

### The unexpected consequences of a party-line vote



phne Campbell is pro-life, has sponsored bills defending members of the clergy critical of gay marriage, supports the expansion of private charter schools, and is backed by conservative groups.

Campbell is also a Democrat, and she will now be representing the interests of a liberal-leaning region that includes most of the Biscayne Corridor and the beaches in Florida's Senate.

Campbell, the only Democrat in Florida to be endorsed by the Christian Family Coalition, won the November 8 race for District 38 after raking in 117,948 ballots, or 75.24 percent of the vote. Her opponent, Phillip Brutus, a former state representative from North Miami from 2000 to 2006, got 38,811 ballots, or 24.76 percent of the vote.

Campbell credits her work as the state representative of District 108 for the past six years and her "positive" platform for her victory over Brutus. "I am going to work with all of the communities of District 38," she says.

But Brutus believes the outcome of the District 38 race was influenced by the contentious presidential race and his decision to run as an independent. "I was swept by not being perceived as a Democrat," says Brutus. "People voted the party line, and I was swept by

## Dems, This Is Your Daphne

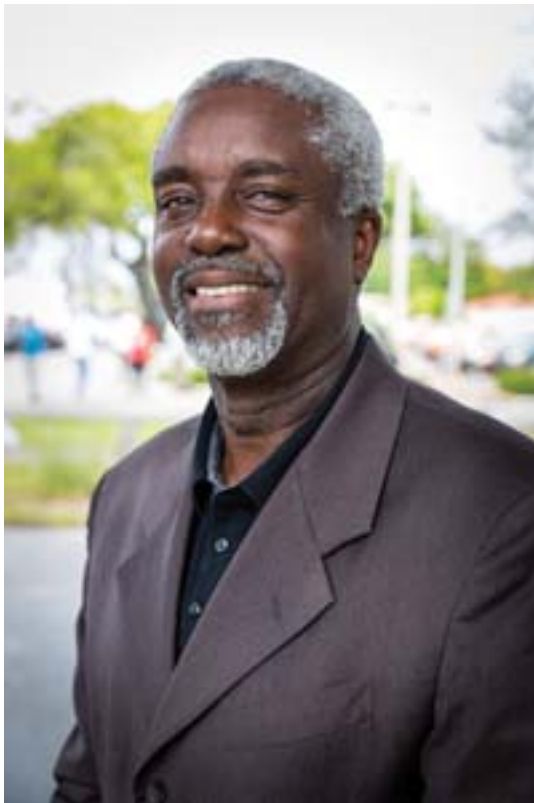
Written by Erik Bojnansky, BT Senior Writer  
December 2016

---

anti-Trump sentiment.”

Brutus, by the way, *is* a Democrat. He was endorsed by Democratic-leaning groups like SAVE Dade, the United Teachers of Dade, and unions like the AFL-CIO and AFSCME. Brutus even got a recommendation from the *Miami Herald*. Brutus, in contrast to Campbell, is pro-choice and is critical of anti-gay groups like the Christian Family Coalition.

So why did he run as an independent? Because the crowded field of candidates leading up to the August 30 primary were *all* Democrats. In that case, whoever garnered the most votes on August 30 would be the victor, even if the winning candidate ended up with less than 50 percent of the votes.



To make matters even more complicated, Brutus, Campbell, and primary candidate Anis Blemur were all born in Haiti, and were likely to split that important voting bloc. So at virtually the last minute, Brutus changed his ballot designation from Democrat to No Party Affiliation, or NPA.

The primary victor turned out to be Campbell, who defeated five other rivals in spite of her controversial history, including a federal investigation into Medicare fraud at a string of nursing

## Dems, This Is Your Daphne

Written by Erik Bojnansky, BT Senior Writer  
December 2016

---

homes she co-owns. Her son was convicted of Medicare fraud in 2013, though Campbell was never charged. (Her son appealed and has won the right to a new trial.)

And so Daphne Campbell ran on November 8 with a “D” for “Democrat” by her name.

Although Donald Trump won the majority of votes in Florida, Hillary Clinton received 63 percent of Miami-Dade’s vote, or 623,807 ballots. That’s more than President Barack Obama received from Miami-Dade voters in both his runs for office.

A lot of those Clinton votes likely came from District 38. About 61 percent of the registered voters of District 38 are Democrats, according to statistics from the Florida Division of Elections.

The boundaries of District 38, like all legislative and congressional districts, are brand-new. Back in 2012, the League of Women Voters of Florida sued state legislators, asserting that legislative and congressional districts they forged after the 2010 U.S. Census violated state prohibitions on partisan gerrymandering.

After years of litigation and media investigations, the courts ordered the boundaries to be redrawn. The new map, backed by the League and approved by Judge George Reynolds III of the Second Judicial Circuit, was enacted in December 2015.

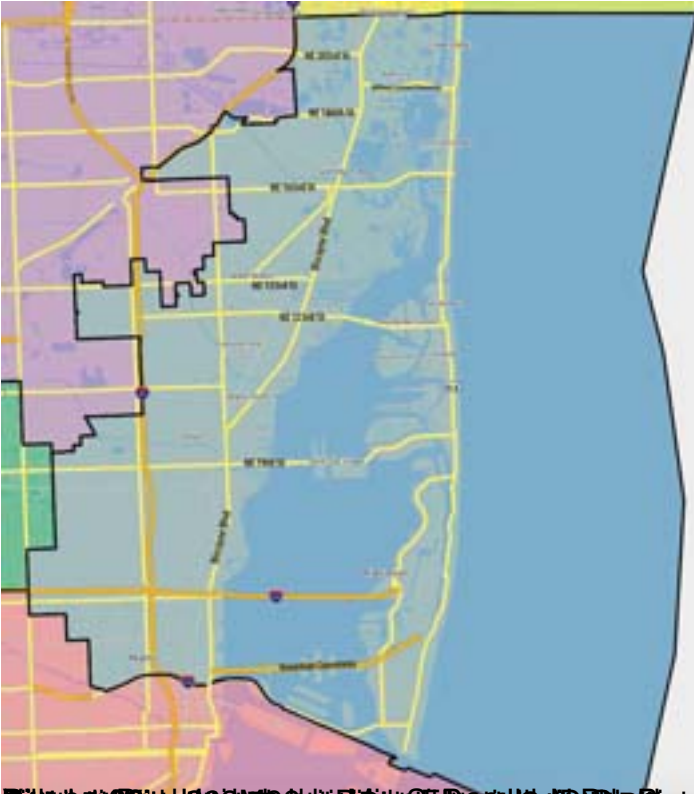
Although most voters in District 38 are Democrats, the region itself is ethnically diverse. About 39.9 percent of the population is Hispanic, 30.1 percent are non-Hispanic black, and 27.4 percent are non-Hispanic white.

District 38’s borders also encompass a range of socioeconomic levels, from the affluent to the impoverished. On the mainland, the district covers downtown Miami, Omni, Edgewater, Park West, Overtown, Little Haiti, Wynwood, the Upper Eastside, El Portal, Miami Shores, Biscayne Park, Aventura, and Ojus, as well as portions of Brownsville, Allapattah, Golden Glades, North Miami, North Miami Beach, Liberty City, Opa-locka, and Miami Gardens.

# Dems, This Is Your Daphne

Written by Erik Bojnansky, BT Senior Writer  
December 2016

---



[letters@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:letters@biscaynetimes.com)