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From president to school board, candidates file for Utah elections

Politics • Santorum submits papers two hours before deadline.

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As Charles Kimball ran down the hallway of the state Capitol, only one thing went through his mind.

“I wasn’t going to make it,” said Kimball, who had been knocking on doors and gathering signatures for three weeks to get his name on the ballot as an independent candidate for Congress in the 2nd District.

There was trouble getting the signatures he needed certified as valid by the county clerk. First half of the 458 got thrown out. He went back out and pounded pavement and rounded up a couple hundred more. But another chunk was denied leaving him 16 short.

He scrambled to collect the last handful, gathering the final one from someone inside the county clerk’s office before dashing up to the Capitol to file for office.

The disappointment and disbelief was apparent on his face when he got there to find the door closed and locked.

But Mark Thomas, the administrator of the Lieutenant Governor’s Office, decided that since Kimball had been in the Capitol before 5 p.m., and the office is required to interpret the law liberally, Kimball was allowed to file.

“I absolutely didn’t think we could do it,” Kimball said. “It’s a beautiful thing, and I think running for political office should be hard, but it should be fair.”

Kimball is one of scores of candidates who have filed to run for office across the state, from president of the United States to state school board.

Former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum filed late Thursday afternoon, less than two hours before the deadline, making a stand in the nation’s final presidential primary in a state expected to go overwhelmingly to Mitt Romney.



Al Hartmann | Tribune file photo Former Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson has launched a new political party and is running for president on its ticket.

Debbie Besselievre, who is coordinating Santorum's efforts in the state, said she expects the candidate to make a visit to Utah, probably in May.

"Right now I'm just working on putting together a grassroots campaign to get as many people as we can," she said, and she is undaunted by the Romney leanings in the state. "The people I'm working with, we believe that Santorum represents our family values better than Mitt Romney does."

Ron Paul and Newt Gingrich both will be on the June primary ballot, as will Fred Karger, a fringe Republican highly critical of the LDS Church.

Karger has ripped the Mormon Church for its involvement in the Prop 8 fight that banned gay marriage in his home state of California and has criticized Romney throughout this race, going so far as to create top10craziestmormonbeliefs.com.

"I think the voters of Utah will either love me or hate me," he said. "It is quite an interesting turn of events."

Former Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson, who formed the Justice Party and was chosen as the party's nominee for president, filed his papers Thursday, as well.

There were relatively few surprises in other filings.

Republican Sen. Orrin Hatch drew a handful of Republican opponents — former Sen. Dan Liljenquist, Rep. Chris Herrod, radio host Tim Aalders, truck driver and small businessman Kevin Fisk, musician Loy Brunson and piano technician Jeremy Friedbaum.

Former state Sen. Scott Howell, an executive with IBM and 2000 Democratic challenger to Hatch, was a late entrant to the Senate race on the Democratic side. He joins Internet businessman Pete Ashdown, who lost to Hatch in 2006 and William Peterson II vying for the nomination.

Gov. Gary Herbert also drew several in-party challengers, including tea party co-founder David Kirkham, former Rep. Morgan Philpot, Rep. Ken Sumsion, retired businessman Lane Ronnow and oil executive William Skokos.

Democrats have fielded retired Maj. Gen. Peter Cooke to run.

There were also a handful of Libertarian Party, Constitution Party and independent candidates in both races.

Seventeen candidates, including Kimball, filed to run in the crowded 2nd Congressional District field.

Five challengers have emerged to take on U.S. Rep. Rob Bishop in the 1st Congressional District.

Third District Congressman Jason Chaffetz has attracted four challengers, including Brigham Young University law professor Lynn Wardle, a Republican, and Salt Lake City Councilman Soren Simonsen, a Democrat.

In the new 4th District, current 2nd District Congressman Jim Matheson, a Democrat, is up against eight rivals — five Republicans and three minor party hopefuls.

State Rep. John Dougall, R-Highland, announced on the closing night of the legislative session that he would not seek re-election and would instead challenge Republican Auston Johnson for the state auditor position.

A handful of Republican state representatives are looking to knock off GOP senators in their districts.

In Senate District 14, centered in Orem, Rep. Craig Frank filed to run against longtime Sen. John Valentine.

Frank said that there are some significant policy differences between himself and Valentine — Utah's health

care reform, immigration law and an open records bill among them — and there's the senator's tenure.

"John's been in for 24 years and in a part-time Legislature, in my opinion, that's a long time," Frank said.

Rep. Patrick Painter, R-Nephi, is challenging Republican Sen. Ralph Okerlund, R-Monroe. And Rep. Evan Vickers, R-Cedar City, is challenging freshman Republican Sen. Casey Anderson, who edged out Vickers for the position in a special election last year.

Rep. Bill Wright, R-Holden, who sponsored a controversial bill restricting sex education this session, drew seven challengers — four Republicans, two Democrats and a Constitution Party candidate.

Jeff McNeill, a contractor from Grantsville, said he had decided to run a while ago, after arguing during redistricting that there should be a representative from Tooele County.

"It's time to step up and be part of that," he said. "I'm also motivated by the fact that local government is where the rubber really hits the road. The presidential election will come and go and that will affect us, but not like local government."

Matt Canham contributed to this report.

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Online

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