

The two-faced party?

The Lowell Sun Lowell Sun

Updated:

LowellSun.com

Why are Democrat leaders waging a war against a fellow Democrat and woman candidate -- Marissa DeFranco?

"Perhaps they are afraid that my numbers might be better than they are hoping they are, and (people) might not support the incumbent and they might support my independent nature and willingness to buck the party," DeFranco told Sun editors during a recent interview session.

DeFranco is a veteran immigration attorney who is running for the 6th Congressional District seat held by Democrat U.S. Rep. John Tierney.

DeFranco knows the deck is being stacked against her. Recently, the Democrat National Congressional Committee conducted a poll in the 6th District, which includes Bedford, Billerica, Burlington, Tewksbury and Wilmington, and failed to present DeFranco's name to potential primary voters. The choices were Tierney and another challenger, Seth Moulten.

An oversight? Hardly, said DeFranco.

"They know I'm here. I'm the only candidate in the race to get 2,000 signatures to secure my name on the ballot," she said.

DeFranco is a plain-talking candidate who says she won't be pigeon-holed into ideological stances just for the party's sake. She wants a "public option" for the mandate-heavy Obamacare, a law Tierney voted to approve in 2009, and favors a 15-year "path to legalization" -- not citizenship -- for America's 11 million undocumented immigrants.

"They'd get behind all legal immigrants, pay taxes and work toward a green card. If they don't agree to the program, they can go back to their home country," says DeFranco, who's worked on immigration cases for 17 years and was named a Top Woman of Law by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly.

DeFranco said Democrats and Republicans share the blame for inaction on key issues, like the stagnant economy and lack of jobs. She said she'd be an independent voice willing to work with like-minded problem solvers.

It's easy to see why Democrats would want DeFranco to stay out of sight and out of mind. She represents a free-thinker.

"Democrats like to criticize Republicans for a so-called 'war against women' and yet they're so hypocritical," she said. "I represent an alternative to the incumbent who's spent 17 years in Congress with little to show for it and I'm on the ballot, so why would they do a poll without me in it?"

Marissa DeFranco is an intelligent woman who represents a legitimate threat to the party establishment and John Tierney. That's why.

It'll be interesting to see if Tierney and Moulten will accept a debate challenge from DeFranco as the September primary draws near. Rank-and-file Democrats should demand it but then they don't call the shots in the illusory, inclusive party of liberal elites.