They want to work for you

By JOE CREWS
joe@beacononlinenews.com

A pair of Daytona Beach-based Democrats are vying for the opportunity to take on one-term incumbent Elizabeth Ferronelli, a Republican, in November’s general election. The race will determine who represents District 26 in the Florida House of Representatives. Twenty-two names have come forward across Volusia County, taking in Daytona Beach, Deltona, Orange City, and parts of Lake Helen.

Squaring off on the Tuesday, Aug. 18, primary are Patrick Henry, who lost in a re-election bid two years ago after a single term as state representative, and fellow Democrat Evans Smith, who has never held elective office.

“When I ask why he’s running again, Henry — the older brother of Daytona Beach Mayor Derrick Henry — told me he has un-finished business to attend to,” said Smith.

“I feel the citizens of Volusia County need some-thing to fight for,” Smith said of Henry, who lost by 54 votes in 2018. I want to get back into office, but it’s about more than that.”

That work includes supporting the public education system, improving the environment (especially water quality), revamping Medicaid to cover more lower-income residents, Henry said.

For his part, Smith also wants expanded Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act. But he also wants additional state funding to address widespread opioid addiction and a lack of mental-health services. “Health care is a human right,” Smith said in a prepared statement. “Everyone should have the security that comes with good health care, and no one should go broke because they are sick.”

Both candidates say they want to increase Florida’s minimum wage, although they differ slightly in how they would approach it. Smith suggested Florida should follow the lead of seven states and the District of Columbia by raising the minimum wage to $15 an hour. Florida’s much lower minimum wage (currently $8.56 an hour) is no longer enough, Smith said.

“There are hundreds of thousands of Floridians earning the minimum wage that cannot afford to live in Florida,” he said. “This is wrong, and it must change!”

But Henry favors having the state call a “livable” wage.

“We really need to start talking about a livable wage, but not necessarily $15 an hour,” he said. “We need to determine what is a livable wage in Florida.”

Two Democrats in primary for House District 26

Florida Senate race attracts 5 Democrats

In November, the winner of the Democratic primary will go up against presumptive Republican nominee Jason Brodeur, a former member of the Florida House of Representatives, and Jesteine Iannotti, an independent.

The five candidates had raised varying amounts of money during the June 20 primary elections, with Sigman, a labor and employment lawyer, leading the pack with $192,450.61. While the candidates have their differences — Florida’s minimum wage, although they differ slightly in how they would approach it. Smith suggested Florida should follow the lead of seven states and the District of Columbia by raising the minimum wage to $15 an hour. Florida’s much lower minimum wage (currently $8.56 an hour) is no longer enough, Smith said.

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