

Sandra Jeff disqualified from state legislative ballot

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 25 March 2016 04:07



District 22 Senate situation related to finances

SANTE FE – Sandra Jeff, a former member of the New Mexico House of Representatives who served District 5 for one term, apparently won't be on the ballot for another political run this year.

At issue, are matters that deal with the Campaign Reporting Act.

Jeff filed to run for the District 22 Senate seat currently held by Benny Shendo of Jemez Pueblo. Shendo, who like Jeff is a Democrat, is ending his first term in the Senate.

"I heard that she's not going to run after all," Shendo said. "That's about all I know."

Amy Bailey, general counsel at the Secretary of State's Office in Santa Fe, said Jeff failed to qualify for this year's ballot due to "noncompliance with the Campaign Reporting Act."

Bailey explained that noncompliance is connected to past due campaign reports and the fines related to past issues.

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Jeff recently told the *New Mexico Political Report* that she was undecided as to whether she'd continue with the run.

Jeff, who is from Crownpoint, on the Navajo Nation Indian Reservation, raised a lot of eyebrows when she was part of the House of Representatives four years ago because she sided with Republicans on key votes, such as a vote against the 2014 state budget.

She also raised some eyebrows with fellow Democrats when she was spotted having lunch on at least one occasion with Gov. Susana Martinez at a fancy Santa Fe restaurant. Martinez is a Republican.

And then there was the time when Vice President Joe Biden called Jeff by telephone regarding a vote on a constitutional amendment on raising New Mexico's minimum wage. Jeff did not vote in that situation and that prompted the phone call from Biden.

In a brief telephone conversation this week, asked if she'd continue to pursue the run against Shendo, Jeff responded with a quick, "Yes."

She didn't say whether she'd run for the District 5 post or within another capacity in state politics.

But as of March 24, Jeff was still listed as "disqualified" on the Secretary of State's website. March 26 is the deadline for Jeff to rectify the campaign finance reporting situation with the Secretary of State's Office.

Jeff did not make the Democratic ballot in 2014 in a District 5 run against Wonda Johnson of Church Rock to maintain that House seat. She subsequently ran as a write-in candidate and lost big in the general election to Johnson.

Jeff spoke extensively to the Gallup Sun about two weeks ago regarding what led up to the filing

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to run for Shendo's seat, but said next to nothing about the disqualification designation.

Bailey said even if Jeff paid beyond what she's already paid to bring the campaign reporting matter to close, the issue ultimately must go before a judge so she can get back on the ballot.

Jeff was presented with a settlement on the matter a while ago, Bailey said, but paid just \$1,000 of that amount, which still left matters outstanding, Bailey said.

Bailey did not disclose the exact amount owed by Jeff.

District 22 includes Bernalillo, Rio Arriba, McKinley, San Juan and Sandoval counties. The district does not include Gallup.

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