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THE TOLEDO BLADE: LAROSE HOSTS CAMPAIGN EVENTS IN NORTHWEST OHIO

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Mike Brice | The Toledo Blade

BOWLING GREEN — Kissing babies has a long tradition in American politics, and Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose Saturday ensured it continued when meeting 6-month-old Carolina Carpenter.

The infant was all smiles as Mr. LaRose, a Republican, talked with her mother, Jessica Carpenter, president of the Bowling Green Republican Club.

“I wanted to come out and meet Secretary LaRose,” she said. “We’ve crossed paths in the past, but I have never actually gotten to sit down and meet with him and speak with him and hear exactly where he stands on policy.”

She hasn’t decided how she will vote in Ohio’s U.S. Senate primary, but Saturday’s event at Mr. Spots in downtown Bowling Green is part of her process.

“I think the best thing I can do is meet each of the candidates when the opportunity presents itself and find out exactly who they are and what they stand for, so that’s what I am doing today,” she said.

The weather might have canceled campaign events in Iowa, but Ohio's bone-chilling temperatures didn't deter Mr. LaRose from campaigning in northwest Ohio on Saturday.

While a visit to Perrysburg's Winterfest turned into a meet and greet at a local restaurant, events at Mr. Spots in Bowling Green and Red Rambler Coffee in Wauseon continued as planned.

Mr. LaRose will face Ohio Sen. Matt Dolan and Cleveland businessman Bernie Moreno in the March 19 primary to challenge Ohio Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown in the November general election.

Speaking to about two dozen supporters who comfortably filled up Mr. Spots' upstairs event space, Mr. LaRose said Saturday's event was a job interview of sorts, and he was the most qualified to defeat Mr. Brown.

When deciding between the three GOP candidates, the key question primary voters should consider is who can beat Mr. Brown, Mr. LaRose said.

"I'm the one that's actually proven I can win a statewide election," Mr. LaRose said. "None of the other candidates have ever done that."

The economy is one of the major issues, he said.

"I am the only one in the race that is not independently wealthy. We don't fault them for that. The fact is, I live the way Ohioans do," Mr. LaRose said. "I have to look at my checking account every month when we pay our bills. I know how this economy under Sherrod Brown and Joe Biden has impacted families."

The U.S. border is also a priority, and with real experience at the border when he was in the U.S. Army, he said he is most qualified to help solve that problem.

"When some candidates go down there and pose for a photo opp, it makes me chuckle because I actually served down there. I was a volunteer as part of a counter-narcotics task force with the U.S. Army," he said. "I know what it takes to secure a border, and I am willing to fight to get those things accomplished."

And while Mr. Moreno has earned several high-profile endorsements, including former President Donald Trump, Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance, and Ohio

Rep. Jim Jordan, Mr. LaRose points to the more than 300 Ohio conservative leaders from county sheriffs to commissioners to Republican central committee members who have endorsed him.

“I am going to get out there and ask for each and every Ohio Republican to vote for me not based on who else supports me but based on them making a value judgment that I am the person they should hire for this job,” Mr. LaRose said.

Northwood Mayor Edward Schimmel has decided that Mr. LaRose will get his vote.

“I have heard Frank’s message and really believe in what he is saying,” Mr. Schimmel said. “I think that he has a good game plan for the state of Ohio moving forward. He has the best shot at prevailing in the race.”

Read the full story [here](#).

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Media Contact: Ben Kindel (440) 864-0106 / Ben@FrankLaRose.com