

# Natalie Tennant has commitment to be success as secretary of state

## EDITORIAL

In the field of candidates vying for the Democratic nomination for secretary of state, two especially stand out for their commitment to the betterment of West Virginia.

They are Natalie Tennant, in her second run for that position, and House Majority Leader Joe DeLong, D-Hancock.

Both display the leadership and express ideas needed for a successful secretary of state. While both have impressive credentials, we can only choose one to endorse — and that's Natalie Tennant.

Tennant was a political newcomer when she ran a surprisingly strong campaign for the Democratic Party's nomination for secretary of state in the 2004 primary.

Recalling her narrow, 1,118-vote loss — “that's less than one vote per precinct” — with good humor, she said she's also learned some serious lessons about the post.

“There's no other candidate in this race who understands the importance of making sure that every vote is counted,” she said when announcing her second run for that state office.

Nearly 3,000 votes were tossed out because of poorly designed ballots in that race, she said. The careless formatting of ballots in some counties led to “overvotes,” with voters choosing more than one candidate for the nomination.

The secretary of state's office “should be viewed as the critical office, which it is, with the power to shape the public's image of our voting system.”

Her loss gave her a chance to show her leadership, she said.

Announcing her second run for the office — first at the Capitol in Charleston and later in Fairmont — the county native quickly laid down a marker for her fellow candidates.

Tennant said she would limit herself to spending only \$150,000.

The spending cap is part of the Code of Fair Campaign Practices. As she did in her first race, she signed it again, she said. Other candidates should do the same, Tennant said.

“This day represents courage, persistence, determination, loyalty and pride — all that makes up the character of a true West Virginian,” she said.

“I stand before you today with the courage to give it another try,” she said.

She could have cried foul after her defeat, she said.

“I could have stalked off, but I didn't. It gave me the chance to show my loyalty to my party and to keep my word and to keep working.”

And that she has.

She said West Virginians deserve a secure, accurate and dependable election process.

“I will continue to work to put confidence back in the voting process. That can be done on several different levels,” she said.

“I will use my communications skills to develop working relationships with the county clerks and election officials. West Virginia is fortunate to have some of the best qualified and most experienced county clerks in the country.

“They are the ones on the front lines of elections, and I will work with them as we

address the sometimes complex and ever changing election process.”

She wants to increase poll worker participation. “Poll workers help build the foundation of our voting systems. For that reason, a diverse poll worker pool needs to be established.”

She also wants to use e-government to help streamline the process for the state’s business.

She first gained statewide notice in 1990 when she became the first woman to serve as the Mountaineer mascot at West Virginia University.

After graduating from WVU with a B.S. degree in journalism and M.A. in corporate and organizational communication, she became a television news anchor. She also has experience working in the executive branch of state government, both in the state treasurer’s and secretary of state’s offices.

As we said during her first run for secretary of state: Never afraid of challenge and driven to succeed, Natalie Tennant is the Democrat’s best choice for secretary of state come May 13.