

Debate

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Sanders on the issues. Brannon said there's been "runaway inequality" over the past 25 years, later adding that he'd redistribute wealth by "taxing the ever-loving what have you" out of the top 1 percent.

"I think we need a political revolution regardless of who we have as president," said Brannon.

Roberts, 71, an Army veteran and former pest control entrepreneur from Mount Airy, promised to create jobs, defend Social Security, prevent medical errors and stop "corporate domination" of public policy. He railed against trade agreements like NAFTA, which he said cost millions of jobs, and the current Trans-Pacific Partnership, promising to "repeal those one-way agreements."

"For 40 years, the average American family and their way of life have been under assault from corporate interests," said Roberts. "Financial gain has replaced patriotism and love of people."

Wallin, 44, an assistant food services director at Appalachian State University, talked about the high poverty in the city. He said average working people should be lawmakers, not "elites" like Foxx. He said she was out of touch and mentioned the

multiple homes she owns. "We have real issues and problems in this district that need to be addressed," said Wallin.

"We need somebody who's serious and who wants to take on Virginia Foxx and wants to send her packing."

On criminal justice reform, all three candidates denounced privately owned for-profit prisons. Roberts and Brannon talked about legalizing

while talking about requiring sick and family leave time. On health care, both Brannon and Roberts support universal health care while Wallin proposed working with the Affordable Care Act but making businesses pay that cut worker hours to avoid giving them health insurance. On college debt, both Roberts and Brannon proposed free college tuition, while Wallin talked about restricting interest to 1 or 2



Brannon Roberts Wallin

drugs. Brannon also discussed getting rid of minimum sentencing and three strikes laws, which he said disproportionately affect minorities. Wallin talked about increased mental health and substance abuse services and helping those already incarcerated.

Both Brannon and Roberts had a lot in common with Sanders on the issues, while Wallin took more moderate stands. On minimum wage, both Brannon and Roberts wanted to raise it to \$15 an hour in a staggered fashion, while Wallin proposed a \$10.95 minimum wage

percent on student loans.

All the candidates acknowledge that it was an uphill battle to unseat Foxx. Brannon said he hoped to counter her superior fundraising by reaching voters through social media and in-person appearances.

Roberts said that he felt his business experience and emphasis on jobs would give him the edge.

Wallin said his work as party chair in the 5th District has taken him all over the district, letting him connect with voters and understand their needs.

HB2

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President Margaret Spellings said public colleges must adhere to state law but will not enforce HB 2.

Much of the federal money at risk goes to Pell Grants, which would be felt locally, according to UNCSA Vice Provost and Dean of Student Affairs Ward Caldwell.

"Close to 29 percent of our undergraduate students relied on Pell Grants this year as part of their financial aid package," said Caldwell in a statement. "The loss of federal funding would put higher education out of reach for many of our students, as it would for students throughout the UNC system."

Jaime Hunt, direct of public relations at Winston-Salem State University, said that the loss would be even worse at the historically black university.

"WSSU receives a significant amount of funding from federal sources," said Hunt. "The most critical impact to the institution would be if the federal financial

aid our students receive were eliminated. About 57 percent of our students are eligible for Pell Grants and 90 percent of our students receive some form of financial aid."

She added that WSSU receives \$10.2 million in federal Title III funding and about \$9.6 million in other federal funding annually.

The stakes could go wider than that. Federal funding for all levels of education in the state, which is about \$4.7 billion, could be at risk. Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools received about \$49 million in federal funds for the 2014-2015 school year.

Additionally, more than \$5 million in federal grants from the Violence Against Women Act could also be lost, along with up to \$108 million dollars in funding for NC Works, which connects jobseekers with employment. State and local governments could also lose \$35-\$65 million in federal contracts for violating a 2014 executive order prohibiting federal contractors from discriminating based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Court tie means no retention elections for justices, for now

BY MARTHA WAGGONER ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — North Carolina won't use a new method of voting on state Supreme Court justices, for now, after justices split on the constitutionality of the option called retention elections.

In an opinion issued Friday, May 6, justices tied 3-3 over a challenge to a law that allowed retention elections.

That 2015 law lets an incumbent, elected justice seek re-election to another eight-year term without a challenger. A statewide up-or-down vote called a "retention election" would determine whether the justice remains on the bench. About 20 states use such elections for appellate court seats.

The tie vote means retention elections won't be used in a state Supreme Court election this year, and the June 7 primary for a seat on the court will be held as planned. But it creates no precedent, meaning the issue could arise again.

The decision "is important for judicial independence," attorney Michael Crowell, who represented the plaintiffs, said Friday in an email. "You cannot have the legislature deciding, as it did in 2015, which judges should have opposition and which not. I hope this decision leads us back to a seri-



ous discussion of reforming judicial selection in a way that complies with the constitution and that does not have partisan overtones."

Only Justice Bob Edmunds faces re-election to the court in 2016. He didn't participate in the decision or listen to arguments the court heard in April.

A lower court ruled in February that retention elections don't meet the state Constitution's definition of an election.

The three trial judges who heard the case also said retention elections impose a new qualification upon lawyers to run for the state's highest court - that they must be the incumbent.

The arguments the court heard last month centered on whether a retention election meets the constitutional mandate that justices "shall be elected" even though only one candidate can run. Legislative sponsors of the law had said there was no need to amend the Constitution to

offer the option.

John Maddrey, North Carolina's solicitor general, argued the retention option is an election, pointing out many matters are submitted to voters that don't involve a contest between candidates.

During the arguments, Crowell said one of the plaintiffs, Wake County lawyer Sabra Faires, was barred from running for Edmunds' seat because Edmunds chose the retention option. "If she cannot run, one of two things has to be true: Either it's not an election, or it's an election and she's been disqualified for some reason other than what's in the Constitution," he said.

Edmunds, Faires and Wake County Superior Court Judge Michael Morgan will now face off in a June 7 primary, with the top two-vote getters advancing to the general election in November.

Before 2015, legislators had debated judicial retention elections for more than 40 years as part of a broader judicial selection process that usually included a constitutional referendum.

Martha Waggoner can be reached at <http://twitter.com/mjwaggoner>. Her work can be found at <http://bigstory.ap.org/content/martha-waggoner>.

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