

# Woodsmall for Congress

## *Ready for the District 11 primary election*

By Florian Peyssonneaux  
Opinion Editor

With less than two weeks before the May 8 primary Election Day, Brevard College professor Dr. Steve Woodsmall is in the heart of the campaign in a race with two other candidates who are seeking the Democratic nomination for U.S. House District 11. (Early voting started April 19.)

Since he started his campaign in December 2017 for District 11, which spans the entire western tip of North Carolina, including Transylvania, Henderson and parts of Buncombe County, there has been a lot of work by Woodsmall and his campaign staff. "We have campaign events literally almost every night," Woodsmall said. "It's a brutal process."

Even with a large number of forum and debates, "we never had a true debate, more like a forum where all candidates answer the same questions," Woodsmall said.

As for the campaign team, Woodsmall finds help from Brevard College members along with others. "Dr. Hamlett is my campaign manager, and we have a communication director who is a recent college graduate—he is currently an intern in the U.S. Senate," Woodsmall said. "He is doing a great job, and then we have a deputy director of communication who lives in Asheville.

"We have a lot of volunteers—a couple of Brevard College students volunteered and are working with us," Woodsmall said.

This campaign is a source of inspiration for some college students. Alex Tenjhay, who has been volunteering for the campaign since February, is now thinking about starting a Democrat's group at the college. "He has been to a lot of our event and knows what's going on," Woodsmall said.

For the past few months Woodsmall, his campaign staff and all the people who decided to volunteer are trying their best to communicate about Woodsmall's candidacy. "We're just working hard, talking to people, getting the word out," Woodsmall said.

According to Woodsmall, it is important to elect the person who is the most qualified for the job, and that is exactly what he is basing his campaign on: his experience and qualifications.

"My main push as a management scientist is to look for the root cause of the problem," Woodsmall said. Even though the candidates have debated issues like health care, immigration and other problems, there is more to it.

"The root cause of all those problems is money in politics," Woodsmall said. "And I'm the only candidate talking about it."

Woodsmall believes that he can represent all the people of District 11 if he is elected to Congress. That is part of the reason why he got endorsements by many groups, including AFL-CIO and Equality North Carolina. "I am the only (District 11) candidate in the Democratic primary who received any endorsement that I am aware of," Woodsmall said.

The campaign should have been very fair among the three Democratic candidates who agreed at the beginning of the campaign to be respectful to one another by not using any negative advertising.

"Early on we agreed that we wouldn't do negative campaigning," Woodsmall said. However, in a letter to the editor in the Asheville Citizen-Times, candidate Phillip Price called Woodsmall a "carpetbagger." Woodsmall considers this an insult to military veterans like himself who had no choice about where they lived while on active duty as well as to those who just chose to live in Western North Carolina.

Woodsmall doesn't want to take victory in the primary for granted, even if he and the rest of his campaign staff get good feedback from meetings. First of all, there is no polling data, "so we don't really know what's going on, but I get a really good response after each forum," Woodsmall said.

Campaign manager and Brevard College professor Dr. Ralph Hamlett thinks positively about the way the campaign is going. "I am hopefully optimistic about the election even though there is no polling data," Hamlett said. Most of the information they receive suggests that the campaign is going well.

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Photo by Madison Ramsey

Steve Woodsmall's campaign booth at the Brevard College second annual Pride Festival last week.