

# Know Before You Go: FL-27 District Primer

**September 2018** • Researched, summarized, and edited by Swing Left's all-volunteer research team!

**In the last election, Republican Ileana Ros-Lehtinen won this district by 28,157 votes (10%), and she will not be running again in 2018.** With your help, Democrats can win this seat.

## About the Republican Candidate

**Introduction:** Republican **Maria Elvira Salazar**, who replaces incumbent Ileana Ros-Lehtinen as the Republican candidate, is a TV journalist with 35 years of media experience. She was born, raised, and attended college in Miami, where she lives with her two daughters.

**Issues:** Salazar fashions herself as a Ronald Reagan Republican. Her campaign site is short on specifics and instead is laced with broad generalities and "feel good" assertions. She supports the recent Republican tax cuts that benefited corporations and the wealthy, and believes government "does more when it involves itself less." She would cut \$100 billion annually in healthcare spending, calling it "waste," and asserts that the ACA has failed, but she has not proposed a replacement. She would increase military spending and would further militarize local police. Salazar voices strong support for gun rights. She does not appear to support a woman's right to choose and engages in pro-life dog-whistling by saying that "the culture of death" must be opposed. To solve the nation's immigration crisis, she proposes having "an honest conversation with Central American nations."

**Strengths:** As a TV journalist, Elvira Salazar has wide name recognition and is likely to appeal to Hispanic/Latino voters who make up 72% of the electorate.

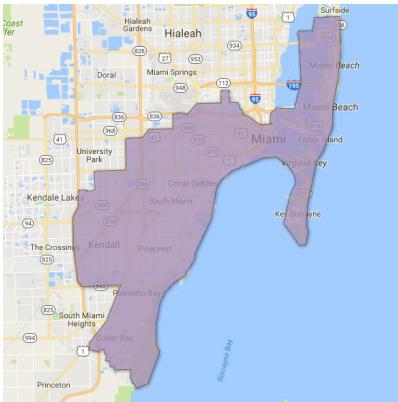
**Potential Weaknesses:** Elvira Salazar has no experience in government. She refused to debate her GOP primary opponents and was criticized by her own party for her support of President Obama's conciliatory approach to re-establishing relations with Cuba. Nationwide, FL-27 has the most people enrolled in the ACA marketplace; Salazar's opposition to the program could hurt her chances.

## About the Democratic Candidate

**Introduction:** Democrat **Donna Shalala** was Secretary of Health and Human Services under President Clinton and President of the University of Miami from 2001 through 2015. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush in 2008. Shalala attended Western College in Oxford, Ohio, earning a B.A. in 1962. After graduation she spent two years in the Peace Corps in Iran. She attended Syracuse University and earned an MA in social science in 1968 and a Ph.D. in 1970.

**Issues:** Shalala supports improving the Affordable Care Act, providing a public option by expanding Medicare, and encouraging employer-provided health plans. She supports strategic investments in public education to prepare children for jobs and industries of the future and believes that infrastructure projects that build new roads, bridges, mass transit options, airports and seaports will create jobs and grow access to markets. Shalala would invest in social safety nets that allows everyone to enjoy a decent minimum standard of living. She fervently believes that our nation's immigration policies must protect and unify families, not tear them apart. Shalala would stop separating children from their parents at our borders, renew DACA and provide a pathway to citizenship for DREAMers and their families, extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) where applicable, and provide a pathway to permanent residency for those who have children or parents whose lives would be endangered if deported.

**Strengths:** Shalala has unparalleled experience in government, education, and health and human services policy. She has the endorsement of Hillary Clinton, who won the district decisively in 2016, Emily's List, the Dade County Police Association, the AFL-CIO of South Florida, NOW, and Moms Demand Action.



## FL-27: Better Know the District

### Geography

Florida's 27th district was created in 2012 based on the 2010 Census. It is entirely within Miami-Dade county and extends to Hialeah and Miami in the north. It reaches just south of Homestead, and includes parts of Miami's coastline. It's mostly suburbs, but contains a growing financial district in Brickell and Downtown Miami. There are also several historic districts and landmarks including Coconut Grove, the Coral Gables Venetian pool, Flagler Station Oversea Railway Museum, and the Freedom Tower. Historical museums and parks make up a large part of the district as well.

### Citizenry

The district is both culturally and socioeconomically diverse, with a mixture of Hispanic, white, black, and Asian populations. Household incomes go as high as the 95th percentile and as low as the 20th percentile. Immigrants make up a majority of the population. Twenty percent of Miami-Dade residents live below the poverty line.

### Elections

FL-27 was created in 2012 through redistricting drawn up by the legislature, which was controlled by Republicans at the time. The district leans Democratic, even though Ros-Lehtinen has been its representative since its inception. (Note that she ran unopposed in 2012 and 2014.) In 2016 her opponent was Scott Fuhrman, a candidate with no prior experience and a drunk driving record. Prior to 2012 she was representative for FL-18, beating a Democrat in a special election. Ros-Lehtinen wrote in her vote for Jeb Bush in November 2016. Hillary Clinton won Miami-Dade county with 63.2% of the vote.

### Higher Education

There are many colleges and universities in the district, including parts of Miami-Dade College and Florida International University. The most notable is the University of Miami, a private institution in the heart of Coral Gables. Other schools include Barry University, St. Thomas University, Florida Technical College, Fortis College, and Miami International University of Art and Design. Students are a great voter registration opportunity and possible source of volunteers!

### Industry

Miami's economy has always relied heavily on the tourism industry, and it continues to. International trade is important; Miami International Airport and the Port of Miami are located within the FL-27. International banking is a new but growing industry, with the largest concentration of banks located in downtown Miami.

### Tourism

Tourism is the foundation of Miami's economy. Previously, cities would come to life in the winter with the influx of "snowbirds" from the North and Canada. Now Miami enjoys a healthy year-round tourist trade.