

Newsday – April 12, 2019

Talking Point

Long-term victory

Former 2nd Congressional District candidate Liuba Grechen Shirley landed national headlines last year when she successfully lobbied the Federal Election Commission to allow her to pay for child care with campaign funds.

The Amityville Democrat lost to long-term incumbent Pete King but months after the election she launched the Vote Mama political action committee to support other mothers running for local, state and federal office.

Vote Mama announced its first full class of some 20 candidates this week (a few candidates had received support in more immediate races). The hopefuls include five from Long Island: Laura Burns for Nassau County Legislature; Gabriela Castillo for Freeport school board; Erin Guida and Melissa McCardle for Oyster Bay Town Council; and Rachel Klein for Oyster Bay town clerk.

Grechen Shirley says that more than 120 candidates from 23 states applied online, and the group did a few weeks of interviews to narrow down the list. Candidates had to be running on the Democratic line, and raising children 18 years old or younger. The candidates also must support access to abortion, paid family leave and universal pre-kindergarten.

The PAC, which Grechen Shirley says has raised almost \$250,000, can donate directly to candidates and also offers access to a bank of volunteers. The organization plus a national advisory committee that includes New York Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul and Assemb. Kimberly Jean-Pierre can offer mentorship. The candidates will be on a Slack channel where they can share advice about juggling kids and campaigning.

Grechen Shirley says the group will be adding more candidates in the coming months in an effort to put more mothers in office.

As for her own elective prospects, Grechen Shirley says she is talking to family and others about another congressional run and doesn't have anything else to report yet.

"I am seriously considering it," she says.

- Mark Chiusano [@mjchiusano](#)

Editor's note: Candidate Liuba Grechen Shirley ran in the 2nd Congressional District. An earlier version of this item included the incorrect district. Also, Rachel Klein is a candidate for clerk in the Town of Oyster Bay. Her candidacy was incorrect due to erroneous information supplied to The Point