

Cory Booker campaigns for Adler in Willingboro

By David Levinsky Staff writer | Posted: Thursday, October 11, 2012 6:30 am

WILLINGBORO — With only a few weeks left before voters head to the polls, Democratic 3rd Congressional District hopeful Shelley Adler turned to one of her party's most well-known figures to help rally support.

Newark Mayor Cory Booker delivered a rousing speech Wednesday afternoon to roughly 100 supporters gathered at the Willingboro Senior Center, telling them that helping Adler unseat Republican incumbent Jon Runyan was crucial to checking the conservative movement of the GOP's House majority.

"Some people in Congress who used to be the most centric Republicans you could find are now moving to the right because of the tea party," he said. "You have Republican congressperson after congressperson scared and moving right."

Booker cited women's rights and access to health care, the environment and the future of Social Security and Medicare as issues that Adler was "right across the board on" compared to Runyan, whom he criticized for supporting a Republican agenda that goes against the views of most New Jerseyans.

"The Republicans want to look like Michael Jackson. They look like they're walking forward when they're really going backward. ... They're doing the moonwalk on women's rights. They're doing the moonwalk on the environment," said Booker, Newark's mayor since 2006 and co-chair of the Democrats' platform committee at the recent Democratic National Convention in Charlotte.

"The plans of the Republican Congress are clear and this man (Runyan) has voted for it. What do they want to do? They want to take Social Security and privatize it. They want to take Medicare and voucherize it.

"This is what Shelley Adler is running against," he said.

Runyan campaign spokesman Chris Russell responded that Booker was misinformed and that Runyan has a strong record of bipartisanship that has earned him the backings of groups across the political spectrum.

"Between all his speeches, tweets and television appearances, we know Mayor Booker is a very busy guy. Therefore, we'll give him a pass for not being terribly well-informed about what's going on here in South Jersey or about Congressman Runyan's strong bipartisan credentials," Russell said.

"Jon's record of working across party lines to create jobs for middle-class families, restore fiscal responsibility to Washington, and protect Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst from harmful cuts has earned him the distinction of being the rare candidate to earn strong support from both pro-labor and pro-business groups. Jon's crossover appeal, combined with Shelley Adler's record as a habitual tax raiser, has us well-positioned to win support from Democrats, Republicans and Independents on November 6th," Russell added.

Adler, a former Cherry Hill councilwoman and Harvard-educated attorney, is trying to become only the second Democrat in the last century to represent the sprawling 3rd District, which now includes almost all of Burlington County plus most of northern Ocean County.

The first was Adler's late husband, Congressman John Adler, who was elected to the seat in 2008 in large part because of a wave of Democratic support in Willingboro. He was defeated two years later by Runyan during an election year that saw GOP wins across the nation.

Booker, who is considered the party's most viable candidate to challenge Republican Gov. Chris Christie next year, told Adler's supporters at the senior center that strong local turnout would be the key to the election.

"Don't do what we've done in the past and sit in sedentary agitation," Booker told them. "If we're not crowded at the polls (on Election Day), we're losing our best chance to send (Adler) to Washington. If we don't send her down there, It's not her fault; the shame is on us."

Adler, who was behind Runyan by 10 points in an independent poll released last week by Richard Stockton College, said her agenda if elected to Congress would be to help small businesses create jobs, cut wasteful spending and protect Medicare and Social Security. She also said she hopes to improve services for veterans and protect women's access to

birth control and basic preventative health services.

A mother of four sons, she promised to bring a mother's experience and work ethic to Washington.

"We need more moms in Congress. And as a Congress mom, I will fight with every fiber of my body to do right by you and your family each and every day."