

Candidate using 2016 election as springboard for political career

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By Andrew Kiser andrewk@montrosepress.com

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A U.S. senatorial candidate was “comfortable” with her dual role as a University of Colorado–Colorado Springs professor and a pastor of a small Baptist congregation — but then, she said, “2016 happened.”

That year’s election results moved Stephany Rose Spaulding to try her hand in politics.

“It didn’t matter if you were a life-long Democrat who went Independent or a conscientious Republican, something shifted in 2016,” said Spaulding, who’s a tenured professor of women and ethnic studies.

She had an unsuccessful run at Colorado's 5th Congressional District last year, but the voter support convinced her to try going after a senate seat in the 2020 selection.

Spaulding is one of many hopefuls vying for Cory Gardner's (CO-R) seat. She visited the home of a Montrose County Democratic Party member Wednesday to discuss issues facing Colorado and the nation.

"Now is not the time to abandon the work but it's the time to do the work that's more deeply and intentionally," Spaulding said.

Immigration

Spaulding said current immigration laws have created a crisis.

Policies need to address "conscientious and complex" conversations around immigration that are not rooted in race and "fear-mongering certain communities of people," she said.

Spaulding said when she was young, she had been actively involved in community transformation processes. She believes her time as an organizer and activist will help facilitate immigration laws discussion.

She also believes the moral issues need to be rethought. Right now, marginalized communities face a lack of criminal justice reform, voter protection, immigration reform, income equality and protections against all forms of discrimination, she added.

"We will get the policies that protect the sustainability of our lives," the candidate said. "I've learned from indigenous colleagues we have to think seven generations forward."

Health care

Spaulding is a proponent of Medicare for all.

She said current leaders in the Senate are working on repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act. But, she said, more than 20 million Americans, including 500,000 Coloradans, now have health coverage because of the ACA.

Spaulding said since 2010, the ACA has improved health care coverage. Young people and low-income earners have had the greatest gains, and are most at-risk if this coverage goes away, she added.

She said parts of the ACA need to be reformed and improved. Reforms should include lower prescription costs and having a vision of achieving universal health care in the US, she said.

Spaulding said every Coloradan should have insurance access, as well as entryways for them to have health care providers.

“Especially in rural Colorado, people don’t have providers in their communities,” she said. “So we need to make sure that the infrastructure is in place for providers to come.”

One way to fix that, the Democratic candidate said, is to fund telemedicine, which will give people earlier access to health care.

Environment

Climate change is one of the most “formidable crises” that’s plaguing Colorado currently, said Spaulding. None of the issues facing the world will matter if the planet is uninhabitable, she added.

“We have to address climate change right now,” Spaulding said.

As for Colorado’s environment, she’s thrilled the Bureau of Land Management’s headquarters will be based out of Grand Junction. But, she said, the current leadership poses a problem for the state and “will be detrimental for the protection of our public lands and spaces.”

She said energy infrastructure needs to be developed that relies on balancing energy independence in the U.S. with the use of wind, solar and hydroelectric and developing technologies.

The Democratic candidate added incorporating more renewable energy will help the nation move toward less reliance on non-renewable resources. Additionally, sites will create good jobs and economic stability. In the past five years, the solar industry alone has created nearly 80,000 living-wage U.S. jobs, Spaulding said.

Crowded field

In response to questions Wednesday about how she is trying to stand out in a large candidate pool, Spaulding said she’s well aware she’s one of many Democratic hopefuls and the race is quite crowded. She said she stands out because her focus is what she’ll do on her first day in office, if elected.

“We can’t just think in the short term of winning a primary. We have to know that we can win this state,” she said. “... We need a senator that has a vision of moving Colorado forward.”

Andrew Kiser is the Montrose Daily Press’ sports/business writer. Follow him on Twitter @andrew_kpress.