

SHARING A VIEW OF THE STATE

Issues and Comments – 33rd Senatorial District

Senator

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The events of Tuesday this week will set the stage of Missouri Politics for the coming year. Any debate of issues was overshadowed by the first day of filing for office. To declare yourself a candidate beyond the county level, you must travel to Jefferson City and file with the Secretary of State. By the end of the first day, 317 people had put their money down and their name on the line. Of these, nineteen are running statewide. The cost to file for office ranges from fifty dollars for state representative to two hundred dollars for governor.

There were no surprises on the first day. Four republicans filed for the office of governor setting up an August primary election. While everyone has a chance to win on Election Day, only two candidates are expected to mount a serious campaign. Congressman Kenny Hulshof and State Treasurer Sarah Steelman both have the ability to raise the necessary money it takes to run statewide. Hulshof had considered running for governor four years ago but ultimately stepped aside to avoid a primary with then Secretary of State Matt Blunt. A third candidate, Richard Kline has filed for office several times with no success. Attorney General Jay Nixon is so far the only democrat to file for governor.

Reasons given for running are as varied as the candidates. Most genuinely believe they can make a difference and want to serve the people of Missouri. Some run on a single issue. Many candidates served as interns while in college and have a long standing interest in politics. Several years ago an elderly man filed for Secretary of State. When asked why he wanted to run, he said his wife had recently died and this would give him something to stay occupied.

Congressman Hulshof's decision to run for governor attracted eight candidates to replace him in Washington, DC and others have announced they are considering getting in the race. When you have several candidates in a race, the winner may only have to attract twenty five percent of the vote or less. Unlike states which require the winner to receive over fifty percent, candidates in Missouri only must receive more votes than any other person who is running.

In addition to the candidates running for office, petitions will soon begin circulating to put various issues before the voters. This is the time of year when ballot initiatives proposed by citizens have been approved by the Secretary of State's office and the process of gathering signatures is about to begin. As you approach a shopping mall, don't be surprised if you encounter several people with clipboards asking you to sign your name to their issue. In the coming weeks I will go into more detail about which issues you might expect to see being

discussed. While many are proposed each year, only a few make it to the ballot for consideration.

I welcome your opinions and suggestions. You may reach me at 573-751-1882, e-mail to chuck.purgason@senate.mo.gov , or write to me at the Missouri Senate, State Capitol, Room 420, Jefferson City, MO 65101. If you would like to receive these newsletters electronically, please call or e-mail my office.