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Bonamici, Cornilles debate at City Club

1st Congressional District candidates talk immigration, job growth.

By Felicia Heaton

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Campaign ads trashing Suzanne Bonamici and Rob Cornilles are running on the local television stations but members of the City Club of Portland watched the two 1st Congressional District candidates outline their stances on the nation's hot button issues live at the Governor Hotel Friday.

The candidates are sparring for the seat vacated by David Wu who resigned last fall after rumors about drug abuse and strange behavior leaked out of his offices in Washington D.C. and Oregon.

Bonamici, a state legislator, lawyer and democrat, and Cornilles, a republican Washington County businessman, took turns on questions that ranged from immigration to job growth to federal funding of Planned Parenthood programs.

On immigration, both candidates, agreed U.S. border patrols should be strengthened, Bonamici saying more must be done to stop human and drug trafficking. Cornilles said he does not believe in amnesty "nor do I believe in deporting 12-million people."

Both candidates also called for tax reform during the debate. Cornilles argued the current system fails to provide businesses with the incentives they need to grow, in turn hiring more workers. Bonamici said she would not support Bush Administration tax cuts that benefit the wealthy and keep revenue from programs needed to improve opportunities for low- and middle-income families.

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