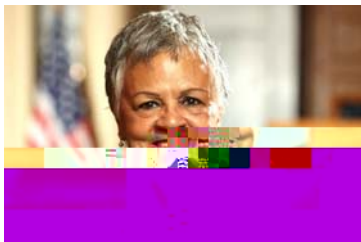


ASSEMBLYWOMAN WANTS TO BE NJ'S FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN CONGRESSWOMAN

TARA NURIN | OCTOBER 29, 2014

Physician Alieta Eck also running to replace retiring Rush Holt in 12th District



Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-15th)

One outcome is nearly certain in New Jersey's 12th District race for Congress: A woman will win the election.

Both major-party candidates are women, and barring an upset from an independent, one of them will become the first to represent New Jersey in Washington, D.C., in more than a decade. The election also presents an opportunity for one candidate to break through a race and gender barrier: If Democratic frontrunner Bonnie Watson Coleman wins, she'll be the state's first female African-American in Congress.

Yet despite their shared gender, Watson Coleman, who serves Central Jersey's 15th district in the General Assembly, and her Republican challenger, Dr. Alieta Eck, who practices medicine in Piscataway, strongly disagree on women's issues and almost every other. Watson Coleman prides herself on her progressive credentials and outspokenness against Gov. Chris Christie's administration, while Eck espouses strictly conservative ideals on issues like reproductive health, role of government, and viability of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

"At the end of the day we've got one candidate who thinks the federal government has a responsibility to its citizens and one candidate who thinks the federal government is of little use," said Watson Coleman.

If past equals prologue, Watson Coleman's philosophies will prevail this election cycle. She's running in a safely Democratic Central New Jersey district to replace popular Democratic Rep. Rush Holt.



Dr. Alieta Eck

The 12th District looks like a ba

The Issues

Eck is running in part to oppose the Affordable Care Act, which she promises to fight every day as a member of Congress. Threatening that the ACA will unduly burden the Medicaid system with new enrollees, she proposes an alternative called the "Voluntary Free Protection Act." Under the act, doctors would voluntarily pledge four hours a week of fr

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