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Republicans pick Julie Killian to run for Latimer's old Senate seat

Mark Lungariello, mlungariel@lohud.com Published 10:05 p.m. ET Feb. 7, 2018 | Updated 10:10 a.m. ET Feb. 8, 2018

The former Rye councilwoman will face Democrat Shelley Mayer on April 24.



(Photo: Peter Carr/The Journal News)

HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON - Republican Party leaders picked Julie Killian to run in a state Senate special election for an open seat that could shift New York's power structure.

Party members chose Killian, who spent six years as a Rye city councilwoman, over former Yonkers inspector general Dan Schorr at a mini-convention at Westchester Manor on Wednesday.

She'll face Democrat Shelley Mayer, a state assemblywoman who lives in Yonkers, on April 24.

DEMOCRATS: Shelley Mayer picked to run for Latimer's seat

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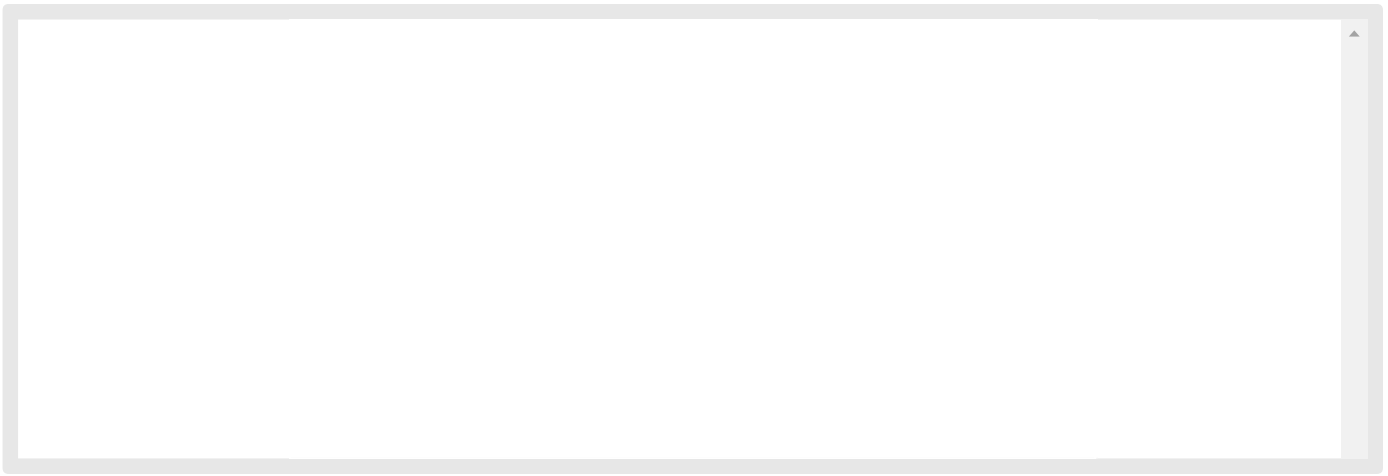
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"The contrast is clear," Killian said of Mayer. "Albany insider vs. local advocate and elected official who's balanced six municipal budgets and understands what our local communities need."

She said if elected, she'd support term limits and look for a more equitable formula for school aid.

"We want representatives that will listen to us, understand our issues, pass solutions and get things done," she said.

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It's Killian's second campaign for the seat after she ran against Democrat George Latimer in 2016. Schorr, a White Plains resident, pledged support for Killian.

Before the vote, he spoke to those in attendance and said with Democratic control of the governor's seat and Assembly, the Senate was the only thing in the way of full control of the state government.

"If we lose this seat, we lose the Senate, so we have to win this seat," he said. He said although Albany powerbrokers had allegedly pledged financial support for Killian's candidacy, local candidates should make their own choice.

Killian filed her paperwork to run for the seat on Monday. A third candidate, Bedford attorney Sarmad Khojasteh, dropped out of the race the same day and said he'd back Killian for the nomination.

Because it's a special election, there won't be a primary before April 24.

The seat has been empty since Latimer resigned to become Westchester County executive on Jan. 1.

Although there is only a bit more than two months until the election, it is expected to be a lively and well-funded campaign. Although Democrats outnumber registered Republicans in the district, it's viewed as a winnable seat by the GOP.

Republicans hold a one-person majority in the Senate with two seats open. Democrats can take a numerical majority, and there is talk they could also unite with eight members of the Independent Democratic Conference to take control of the Senate with a win in Westchester.

The winner of the special election won't take office until after New York state's budget deadline on March 31. They'll face re-election in November, when state legislators vie for new two-year terms.

Senators make a base salary of \$79,500.

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