

Stansky takes on Barbieri

Mary Orr/St. Maries Gazette-Record

The Democrat challenger to Republican incumbent Vito Barbieri, District 2A Representative, said the two candidates couldn't be any more different.

Cheryl Stransky has lived in northern Idaho for 37 years, raised two children and recently retired from 33 years working as a school counselor.

She said she decided to run not because she was interested in politics but because she was interested in helping her community.

Ms. Stransky said she is unimpressed with Mr. Barbieri's representation.

"His representation of our district is radically opposed to anything I felt comfortable with," she said. "My opponent has lived in Coeur d'Alene for less than 10 years, so I feel like my investment in the community is more solid and I have a better understanding of the people's wants and needs."

She criticizes that Mr. Barbieri fails to follow the wishes of the people that he represents.

She charges that he has ignored popular opinion of his constituents and voted against their wishes on issues in Boise, Ms. Stransky said. She specifically notes a few examples, including issues involving a mental health facility in Coeur d'Alene, education reform and tax breaks for businesses.

"We lost the mental health facility because he voted against it, even though we were all for it," she said. "Working as a school counselor I know the need for mental health resources. Kootenai County has the highest suicide rate in the state and the state is sixth in the nation."

Ms. Stransky's focus is education.

"My experiences in education both as a staff member and a mother in our district was very positive," she said. "I am a believer in public education as the great equalizer. Education has been underfunded for the last 6 or 8 years and is undervalued in the state. We need to change that."

She supports raising the minimum wage and catering to smaller businesses.

"We have a lot of small business owners in Idaho," Ms. Stransky said. "I felt the representation from Mr. Barbieri seemed to be more concerned with out of state corporations rather than our local businesses. Giving a large tax break to the largest corporations does not benefit the majority of the citizens in Idaho."

Ms. Stransky said she believes better support for education and local businesses directly correlates to a higher quality of life.

"It's an attitude of supporting our own people," she said.

Ms. Stransky also does not support taking back federal lands, but gaining more access for people to use the property. She also does not support guns on campus. Ms. Stransky does support expanding Medicaid and open primaries.

She said she believes the people need someone to go to Boise to represent the community.

"When you elect a state representative, their job is to go to the capital and work on the issues that affect their community," she said. "They are not going to Washington D.C. to change federal laws, neither will they be voting on congressional issues. People need to realize they need to send someone who will represent their local issues."