

Our View: VanderSloot a reminder of how wealth affects elections

Anthony Kuipers/Moscow-Pullman Daily News Editorial Board

One of the primary tenets of a democracy is it allows all of us to have a voice when it comes to choosing our political leaders.

But you don't have to be a cynic to know that some voices are louder than others.

Just look at wealthy Idaho entrepreneur Frank VanderSloot.

VanderSloot, founder and CEO of health care products company Melaleuca, is gearing up to donate millions to the GOP presidential candidate of his choosing.

According to a Thursday Associated Press report, his short list includes Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, Scott Walker and Carly Fiorina.

At least one of those candidates is sure to see their campaign bolstered after winning the VanderSloot sweepstakes.

Last presidential election, he donated at least \$1 million to a political action committee supporting eventual Republican nominee Mitt Romney. He served as one of Romney's campaign finance co-chairs as well, a position that allowed him to raise more millions. VanderSloot is certainly free to do what he wants with his money, and we can't blame any candidates from taking advantage of his generosity.

But every time a candidate like Bush or Rubio stops by Idaho during their campaign tour, we can't help but wonder: Are they there to impress us, the average voter? Or are they there to impress people like VanderSloot?

We get it. Raising dollars to keep your campaign afloat is part of the deal, especially in a race as bloated with candidates as the Republicans'.

Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus spoke about this issue of campaign donors in an interview with CNN, as reported in a Tuesday AP story.

"There's not enough cash to go around to pay campaigns in these states in order to keep 17 candidates alive," he said.

We just hope whoever wins the nomination in their respective party, and goes on to win the presidency, remembers they don't just represent those few billionaires and millionaires who supported their campaigns.

They also represent us, the people who speak louder with our votes than with our checkbooks.