



Shellie Yoder announces run for State Senate District 40

Jan. 25, 2020 - The Herald Times by Ernest Rollins

Former Monroe County Council woman Shellie Yoder announced Friday she is running for Indiana Senate.

Yoder, a Democrat, is running to represent District 40 in the Indiana Senate. Incumbent Democrat Mark Stoops announced last year that he will not be seeking reelection to the seat. District 40 encompasses most of Monroe County.

“I am grateful for the many neighbors throughout Monroe County who have encouraged me and who have inspired this people-powered campaign,” Yoder said in a news release.

“My experience as an educator and nonprofit executive, and my record of getting results on the Monroe County Council, equips me to be the strong voice and fierce advocate our community deserves in the Senate.”

Yoder served as the District 1 representative on the Monroe County Council from 2013 to 2019. Yoder resigned from the council because she was moving out of the district she represented. Along with serving on the council, she has also served on the boards of the Head Start Policy Council, Indiana South Central Community Action Program, Fleet Financing and Energy Commission, Bloomington Economic Development Corporation, and the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce.

In addition, Yoder served on the Monroe County Women’s Commission, Hoosier Women Forward board of advisors, staff at First United Church, and the inaugural Monroe County Opioid Commission, which was recently renamed the Monroe County Substance Use Disorder Taskforce. She also co-chaired the first South Central Indiana Opioid Summit. Yoder is currently a lecturer in the Indiana University Kelley School of Business.

Her professional experience also includes leading nonprofits related to women’s health care and improving conditions in at-risk communities, according to the release.

According to the news release, Yoder’s campaign will center around nine legislative priorities:

- Fighting for the environment;
- Respecting public education;
- Growing the economy inclusively;
- Ensuring equity;
- Protecting reproductive justice;
- Improving public health and wellness;
- Reforming the criminal justice system;
- Ending gun violence; and
- Restoring democracy

“When I think about the future, I am increasingly concerned that our kids and grandkids won’t

have the same opportunities as previous generations,” Yoder said in a news release. “Now is the time to pull together and champion bold, progressive solutions to our greatest challenges.”

To learn more about Yoder’s campaign, residents can follow along on Facebook, @ShelliYoderforStateSenate, and on Twitter, @ShelliYoder.

Letters To The Editor:

Supports Yoder for Senate

March 2, 2020

To the editor:

While we are riveted to the presidential campaign, another contest of direct importance to our lives is taking place. What happens in the Indiana General Assembly has an immense impact on what we can and cannot achieve in Monroe County. State law thwarts common sense gun control, fails to protect all our LGBTQ+ neighbors against hate crimes, and favors coal over renewable energy.

Shelli Yoder is running for Indiana State Senate District 40 because she believes that we need bold, progressive change at the state level. She pledges to protect our environment, strengthen public education, raise the minimum wage, push for a stronger hate crimes bill, defend workers against discriminatory dismissal and ensure equal access to reproductive health care. Shelli wants Indiana to treat the opioid crisis as a mental health issue, not a criminal one. She will also work to lower the cost of prescription drugs, decriminalize marijuana and fight to end racial bias in the criminal justice system.

Shelli leads with empathy. With roots in small town northern Indiana, she will communicate across the aisle, not to strike routine deals, but to forge new coalitions for justice.

Please support Shelli Yoder for Indiana Senate.

David Keppel

Bloomington

Supports Yoder for Senate

April 6, 2020

To the editor:

I am writing as a retired state legislator of two decades, relocated to beautiful southern Indiana. In three months Bloomington Democrats will select a nominee for State Senate District 40.

The district deserves a strong voice in the tradition of Mark Stoope and Vi Simpson ... and that candidate is Shelli Yoder.

Shelli is a dedicated community servant leader. County council president, former congressional candidate, IU faculty member, mom and community activist. She will represent District 40 with the dedication, knowledge and passion that we all know she possesses. She knows the district’s touch points. She understands the district’s problems and promise. She will serve with distinction and dedication. We should all support Shelli in this year’s June primary. Select a strong candidate who will make us proud in the Indiana Senate — Shelli Yoder.

Linda Lawson

Nashville

Articles of Interest and Press Releases

State Candidates Address Climate, Race, Education

March 12, 2020 - The Herald Times by Ernest Rollins

Supporting public education, fighting white supremacy and addressing the effects of climate change were some of the issues candidates running to be in the Indiana statehouse discussed as part of a forum on Tuesday.

Democrats Shelli Yoder and John Zody are seeking the party's nomination to represent District 40 in the Indiana Senate. Incumbent Democrat Mark Stoops announced in 2019 that he intends to retire from his position this year. Democrat Trent Feuerbach is also seeking the nomination but was not in attendance at Tuesday's forum.

Also present at the Democracy for Monroe County forum was Tiffany Grant and Paula Staley, who are running to represent District 60 and District 65 in the Indiana House, respectively. Both candidates are running unopposed.

Public education:

Each of the candidates at the forum plans to do more to support public education in the state. Zody said state lawmakers need to pay Hoosier teachers what they deserve and should have a long-term plan for accomplishing that goal. He said the current legislature ignored teachers' latest efforts to secure better pay and continues to kick the can down the road.

He said the legislature must also properly fund public education in Indiana. He added they still have not restored the \$300 million that was cut ten years ago out of public education system in Indiana.

Yoder agrees that teachers need to be paid better and shown that they are appreciated through how they are compensated.

"We should be setting them up for success, not tearing them down so that they have to supply their own classroom with the school supplies they need to be successful," Yoder said.

Along with pay, Yoder plans to also work to ensure that teachers get the training they want. She said the training lawmakers are recommending does not align with what teachers say they need.

Yoder said the state's school funding is broken. She said the way the school funding formula currently works leaves the Monroe County Community School Corp. and Richland-Bean Blossom School Corp. behind. She added voucher programs take the first bite of the apple and that needs to change.

Grant said teachers would like to be paid an appropriate wage that keeps up with the standard of living. She said many teachers have not seen raises in a long time, and that comes at the price of larger classroom sizes and fewer teachers.

She would also like to see mandatory kindergarten for all kids. She works with Title I, which is a reading program for kids who come to school behind, and sees a lot of kids who are not ready for school.

"If we can get every kid into kindergarten, it would help them be ready for when they move into first grade," she said.

In addition, she said there is a need for more caseworkers, social workers and counselors in schools to help students.

Staley thinks that the two online schools that defrauded the state of more than \$68 million

should pay that money back.

Staley said she has found the current legislature's naming of bills can seem as if they support public schools, but upon closer review, it is the opposite. For example, she said, there was a recent referendum bill that would have shared revenue raised with private and charter schools. She views attempts like this as a way for lawmakers to push support more toward charter and private schools at the expense of public ones. She does not support such actions. She said public schools are the foundation of strong families and communities.

Climate change:

Staley said the basic underlying strategy to address climate change would be educating more people about its impact.

She added actions at the statehouse this session to slow down the ability to close coal power plants and reducing tax credits are steps in the wrong direction.

Grant agrees there is need to educate the public about how climate change impacts everyone. Once people have a better understanding of the impacts, Grant said, the next step is drastic policy changes. This includes investing in programs that would move the state to more renewable energy sources.

Zody said the Indiana Department of Environmental Management is underfunded and environmental sustainability is not discussed in state government. He added Indiana University and the city of Bloomington are taking the lead on addressing climate change, and he thinks there is common ground to be found so that everyone is actively involved in tackling this issue. He used examples such as composting and weatherization as ways to accomplish this.

Yoder said while it is generally assumed that coastal cities would share the brunt of the effects of climate change, Indiana is on the front lines. She said the effects can impact the health of Indiana rivers, streams, creek and air quality.

She said the state should be aggressively responding to this. Yoder added the state has the opportunity to be leading the rest of the country on this issue.

Combating white supremacy:

Members of the public asked candidates to address how they would respond and make policy to address white supremacy groups, including the American Identity Movement.

Sarah Dye, a vendor at the Bloomington Farmers' Market, stated she identifies with the American Identity Movement. That connection has sparked local residents to protest her farm's presence and the farmers' market.

Yoder said the American Identity movement is one of the 120 hate groups listed on the Southern Poverty Law Center website. She added their existence in our midst is known from flyers on campus to selling produce at the farmers' market. She said she personally doesn't feel free to go to the farmers' market because everyone doesn't feel comfortable there.

Therefore, she said, no one should feel free to go to the farmers' market.

Yoder said addressing white supremacy has to start with each and every individual. She said she supports State Sen. J. D. Ford's bill that would require all state lawmakers to receive implicit bias training. She said the bill did not even make it to a committee for a hearing.

"If our state legislators are saying it is not important, what do you think the next generations would be saying?" Yoder said.

Zody said any ounce of white supremacy is not OK and should not be excused.

"The spread of hate has to be fought and combated," Zody said, and this can be accomplished by banding together as a community and making it known that hate is not welcomed.

Zody added the state's hate crime law is not comprehensive enough. He said it does not get Indiana off the list of states without adequate protections for different groups that face

discrimination.

Grant said one way to combat racism is through education, including reeducating people, which can be the more difficult challenge.

Grant said along with education, she would like to see stronger penalties for those who exhibit hate and racism and also supports more implicit bias training. She said teachers are required to do such training. She agrees state lawmakers should do the training, but feels many more people can benefit as well.

“I don’t see why it couldn’t be part of every career,” Grant said, adding she plans to work on this if elected.

Staley said she also supports educating individuals about diversity and racism to ensure the next generation will grow up to overcome these racial ideals. She said she would like to see the definition of a hate crime expanded to make sure there is both the carrot and the stick. Staley said the carrot is educating people about racism and diversity and the stick is stronger hate crime laws.

In addition, Staley said officials who are complacent about groups that promote hate and racism should be voted out of office.

Yoder chairs her final meeting of county council:

“Find what makes you come alive and go do it.”

Oct. 22, 2019 - BSquare Beacon

Tuesday night’s Monroe County council’s work session was highlighted by debate on the issuance of \$3 million worth of general obligation bonds—the item passed on a 5–1 vote with dissent from councilor Marty Hawk.

At the end of session, councilors marked the occasion of council president Shelli Yoder’s last time to preside over a meeting. Yoder announced her resignation last Thursday, effective at the end of October—she’s moving out of District 1, which she represents.

The council left the matter of electing a new president of the council for another time.

Geoff McKim told her: “I just want to thank you for your service to this council and this community.

You’ve done a fantastic job as council president. It’s been an honor working with you.”

Hawk, who serves as the sole Republican on the county council, followed McKim, saying, “It has been really fulfilling to be able to work with this council and to... be treated with respect by our council president, regardless of what political side of the political aisle.”

Vice president of the council, Eric Spoonmore said, “I’m saddened, that we’re losing such an esteemed colleague as president Yoder. I know you will find ways to continue to stay involved in our community and doing the all great things that you have been... Thank you so much for your leadership, it has been an absolute honor to work with you.”

Yoder wrapped up the meeting with thanks to the community, her council colleagues and the employees of Monroe County:

The last 7 years have been a privilege to serve this community, the residents of this community, to sit alongside the colleagues I’ve been able to get to know ... learning from you, being inspired by you, being challenged by you. I have grown, I have been touched by your generosity, and will take that with me into every single way that I can serve this community. And may we all do all that we can to make the world a better place ... I encourage everyone watching, listening to find what makes you come alive and go do it.

I would say a special thank you to all the employees of Monroe County, who so selflessly and with dignity serve this community. Thank you. It has been an honor to serve alongside you. And with that, I thank you and this meeting is adjourned.

Yoder also told The Beacon last week that she plans to attend the joint meeting of the county council and the Bloomington's city council, scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Oct. 29 in the Nat U. Hill room of the county courthouse.

Under state statute, it's the party to which the resigning council member belongs that has the responsibility to find a replacement. The statute says the party chair has ten days after a vacancy occurs to give notice to the precinct "committeemen" that a caucus will be held. The caucus itself has to be held no later than 30 days after the vacancy occurs.

When The Beacon spoke with Monroe County Democratic Party, Jennifer Crossley, at "The Power of the Black Vote" panel discussion in city council chambers on Saturday, Crossley said she was still working to schedule the caucus.

Vice chair of the Monroe County Democratic Party, Peter Iversen, has stated on his Facebook page that he is a candidate to fill the vacancy left by Yoder.