

Only Libertarian state representative candidate in the state is running in her eighth election

By SUSAN DOUCET / Monitor staff

A Libertarian state representative candidate has not been elected in New Hampshire in 14 years, but Lisa Wilber is persistent.

She was not elected when she first ran for state representative in 2000 – or in each consecutive election since then – but she continues to run on the Libertarian Party ticket, this year for the eighth time.

Wilber, 51, of Weare is the only state representative candidate running as a registered Libertarian in New Hampshire this year, although she said that other libertarians are running as either Democrats or Republicans.

She is seeking a state representative seat in Hillsborough County District 2 – which serves Deering and Weare – against three Democrats and three Republicans, including two incumbents. Republican Christine Ivinjack is also running a write-in campaign for a seat in the district; Ivinjack, a Weare resident, ran in the September primary election but did not receive enough votes to get on the ballot.

Three state representative seats are open in the district.

“They make it so hard to be anything but the two parties, and the two parties aren’t that different anymore,” Wilber said. “If I wanted to run as a Democrat or Republican, you just go up to the town hall and pay \$2.”

Wilber said that as a third party candidate, in addition to paying the \$2 administrative assessment fee, she had to collect 150 signatures before she could file her candidacy.

“You have to go through so much to run as a Libertarian,” she said.

Steve Vaillancourt was the last Libertarian candidate elected to a state representative seat. Vaillancourt was elected to represent Hillsborough County District 44 – Manchester Ward 8 – in the 2000 general election; he currently represents the same ward (now Hillsborough Country District 15) as a Republican.

The Libertarian Party’s slogan is “minimum government, maximum freedom.” Wilber’s personal platform is focused on freedom and personal responsibility.

Elected officials are passing too many laws that are not enforceable, Wilber said, something she would like to change.

“I don’t think they should just go to Concord with the intent to pass more laws without taking some off the books,” she said. For every law passed, Wilber would like to see one law removed, although she said she does not have any specific laws she would retire if she were elected to the House.

Wilber works as a representative for Avon Products. She said she has the fifth-largest team in the company, overseeing 2,500 representatives who sell about \$9 million a year. At her home on South Stark Highway, Wilber has a store where she sells products, although this is where a small fraction of her revenue is generated.

In 2000, the state Department of Transportation asked Wilber to move a sign in front of her residence because it was deemed a safety violation. “I ran originally because of the sign issue,” she said.

The lawn in front of her residence is not part of her property, but is owned by the state, she said.

Wilber waited a few years before putting another sign in front of her home and business, but a sign now stands out front again.

In the 2012 general election, Wilber ran against Mark Warden, a Republican, and Aaron Gill, a Democrat, for the one state representative seat in floterial district 39. Warden earned about 5,000 more votes than Wilber to win the seat that represents Weare, Deering and Goffstown.

Wilber is a supporter of gambling – she said would like to see a casino in the state – and of legalizing marijuana, two potential revenue sources for the state.

“The thing I like about the casino or legalizing marijuana . . . is it’s a revenue source that is voluntary,” she said. If she does not want to gamble, she will not visit a casino; if she does not like marijuana, she will not purchase it.

“I actually know a lot of people that have major health issues or problems with alcohol but I don’t know anyone that has died from marijuana,” she added.

She opposes raising the minimum wage and would support abolishing the federal minimum wage.

In her numerous attempts for political office, Wilber has received support from some in the Weare community, where she has lived for about 30 years.

Outside of Sanborn Lumber Co., along Concord Stage Road in Weare, is a large sign that reads “Lisa Wilber – yes, Neal Kurk – no,” referring to incumbent state representative Kurk, a Republican who is currently in his 14th term.

Ed Sanborn, a Weare resident who has run the lumber company for 35 years, is a registered Republican but said that he is an independent voter.

He said that he put up the sign because he does not agree with all of Kurk's stances. "Kurk and I have butted heads a few times over different issues," Sanborn said.

Wilber said she is not directly campaigning against Kurk or Republican Gary Hopper, the other incumbent state representative candidate, who was first elected in 2008. Kurk also said that he is not directly campaigning against Wilber.

When Wilber's name is on the ballot – as it has been since 2000 – Sanborn said he votes for the Libertarian candidate.

"I've supported her for a long time," he said.

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