

Three Bits of Voting Advice!

Dear Newsletter Readers,

This is a critical time! The Republican primary is this Tuesday, and your vote can make a serious difference. Our local area elections are often decided by just a few votes, and many of the winners will have no challenger in November's General Election, so this Tuesday's vote will be the final decision.

Who to vote for? How to make sense of the pile of political postcards in your mailbox each day? Or the non-stop media buzz, constantly promoting the same candidate with pandering feel-good slogans until you wonder who is spending all that money, and why?

Here are my three bits of advice for this year's primary:

1. Life experience matters. Look at what the candidate has done in their life. Have they had to overcome adversity? How have they fulfilled their commitments? If they've been a member of a board or an elected position, have they shown up? Do they understand of the needs of all our citizens or just a certain group? There are three young candidates running for legislative seats in our area this year. All have formal education, some a great deal of it, but do they have the integrity, self-knowledge and wisdom to represent you ahead of furthering their political careers? Please look past the flashy videos, billboards and ads, and carefully evaluate each candidate.

2. Water matters. You might wonder what water has to do with next Tuesday's primary election. As of last week, water has now been mixed into this election. This past Wednesday's Press reported a new PAC (political action committee) just created by the CdA Tribe. According to the Tribe's lobbyist, this PAC was designed to support candidates Luke Malek and Peter Riggs. The Press article said \$12,000 has been sent to a Democratic campaign specialist in Texas, who will orchestrate a phone bank to get non-Republican voters in our community to cross over and register as Republicans to vote for Luke and Peter in the Primary. No other candidates will be included, according to the Press. This move by the Tribe raises concern because there is a new legal negotiation between the CdA Tribe and the State of Idaho over water rights in our northern part of the state. Water rights are incredibly important! The Tribe already legally controls the southern 1/3 of Lake Coeur d'Alene, and is claiming rights to the rest of it as well as large sections of the rivers and streams flowing into and out of the lake. Even private wells and ground water could be involved. So who is on the committee for this critical water adjudication?--the North Idaho legislators, along with legal staff from the State. Elections matter.

3. Integrity matters--integrity in both candidates and news / media sources. Look to see if the candidate is twisting words: One ad announces that a candidate fought against the Federal Obamacare Exchange, when in fact he lead the effort in favor of the State Obamacare Exchange which was run by the Feds and is essentially the same thing. See if you think media sources are being objective: I have heartburn when I see the frequent political columns in the CdA Press, all authored by the head of NIPAC (North Idaho PAC), a group that aggressively supports and endorses certain candidates. The author's bias shows and NIPAC's

candidates get free advertising. Watch for the media distorting the truth: Long time conservative attorney and Senator, Curt McKenzie, is running for the open seat on the Idaho Supreme Court. He was recently raked over the coals on a political blog for not noticing an automatic deposit error made by the state system years ago, even though he repaid it when it was discovered. Then they also criticized him for accepting the standard housing and food allowance given to all legislators, during the session, who live a certain number of miles away from the Capitol. (Full disclosure, I am supporting Curt McKenzie for the court.)

So that's my advice, dear readers. Please look carefully at all the candidates for County and State level positions, and please get your friends and neighbors out to vote too. I will need your help and support in November, when I will have a Democrat running against me, but am very happy not to have a challenger in this Primary.

We have been busy getting ready for our son's upcoming wedding, in a few weeks, and are excited to have family coming from far and near. We love our future daughter-in-law, and her whole family, so it is a wonderful match to celebrate!

Have a great weekend - Mary

Mary Souza is Idaho State Senator for District 4, which is Coeur d'Alene. She has been a long time community activist and political writer. To sign up for her now more sporadic newsletter, or to read her Senate Journal, please visit the web site: marysouzaforidaho.com. Comments or questions can be sent to: marysouzacda@gmail.com