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`David and Goliath' in 69th House District

Tuesday, August 7, 2012

East Lansing – The 69th House District Democratic primary could be considered a David and Goliath story of the small taking on the mighty, but just which candidate is which character depends on who you talk to about the race.

The term-limited Rep. Mark MEADOWS (D-East Lansing), who is running for a 54B District Court judgeship, cannot make an endorsement in the race to replace him, but has been watching closely.

Susan SCHMIDT, former chief of staff for Meadows, is facing off against former East Lansing Mayor Sam SINGH. The race is one of the highest-funded elections this cycle (See “Wolkinson, 40th House District Tops Fundraising List,” 7/31/12). Both are on TV and, combined, the two raised more than \$250,000. The race is also one of the Top 10 open Democratic primaries to watch.

Meadows said he thinks the race is down to the wire.

“Susan has been knocking doors like crazy, and Sam has been spending money like crazy,” he said.

What makes for a David and what makes for a Goliath in such a case depends on the point of view, Meadows said.

“We'll see on Tuesday whether it matters more to spend money or knock doors,” he said.

Meadows said he was surprised to see one of the recent turns in the campaign, however, in which Singh accused Schmidt supporters of going negative.

Up until recently it had been a very clean campaign on both sides, Meadows said.

Schmidt's campaign sent out an email last week to supporters drawing distinctions between her campaign finance and Singh's.

The email alleges Singh received most of his money from outside the district and that some of his money came from “special interests.”

Singh's campaign sent out a fundraising letter last week fighting back, stating that “supporters of my opponent have begun attacking me with misleading information.”

“I can only describe it as an act of desperation, but that doesn't mean it won't have an impact on voters,” the statement goes on before asking for donations to help “combat the negative campaigning.”

His campaign also put up a web page dedicated to fighting back against the statements made in the Schmidt campaign email.

Meadows said Singh's statement that Schmidt has done negative campaigning could almost be considered negative campaigning on his part, because Meadows believes the accusation is a false claim.