

Political analyst: Langford may lose Democratic support if he runs for Senate as independent

By **DEREK HARPER**, Staff Writer | Posted: Monday, June 27, 2011 5:57 pm

Atlantic City Mayor Lorenzo Langford may lose support among other core Democrats if he chooses to run for state Senate as an independent, political analyst Brigid Harrison said Monday.

Harrison speculated that party loyalists could be driven away if Langford ultimately plays spoiler to fellow Democrat incumbent Sen. Jim Whelan.

Furthermore, Harrison, a political science and law professor at Montclair State University, said Langford could hurt his own political future if he does not do well, especially in Atlantic City.

Langford filed earlier this month to run as an independent for state Senate in the 2nd District,

Atlantic County Democratic Party Chairman Patrick D'Arcy said he does not think Langford ultimately will run for Senate, but instead will "launch grenades all summer."

County party chairmen have wide discretion under New Jersey law to give candidates good or bad ballot positions or help direct funds.

Should Langford run again for mayor, D'Arcy said that would be part of the discussion.

Polistina declined Monday to speculate on the political ramifications for Langford.

"If the mayor runs, the only thing I expect is I will be running against two people I disagree with, not one," he said.

Whelan said he is not convinced Langford will stay in the race.

"Clearly, if Mayor Langford is in the race, he has no chance of winning," Whelan said. "He's in there to help Polistina."

Langford and Whelan have a long history that dates to the mid-1990s, when Whelan was Atlantic City's mayor and Langford represented the 4th Ward on City Council. Langford beat Whelan in 2001 after three runs for mayor.

After one run in 1998, Langford and others filed suit against the city the following year, claiming the Whelan-dominated City Council eliminated his school district position following a defeated school budget as payback.

More recently, Langford has suggested Whelan was behind recent news that Langford had not disclosed \$60,000 in in-kind donations from PACs Voters United and Citizens First during the mayor's 2009 campaign.

Langford has not filed any reports with the state Election Law Enforcement Commission since Oct. 29, 2009, which said he had \$5,894 on hand.

ELEC regulations require candidates with cash on hand to file reports every three months. No complaints have been filed against Langford.

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