

OPINION / **ENDORSEMENTS**

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Ellen M. Lederer DeFrancesco for New York State Assembly 14th District



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David G. McDonough has been a capable public servant since his election to the Assembly in 2002. As a member of the minority, the Merrick Republican has provided good constituent service and Newsday has supported past candidacies.

But the 14th District needs more vigorous **representation** than McDonough, 87, is now able to provide. McDonough has a tendency to talk about past accomplishments and answer questions by rehashing the issues without offering his ideas about how to address them. His constituents would be **better served** by someone more oriented to the future.

Fortunately, they have a choice. Democrat **Ellen M. Lederer DeFrancesco**, 54, of Oceanside, is making her first run for public office. A former New York City teacher, she uses her mantra — "Saying 'I don't know' is a strength, not a weakness" — as a spur to dig deep into issues. When a would-be constituent complained about the \$40 per day jury duty pay, her research found the figure dated to the late 1990s and she promised to push for a hike.

As befits her background, **education** is a passion. She supports efforts to revamp the Foundation Aid formula by which the state funds public schools; the metric must account for special education and English language learners, she says, and should reflect rising or falling enrollments. She backs universal pre-K as one answer to the **affordability crisis**. Other elements include building more **affordable housing** sustainably by converting zombie homes and empty buildings, which she says will help keep **young people** from moving away, and paying **child care** workers a living wage.

She supports the state's efforts to bring offshore wind energy to Long Island but deplores Equinor's strategy in trying to site a cable landing in Long Beach. Lederer DeFrancesco says she could back a different plan to land a cable on state land at Jones Beach if an alternative route to bring the power to the grid — perhaps up the Wantagh or Meadowbrook parkways — was devised. She also advocates for a different approach to congestion pricing in New York City: "Maybe make it incremental, maybe ease into it," she said.

Newsday's editorial board endorses Lederer DeFrancesco.