

Dems fight among themselves as they work to replace McClintock

By Emily Cadei, Sacramento Bee

California Democrats face a crucial task as they gather in San Diego this weekend for their annual convention: deciding the party's endorsements in a handful of crowded congressional races. That includes the increasingly fractious 4th Congressional District contest, where some local leaders are hoping the decision to endorse a candidate will help stem some of the infighting – and turn the race's focus to ousting veteran House Republican Tom McClintock.

The traditionally Republican district, which includes El Dorado County, parts of Placer County and eight others that stretch into the Sierra Nevada mountains, has seen a surge of energy and excitement on the Democratic side since President Trump's election. Despite the long political odds, activists believe whichever Democrat gets out of the top-two primary could give McClintock a run for his money.

Two of the three Democrats running for McClintock's seat – Regina Bateson and Roza Calderon – are urging the party to let the voters sort out who that will be in June, and not weigh in with an endorsement now. But "Democrats, in general, I think they would like to see an endorsed candidate," said Eric Sunderland, the state party's regional director based in Sacramento. It could "help clean the field up a little bit."

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