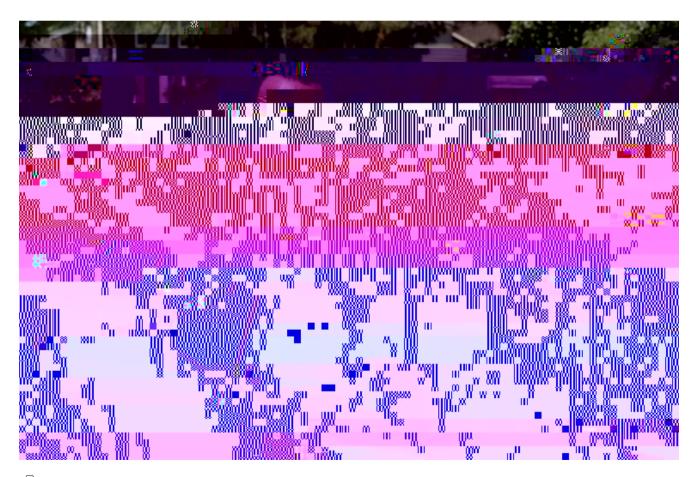
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Ba le brews amon Democrats over primary in South ersey's 2nd District

By Joe Hern $ndez \cdot M y 31, 2018$

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Congression I c ndid te T nzie Youngblood holds up Time m g zine with her photo on the cover s Will Br nt uses his phone to record Sn pch t story. Youngblood w s c mp igning t n p rtment complex in Bridgeton, New Jersey, on M y 26, 2018. (B sti n Sl bbers for WHYY)

Tanzie Youngblood wanted to run against a Republican.

e retired school teacher; a Democrat, entered the race for South Jersey's 2nd Congressional District last year; setting her sights on incumbent Rep. Frank LoBiondo.

e Republican has held the seat since 1994, the same year the "Contract with America" catapulted dozens of conservatives into Congress and Newt Gingrich into the House Speakership.

To Youngblood's surprise, LoBiondo <u>announced in November</u> that he was retiring after more than tat he !

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Van Drew, a dentist by trade, would bring with him a long de

Instead, Van Drewsecured all eight county party endorsements right away, leaving Youngblood and the

Van Drewalso has the backing of the nationally-focused Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, which included Van Drewin its "Red to Blue" program, an e-ort to óip the House to Democratic control during the 2018 midterm elections.

Although he has the support of party leaders, Van Drewhas drawn the ire of many Democrats who see themselves as more progressive. ose voters say Van Drew's conservative leanings should disqualify him from getting party endorsements.

And his critics say the race comes down to one question: Why would leaders in the Democratic Party support someone like Van Drew over more progressive candidates like Youngblood, who supports gun control and same-sex marriage?

His campaign was unable able to fulòll our requests for an interview, but Van Drew has addressed this criticism before.

"It is important to work for your country and not your political party," he said <u>in a 2017 appearance on NJTV</u>. "I'm a Democrat, but if I really, truly believe there's a good Republican idea, I would vote for it and support it."

What many progressives say they ond most objectionable about Van Drewis his position on guns.

e Democrat supports the Second Amendment, and reportedly has a few guns of his own. He also has a 100 percent rating from the National Rióe Association, <u>deschalide</u> to VöteSmart, and has received at least \$1,000 in contributions from the group. In the Legislature, Van Drewhas voted against gun-control bills.

Parkland, Florida school shooting survivor and activist David Hogg called out Van Drew <u>in an April tweet</u>. "Rehtetslater both Democrats and Republicans take #NRABloodMoney," Hogg wrote. "Just look up New Jersey state senator @ Je Van Drew, he's a Democrat with An A rating from the NRA."

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