Wyatt said his campaign shows he is not the typical candidate

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on most things, we actually agree," McClanahan said.

Regarding Bond's endorsement of Wyatt, McClanahan said it isn't a surprise. "Of course he would endorse Zachary Wyatt," McClanahan said. "Why wouldn't he? So I don't see it as relevant."

Although it was not a surprise to him, Wyatt said Bond's endorsement is an honor for him.

"I think it shows the momentum that has been building constantly throughout the last seven months since I started campaigning," Wyatt said.

Wyatt said his campaign strategy has been to show that he represents a new generation of politicians.

Wyatt said volunteers will be "crucial" for a victory. "That is what's going to get me across the finish line come Nov. 2," Wyatt said.

Wyatt's campaign team is completely volunteer-based. He said his military ex-

perience serving his country and the leadership that came with that service will be an advantage.

Wyatt also said his age is both an advantage and a disadvantage for him, in that he is able to attend many events and travel often, but that some older voters might question whether his values align with their own.

"The advantage there is that I'm able to get on the ground," Wyatt said. "I'm everywhere. I don't tire very easily."

"The way I combat that with the older voters is I just say, 'Look, I have the same conservative values as you have and my age doesn't change what I think on those values.' And they know that."

Wyatt said recent advertisements that have been paid for by the House Republican Campaign Committee and, because of election laws, he has no say in what content, negative or positive, is included in them.

"Anything that is not true, my opponent can approach me and give me the facts that aren't true on it, and I would gladly say that they're not true and come out on that," Wyatt said. "But if they're true and that's what she voted for, she needs to stand behind her vote."

McClanahan and Wyatt will speak at the candidate forum, which will be held at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 19 at the El Kadir Shrine Club in Kirksville. The forum, sponsored by the Kirksville Area Chamber of Commerce, will allow both local and state government candidates to meet with voters and respond to questions from their opponents and the media.

McClanahan and Wyatt agree that the debate will serve as a valuable opportunity for voters to compare and contrast candidates and to decipher where each candidate stands on the issues.

WATER | Multiple residents do not receive boil alerts during a recent water boil advisory on Jefferson Street

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be identified, she said she did not receive an automated call on Oct. 4.

Killday said the 911 center normally notifies residents of a boil advisory with phone calls, but that there were problems with the automated call system earlier in last week. She could not confirm that the system problems were the reason for the lack of notification.

Jefferson Street residents who did know about the boil advisory while it was in effect said they found the information online. A notice of the boil advisory was posted on the city of Kirksville homepage Oct. 4, and the Kirksville Daily Express website posted an alert that same day.

Senior Shannon Farias said she received an e-mail from her grandmother about the boil alert Oct. 5, a day after the order had gone into effect. Farias said she does not have a land line or TV and that she never got a door hanger notice.

Senior Erin Done also found the information online after the boil order had already gone into effect, but not directly from the city.

"I was doing homework, and I ended up on the KTVO or

Kirksville Daily Express website, and it said 'boil for this block of Jefferson,' and we got nothing — no phone call, nothing on our door," Done said.

Since mid-August, there have been eight boil advisories. None of those have been extended past the 48-hour testing period, which means that none of the water samples have been contaminated.

Residents interviewed in areas affected by boil alerts in the recent past said they were not notified by phone or by door notices that an advisory was in effect. The exception was Jamie Wolf, who said he signed up to receive text message alerts on the city of Kirksville website.

Buckwalter said the number of recent boil advisories is a little higher than normal because the public works department has been doing an increased amount of construction on the water mains in residential areas recently. He said that every year the city tries to replace 10,000 feet of old or undersized lines, or lines that have a history of failure.

Buckwalter said water lines, especially older lines that were installed from the 1920s to 1950s, fail because of

internal and external pressure on the pipes.

"If we have to fight a fire and a number of hydrants have to be turned on and off very quickly, then there'll be a surge in the line, and that may cause a pressure surge that may cause a line to break," he said.

Buckwalter said changes in the moisture content in the soil can also cause pipes to fail, because the ground swells with rainwater and shrinks away from the pipe as it dries.

The next water main scheduled to be replaced is on LaHarpe Street between First and Franklin, Buckwalter said. He said residents of that section of LaHarpe can expect to be under a water boil advisory in the next two to three weeks, after workers finish installing the new line and water flow is redirected into the new pipe.

Killday said land lines are automatically registered with the Adair County 911 Center, and that if students without land lines in their homes want to receive notice of water boil advisories, they can register their cell phone numbers on the city of Kirksville website, at the Kirksville Fire Department or at the Police Department.



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