

**Optimum Customers:**

Your Newsday access is ending Sept. 15th. Enroll now to continue your access.

LEARN MORE

**OPINION / EDITORIAL**

# Newsday endorses Tara Scully for Suffolk Surrogate's Court

If you are a Democrat fed up with your party cozying up to Conservatives and not giving you real choices, vote for Scully in the primary.



Attorney Tara A. Scully, GOP Candidate for the 6th District Court Judge.  
VOTE by Richard T. Slattery Photo Credit: Richard T. Slattery

**By The Editorial Board**

Updated September 5, 2018 6:00 AM

Suffolk County politics is a swamp. It has been one for years.

The mastermind of the morass is Democratic Party county boss Rich Schaffer, and he's been up to his usual tricks in advance of next week's primaries, weaving a web of cross-endorsements in cahoots with Conservative and Independence party leaders.

Why should you care? Because these deals steal from you the power of your vote. Candidates end up with so many ballot lines that the result is a foregone conclusion. Party bosses divide the jobs that are the spoils of victory. And real damage is done. This cabal is responsible for a notable decline in the quality of the Suffolk judiciary — by engineering victories for party favorites while hindering the progress of strong, independent judicial candidates and judges.

To all Democratic voters: If this brand of politics disgusts you, if you want to cast a vote for change, look at your party's primary for judge of Suffolk Surrogate's Court. It's a doozy, and the stakes are high.

The surrogate's position is the mother lode of patronage. The judge assigns legal work, like handling wills and guardianships, where billing can reach six figures. As part of a nine-judgeship deal, Schaffer promised his party's line to District Court Judge Marian Rose Tinari, a Conservative who also happens to be the wife of Suffolk Conservative Party chairman Frank Tinari.

Responding to a Newsday editorial board plea for alternate candidates, Port Jefferson attorney Tara Scully, 41, of Setauket, gathered enough petitions to run — as a Democrat and as a Republican, her party of registration. After Tinari withdrew, Schaffer replaced her with someone who is registered as a Democrat, Family Court Judge Theresa Whelan, 56, of Wading River. She's the wife of Supreme Court Judge Thomas Whelan, who has close ties to the Independence Party and was entangled in controversial lawsuits involving political power broker Gary Melius and former Conservative boss Ed Walsh, now in prison. Of course, she has the Independence line.

So now it's Scully vs. Whelan for the Democratic nod.

If Whelan wins, the Conservatives likely will give her their line, too, and reap the spoils just as they would have with Tinari. If Scully wins, she will have both the Democratic and Republican lines and almost certainly triumph in November. Schaffer's argument now that Scully wants to deprive voters of a choice is an insult; his deals repeatedly deny them a choice. It's even more ludicrous given Scully's proposal for nonpartisan elections of judges, which would remove political party bosses from the process. Schaffer's complaint about a Republican being on the Democratic line is rich, given he was going to give the slot to a Conservative. Now he has sent out mailers giving the impression that Newsday's editorial board has endorsed Whelan. It has not.

---

## Sign up for The Point

Go inside New York politics.

Sign up

By clicking Sign up, you agree to our [privacy policy](#).

We're usually loath to encourage a primary vote that would limit voter choices in November. But we're also loath to encourage a vote for a system, corrupted by Schaffer's machinations, that has weakened our judiciary. If you are a Democrat fed up with your party cozying up to Conservatives and not giving you real choices, vote for Scully in the primary. Unique times call for unique responses.

Newsday endorses Scully.

**By The Editorial Board**