

NEWS COLUMN

PAID POLITICAL LETTER

Better Together

Whether real or perceived, it is disheartening to read about the disarray in the NDGOP. Either way, one must hope that a common purpose will emerge. One only has to look to the national political arena to observe that, in many instances, bad or non-existent Democrat policies, even preposterous in some cases, are recurrently winning elections at all levels. Unfortunately, Republicans advocating practical policies are often failing to influence voter turnout. Poor messaging, ineffective explanations, and party squabbling, among other reasons, are just not attractive to voters, especially Independent voters.

The NDGOP, working together on behalf of the electorate, has generated unprecedented prosperity for our great State. Nevertheless, factions within the party such as "populist," "conservative, etc., risk overshadowing the many accomplishments. As a senatorial candidate, be assured, I will work to ensure our laws and programs support all of our residents by enabling each person to build a successful future for themselves, their families, and future generations, regardless of party affiliation.

Historically, the GOP has prided itself on robust party debate, building a big tent, and offering good practical solutions. The cancellation of dissenting voices or of differing opinions within the party would be a real pity. As Republicans, we cherish our liberty and seek to protect our Constitutional and inalienable rights. Yet for Republicans to win this upcoming election, we must also work together to foster harmony, promote the good, and seek peaceful coexistence in our state and districts while holding fast to our core principles. As we are so often reminded, a house divided against itself rarely, if ever, prevails.

While the NDGOP has a responsibility to effectively communicate its messages so voters can be informed, citizens also have a duty to participate in their government by asking questions and giving input. Choosing not to vote or remaining silent equates to tacit approval, which does, in the end, mean that the voters have indeed spoken, regardless of turnout, since winners and losers are declared at the conclusion of the election.

My promise to the voters is a family-friendly campaign because I believe in service, the family, the sanctity of life, and that all of us, the young and "mature," deserve a decent shot at the "American Dream." So, whether "populist," "conservative," or somewhere in between, we must work together before the North Dakota Grand Old Party folds in on itself. See you on the campaign trail.

Dr. Christine O'Riley, Psy.D., JCL
Clinical Psychologist
District 11 GOP Senate Candidate

Christine A O'Riley
 Fargo , N.D.

Dem-NPL party official chosen to take Boschee’s Senate seat

MINOT

On Monday I reported that newly-elected Fargo Mayor Josh Selzler was resigning from the state Senate. He indicated he had expedited his timeline for stepping down due to the special session recently announced by Gov. Kelly Armstrong, hoping his replacement could be appointed in time to serve in that session.

The process has moved quickly. State law gives Boschee’s political party the opportunity to choose his replacement once officially notified of the vacancy by the chairman of Legislative Management, who is currently Senate Majority Leader David Hogue.

Hogue made that notification today, and the District 44 Democrats immediately announced that longtime party official Jamie Selzler is their choice.

“I know that trust has to be earned, and I intend to earn the trust of the residents of District 44 by being accessible, responsive, and willing to listen,” Selzler said in a press release announcing his appointment. “I



ROB PORT

believe we learn more by listening than by talking, so I look forward to learning from my colleagues in the Legislature and hearing directly from the people and organizations across our community.”

“I care deeply about issues including housing, childcare, jobs, and supporting public employees. I am humbled by this opportunity and ready to begin serving the people of District 44,” he continued.

You may recognize Selzler from recent national headlines about his remarkable weight loss. At one point he weighed over 650 pounds, but shed approximately 370 pounds with a mix of diet, exercise and Wegovy. “I fell in love with physical activity in a way I never expected,” he told the New York Times in February.

Selzler has founded the company My One Change, through which he offers coaching services to help people lose weight and improve their lives.

The press release indicates Selzler “has been



David Samson / The Forum

Fargo Mayor Josh Boschee is seen during the Fargo City Commission meeting on Monday at Fargo City Hall.

active in Democratic politics in North Dakota and nationally for more than two decades.” He’s been a national committeeman for the Democratic-NPL for the last three years.

“District 44 is excited to announce Jamie Selzler will complete Josh Boschee’s term as Senator. Jamie brings many years of strategic leadership within the party and has extensive experience working with North Dakotans on both sides of the aisle,” District 44 Democratic-NPL Chair Jessie Smette said in the release. “We are confident he will use those skills to benefit not only the constituents in District 44, but all North Dakotans.”

Because Selzler was appointed after an Aug. 1

deadline, he will be able to serve the remainder of Boschee’s term without appearing on the November ballot later this year. That timing does come at a cost, however. Serving a partial term would allow Selzler to seek election to an additional four-year term in the state Senate, under North Dakota’s term limits law, but he couldn’t stand for election to the Senate a second time. The term limits amendment caps total service in any one chamber of the Legislature at eight years, and makes no exceptions for those appointed to fill vacancies.

Rob Port is a columnist, news reporter and podcast host for Forum News Service. Reach him at rport@forumcomm.com.

Bitter reflections on a failed gubernatorial run

BY MATTHEW STOLLE
Post Bulletin

ROCHESTER — Steve Patterson could write a book, “What I Learned about Running for Governor as a Third Party Candidate.” It would not be a happy tale.

The Austin, Minnesota, businessman faced the longest of long odds in his run for the state’s top political office as a third-party candidate. But Patterson is a bit of an idealist and wasn’t afraid to try. He had tried it once before and thought he could do better.

But he found that the rules had changed.

At the very least, Patterson and his running mate, JT Thompson, thought they could garner enough signatures to reach the ballot in November.

It was not to be. His a-pox-on-both-your-houses effort was stillborn — the way the two major parties like it, he believes.

Patterson and Thompson held signature-gathering events around the state during the two-week filing period from May 19 to June 2. The duo went as far north as Big Fork and as close to home as Rochester’s Peace Plaza, with a detour thrown in at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds for the state fair kick-off.

They ended up collecting about 1,300 of the 2,000 signatures required. The experience left a bitter taste in Patterson’s mouth about the near-impossibility of opening a moderate middle lane in today’s bifurcated system. Instead of signing the petition, people wanted to argue.

“Some people were very nasty to me,” Patterson said.

“It’s hard when people use political parties as

their identity, and it’s part of their core make-up as a person,” he said. “It’s really hard to get them to be open-minded to new things.”

He found people on the left angry and mean, even though “their guy (Gov. Tim Walz) is in office.” He found people on the right so averse to compromise and coalition-building that, he predicted, it would guarantee the DFL’s hold on power for the foreseeable future.

He found himself especially disappointed with people who are retired or near retirement. In talking to them, he found that they agreed that his generation is not in a great spot but were OK with that as long as they got their Social Security checks.

“The ship is sinking, but they’re on the lifeboat,” Patterson said.

Patterson didn’t enter the political arena as a starry-eyed novice to politics. Four years ago, he ran for governor as a candidate for Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis when it and the Legal Marijuana Now Party gained major-party status. And though he had only gotten 1% of the vote, he thought it was possible to build on public disaffection with the two-party system.

But he hadn’t counted on how difficult it would be to overcome new roadblocks to third parties thrown up by the Legislature since then.

In 2023, lawmakers passed a new election law requiring political parties to abide by stricter organization rules. Much of the oomph went out of the cannabis issue when the Legislature legalized recreational marijuana. Legislators also raised the threshold for maintaining major party status to 8% of the vote from



Joe Ahlquist / Post Bulletin file photo

Former gubernatorial candidate Steve Patterson, left, an Austin businessman, and his running mate, JT Thompson, are pictured in Rochester at Thompson’s Lucky Penny Garage on Nov. 17, 2025.

5%. “A lot of it was just the fact that people don’t know how it really works. And I didn’t understand the process until I was in it,” he said.

Patterson also found collecting 2,000 signatures during the two-week filing period an impossibly tight window. The signature-gathering threshold for gaining ballot access had also changed. It had previously been 1,000, but it had been doubled by the 2023 Legislature, he said.

“I don’t want to say I thought it would be easy, but I thought it was achievable,” he said.

Patterson became politically active during the pandemic. The state-imposed rules to combat COVID, he felt, were too heavy-handed and landed harshly on small businesses. It dealt a fatal blow to a brewery he was trying to open in Rochester. He felt they weren’t being told the truth. Last year, Patterson launched his new Moderate Majority party as a way to address issues that he felt were being ignored.

In the end, the experience taught Patterson how hostile the two-party system is to independent party candidates. And that’s a shame, he said, because it narrows the debate about what can be

said and talked about. “I don’t think our country or our state is going in the right direction,” Patterson said. “(The two parties) want to keep repeating the same tired arguments and saying, ‘Well, if everyone would just listen to me or if everyone just would vote my way, things would get better.’”

BRIEF

Auto shop launches backpacks for students drive

FARGO — A local auto repair shop is helping drivers get ready for the road and students for another school year.

Skalicky’s Auto Repair is hosting its first Brakes for Backpacks event, now through Aug. 19.

For every brake service completed, it will donate one backpack filled with school supplies.

There will be an event party to hand out backpacks 5 to 7 p.m., Aug. 19, at Skalicky’s, 3939 Seventh Ave. N.

Any remaining supplies will be given directly to area schools. The business is hoping to donate 40 to 50 backpacks.

“We’re at a really good spot to start really giving back in really cool ways

in the community. I’m from here. I went to Fargo North, and I’ve been here my whole life, so it feels really good to be able to start to do things like this,” said Jesse Skalicky, owner of Skalicky’s Auto Repair.

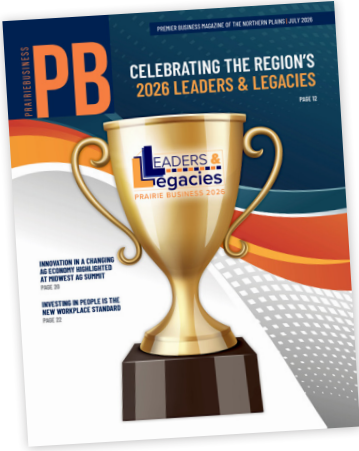
The business says you can schedule your brake service online and also to donate supplies.

Forum staff



Read local news 24/7.

inforum.com



Subscribe to the FREE E-EDITION OF PRAIRIE BUSINESS

For more than 25 years Prairie Business has been the window into business and industry in North Dakota, South Dakota and western Minnesota.

To start your **FREE** subscription, go to **grandforksherald.com/newsletter** and click on the Prairie Business monthly e-edition.

We'll deliver each edition to your inbox **FREE** every month - it's that easy!



Scan the QR code and click on the Prairie Business Monthly e-edition.