

WSSU denied early voting site

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem State University will once again not have an early voting site after the North Carolina Board of Elections upheld the Forsyth BOE primary early voting plan on Wednesday, Feb. 10.

The Forsyth BOE voted 2-1 in December to approve a plan with 11 sites. Fleming El-Amin, the sole Democrat on the board, was the "no" vote, because he wanted Sunday voting and one additional site at WSSU, which had an early voting site before the 2014 election.

When Ken Raymond became chair of the current board in 2013, he said he wouldn't allow a site at the university because he claimed there was an election law violation there in

2010 involving a professor giving credit to students for voting. El-Amin submitted his plan to the state BOE for consideration because he said it was unfair to hold a five year-old incident against the students.

"All these accusations against Winston-Salem State University are based on innuendos, there's no factual basis behind them and because of that, I'm here to defend this site as an early voting site," El-Amin told the state board, during their teleconference meeting last week.

The Forsyth BOE in 2010 looked into claims made by Raymond, who was then a pole observer. Raymond was never able to find the professor who supposedly gave the credit. The local board at the time found no violation had occurred since there was no accusation of anything

being given to the students to vote for a specific party or candidate.

However, the five member N.C. BOE gave



little, if any weight, to the accusation. Forsyth BOE member Stuart Russell, who argued for the majority early plan, said that the alleged incident was only a factor in Raymond's opposition to the site and not the other board members. He told the State BOE that an early voting plan not including WSSU passed unanimously in 2014 and that the WSSU site didn't come up for this year's primary before the meeting when the board voted on

the plan.

El-Amin said he had tried to reach consensus with the other board members in 2014. He was trying to do the same this year before he heard concerns from constituents, including a 500-signature petition from WSSU students and another 500-signature petition from Democracy NC, asking for a site at the university.

"I think it's somewhat pretentious of us to think we should not respond to the concerns of the broader community, no matter when those concerns are brought to us," he told the state BOE.

WSSU Student Government President Kyle Brown told the state board both in a letter and over the phone during the meeting, that freshmen aren't allowed to park on campus. He said it's a more

than 30-minute walk to get to the closest early voting site at the downtown BOE office. He said freshmen without transportation were disenfranchised when the on-campus voting site was taken away and he gave nearly 100 students a ride to the poles himself in 2014.

"It was discouraging that a site was taken away when just a year ago I was able to walk down the street and vote at the Anderson Center on my campus," Brown told the board.

The state BOE voted 3-2 along party lines to uphold the existing early voting plan without WSSU. The Republican board members cited the unanimous approval of the 2014 early voting plan without the university in it and the university being on spring break during most of

the early voting period in their decision, though El-Amin argued the site is also used by the surrounding area. WSSU being the only college in the city that had an early voting site was also discussed.

One fact that didn't come up was that WSSU freshmen not having access to their own vehicles is unique among the city's large colleges with student residents. Salem College and UNC-Asheville both allow freshmen to park on campus. Wake Forest University has an off-campus freshmen lot that students are shuttled to and from.

Both El-Amin and Brown said they were disappointed with the state board's decision. El-Amin said he plans to propose the site again for the general election, a move Brown said he fully supports.

City Council members endorse Clinton

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With a month to go until the North Carolina primary, half of the Winston-Salem City Council announced their endorsement of Hillary Clinton for president at the Forsyth County Democratic Party headquarters on Tuesday, Feb. 16.

City Council Members Denise "DD" Adams, Dan Besse, Molly Leight and Vivian Burke, who couldn't make it to the event, have all endorsed Clinton, who is a former first lady, senator and secretary of state. All four supported then-Senator Barack Obama over then-Senator Clinton in 2008, and now say that she is clearly the best person to build on Obama's accomplishments as president.

"Hillary is the one candidate who truly under-

stands the necessity of building our 21st century infrastructure and has the experience and temperament to make it happen," said Besse, who lauded her plan to invest in infrastructure and create jobs.

Adams said Clinton is a longtime supporter of voting rights and praised her



plans for automatic registration for eligible 18 year-olds, restoring the Voting Rights Act and mandating a minimum of 20 days of early voting.

"I'm enthusiastic about Hillary's plan to combat Republican efforts to stifle our voices and your vote," she said.

Leight highlighted

Clinton's stands on women's issues like equal pay and paid leave.

"Hillary Clinton has worked her entire career for women and girls," she said.

Each city council member said that they had a difficult choice between two qualified candidates in 2008 when they chose Obama over Clinton. Besse, who was running for lieutenant governor at the time, said it was Clinton's judgement when voting to authorize military force in Iraq in 2002, which led to the Iraq War, which led him to support Obama, who opposed the war. Besse now says he believes she's learned from that vote and that Obama tapping her as his first secretary of state speaks well of her judgement.

"Like any extremely capable and brilliant individual, Hillary Clinton



Dan Besse speaks while Molly Leight (left) and Denise "DD" Adams look on as they endorse Hillary Clinton.

learns from her errors and she grows and doesn't make the same mistakes twice," he said.

Besse said he felt that Clinton was a candidate who was capable on all the issues. He said he felt her primary opponent Sen. Bernie Sanders, who did vote against authorizing force in Iraq, is "mono focused" against Wall Street and big banks in his campaign, while Clinton will deal with the many different causes of inequality.

Endorsements for both Sanders and Clinton have picked up recently with the Nevada Democratic caucus on Saturday, South Carolina primary on Feb. 27, and Super Tuesday on March 1, when 12 states hold their primaries or caucuses. The Congressional Black Caucus endorsed Clinton last week. Sanders, civil rights advocate and self-described democratic socialist, was recently endorsed by civil rights icon and entertainer Harry Belafonte; Erica Garner, the daughter of Eric Garner, who died while being arrested by New York police; and former NAACP President Ben

Jealous.

Sanders, who is trailing by double digits in state polls, is coming off a win in New Hampshire and a close second in Iowa. In January, Sanders' campaign raised \$20 million, compared to Clinton's \$15 million. That's not counting Super PACs, independent groups that campaign for candidates. Priorities USA Action, one of two pro-Clinton Super PACs, had \$45 million in January. Sanders, who has denounced Super PACs because of the influence he says they give special interests over politicians, doesn't have any affiliated Super PACs.

Supporters of Sanders opened a Winston-Salem office for his campaign in January and the Clinton campaign recently opened an office in Raleigh and opened one in Greensboro today (Feb. 18).

The North Carolina primary will be held on March 15 and early voting will run from March 3-12.



Kim Payne kisses her daughter during the blood drive held at Winston-Salem State University on Tuesday, Feb. 16. Payne said her daughter is a one of the strongest people she has ever met.

Student

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In less than three months the "Sierra Transplant Fund," has accumulated \$2,000, but the support didn't stop there; the WSSU family decided they wanted to get involved as well.

On Tuesday, Feb. 16 with the help of the Winston-Salem American Red Cross, the university sponsored a blood drive to support Payne.

Dozens of students made their way to the Cleon F. Thompson Jr.

Student Services Center to donate blood and show their support for their fellow Ram. Payne said she was surprised by the number of people who have supported her.

"Once I seen the support I was getting, it kinda took a burden off of me," noted Payne. "I really do appreciate it all. It's amazing how many people have been willing to help and give me words of encouragement."

Sierra's mother Kim Payne has seen her daughter overcome many obstacles and said she is a true inspiration to her. She said

she was devastated by what doctors told her.

"I have seen what Sierra has gone through over the years," she said. "But she has taken it all in stride and not complained once."

"She is definitely one of the strongest people I know, and a real inspiration."

Although the support has been great for Sierra many who suffer from diabetes aren't as lucky, especially within the African-American community. According to the American Diabetes Association, blacks are nearly two times

more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes than are whites, and are significantly more likely to suffer from blindness, kidney disease and amputations as a result. Payne said although she wants people to support her, she also wants African-Americans to become more aware.

Payne still needs \$2,000 to fund the double transplant procedure. To support the Sierra Kidney Transplant Fund visit www.gofundme.com/sier-rasmiles.

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THE CLARENCE E. "BIG HOUSE" GAINES ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

The WSSU Department of Athletics is now accepting applications. Nomination must be submitted by Friday, April 1, 2016.

For more information contact the WSSU Department of Athletics (336) 750-2141