

# Runyan receives business group endorsement, leads in fundraising

By David Levinsky Staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, October 17, 2012 5:00 am

MOORESTOWN — Ahead in a recent poll and holding a sizable advantage in available campaign cash, 3rd Congressional District incumbent Jon Runyan continued to make his case for re-election Tuesday during a visit to a local printing business, where he accepted the endorsement of the National Federation of Independent Business.

Runyan, a freshman Republican who is seeking his second term in the U.S. House of Representatives, is being challenged by Democrat Shelley Adler, the widow of the late Congressman John Adler, whom Runyan unseated two years ago.

The two candidates have presented themselves as being the ideal representative for small businesses in the district, with Runyan frequently calling for reduced government regulations and lower tax rates to remove the “uncertainty” that he believes is stifling business expansion. He also wants to repeal the Obama administration’s massive health care reform law, which he claims raises taxes without bringing rising health care costs under control.

Adler has called for the U.S. Small Business Administration to guarantee loans for small businesses and for tax code changes that reward “business innovation and hiring” rather than outsourcing jobs overseas. She wants the Affordable Care Act improved to address health care costs, but opposes its repeal.

Joe Olivo, president and CEO of the family-owned Perfect Printing, favors Runyan’s approach, which he said would help him and other business owners feel more confident about expanding and investing in new hires.

“We say it a million times, the uncertainty is killing us,” Olivo said Tuesday after giving Runyan a tour of his Glen Avenue operation.

He said the potential end of the Bush-era income tax cuts next year and the start of tax increases and mandates and penalties imposed on businesses by the Affordable Care Act were particularly troublesome.

Given the still rising cost of insurance, many small businesses will likely opt to drop coverage and pay the penalty, said Laurie A. Ehlbeck, New Jersey director of the National Federation of Independent Business.

Olivo said he now employs 48, about six fewer than four years ago when the recession hit, but two fewer than the health care law’s threshold for whether a business must provide employee coverage or pay a penalty.

“We’re in limbo right now. ... Until we figure out the full effects, we’re going to do what we can to stay under 50 (employees),” Olivo said. “All I know is that the health care law, it does nothing to make insurance more affordable for my business.”

Runyan said responses like that are why he wants to repeal the law and replace it with measures designed to lower insurance costs.

“It’s all part of the package to remove that uncertainty,” he said. “If you know what to expect and what your costs will be, you can plan for it.”

Adler spokesman Michael Muller said the federation’s endorsement doesn’t change Runyan’s record.

“Congressman Runyan is trying to defend his failed small-business record with political endorsements that can’t hide his destructive votes that encourage companies to ship American jobs overseas,” Muller said. “Shelley Adler has different priorities. She opposes providing tax breaks for companies that are eliminating jobs in America and instead would provide tax breaks that help our local business grow and expand here in Burlington County. Shelley Adler will fight to relax credit restrictions so small businesses can meet their payrolls, expand their businesses and purchase new equipment.”

The national federation is the latest of several endorsements the incumbent has received from groups such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Recreational Fishing Alliance, as well as about a dozen labor organizations and unions, including the Regional Council of Carpenters and the New Jersey State Fraternal Order of Police, which announced their

support for Runyan's re-election Monday.

Adler's campaign recently announced support from the Professional Firefighters Association of New Jersey and the endorsement from the publication Veterans' Vision.

Runyan said Tuesday that business and labor share the common goal of boosting job growth, and that both want government to be proactive on issues.

"It's about having an honest conversation about the challenges this country is facing rather than saying we're going to deal with it 20 years from now," he said. "Most of the support I've received is from groups who realize that these issues need to be dealt with now rather than kicking the can down the road."

The Runyan-Adler contest is considered the most competitive of all 12 of New Jersey's House races, but a recent poll performed by the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey gave Runyan a comfortable 10 point lead entering the last month.

Campaign finance reports released by the Federal Election Commission also give Runyan a big edge in funds.

Runyan raised \$408,679 during the last quarter between July and Sept. 30, padding his total fundraising this election cycle to \$1.79 million. His campaign reported having \$738,326 in available funds entering October, according to the reports.

Adler raised \$300,220 during the last quarter, bringing her campaign's fundraising total to date to \$933,229. She had \$174,932 in her war chest entering the final month.

Runyan and Adler have enjoyed support from their respective national parties, but both the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and the Republican Congressional Committee have canceled ad buys in the Philadelphia market for the last weeks before the election, a move that favors Runyan and his larger war chest.

Muller said the Adler campaign has already bought advertising and is confident that it will be able to communicate the differences between her and Runyan.

"Residents will have a clear choice between Congressman Runyan, with a destructive record that encourages companies to ship American jobs overseas, dismantles Medicare, would raise the retirement age on Social Security, and deny women critical preventive health care, and Shelley Adler, who can be counted on to stand up to the powerful special interests in Washington and fight for middle-class families, small businesses and senior citizens," he said.

Runyan's campaign responded that it was confident in its candidate and a 4-to-1 cash advantage.

"The bad news continued for Shelley Adler's campaign today in New Jersey's 3rd Congressional District. After watching national Democrats abandon her struggling campaign and pull their ad buys from the Philadelphia media market in the wake of multiple polls showing Adler trailing by double digits, it appears that Mrs. Adler's fundraising has also hit the wall," Runyan's campaign manager, Kristin Antonello, said in a memo.