

Wyatt changes plans for future

BY JACCI GUTHRIE
Staff Reporter

After serving two years as a state representative, Republican Zachary Wyatt, R-2, said he enjoys representing the people of his district and the state, but is looking forward to his future plans of attending college — a different college from what he initially planned when he announced he wouldn't be running for reelection.

Wyatt will be attending Creighton University starting January 2013, pursuing a degree in sustainable energy, something he's always wanted to do, with plans of studying environmental law during the future. Previously, Wyatt planned to attend the University of Hawaii to pursue marine biology.

"I've always wanted to go to Creighton Law School, and I believe finishing my undergraduate and masters here will give me a much better chance to get into the law school," he said.

Money was another factor, Wyatt said, as his military benefits would have funded some, but not all of the costs for travel and general living in Hawaii.

Though he said he plans to head to his new Nebraska home during the next few months, Wyatt said he wants to maintain close relationships with his constituents. He said eventually he hopes politics will come back

into his life, but he's not sure when.

During his first year in office, Wyatt said he passed three pieces of legislation, but it was during his second year that Wyatt said he "got his wings."

After a year of experience he said he gained influence and credibility enabled him to do more. Specifically, Wyatt said he addressed the safety concerns of the new Highway 63 bypass by adding more railing and signage to the project.

He said his first piece of legislation, House Bill 1077, which focused on integrating people with disabilities into the community, was inspired by his upbringing in northeast Missouri, where there is a strong presence of people with disabilities in the work force.

It was experiences like these that Wyatt said helped him learn how legislators work for their districts.

Wyatt said he has some regrets from his term as the state representative. There were bills that, he said, with more information, he might have voted differently on.

Overall, he said the process was a learning experience.

College Republicans chairman Josh Foster said when Wyatt first announced he was running for state representative, it excited a number of college students. He said Wyatt was a young face for

the Republican Party and had the potential to energize the party.

The first year of representation lived up to expectations, but during the second year, Foster said Wyatt seemed disenchanted with the process.

Randy Hagerty, political science department chair, said Wyatt's youth opened the opportunity of a bright political future after he defeated the Democrat incumbent Rebecca McClanahan.

However, Hagerty said the circumstances in which Wyatt withdrew caused turmoil among the local Republicans who had to replace their candidate.

After serving as the only open gay publicly-elected Republican in the state, he said he wants to relay the message to children that party politics and beliefs don't impact one's ability to succeed.

Wyatt said he was lucky enough to be introduced to politics at a young age and has enjoyed the feeling of being able to give back to those who encouraged his passion. He said he wants to thank the people of his district for giving him this opportunity.

Fran Wyatt, Zach's mother, said she and the family are proud of his time in office and look forward to his future at Creighton, especially since he'll be closer to home than if he were in Hawaii.

"I doubt we've heard the last of him," she said.



Ashley Jost/Index

Rep. Zach Wyatt, R-2, speaks with Rep. Mike Colona, D-67, at Pride Fest in St. Louis during June about LGBT rights. Wyatt and Colona are the only two openly gay, male state representatives in Missouri.

Munzlinger supports other GOP candidates

BY CHELSIE YOKUM
Staff Reporter

Senator Brian Munzlinger, R-18, isn't up for reelection, but that's not keeping him out of the 2012 campaign.

From preparing his own future campaign to aiding other Republican candidates with their races, Munzlinger said he is staying active this election season.

Munzlinger said he already has begun campaigning for the 2014 election, primarily by having fundraisers to raise money and traveling throughout the district to meet constituents.

He said he was in Kirksville Oct. 20 during Truman State's Homecoming parade, and in Chariton, Mo. on Thursday, Oct. 25, to familiarize himself with his new district.

With Munzlinger's district now ranging from the Mississippi River up to Alex-

andria, Mo., and down to Brunswick, Mo., the wider area has made it more difficult to reach out to constituents, he said.

"Of course, I've got a lot of new counties in my new district with redistricting, so I'm trying to get around, meet people, businesses, see what their interests and their needs are," Munzlinger said. "Basically just try to be a good senator and hopefully that helps in being reelected."

Munzlinger said he's already getting used to some of his district's newer areas and he said he is looking forward to meeting more new constituents.

He said he's helping Republican candidates in his district campaign by walking in parades and giving them any guidance he can. In addition, he has sent letters in favor of Republican gubernatorial candidate Dave Spence, and will be doing the same for Republican candidate for Secretary of State Shane Schoeller.

"I've known [Schoeller] well, and served in the House with him, and actually filled in for him at a fundraiser after his mom passed away," Munzlinger said.

Munzlinger also explained that he thinks Spence, as a businessman, understands what it will take to create more jobs in Missouri and start new businesses.

"The backbone of our economy, in my opinion, is small businesses and farms. And that's what he has his expertise in," Munzlinger said.

Munzlinger also supports Republican U.S. Senate candidate Todd Akin because he said he thinks Senator Claire McCaskill's voting record increasing the price of energy in Missouri has created problems for businesses.

"I'm not officially endorsing him, but I definitely would support him because I don't believe in the failed Obama agenda," Munzlinger said.



Sen. Brian Munzlinger

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