

## 10 candidates for 19th District seat speak at New Paltz forum

By Amanda Spadaro

Times Herald-Record

Posted May 6, 2018 at 9:43 PM

Updated May 6, 2018 at 9:44 PM

NEW PALTZ - Aside from the obvious goal of getting elected, many political candidates aim to have their voice heard and set themselves apart from their opponents.

And 10 candidates attempted to do just that during the New Paltz's Women-Focused Candidate Forum, held by a New Paltz group, The Resisterhood, at SUNY New Paltz on Sunday afternoon.

The forum was co-sponsored by the Benjamin Center for Public Policy Initiatives and the university's Women's, Gender and Sexuality Department.

The candidates are all running for New York's 19th Congressional District seat, currently held by Republican John Faso.

Seven Democrats are running: Jeff Beals, Dave Clegg, Erin Collier, Antonio Delgado, Brian Flynn, Gareth Rhodes and Pat Ryan.

Steve Greenfield is running on the Green party; and Diane Neal and Luisa Parker have filed as independents.

Faso, who was invited to the forum, did not attend.

Sunday's forum required two tables to accommodate all the candidates and included a 90-second cap on all answers.

A special "lightning round" gave candidates just three seconds to answer questions; yet the forum still lasted its scheduled three hours, from 4 p.m. until a little after 7 p.m.

The candidates answered questions focused on topics such as women's issues, including reproductive rights; paid family leave; the gender wage gap; and sexual assault.

Those talking points led the candidates to speak about other issues: healthcare access, economic distress of the middle and lower classes, and immigration reform.

While the candidates tailored responses to their particular experiences and platforms, the sentiments expressed and proposed solutions varied little: support for healthcare for all; equal pay; and changes to the system that keeps women, people of color and immigrants down.

During his introduction, Beals applauded the idea of a women-focused forum; Ryan seconded the notion.

Collier pointed out in her opening and closing that "(women) are greatly underrepresented" in federal government.

Currently, there are 106 women in Congress, making up just shy of 20 percent of its 535 members, according to Rutgers University's Center for American Women and Politics.

Of the 10 candidates at Sunday's forum, three were women: Collier, Neal and Parker.

The primary election will be held June 26.

[aspadaro@th-record.com](mailto:aspadaro@th-record.com)