

CANYON COURIER

OUR READERS WRITE



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Leonard is the right choice in HD 25

Editor:

My letters to the editor generally focus on issues and not personalities. Every two years, however, our community chooses someone to represent us in the state legislature, and personalities are the issue. Our choice in this election is between incumbent Republican Tim Leonard and first-time candidate Tammy Story, a Democrat, and a major issue in both campaigns is public education. This isn't surprising, as Jeffco Public Schools are the county's largest employer and the majority of our property taxes go directly to the school system. Unfortunately, not every child has been getting what he or she needs to succeed in today's global environment: Fewer than half of all Jeffco graduates meet college and career-readiness standards, and thousands of Jeffco parents now find themselves paying for remedial courses after graduation.

When faced with this disturbing dilemma, I watched Tim Leonard work with community members to replicate Colorado's top school models (Ridgeview Classical, Liberty Common, and Vanguard) and bring their success to Jeffco. The resulting Golden View Classical Academy now serves 600 Jeffco students, with several hundred more on the waiting list. In stark contrast, I saw Tammy Story stand before the Board of Education and, in an astonishing demonstration of denial, insist that the "Jeffco schools are a well-oiled machine. You don't fix what isn't broken." When concerned Jeffco voters elected non-union representatives (including yours truly) to the school board, Story helped spearhead a recall campaign that, by their own admission, began two weeks before the elected officials were even sworn in. Her associated political action group (Jeffco United) was subsequently found guilty of breaking the law by concealing their source of funding.

Public records show that most of Leonard's campaign contributors are citizens from within our community, while the majority of Story's money comes from

outside special interests such as the Boulder-based Colorado Climate Action, the plumbers union, the pipefitters union and, as one might expect, the teachers union.

We must now ask ourselves what kind of personality do we want to represent our community at the Colorado Capitol. Do we want someone who represents our local interests, or those of outsiders? Do we want someone who will rise to face our most difficult challenges, or someone who denies they exist? Do we want a candidate so inflexible that she'll shut down the opposition before policy changes can even be discussed, much less implemented? Or do we want someone who will listen to both sides of an issue and then make an informed, thoughtful and rational decision.

For Jeffco residents who identify as hard-left progressive, Tammy Story would no doubt be a dutiful representative. For the majority of us, Tim Leonard represents a far better choice.

John Newkirk, Conifer