

Passion for politics leads to candidates' forum

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Cody Pedro wanted to do something for his senior research project at C.M. Russell High School related to the upcoming legislative elections because he wanted more people to be aware of the candidates' stances on the issues.

"Honestly, I just feel most of the time you vote for the one with the most yard signs," Cody said.

He decided he wanted to host a forum for the four legislative candidates vying for a position in the Montana House of Representatives in House District 25, which represents a large cross-section of the CMR community.

To his surprise, all four candidates agreed to show up for a forum tonight at the high school, where Cody will lob questions at them on everything from medical marijuana to fiscal policy.

"He cares very much about politics and government," said Brian Halverson, Cody's AP government teacher.

The candidates are Democrats Lindsay Love and Rod Lukasik, and Republicans Cleve Loney and Rick Tryon. The like-party candidates will square off against each other in the June 8 primary election before advancing to take on the top vote-getter from the other party in the general election in November.

Even though they have different political backgrounds and ideas, all of the candidates said they were excited to get an invite to a candidate forum from a high school student. They also are excited about the opportunity to address voters in an organized forum.

"I was delighted and surprised," Tryon said of the invitation. "I think this is exactly what voters need to make an informed decision. He's a really sharp kid."

The forum begins at 6 p.m. today in the CMR auditorium, and the public is invited. Cody said he will ask the candidates a series of nine questions, with each candidate having two minutes to respond. He said he worked with Halverson to craft the questions for the forum.

"This is a wonderful way to engage the neighborhood," Love said.

Loney said he believes Cody did a great job organizing the forum, and Lukasik said he wants to support a student who went out of his way to give candidates a platform to address the community.

"I wish more younger people would take an interest in politics," Lukasik said.

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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