

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Alliance native Rebekah Davis wants to represent Nebraska's 3rd Congressional District in Washington, D.C.

Davis, 28, a Democrat, said Nebraska has just five voices in Congress and believes all five should be heard.

For the 3rd District, that means being an advocate for the needs of the state rather than a political party.

Davis shared her thoughts during a campaign stop in Imperial, Friday, Dec. 11.

She believes she can be the independent voice for what matters to 3rd District Nebraskans.

As a Democrat, she knows she's facing some tough odds. Nebraska's 3rd District hasn't sent a Democrat to Congress since 1958, she noted.

However, the 3rd District has a history of being supportive of woman candidates.

Rep. Virginia Smith of Chappell served the district for many years and was an effective voice for Nebraska, Davis said.

She feels it's important for the woman's voice to be heard, as well.

When incumbent Rep. Adrian Smith, (R), along with Nebraska's other two Republican representatives, voted against the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act last January, Davis said she decided it was time to stand up for women and get in the race.

She said Smith's vote against the bill was a "slap in the face to women of Nebraska."

The bill ultimately passed, with the vote of just three Republicans, and was signed into law by President Obama.

The bill amended the Civil Rights Act of 1964 stating that the 180-day statute of limitations for filing an equal-pay lawsuit regarding pay discrimination resets with each new discriminatory paycheck.

The law was a direct answer to a U.S. Supreme Court decision holding that the statute of limitations for presenting an equal-pay lawsuit begins at the date the pay was agreed upon, not at the date of the most recent paycheck, as a lower court had ruled.

Davis said that provided the motivation to go ahead and run for the seat in 2010. "I just couldn't sit idly by while the women of Nebraska were not being represented," she said.

Independent thinker

Davis said the district needs a representative who can think independently and be willing to buck their own party for the good of Nebraska.

Davis' stand as a pro-life candidate represents a direct conflict to the Democratic party. However, her belief in the sanctity of life from beginning to end takes precedence over party views.

In the 3rd District, no one political party has enough majority to elect a candidate. As a result, she believes she can reach across partisan lines to achieve victory as people realize her goal is to represent Nebraska, not political parties.

Campaign themes

Davis said everyone wants to talk about health care reform on her stops throughout the district.

She said health care issues will continue to be an issue for the 3rd District even after a reform bill passes.

Another key issue centers on the economy and what can be done to help create jobs for Nebraskans.

She believes wind energy and broadband internet expansion will play big roles in creating job opportunities for the future.

She said Nebraska needs to be on the forefront of wind energy development.

She places a high priority on creating green energy in Nebraska. The state has the fourth highest potential for wind energy development but is only 22nd in actual development.

This represents a big area for job creation.

She added faster broadband speeds will serve another facet for job growth by allowing tele-commuters to work and live in Nebraska while working remotely for their employers.

When asked about her stand on cap-and-trade issues, she said that's been a hot topic, as well.

She says it could be workable if wind energy and other green energy development are part of the process.

Alliance native

Davis grew up in Alliance as the youngest of four kids. Her parents are both retired from BN-SF Railroad.

After graduating from Alliance High School, she attended Indiana University, graduating in 1998 with degrees in French, Japanese and International Studies.

She then spent two years doing mission work in Southeast Asia and West Africa.

Upon returning, she enrolled in Yale University's School of Divinity, receiving her divinity degree three years later.

She trained in Omaha to become a chaplain and now lives in Alliance, serving hospitals throughout Nebraska, specializing in end-of-life care.

She said these experiences have all helped her to prepare for public service with a commitment to be a strong voice for the people of Nebraska.