

# Opinions

EDITORIAL THE REPUBLIC EDITORIAL BOARD: DEMOCRATIC ENDORSEMENT

## Tipirneni could cut through vitriol

**While both of CD8's Democratic candidates offer reasons to be optimistic, the Glendale ER doctor's science-based approach is one Congress could use**

Two Democrats are running in Congressional District 8 in this year's special election.

That fact alone should be heartening for progressives. In the past two elections, the Democrats did not field a challenger to Republican Trent Franks.

Granted, CD8 constituents are heavily conservative and Republican, but it doesn't bode well for democracy to have a dearth of political alternatives (there was a Green Party candidate in 2014 and a nonpartisan Americans Elect candidate in 2012).

Which makes this cycle noteworthy. Hiral Tipirneni, an ER doctor from Glendale, and Brianna Westbrook, a social activist from Peoria, are running for public office for the first time.

Tipirneni is a first-generation immigrant whose work in cancer research was inspired in part by the loss of her mother and nephew to the disease.

Westbrook's background, too, informs her passions and causes: She said she grew up in poverty, at one point she and her mother living out of her mom's vehicle, and later in life, she endured discrimina-

tion as a transgender woman.

They share similar positions on tax reform, immigration and border security, and environmental concerns, including climate change. They both represent an alternative to the platforms of the GOP and the Trump administration.

We're endorsing Tipirneni. Here's why:

Tipirneni, in her work as a physician, has firsthand insights into the challenges and failings of the health-care system. She calls health-care reform "a moral imperative for me" and champions legislation that expands access, including allowing individuals between the ages of 50 and 64 to buy into Medicare.

She also opposes any scaling back of medical benefits to seniors, such as the idea of taxing some of those benefits.

Tipirneni favors greater and more affordable access to college and vocational education, which she views, rightly, as a

way to economic and individual security. And as a product of public education, she also favors ways to encourage people to enter the teaching field, including forgiving student loans.

Although her stances reflect a Democratic agenda, Tipirneni touts a science-led, data-based approach to policy making, which could help take the passion out of vitriolic debates over how to deal with entitlement reform or environmental programs. Or how to deal with gun violence, which she views as a public-health issue.

Westbrook brings unique qualifications to the race, too. She has spent time advocating for civil rights and protection for transgender individuals and the working class.

Both candidates may be inspired to run for public office for the first time, but we hope their work in the public sphere continues beyond this race. CD8 stands to benefit from it. Arizona, too.



**Hiral Tipirneni**



**Brianna Westbrook**