

It's Democrat vs. Democrat in District 38

Written by Erik Bojnansky, BT Senior Writer
August 2018

Controversial incumbent Daphne Campbell faces same-party challenger Jason Pizzo

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Florida State Sen. Daphne Campbell is mingling just outside a tent on NW 151st Street and NW 7th Avenue. She's there with a hundred or so other people to help dedicate a segment of NW 7th Avenue as Robert "Bobby" L. Parker Memorial Way. Parker, who retired in 2009 as director of the Miami-Dade Police Department after 33 years, took his own life in 2015. He was 62 years old.

Parker was well known for volunteering with local youth groups. In fact, that's how Campbell says she met Parker and why she sponsored a bill naming this section of road in his honor.

"I'm the one who filed this last year to name the street in his name," she tells the *BT*. "That is my bill. I worked hard to make sure we honor him today."

Campbell, who was first elected as a Florida representative in 2010, is up for reelection in the

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August 28 primary. She says she has been instrumental in bringing money to her district and addressing her constituents' concerns.

Thanks in part to her stature in the Haitian-American community, Campbell hasn't lost an election. In 2016 the Democrat won against five other competitors in a crowded primary for Florida's open and newly redrawn Senate District 38. She then went on to trounce former legislator Phillip Brutus's independent run in the general election. This, in spite of being investigated for Medicare fraud (related to nursing homes her family operates) and her tendency to vote with conservative Republican legislators on abortion (she's pro-life), religion (she has supported clergy "defense" bills), and education (she's favors expanding private charter schools).

On August 28, Campbell faces just one challenger: Jason Pizzo, a former prosecutor with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office.

This time there's a decent chance Campbell will not win. In the 2016 primary race, Campbell garnered 9017 votes, but her Democratic opponents' combined votes far outstripped hers. All together, 20,061 people voted *against* Campbell.

"Daphne Campbell has been resilient over the years and finds a way to get reelected in the wake of several scandals," says Sean Foreman, a professor of political science at Barry University. "We know she has hardcore supporters who follow her to the end, even with all the controversy. But that said, this is a chance for the Democratic Party to purge Daphne Campbell."

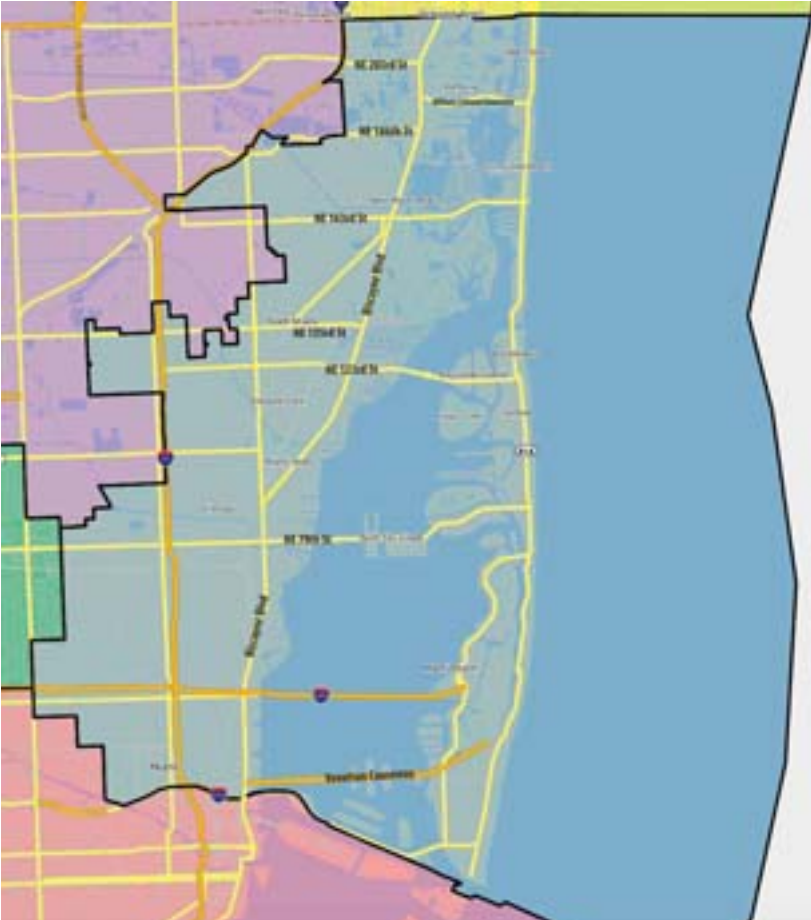
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