



NEWS for immediate release

Fremont County School District #1

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Contact: Paige Fenton Hughes, Superintendent (307) 332-4711

Students quiz U.S. Senator at school assembly

(Lander) -- For the first time in over a decade, Starrett Junior High School in Lander received an opportunity to show off the school's educational values when Wyoming U.S. Senator John Barrasso dropped by for a visit Thursday, January 14.

Eighth grade students were treated to an invaluable experience of meeting one of their national elected officials and were given the opportunity to ask him any question they wanted.

As Barrasso took the stage in front of students, teachers, parents and city dignitaries, he said he wanted to make it clear that as far as schools in Wyoming were concerned, Starrett was a step above. "This school has a great reputation statewide," he said. "And the reason for that is because of you, the students."

Barrasso went on to tell the students how important it is for them to realize that living in a state like Wyoming allows them a rare ability to be directly involved in their country's representative democracy, an involvement that they should not take lightly.

"In a state like Wyoming, you get a chance to know your mayor, you get a chance to know the people that represent you in the local state and nation-wide government," he said. "You are involved in the process. That is one of the great things about living where you do."

But Barrasso let the students know he wasn't there to make speeches, he was there to let them ask questions.

Students peppered Barrasso with questions about energy solutions, gun control, health policy, tribal relations, climate change and career suggestions, among others.

"It was just amazing to have someone like Senator Barrasso to come to our school and talk to us," 14-year-old Kennedy Thatch said.

Thatch, who had the particular honor of introducing the Senator to the assembly, saw it as a chance of a lifetime.

"What happened here today is very important," she said. "The students were able to meet one of their representatives in the national government. He gave me a new perspective about what democracy really means."

Thatch, who is involved in National History Day and the Change Attitudes Now student club, was one of the students who asked Barrasso about medical careers.

"For me, it was something I wanted to get into because I really enjoy helping people," she said. "Senator Barrasso showed me that you could make a difference in people's lives. He made a big impression on me, and I think the rest of the students too."

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Photo cutlines:

#1--Starrett Junior High School student Kennedy Thatch escorted Senator John Barrasso to a student assembly Thursday.

#2--Senator John Barrasso shakes hands with Starrett Junior High School student Casey Winger while Colby Voxland, Codie Severson look on Thursday in Lander.



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#2--Senator John Barrasso shakes hands with Starrett Junior High School student Casey Winger while Colby Voxland, Codie Severson look on Thursday in Lander.