

## OUR VIEW / ENDORSEMENT

# Boyechko the DFLer for District 11

The one-two punch this summer couldn't be ignored. The U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, and, in Uvalde, Texas, a gunman shot and killed 19 schoolchildren and two teachers.

"It was too much. All of it was just too much," Michelle Boyechko, a farmer and mother from Tamarack, said in an interview a day after Independence Day with News Tribune Editorial Board members. "Watching our democracy kind of crumble in front of us, I really felt like I needed to step up and do something."

What Boyechko did was file to run for Minnesota Senate in her District 11, which stretches from about Cloquet in the north to about Rush City in the south. In the DFL primary on Aug. 9, she can be advanced by voters to challenge incumbent Republican Sen. Jason Rarick of Brook Park on Election Day on Nov. 8.

"I'm going to stand up and speak out for the people of Minnesota. ... You've got to be able to stand up and say, 'Listen, this is what Minnesotans need,'" Boyechko said. "I always thought the people running the government knew something special or they were more knowledgeable about what they were doing. They're not. They're just regular people. And a lot of times they're working with information that's not necessarily correct. So, I thought, what the hell, educate myself and jump in. I can't complain if I haven't tried to do something."

As it turns out, Boyechko already had a pretty good grasp on — and definite views about — many important matters.

Her priorities as a candidate include improving elder care in Minnesota, codifying abortion rights into the state Constitution, and helping farmers like her "get their food directly to the people," she said. "There's a lot of legislation that's in the way, a lot of paperwork. ... I feel a lot of legislation has been meant to cut (small- and medium-sized farms and farmers) out of the system."

The state's record budget surplus should be used to improve education, so teachers can be paid closer to what they deserve and so

### ABOUT THIS ENDORSEMENT

This News Tribune endorsement was determined solely by the newspaper's Editorial Board.

they don't have to continue buying their own classroom supplies, Boyechko said. The surplus also can be used to fix streets and meet other infrastructure needs in the state, she said.

"I feel like it's silly that there's just bickering back and forth (in St. Paul) and just not getting anything done for the people. Everyone voting along party lines is very frustrating," she said.

If elected, Boyechko can be urged by constituents to keep that sentiment in mind, as she also said in the interview her DFL party members can be too quick to compromise.

After the shootings in Uvalde, "I could barely send my kids to school the next day, just thinking this could be the last time I ever see them," Boyechko said. "And there are a few kids in my mind who could possibly do this in our area, and I know there are a lot of guns in our area. It's a very, sometimes, volatile atmosphere in our area."

Boyechko supports broader background checks, cooling-off periods before gun purchases, and requiring gun owners to carry liability insurance — all reasonable measures for law-abiding, responsible citizens, she said.

Boyechko is ready to go from the sideline to her state Senate race's Election Day ballot.

#### ALSO RUNNING:

Boyechko's DFL opponent in the primary is John Peura of Moose Lake. He most recently served as a public member on the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education and has experience as a substitute educator, in public safety, as a mental health practitioner, and as a first responder in Kettle River.

"I can bring all that experience and blend it all together, and it really helps me focus on three core areas: education, health care, and public safety," he said in a separate interview with the Editorial Board. "I'm a 40-year resident and fifth-generation resident of Carlton County, and, having been a part of this community for as long as I have, my running is really a reflection of community values and, really, about those who have helped shape and mold me."

## READER'S VIEW

### Support those who support truth

Election Day 2022 is approaching. We the people of the United States have a chance to select persons who will control our lives until the next election. Results are crucial to the future of our democracy.

I feel an urgency to express support for electing senators and representatives who favor pro-people issues. Energy is in force to crush our rights. It was made evident by the events of Jan. 6 in Washington, D.C., with the coup attempt on our democracy.

Obstacles are constantly being introduced to make it difficult to know the truth. I consider persons who create and spread false information to be traitors to our nation. Those who attempt to suppress or alter or deny

truth in order to gain power personify evil. I am encouraged by those who relentlessly search for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The senators and representatives who are winners in the primary and general elections in August and November will control your life for the next two years. Be vigilant about who stands for truth versus who will lie big time in order to get your vote and control you. Your choices will show if you want to live in a democracy or prefer to be ruled by a dictator like Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin or Vladimir Putin.

It cannot be repeated too often: Your vote is critical to our survival as a United States of America. Vote. And vote for those you can trust.

**Barbara Bowling Hermantown**

## LOCAL VIEW



Getty Images

# Older Minnesotans left behind by increasingly online world

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the importance of digital equity with the acceleration of digital transformation

occurring in workplaces, education, and commerce. Technology is now considered an essential resource — a necessity for civic and cultural participation, lifelong learning, and access to critical services.

However, virtual as the new normal is exposing an age-based digital divide within our state of Minnesota. Older adults have lower access to the internet, fewer digital skills, and more limited use of technology. The digital divide contributes to increased social isolation, the severity of chronic diseases, and an overall diminished quality of life. The problem is worse in rural areas than metro areas.

A few facts: Minnesota already has a larger 65-plus population than that of school-age children; and, from 2010 to 2030, the number of Minnesota's older adults will double. Greater Minnesota is home to a larger share of older adults, outpacing metro areas in the ratio of older adults to school-age children.

As 10,000 baby boomers retire daily from now until 2030 across the U.S., retirees are realizing there is no longer an IT department available to them. With rapid and continual changes in technology, ongoing adoption

and assistive services are essential, regardless of age or where a person lives.

Prevailing ageist beliefs and behaviors are driving our public response to the age-based digital divide. Older adults can often feel that they are invisible in our communities, perceived to be a burden, and rarely prioritized for community engagement and resource investment. When asked to participate in community discussions, older adults may be asked to be included in a focus group but are rarely stakeholders in the decision-making process.

The current aging narrative primarily focuses on supports and services and not enough on attaining quality-of-life goals, impacting our policies, systems, and structures while creating ongoing barriers to age well.

There is a timely opportunity, however, for Minnesota to achieve equitable digital inclusion and increase digital literacy. The Library Services & Technology Act of 1996 (LSTA) established a federal grant program to identify priorities centered on technology infrastructure. Under the leadership of the State Library Services, Minnesota's library network of 356 public locations has historically provided community-based digital devices and training resources. Every five years, the LSTA requires state library agencies to submit a five-year grant plan identifying state priorities for LSTA funds. With the 2022-2025 five-year plan due this summer, Minnesota has the opportunity to prioritize

digital inclusion and digital literacy programs that champion Minnesota's rural older adults.

Minnesota has a significant funding opportunity via the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act. Linking the development of a state digital-equity plan to existing broadband-access initiatives strategically positions the Minnesota State Library Services to lead digital inclusion and digital literacy, using its extensive statewide footprint.

The broad deployment of digital inclusion and digital literacy programs will enable Minnesota's growing older adult population to fully participate in the virtual new normal.

The opportunity is now. Baby boomers continue to change the world. We have the population size, voting capacity, and drive to expect positive quality-of-life outcomes throughout our lifespans. In order to ensure equitable participation in the modern digital landscape, we must have IT services accessible to us regardless of where we live in Minnesota. The Minnesota State Library Services has the geographic reach, knowledge, expertise, and savvy to create real change and implement digital inclusion and digital literacy as an essential healthy aging strategy benefiting all of Minnesota.

**Ann Bussey of Side Lake is a fellow for Project REACH (Rural Experts Advancing Community Health), a joint initiative of the University of Minnesota Rural Health Program through the Office of Academic Clinical Affairs and the Clinical and Translational Science Institute. She is retired and serving as chair of the Minnesota Rural Health Advisory Committee.**

## READER'S VIEW

### Trump's legacy will long haunt nation

American presidents may be in office for a short time, but their legacies may thrive for several lifetimes. Such is the lasting impact of former President Donald J. Trump. With Trump's three conservative U.S. Supreme Court appointments joining the other three conservatives appointed by previous administrations, the Supreme Court today already has demonstrated a willingness to deny long-established rights and risk our climate for generations to come.

With *Dobbs v. Jackson*, the recent Supreme Court decision overturning abortion rights that had been guaranteed by *Roe v. Wade*, Associate Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas stated the 9th and 14th Amendments should no longer be used to guarantee the unenumerated rights not specifically stated in our Constitution. He also suggested states should reconsider recently established rights like gay marriage and relationships or long-held rights like access to contraception. Justice

Thomas was silent on whether his own interracial marriage should remain legal, as guaranteed by *Loving v. Virginia*.

It is not only individual rights that are at risk. After almost four decades of Republican administrations using cap and trade to regulate pollutants, the Supreme Court determined the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency no longer has authority to use this effective measure to regulate greenhouse gases to combat climate change. Chief Justice John Roberts and his five conservative colleagues determined in *West Virginia*

*v. the EPA* that using cap and trade to regulate pollutants can only be specifically mandated by Congress. Our planet is burning up, and conservative jurists are willing to let it happen so a select few can profit while others suffer.

By virtue of losing the 2020 presidential election popular vote, Trump was a gift the majority of American voters did not want, yet his legacy will haunt numerous generations to come. Elections have consequences.

**James N. Bragge Carlton**

### Readers' Views and Local Views

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