
In My View: Coffee and a chat with Chris

April 26, 2024

The California Primary results were certified by the Secretary of State on April 12. This election is now officially decided. In the race to replace our Assemblymember Jim Wood, Republican Mike Greer got the most votes with a total 39,050 (27.6%) of the votes. This is equivalent to the number of Republican voters in the district.

In this primary campaign the competition was between six Democrats fighting for second place. Only the top two candidates will advance to the General Election on November 4. These six Democrats split 102,000 Democratic votes and the result was so close it took weeks before any candidate could declare victory.

In the end, Santa Rosa City Council member Chris Rogers locked up second place and will advance in a head-to-head competition with Mike Greer. I recently had the opportunity to have coffee and a chat with Chris Rogers. He reached out to me as a part of his ongoing campaign to be our next Assemblymember.

Primary Strategies

It is often possible during a campaign to evaluate how a candidate will act after they are elected. My first test is whether we can get them to come to Del Norte County. Do we matter enough for them to visit? This is why the local Democrats organized a candidate forum so we would have a chance to meet the Democratic candidates.

When I first met Chris Rogers, he told me that he intended to campaign the same way that he plans to govern. He has been to Crescent City often since then. While I appreciate him reaching out to meet with me, I don't believe I'm that special. He is meeting with many others in his effort to connect and understand our issues.

We talked about the shenanigans and malarky that happened during the Primary campaign. In Sonoma County, a group of realtors sent mailers maligning candidate Rogers. This attack campaign backfired spectacularly and actually resulted in increasing support for Rogers. Negative campaigns do not always work.

Ariel Kelly and her wealthy sister funded a campaign to smear Rusty Hicks with vague and unfair allegations of impropriety while he was serving as Chair of the California Democratic Party. I spoke with many local voters who were turned off by this tactic, but it did have an impact. Rusty only missed second place by 1329 votes.

General Election

I expect that the campaigns for the general election between Chris Rogers and Mike Greer will be more cordial.

Chris explained to me that it is his intention to keep to the high ground. He recognized that it is important to remember in an election that when it is over, you still need to find a way to work together.

Mike Greer means well, and I give him credit for running. Even though we can disagree on policy objectives, I have had many polite conversations with him. He has thrown himself into this race and contributed his own money to fund his campaign. I think he knows he cannot win, but he is highlighting his issues.

It was nice to meet with Chris and get to know him a little better. He is genuinely a likeable person. He told me that he and his wife are expecting their first baby soon. Chris said he intends to have the family join him on the campaign trail, thereby bringing his own baby to kiss.

Chris Rogers

It is a great benefit for us that Chris Rogers is an experienced public servant. Chris was born in this district, where he continues to live with his wife. Chris was elected to the Santa Rosa City Council in 2016 after nearly a decade of helping to represent the north coast as senior staff for Senator Mike McGuire and other legislators.

Shortly after Chris took office, Santa Rosa was hit with one of the most devastating wildfires in California's history. The Tubbs fire took 3,000 homes and dozens of lives. Chris was literally tested by fire. As a Council member and Mayor, Chris led his community through four wildfires, a drought, flooding, and a pandemic.

As Mayor, Chris Rogers balanced the budget, expanded access to childcare and launched a groundbreaking first-time home-buyers program for low-income workers. Chris championed initiatives like free public transit for veterans, seniors, and youth, and supported switching over all city buildings to 100% renewable energy.

Welcome Chris!

In the coming months, I expect Chris Rogers will be traveling across the second district from Santa Rosa to Smith River. The next time he is in town, I hope that you will have an opportunity to speak with him. I think you will like him too. If you get a chance to talk to Chris, please welcome him to our community.

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