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Congressman Tim Huelskamp, middle, answers a question as Republican candidate Alan LaPolice, left, and David Joyce, right, listen to his answer. L&T photo/Earl Watt

Challenger LaPolice points finger at Huelskamp, Huelskamp blames Obama, Reid

By VICTORIA CALDERON

• Leader & Times

There was plenty of president-blaming and underhanded remarks flying back and forth amongst the candidates for U.S. Representative of the 1st Kansas District Wednesday night at the Rock Island Depot.

The Seward County Republican Party hosted the legislative forum along with the Liberal Chamber of Commerce, KSCB and the Leader & Times, where Republicans Alan LaPolice and incumbent U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, along with Independent David Joyce, answered

questions provided by the public through call-ins, emails and written notes from people in the audience.

For opening remarks, LaPolice told the audience that he was raised on a dairy farm, served in the Gulf War and spent the last 15 years of his life teaching and working in public education.

“This is an interview to be your representative. This process is not the job,” LaPolice said. “The job is to go to Washington and work with 434 other representatives and be your voice in Congress. This district has over 700,000 men and women and children in it. Every single one of them deserves to be at the table when decisions are being made. Every living person in this district is entitled to fair and honest representation, whether they are man or woman, white or black, Catholic or Protestant or of any faith, be they Republican or the occasional Democrat. Now to do this, one must lead with honor, one must lead with integrity, and most of all, one must lead with respect.

“This is not what I believe we have right now,” LaPolice added, going on to reference what he believed was Huelskamp’s shortcomings in office.



“I intend to serve you, and not to scare you. I intend to listen to you, and never to lie to you. I intend to work with anyone willing to help me accomplish our goals, and not to attack everyone who doesn’t agree with my ideology. This is the job I promise to do for you. This is the job I’m committing to right now. I will do it with honor, integrity, respect, and most of all, with your support,” LaPolice concluded.

Huelskamp was the next candidate to speak.

“What happens when you have an administration that is out of control? What is happening with our country? What is happening when you have a president who simply can ignore the law? What is happening when we are losing jobs, when we have a health care system that is encouraging people to be laid off? Those are the questions that people are asking,” Huelskamp said.

“What I’ve done in the past four years in Washington is fight for our way of life... This is a tough task. I appreciate your support and your encouragement. But it is a difficult job, because there are many people that want to take away our way of life,” Huelskamp said. “Thank you for the opportunity to serve you in Washington.”

Independent candidate David Joyce opened with his background: He was born and raised in Abilene, received his GED, went to college and earned a degree in business administration and economics.

Joyce dived right in to discussing his policy plans if he were to become a U.S. Representative.

“Our working class is totally being ignored. When we consider that 98.4 percent of all Kansans are deemed as working class individuals, in other words, making \$50,000 or less a year,” Joyce said.

“I want to reduce spending to less than a trillion dollars a year without hurting a single needed program. I want to do away with our tax code, come back with a constitutional tax code that does away with all write offs, all deductions, all refunds and reduces the base tax rate,” he continued. “For the average working class American, what that will do is put (money) back in their pocket at a time when they need it, which is when they get their paycheck. When people have money, they spend. When people spend, the economy thrives.”

One of the big questions asked of the candidates was, “What will your role be in reducing the interference of federal regulations, such as the EPA?”

Joyce was the first to answer this question. He responded with, “I don’t know what kind of role I

could play, but I can tell you right now, I will oppose anything I can that is nonsensical, like most everything that the EPA has passed over the past 25 years.

“I do actually approve of regulation being put back into the marketplace on the speculators in the market,” he added.

LaPolice was next to speak.

“I read of this thing that used to happen; it was called congressional oversight. Back in the day, Congress had authority over all of these agencies. When a leader in an agency went awry or afoul of the law or their limits, they were brought before a congressional oversight committee. That committee... could tell them what their job was and what their job was not. That doesn't happen anymore because many members of our House are too busy infighting,” he said. “There's not real accountability in the House, so there's no accountability at the EPA. My role would be to restore the order, restore the balance of power and be their boss.”

Huelskamp discussed the difficulty of trying to compromise with executive agencies.

“I would encourage you to think about the idea of compromising with the IRS, of compromising with the EPA; if we could just all get along. But this president is not about compromise. He very clearly on the IRS, very clearly in the EPA, is running well beyond his constitutional authority. The Supreme Court has dictated a decision... They ruled that, according to the United States Constitution, the administration has no right to infringe on religious rights. We won,” he said.

“We're going to fight for our way of life, and it starts with fighting this administration,” Huelskamp concluded.

Another big question regarding the fate of Kansas and the nation was asked: “What do you see as the biggest threat to rural Kansas and to America?”

“The greatest threat to Western Kansas and the greatest threat to the United States is that we have a Congress built on the balance of power,” LaPolice said. “Our federal government is built on the balance of power: The executive, the legislative and the judiciary. And we effectively have no legislative body right now. We have a bunch of men and women behaving badly, and we get the result of executive overreach, the agency overreach... Our biggest threat is the inability to lead.”

Huelskamp spoke said that the federal government and its excess was the greatest threat.

“(The government) will change your health care plan whether you like it or not, the EPA will regulate every single drop of water... And if you expect me to go Washington and say, ‘We’re just going to keep doing what we’re doing and get along,’ that’s not going to happen. We have to change our direction. We can do that, but we have to rely on the American people, not Washington.”

Joyce said the biggest threats are: “Ineffective Congress, and too many people in Western Kansas... are not involved. I’ve seen more and more Kansans get involved all the time, and that’s what it’s going to take, more involvement from the people and a representative who will go out there and speak for the people, and for exactly what the people want based upon the majorities.”

There were many other questions asked Wednesday night; they covered everything from federal transportation to the VA outreach program in Liberal to social media in the campaign.

In his closing remarks, Huelskamp said, “What we need in Washington is more voices fighting for constitutional principles. I took an oath to defend that Constitution, whether it’s being attacked by President Obama, or being attacked by federal Republicans that won’t stand up for the principles we claim to believe.”

Joyce said legislators need to stop fighting each other.

“There’s so many things I have to say that I can’t get within a one-minute or 30-second time

frame,” Joyce said. “We have got to stop bickering. We’ve got to learn how to work together. We need to do it in a way that does not compromise our values, and does not compromise the people we represent. That’s what I’m hoping to do, be a better representative of the working class of Kansas.”

LaPolice was the final candidate to speak his closing remarks.

“There’s a sincere workload ahead of us, and we need sincere workers to do it,” LaPolice said. “Kansans expect certain things, like pushing back against the executive agenda that doesn’t meet our needs, that doesn’t serve our people. It’s about pushing back against regulatory agencies that are crippling America. It’s about passing legislation that will improve our economy.

“If you have a mechanic that four years later still can’t fix the engine, still can’t make any progress on the problem, and they’re just going to complain... I’m going to replace that mechanic,” LaPolice said.

This forum was expected to be the only forum with all three candidates. The Chamber will host other local forums and will feature candidates running for the Seward County Commission, Kansas House of Representatives and more.

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