

Independent Luick-Thrams to challenge Grassley



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for the *Gazette*

CEDAR RAPIDS — At 53 years old, Michael Luick-Thrams has spent the majority of his life with U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley in office.

But the cultural historian is hoping to make history himself by unseating the 36-year incumbent and Republican.

“With all due respects, I would have hoped Grassley would have been gracious enough to realize his time has passed—but, he is running again,” he said. “One of the reasons I’m running is because he’s running and we have to stop this, we have to change the narrative.”

As an Independent, Luick-Thrams won’t run in the June 7 primary. He’ll have to file during the general election period from Aug. 1-19 to be placed on the November ballot with Grassley.

Luick-Thrams said he would advocate for term limits of no more than 12 years for legislators, more transparency in government and campaign donors, and a 10 percent pay cut for those in congress, according to the release.

Also in the November election will be the victor of the Democratic primary. Former lieutenant governor Patty Judge, former lawmaker Bob Krause, bankruptcy lawyer Tom Fiegen and state Sen. Rob Hogg are vying for the Democratic nomination.

Luick-Thrams acknowledged the challenge of running not only against a long-term incumbent like Grassley, but doing so as an independent candidate.

He said he’s hopeful there are enough voters who also want to see a change.

“If there’s a chance at all that American democracy still is vital and not comatose, people like me should be able to win. If I can’t win, you can’t win, nor your uncle, nor your neighbor, nor your girlfriend,” he said. “I’m running for all of us who are the 99 percent.”

Luick-Thrams, who grew up on a Century Farm between Mason City and Clear Lake, directs two non-profit cultural history organizations and is the author or editor of 15 books about Midwest cultural history, according to a Tuesday news release.