

Pat-Med alum also vies for Zeldin's seat

BY TARA SMITH

Hopeful Democratic congressional candidate David Pechefsky hasn't been featured in the *Advance* since he was in high school. A 1986 graduate and valedictorian of Patchogue-Medford High School, Pechefsky has thrown his hat into the ring for the 1st District seat in 2018.

When asked about his decision to run for Congress, Pechefsky said he believes he can be a "force for good" representing the 1st Congressional District. "I'd put my record of public service up against Lee Zeldin's any day," Pechefsky said in a phone interview from his Brooklyn home. Though he currently lives in Brooklyn with his wife, a pediatric ED doctor, and two daughters, he said the family would soon be moving back to the East End and is in the process of closing on a home in Port Jefferson. According to Pechefsky, he used the summer as an exploratory phase and as of September, is actively campaigning. "I moved away and did what I think is very good work and I'm coming back, hoping to do good work," he said.

Growing up in an old Victorian on River Avenue, Pechefsky recalled his working-class upbringing and being inspired by his mother. "My dad lost his job when I was 8 and died when I was 14," he said. "My mom had to work two jobs and still could barely make ends meet. I don't know how she did it. My family struggled economically, and I understand what it means to work hard and still be barely getting by. We have to address that."

He got his first taste of politics representing Patchogue-Med-

ford High School in Washington, D.C. at the Presidential Classroom. He then went on to earn degrees in political science and international development. Pechefsky spent over a decade working as a staffer for the New York City Council on a range of issues, but largely as a housing policy expert, who helped build thousands of affordable housing units. "Now I'm ready to go back to D.C. to fight for the people of New York's 1st Congressional District," he said.

He left the city council in 2008 and began working as a consultant for the National Democratic Institute from 2010 to 2013 to help strengthen democracy and governments of countries coming out of conflict. He worked to establish a congressional budget office in Liberia after their civil war and on a program to improve the parliament in Somalia while living in Nairobi, Kenya. "We were interested in building good, stable governments," he said. "If you don't like refugees, what you need is stability in countries so they can address the needs of their people. The way to do that is not by bombing."

Pechefsky believes that his experience with both domestic and foreign policy makes him the most qualified candidate out of the several Democrats running against incumbent Republican congressman Lee Zeldin. "It's important that we have a candidate that can go toe to toe with [Lee Zeldin] on foreign policy," he said. He also said that his work crafting legislation gives him relevant experience. "I know how to get things done in government, how to bring legislation to the finish line and build a coalition around a piece of legislation," he said. "I also

know that not everyone is going to get what they want and how to compromise."

His top reasons for running include longtime beliefs that the economy is not working correctly, that foreign policy should focus on diplomacy rather than militarism and newer ideas after this past election season. "At the moment, I think what President Trump is doing is damaging to the democratic tradition," he said, citing Trump's divisive comments and attacks on institutions like the free press. "I've been in countries where the civil fabric is destroyed. It's easy to tear things down but harder to build things up," he said.

His other top issues include a livable minimum wage, free public higher education, a single-payer healthcare system, paid parental leave, gun reform, women's health and compassionate immigration reform.

Pechefsky is one of six Democratic hopefuls running for Congress in 2018. Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, a former Suffolk County legislator from East Setauket, Brendon Henry, a bartender and former teacher from Center Moriches, Perry Gershon, a chief investment officer at Jefferies LoanCore LLC of East Hampton, Elaine DiMasi, a physicist at Brookhaven National Laboratory who lives in Ronkonkoma, and Kate Browning, current Suffolk County legislator, have also announced their congressional campaigns. "To beat Zeldin, we need a candidate who has a depth of domestic and foreign policy knowledge. I have that combination and I can raise enough money to be competitive," Pechefsky said. ■



Patchogue native David Pechefsky is also running for Congress in 2018.

BLOTTER

Disclaimer: This section reflects information obtained from the Suffolk County Police Department. A criminal charge is an accusation against an individual. Unless and until proven guilty in court, individuals are presumed innocent of these charges. During the criminal justice process, individuals may be acquitted or may have a charge against them reduced or dropped.

Bellport

Two bicycles were stolen from Station Road and Kreamer Street on Oct. 15.

Brookhaven

A leaf blower was stolen from the backyard of a residence on Old Barto Road on Oct. 13.

Mastic Beach

On Oct. 14, an unknown person damaged a 2005 Toyota Corolla on Alder Drive by throwing a brick at the window. Police said the front passenger-side window of a Ford van on Alder Drive was also smashed on Oct. 14.

Mastic

Someone damaged the roof of a 2002 Ford Taurus on St. James Place on Oct. 14.

The rear door to a residence on Dana Avenue was damaged on Oct. 15.

Police arrested an 18-year-old male for burglary charges on Oct. 17. Police said Julian Mojica of Mastic entered a residence on State Street and stole a television and Playstation around 3 p.m. on Oct. 17. He was charged with second-degree burglary.

Medford

Cash, cologne and a handicap parking pass were stolen from a 2016 Dodge on Pennsylvania Avenue on Oct. 14.

A generator was stolen from a rear parking lot at North Shore Generator Systems Inc. on Industrial Boulevard on Oct. 17.

North Bellport

On Oct. 16, an unknown male entered a smoke shop on Montauk Highway, demanded cash and fled with proceeds. Police said no one was injured, and no arrest has been made.

A pocketbook was stolen from a 2014

Dodge on Walker Avenue on Oct. 17.

East Patchogue

Someone damaged a fence at a home on South Dunton Avenue on Oct. 13.

Money and contact lenses were reported stolen from a home on Miramar Avenue on Oct. 13.

On Oct. 14, an unknown suspect entered How-Wok Kitchen on Medford Avenue and demanded money. Police said the suspect fled with no proceeds.

Credit cards were stolen from an unlocked 2008 Dodge parked on Robert Street on Oct. 16.

Patchogue

An unknown person keyed the rear of a 2016 Hyundai Sonata on Fairharbor Drive on Oct. 12.

A cell phone was stolen from a Rider Avenue residence on Oct. 14.

Headphones, memory cards, a MacBook and other items were stolen from a 2010 Kia on Bay Avenue on Oct. 15.

North Patchogue

Someone damaged a window pane and screen at the First Church of Christian Science on Oct. 14. Police believe

someone was trying to break in.

Shirley

Gas was siphoned out of a 2010 Nissan on Loughlin Drive on Oct. 13.

An unknown person damaged a front lawn on Holly Lane by driving over it on Oct. 14.

An unknown suspect entered I-Fix-Screens on Montauk Highway on Oct. 17 and stole iPhones and money.

CRIME STOPPERS

Man shot in Shirley

Police arrested a 20-year-old Center Moriches man in connection with a shooting at a Shirley restaurant on Oct. 14. Assistant commissioner Justin Meyers said that after a number of customers got involved in an altercation at La Jolla De Oro Restaurant, located at 234 William Floyd Parkway in Shirley, a male bystander was shot at approximately 12:50 a.m. The victim was transported to Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries, he said. Police arrested Raul Alvarez, who was charged with assault and criminal possession of a weapon.