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Newsday
235 Pinelawn Road
Melville, NY 11747
Attn: Editorial Board

Dear Editor:

In an editorial published in the form of a help wanted advertisement, the Newsday Editorial Board expressed concern that political deal-making between party leaders denies voters any role in the selection of judges in Suffolk County. The Board urged a qualified candidate to step forward to seek election as the Judge of the Suffolk County Surrogate's Court ("Backroom Deals for Judgeships Insult Voters", June 28th).

Voters deserve the right to choose the judges who serve in their Courtrooms. I respectfully submit my name for consideration as the next Judge of the Surrogate's Court of Suffolk County.

As a past President of the Suffolk County Women's Bar Association, who practices primarily in the area of Trusts and Estates and Elder Law, I have represented clients in the administration of Estates for more than a decade. I have experience practicing in Surrogate's Court and possess an understanding of the functioning of the Court. Most importantly, I would make independence and integrity the hallmarks of my administration.

Newsday's editorial details the debilitating impact of pre-arranged cross-endorsements on the ability and willingness of qualified judicial candidates to seek election to the bench. My 2015 campaign for Suffolk County District Court Judge exemplified how powerless candidates are without the guarantees afforded by such cross-endorsements. I had been found qualified for the office by the Judicial Screening Committee of the Suffolk County Bar Association. Despite not screening either of us, leaders of the Suffolk County Conservative party endorsed and awarded another candidate the Conservative line on the ballot, and, as a result, I fell 170 votes short of winning that election.

Following that experience, I was resolved that I could more effectively make a difference in front of the bench rather than on it. I continued in my private practice and established a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation with the intention of providing pro bono legal services to indigent seniors. I adhered to my personal beliefs and desire to help people and have managed to successfully grow a business that embodies my holistic approach to practice and the care and compassion I have for my clients.

When the possibility of entering the race for Surrogate's Court Judge arose, it became apparent that it offered not only an opportunity to make a difference but provided an even greater opportunity to effectuate change in the political climate in Suffolk County.

As a candidate for a judicial office I am unable to address many of the detailed concerns that the editorial raised about the recent history of the Conservative Party in Suffolk County and ways in which cross-endorsements have often denied the voters any say at all in electing judges in Suffolk County. What I can do is state unequivocally that my only interest in serving as Judge of the Surrogate's Court is based on my passion for the law, my desire to help people, and the significant role the Surrogate's Court plays in the lives of Suffolk County families after the death of a loved one.

Throughout my career, I have worked very hard to address the needs of many vulnerable clients and their families. I have done so with sensitivity and a well-grounded sense of right and wrong. I will bring these same qualities to the office of Surrogate's Court Judge, as well as the backbone that your editorial suggest would be a requirement for any successful candidate. As the editorial pointed out, winning the election may be elusive, but standing up for democratic principles will provide its own satisfaction. I am proud to step forward to offer voters an alternative to the political deal-making that has made almost impossible for independent qualified candidates to become judges in Suffolk County.

Very truly yours,

Tara A. Scully

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