

The Lumberjack

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Candidates Debate Key Issues at ACC

League of Women Voters, ACC Student Senate Bring Gillard, Wyman, Neuman, Stamas to ACC

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Staff Writer

The League of Women Voters and the ACC Student Senate sponsored a candidate-forum on Thursday, October 24. This was held at the Granum Theatre at ACC. Area citizens asked questions and listened to responses by the candidates for the 106th district in the State House of Representatives and candidates for the 36th State Senate district.

Candidates for the 106th district House of Representatives are Democrat Matt Gillard from Alpena and Republican David Wyman from Grayling.

Both of these candidates expressed concern over the negative campaigning that has heightened in the past week. They also agreed on the issue of campaign finance reform.

In opening remarks, Gillard's three priority issues were reducing classroom size, improving the economy, and expanding health care.

Wyman emphasized Proposal A, quality education, creating more jobs, and tourism.

They were each asked what makes them a good

candidate. Gillard believes his education, experiences, and direct involvement, along with the fact that he is from the area and knows the problems, makes him the better candidate. Wyman believes that his experience owning his own business, employing people, meeting payrolls, and serving on the city council better qualifies him as a candidate.

When asked what committees were the most significant to serve on, Gillard believes transportation, power and energy, and natural

resources are most important. Wyman believes commerce, tourism, DNR, DEQ, and environmental involvement are important.

The candidates disagreed on several issues. Wyman is against and Gillard is in favor of Proposal 3, binding arbitration for state employees. Gillard is against school vouchers and believes they will hurt public schools. Wyman thinks that parents should be able to decide where their children should go. On Proposal 1, Elimination of Straight Party Voting, Gillard is against and

Wyman is in favor.

Each candidate spoke briefly about their beliefs and issues. Wyman stated he is Christian, sponsored by Right to Life, wants less taxes and smaller government. He restated he is not in favor of negative campaigning.

Gillard stated we need to separate the deer and cattle as a step to solving the problem of bovine TB and feels this is a very important issue. Gillard added we also need to preserve the quality of life we have here, now and in the future, for our children.

The candidates for the 36th State Senate district are Andy Neumann, a democrat from Alpena and Tony Stamas, a republican from Midland.

In their opening remarks, Neumann stated we need a voice in Lansing and he would focus on health care. Stamas said his family, faith, and community values were taught from his family.

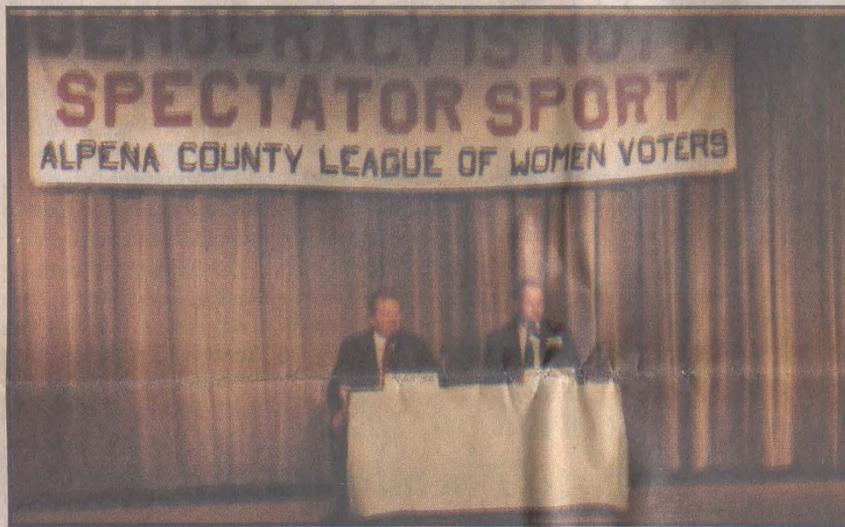
The candidates were asked what were the most important issues facing Northern Michigan. Stamas felt it was economic development and jobs. He believes our kids that go

away to school need to be able to come back to good paying jobs. Neumann believes there is not just one issue, but several including health care, the economy, and education. He feels we need to remind the state we are here.

Candidates did disagree on some issues; on Proposal 1, Elimination of Straight Party Voting, Stamas supports it and Neumann opposes it. On Proposal 3, Binding Arbitration for State Employees, Neumann supports it and Stamas opposes it. On Proposal 4, Tobacco Settlement Monies, Stamas opposes it and Neumann supports it.

The candidates each made a brief closing statement. Stamas said that everyday is a learning experience and he will deliver for Northern Michigan. He will fight for education and funding, economic development, and protecting the environment. He will fight for our fair share.

Neumann said he believes we need someone who understands us. He believes he has a strong voice and that we need someone who can work with both republicans and democrats.



Candidates Matt Gillard and David Wyman debate local issues

Photo by Kara Eubank

Proposal Four: Shutting the Door on Higher Education

RON LANCEWICZ
Staff Writer

A multi-state lawsuit against tobacco companies generated a settlement for Michigan in the sum of 8.5 billion dollars. There is a debate on both sides of the issue on how to spend the settlement money.

Should the government have control of the money? Where should it be spent? Should private interest groups be in control of where the money should go? Today, voters will be asked if they support or do

not support Proposal 4.

The settlement money has already been divided among the following programs: Michigan Merit Award college and skills training scholarship program and Life Sciences corridor health research. It also provides assistance to senior citizens for prescription drugs, personal needs assistance for seniors, relief care for Page Seniors, and additions to Medicaid grants.

ACC's President, Dr. Donald Newport, stated that if Proposal 4 were

passed that the Michigan Merit Awards program, which is a \$2500 Scholarship, would most likely disappear in Michigan.

Newport also stated that more than 600 students at ACC and ap-

“Proposal 4 would put 8.5 billion dollars in the hands of private interest groups...”

proximately 50% of all graduates from area high schools since 2000 have directly benefited from the Michigan Merit Awards program.

Proposal 4 would take 90% of the settlement money and divert it from the programs it is already designated for. It would then use it for health care for people who are sick and dying from exposure to

cigarette smoke. Proposal 4 would also address medical research and the prevention of smoking.

Money would be funneled into nonprofit hospitals, li-

censed nursing homes and hospices, nurse practitioners, health and research development initiatives, Tobacco Free Futures Fund, Counsel of Michigan Foundations, and Nurse's Scholarship programs.

Furthermore, Proposal 4 would put 8.5 billion dollars in the hands of private interest groups that would not need to show accountability to the government or the public.

300 million dollars annually would be promised to the special interest groups

regardless of the outcome. This means that if the private interest groups do not deliver the service they promised, they would still receive the money.

Everyone needs to make their voices heard today and vote on proposal 4. If you are thinking that it does not make a difference if you vote or not, you are wrong. This is a highly contested issue and one vote could determine if this proposal passes or fails. Think about the fate of higher education in Michigan as you go to the polls today.



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