

Votes are in: Evergreen's Tim Leonard retains HD 25 seat

By Joe Moylan

Tuesday, November 8, 2016 at 8:06 pm (Updated: November 15, 2:38 pm)

The Jeffco Elections Office appears to have caught up on its outstanding Election Day ballots, making it safe to declare Republican Tim Leonard the winner in the race for state House District 25.



Chancey Bush

State Rep. Tim Leonard monitors results on election night at Fossil Trace Golf Club in Golden.

"I'm very grateful to the residents of House District 25 for electing me to represent them," Leonard said Tuesday. "Our campaign was about ideas, and I'm grateful to the donors who invested in those ideas in spite of the warfare waged by the other side."

As Election Day came to an end last week, Leonard led Democratic challenger Tammy Story 51.8 percent to 48.2 percent. But the two candidates were separated by a mere 1,803 votes with several thousand ballots still to be tallied. On Nov. 9, Carrie Kellogg, Jeffco's director of elections, said this year's election drew more voters than expected, and there were 16,000 to 18,000 in-person ballots, as well as an unknown number of military and absentee ballots, that needed to be counted.

Calls to Kellogg on Tuesday for an update were not returned by press time, but the county's election site had been updated late Monday afternoon, and it appeared the Jeffco clerk and recorder's office had caught up on those outstanding ballots.

According to the latest numbers, Leonard maintained his slim 51.8 percent to 48.2 percent lead over Story. Leonard received 26,162 votes to Story's 24,326.

On Tuesday, Leonard said he was looking forward to putting the difficult election behind him, but noted that the campaign wasn't necessarily contentious due to any real or perceived hostility between him and Story. Instead, Leonard noted that there were several liberal special-interest groups that poured an unprecedented amount of money into a historically Republican stronghold in an effort to unseat him. Leonard was appointed to serve HD 25 in March when Jon Keyser stepped down to run for the U.S. Senate.

Those special-interest groups dedicated more than \$426,000 for mailers, online and cable television advertising, door-knockers and phone-bankers in an effort to thrust a Democrat into the HD 25 seat, Leonard said. For comparison, Leonard said "his side" contributed \$75,000 — a 6-to-1 ratio.

"To see half of a million dollars dedicated to a House District 25 race is unheard of," Leonard said. "Personally, I myself received 31 different mailers that were either against me or in favor of my opponent."

Leonard added that his was one of 10 races targeted by liberal special-interest groups. He was the only Republican to survive and, in total, the party lost three seats in the Colorado House.

"I know full well we are the minority in the House; it's the context we have to work in," Leonard said. "I know I can work well across the aisle, and it's going to be important we all work together to keep the best ideas coming to the surface to ensure there is good representation for the people of Jeffco and the rest of Colorado."

Leonard, who is originally from Detroit, moved to Colorado 30 years ago and currently lives in Evergreen. During his campaign, Leonard vowed to uphold what he said are America's two guiding principles — its constitutional republic and free-enterprise economy.

Story was raised in a military family that settled in the Conifer area in 1987. She played an activist role in the 2015 recall of three Jeffco school board members. Story made public education the focus of her campaign, saying that the district and the state needed to find new funding streams to offset the longstanding "negative factor" in state education budgeting.

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