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5 Democrats are running for the shot to take on Anna Paulina Luna, and their campaigns show deep resolve


Janelle Irwin Taylor
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15 min
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Whitney Fox has emerged as the front-runner in CD 13, but 4 opponents aren't counted out.

Five Pinellas County Democrats are foes united in a common goal: defeating U.S. Rep. **Anna Paulina Luna** in November, and making the Republican a one-term Congresswoman.

Each candidate has plenty to say about Luna – most use the term “extremist” frequently – but none has uttered a negative comment about their Democratic opponents, a sign of party unity that can be easy to miss in this modern divisive political environment where name-calling and trading barbs is a daily occurrence.

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defeating U.S. Rep. Anna Paulina Luna in November, and making the Republican a one-term Congresswoman.

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But being cordial doesn't mean there isn't a fight afoot. Democrats are eyeing Florida's 13th Congressional District as one of its only U.S. House pickup opportunities this cycle.

At R+6 and "likely Republican," the district will be tough to flip, but Cook Political Report lists it as one of only three competitive congressional races in Florida. The other two are listed as "likely Democrat" — Florida's 9th Congressional District, represented by **Darren Soto**, and Florida's 23rd Congressional District, represented by **Jared Moskowitz**. Both are incumbent Democrats not facing Primary challenges.

While money can be hard to come by for Democrats under an ever-tightening GOP grip, CD 13 candidates — or at least one of them — have found a bright spot in the Pinellas County-based district.

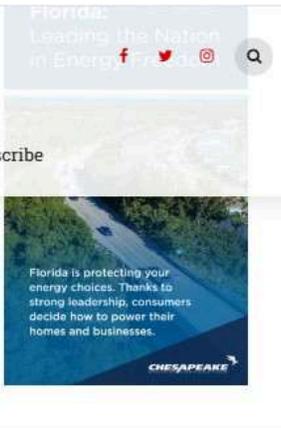


Whitney Fox, a former Communications Director for the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), has emerged a clear front-runner for the Democratic nomination. Fox has consistently **outraised** all of her Primary opponents, which include **Sabrina Bousbar**, **Liz Dahan**, **John Liccione** and **Mark Weinkrantz**. Even considering loans to her opponents' campaigns — of which there have been several — Fox still has a major money advantage.

As of the end of the second quarter of 2024, Fox had raised nearly three quarters of \$1 million. She **brought in \$320,632** in total contributions during the second quarter of 2024, which covers campaign finance activity from April through June.

When excluding personal loans to their campaigns, Fox also outraised the entire field combined by more than \$100,000. Fox did not loan her campaign any money.

She also ended the quarter with more cash on hand than her opponents, at \$355,684. Her closest opponent in total cash on hand is Liccione, who



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Dahan follows with **more than \$127,000 on hand**, but that also includes a \$50,000 personal loan. Weinkrantz had **nearly \$118,000 in the bank** heading into the third quarter, buoyed by \$200,000 in personal loans. And Bousbar trails with **just over \$65,000 on hand**.



Cash isn't the only advantage Fox is carrying into Election Day. The mother of two has also been leading the race in endorsements, including some top names in Florida politics and abroad.

She recently landed an endorsement **from EMILYs List**, the nation's largest resource for women in politics. And perhaps more importantly, she managed to land a coveted recommendation **from the Tampa Bay Times**. The paper described her as "a natural on the campaign trail and comfortable in the public eye." The editorial board wrote that Fox "appears to have the personal fortitude to hold up under what will likely be a withering General Election campaign."

Before that, Fox earned **an endorsement** from former U.S. Rep. **Stephanie Murphy**, who served in Congress as a pragmatist who often worked across the aisle to bring home policies, resources and other accomplishments for her constituents in a deeply divided congress. In her endorsement, Murphy said Fox was also a pragmatist.

In all, Fox has earned endorsements from well over 50 current and former elected officials, community leaders, advocacy groups and others, including a recent endorsement **from U.S. Rep. Eric Swalwell** of California and another **from SEIU Florida**.

The full list includes, among others, U.S. Reps.

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→ Liccione has gained the least traction of the field. He calls himself “the Rebel Democrat Engineer,” a nod to his undergraduate degree in electrical engineering and work in the military on helicopter cockpits and their complicated tech systems. ←

→ He’s a U.S. Air Force veteran and formerly worked as an intelligence agent for the NSA, according to his website. His campaign platform includes fighting for veterans, keeping students and teachers safe, restoring reproductive freedom, increasing affordability for seniors, protecting shorelines from red tide, and more. ←



Janelle Irwin Taylor

Janelle Irwin Taylor has been a professional journalist covering local news and politics in Tampa Bay since 2003. Most recently, Janelle reported for the Tampa Bay Business Journal. She formerly served as senior reporter for WMNF News. Janelle has a lust for politics and policy. When she’s not bringing you the day’s news, you might find Janelle enjoying nature with her husband, children and two dogs. You can reach Janelle at Janelle@floridapolitics.com.

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