

Hillary's Newest Foe?

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Clinton will have to fight for her Senate seat rather than be assured an unopposed victory. (AP)

QUOTE

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Mitchell Moss, NYU's Professor of Urban Planning and Policy, on Kathleen Troia McFarland

would hurt the Republican ticket from top to bottom as the base would stay home."

But Mrs. McFarland, who is known as "KT", does have a significant Republican resume with top leadership positions in three administrations - Nixon, Ford, and Reagan, where she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs.

She left public office in 1985 to become a full-time mother. Initially, Mrs. McFarland was considering a run against Congressman Carolyn Maloney. In anticipation of that race, Mrs. McFarland raised over \$600,000 in just about four weeks. That money will provide a starting point for her Senate race and puts her on equal financial footing with John Spencer. Senator Clinton, on the other hand, has raised over \$33 million for her re-election campaign.

In an interview with CBSNews.com, McFarland says that she wants to run for office because "after 9-11 the stakes have changed" and it is time to "put playground politics aside." She is "optimistic" about the start of her race and will continue traveling the state meeting with Republican leaders.

While she has technically "not made the decision yet", McFarland's candidacy is sure to get off the ground in the coming months and she insists that "all signs are good." Politically, Mrs. McFarland is described by her spokesperson, William O'Reilly, as a "Reagan Republican - an actual one - an unabashed fiscal conservative who believes that tax cuts create jobs. She's moderate on social issues and believes in a strong national defense."

New York University's Professor of Urban Planning and Policy, Mitchell Moss, says that New York Republicans "need new energy, new talent." And most importantly they need candidates who are willing to give running for office more than one try.

"Running for office has benefits for the candidate win or loose" says Professor Moss. "They benefit from getting political seasoning."

Mrs. McFarland has never run for elective office and she faces one of the country's most formidable politicians. Political insiders expect Senator Clinton to run for the Presidency in 2008 and thus far her bid for re-election has looked more like a fundraising vehicle and testing ground for a national message than it has a statewide campaign.

If Mrs. McFarland's entrance into the race manages to spark a political dialogue within the state, it will force Mrs. Clinton to spend more time and money defending her seat rather than looking toward the future. **According to Professor Moss, "There is no such thing as a token candidate when you are running against Hillary Clinton."**

This race pits a career politician against a novice with insider knowledge. **"Politics is a special test," says Professor Moss, "You don't know what kind of candidate they will be until they are a candidate. Some people blossom."**

In a highly handicapped race, Moss adds that Mrs. McFarland has some small advantages. "She has three things going for her: low expectations, good pedigree, and she is not tarnished by being tied to current Republican office holders."

An interesting political note: No Republican candidate has won statewide in New York without the endorsement of conservatives. John Spencer, who is pro-life, already has that endorsement. As Jennifer Duffy of the Cook Political Report points out, "Spencer has aggressively pursued the conservative party endorsement and it may be too late for McFarland to compete for it, even if conservatives are willing to accept her more moderate positions. That would mean that even if Spencer loses the GOP primary, he would be on the November ballot, siphoning votes away from McFarland."

(CBS) This story was written by CBSNews.com's Allison Davis

Yet another New York Republican has emerged to try to disrupt Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's smooth ride to second term in the Senate.

Kathleen Troia McFarland, a former Reagan administration official, will soon declare herself a candidate in the New York Senate race, once again forcing the former First Lady and potential 2008 presidential candidate to fight for her Senate seat rather than be assured an unopposed victory.

The Republican side of this year's Senate race got off to a rough start. Edward Cox, the son-in-law of the late President Richard Nixon, withdrew from the race after Governor George Pataki endorsed Long Island District Attorney, Jeanine Pirro.

But Pirro's candidacy faltered almost as quickly. Democrats mocked the D.A. for taking a 32-second pause while looking for "Page 10" during her live televised campaign announcement. As pressure from state leaders built, Pirro suddenly withdrew from the race citing personal issues.

That left the conservative Mayor of Yonkers, John Spencer. Until McFarland officially announces her candidacy, expected to come at the end of this month, Mr. Spencer is the only official challenger to Senator Clinton. Spencer's campaign is giving no credence to the newly formed McFarland campaign.

"She is not a serious candidate" says campaign manager Kevin Collins in a conversation with CBSNews.com. "A liberal Republican candidacy