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Linda Joy Sullivan
PHOTO PROVIDED

Rep. Sullivan announces campaign for state auditor

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By Jim Therrien, Bennington Banner

DORSET — Rep. Linda Joy Sullivan, D-Dorset, announced this week that she will seek the Democratic Party's nomination for state auditor.

Sullivan (<https://www.lindajaysullivan4vermont.com/>), who is in her second two-year House term, would likely face the incumbent, Democrat Doug Hoffer (<https://hofferforauditor.com/>), who was first elected to the post in 2012.

The primary election to determine candidates for the November ballot is scheduled for Aug. 11.

In addition to conducting the statewide audit, the auditor "is the principal state authority responsible for ensuring against fraud, waste and abuse in the operation of government programs," Sullivan said in her announcement. "The state auditor is also tasked by the Legislature with conducting special purpose reviews and program oversight."

In addition to serving in the Vermont House, Sullivan is a certified public accountant and the founder of a Vermont-based public audit and consulting firm, MaughanSullivan, LLC (<https://www.maughansullivanllc.com/>). She also holds a master's degree in business administration, as well as a master's degree in law, focused in finance and international taxation.

In connection with her law degree, she was awarded a Certificate of Expertise in U.S. Taxation. Sullivan has been court appointed to act as a receiver and turnaround specialist, and she has been qualified by the courts to testify in various litigation matters as a forensic investigations expert.

"The state auditor is charged under the Vermont Constitution with making sure the Legislature and the Administration is made to account to the people," Sullivan said. "Rooting out waste, fraud and abuse is what I do for a living. I am running to be the state's watchdog!"

She added, "My experience as a legislator has taught me that many of our state programs are inefficient and wasteful. I hope to share my decades of experience as a public auditor and CPA to ensure not only that our programs bring real value to Vermonters, but that we are protecting the substantial investments in those programs by our tax payers and communities."

Sullivan has served on the House Commerce and Economic Development Committee and currently sits on House Institutions and Corrections. She has acted as principal sponsor of a number of important bills, including proposed legislation focused on climate change, Act 250, the opioid crisis, sex trafficking, the state's unfunded pension liability and education.

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She currently serves as the Northeast Regional Director of the National Foundation of Women's Legislators, as well as the Vermont state director for another national women's leadership caucus, Women in Government.

Sullivan currently represents Dorset, Danby, Peru, Landgrove and Mount Tabor in her Bennington-Rutland House district.

If unsuccessful in her bid for the nomination for auditor, Sullivan said she would then decide whether to seek re-election to the House.

"Although I appreciate the sincerity and hard work of my colleagues in the Legislature, I know first-hand that we need to conduct more rigorous oversight over how we spend our scarce resources," Sullivan said. "The absence of a robust ethics function in the state also makes me uneasy. We need to work on all fronts to bring true accountability and integrity to how our government is run. The state auditor obviously plays a critical role in that effort."

A frequent op-ed contributor, Sullivan believes the hallmarks of any good legislator and public official are accountability, advocacy and accessibility. "I see little sense in serving passively in elected positions. Public officials are given a special trust, and we need passionately to repay that trust — by firmly calling out things that don't work, by strongly advocating for change when necessary and by working every day to make ourselves accessible to those we serve."

Sullivan lives in Dorset with her husband, Allan Sullivan, an attorney practicing in Manchester.

Prior to holding public office, Sullivan was the founder and executive director of a national anti-human trafficking not-for-profit that served over 3,000 victims of sex trafficking offenses. In that capacity, she helped train judges, members of the law enforcement community, first responders and concerned citizens. In addition, she was in 2015 appointed to the Vermont Children and Family Council Program and chaired its Judicial Committee. She was also appointed to an Unlicensed Practice of Law Committee by the Florida Supreme Court.

Sullivan's business, MaughanSullivan, is one of the few female-owned Public Company Accounting Oversight Board registered audit firms in the country. Her firm operates nationally through three offices, to include an office in Manchester. The PCAOB is established under the federal Sarbanes Oxley financial accountability law.

Jim Therrien writes for New England Newspapers in Southern Vermont, including the Bennington Banner, Brattleboro Reformer and Manchester Journal.
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