

Now you see her ...

Marty Trillhaase/Lewiston Tribune

JEERS ... to Rep. Caroline Troy, R-Genesee. Remember back in March when she joined fellow Republicans Christy Perry of Nampa and Kelley Packer of McCammon by promising to gum up the legislative machinery if something wasn't done to extend Medicaid coverage to 78,000 low-income uninsured Idaho adults?

They vowed to stop any rule, any bill, any measure that comes before the Health and Welfare Committee next year until the full House votes on a Medicaid expansion bill. It meant standing up to the House GOP leadership.

"I chose to do something over nothing," Troy said at the time.

Fast forward to last Friday's Latah County AARP candidate forum.

Troy, who is facing a re-election challenge from independent Ken De Vries of St. Maries from the right and Moscow Democrat Laurene Sorensen from the left, had nothing good to say about Medicaid expansion.

As the Moscow-Pullman Daily News' Garrett Cabeza reported, Troy now believes the state should not get involved with Medicaid expansion.

"I don't feel that there's political will in Idaho for straight Medicaid expansion to happen because there's a strong feeling - and I would agree - that Medicaid is a broken system," she said.

In March, Troy was for Medicaid.

In October, she's against Medicaid.

Any bets where Troy will stand in January?

JEERS ... to Congressman Raul Labrador, R-Idaho and his Democratic challenger, Boise attorney James Piotrowski. Some have political courage. They don't.

Both refused to complete Project Vote Smart's even-handed but detailed questionnaire that covers everything from abortion to the economy, from gun rights to energy policy and from immigration to taxes.

Project Vote Smart - a voter's self-defense outfit founded by Sens. Barry Goldwater and George McGovern as well as former Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter - calls that survey its "political courage test."

It's one of the few times a candidate is forced to break free of a protective cocoon built with campaign contributions, staff and advertising.

Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, routinely answers this survey, as did Constitution Party candidate Ray Writz of Coeur d'Alene. Democratic challenger Jerry Sturgill of Boise, however, declined.

Likewise, Congressman Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, and his Constitution Party opponent, Anthony Tomkins of Twin Falls, passed the "political courage test." Democrat Jennifer Martinez of Boise did not.

CHEERS ... to state Sen. Dan Schmidt, D-Moscow, and his Republican challenger, Dan Foreman of Viola. They are among just 21 of 174 Idaho legislative candidates who also have filled out Project Vote Smart's survey.

Elsewhere in north central Idaho:

- Neither Rep. Paulette Jordan, D-Plummer, nor her Republican challenger, Carl Berglund of Kendrick, have responded.
- You can find out what Democrat Sorensen says about the issues. But her opponents, Rep. Troy and independent De Vries, have kept their heads down.
- Rep. John Rusche, D-Lewiston, passed the political courage test; Republican Mike Kingsley of Lewiston is a no-show.
- Democratic House candidate Bob Blakey answered the survey; Republican Thyra Stevenson has not. Read the results for yourself at www.votesmart.org.

JEERS ... to state Rep. John McCrostie, D-Garden City. Forget he's a teacher. Or that he has served two years in the House. All you really need to know is that McCrostie is 45 years old.

Yet, like a kid still in kindergarten, McCrostie was caught red-handed stealing Republican campaign literature from homes in a Garden City neighborhood.

As the Idaho Statesman's John Sowell reported, Ryan McDonald, a Republican challenging state Sen. Grant Burgoyne, D-Boise, was distributing material for himself and McCrostie's Republican opponent, Joel Robinson.

When he spotted McCrostie lifting those brochures, McDonald asked him to "fess up."

As an audio recorder took it down, McCrostie told him: "It's part of the game."

Chastened by public exposure, the state lawmaker later apologized. But now you know how McCrostie acts when he thinks no one is watching.

JEERS ... to state Rep. Heather Scott, R-Blanchard. It's been weeks since allegations emerged that some of her supporters harassed Democratic challenger Kate McAlister's 90-year-old mother-in-law and ran off a 21-year-old Brigham Young University-Idaho student working as a Democratic Party field organizer.

She still won't publicly discourage her supporters from engaging in such behavior. Instead, she emailed the Idaho Statesman's Rocky Barker: "It's campaign season and mudslinging appears to be the approach of my opponents. ... While allegations make great headlines, they are just that: assertions that someone has done something illegal or wrong, made without proof."

Well, not exactly.

As Barker noted, Scott signed a campaign flier with this message: "If you see Democrat signs go up in your neighborhood, please write down a house number and street name. ... We are trying to figure out which 'Republicans' may really be Democrats in disguise on the voter logs."

Bonner County Prosecutor Louis Marshall has referred the case to Attorney General Lawrence Wasden. Meanwhile, state Democrats have approached U.S. Attorney Wendy Olson to look into it.

CHEERS ... to Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter. Credit him with finding one more reason to turn thumbs down on House Joint Resolution 5 on Nov. 8.

That's the amendment state lawmakers want enshrined in the state constitution, forever guaranteeing their right to veto rules and regulations drafted by the executive agencies.

In 1990, the Idaho Supreme Court sanctioned the system. But HJR 5 would pre-empt the court from ever changing its mind.

Worse, says Otter, the proposed measure expands legislative authority to reject rules "in whole or in part."

"That fundamentally changes the dynamic of legislative review and is a serious breach of the balance and separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judicial branches," Otter wrote.

Good for him. - M.T.