

—Slug:.....COMM-0866.wc.Becca\_runs\_again  
—Contributor.....Joyce Marcel  
—Contributor email.....joyrand@sover.net  
—For section..... News  
—Format..... News - byline, no dateline  
—Dateline.....  
—Article Number:.....43649



**Notes from editor (not for publication):**



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Ready for a third term

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 As U.S. Rep. Becca Balint kicks off a run for re-election,  
3 she outlines her hopes for a Democratic Party majority to control  
4 the House

####END SUBHED####

5 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

6 "Every day we're fighting the fight," U.S. Rep. Becca  
7 Balint, D-Vermont, told *The Commons* last week. "Everything is  
8 about abuse of power."

9 Balint, 58, who used "scrappy little dyke" as the  
10 catchphrase that launched her into the House of Representatives

11 in 2024, recently announced that she will be running for a third  
12 term in the upcoming elections.

13 In Congress, Balint sits on the House Judiciary  
14 Committee and the House Budget Committee. In Judiciary, Balint  
15 serves on the Constitution and Limited Government  
16 subcommittee as well as the Administrative State, Regulatory  
17 Reform, and Antitrust subcommittee.

18 These past two Congresses have been remarkable for the  
19 lack of work done, the bad blood between the two parties, and  
20 the depth of the aversion between the Democrats and President  
21 Donald J. Trump. So why would Balint run again? Why not take a  
22 long hot shower, wash off the bad blood of D.C., and come home  
23 to enjoy Vermont?

24 "I can tell you, having been now in the minority for four  
25 years, I am ready to get some real work done," Balint said. "We  
26 are going to flip the House, and I'm going to finally make the  
27 impact that I want to have in housing, in lowering costs, and  
28 really getting working people back at the center of the work that  
29 we're supposed to be doing here."

30 She also is excited about the implications of serving on  
31 the Judiciary Committee with her party in power.

32 "I feel like there's going to be a bunch of work that  
33 happens around intellectual property, around AI, and holding big  
34 tech accountable," she said. "I'm also hoping to move up the  
35 ranks in the subcommittee on Antitrust and continue to go after  
36 some of these monopolies that we know are driving up costs for  
37 people."

38 Then she added, "And in terms of taking a shower and  
39 washing the grime off? I do that on the regular here."

## 40 **FEMA money comes home**

41 Balint has had some significant success during her time  
42 in Washington. Her voice is being heard. Her heated February  
43 exchange with now-former Attorney General Pam Bondi went  
44 viral.

45           And while Trump has routinely tried to punish states that  
46 did not vote for him by withholding already appropriated federal  
47 money, the Vermont delegation — Balint and Sens. Bernie  
48 Sanders and Peter Welch — recently announced that the state  
49 will get \$20.83 million in Federal Emergency Management  
50 Agency (FEMA) money to help pay for recovery from the 2023  
51 floods that devastated communities in northern and central  
52 Vermont, including Montpelier’s “hard-hit municipal buildings  
53 and state rail and trail infrastructure,” they said in the  
54 announcement.

55           “Much of this funding was delayed by FEMA for years —  
56 it never should have taken so long to get to Montpelier, and is a  
57 glaring example of how this agency needs reform,” the  
58 announcement continued. “We will continue to fight for the  
59 FEMA funding our state needs, and will work with new  
60 leadership at the agency to deliver the assistance Vermonters  
61 need to fully rebuild and recover.”

62           Balint said the administration is definitely withholding  
63 FEMA money to punish “blue” states.

64           “We’re never going to stop shaking this administration to  
65 make good on these grants,” she said. “And a lot of times, we  
66 have to take them to court.”

67           With some success, individual Democratic legislators or  
68 the Democratic Party caucus as a whole have signed on to  
69 amicus (“friend-of-the-court”) briefs “to force the issue in court,”  
70 Balint said. “But it shouldn’t take us taking the administration to  
71 court to get the money released. I don’t have any easy answers,  
72 but we’re certainly very focused on this.”

73           A lot more money is due to Vermont, Balint said.

74           “My office works on these issues,” she said. “Week after  
75 week, we receive information from organizations or from  
76 educational institutions or businesses that are waiting on grants  
77 or loans.

78           “We do what we can with the information that we are  
79 given to try to get answers for folks from this administration. But

80 as I've said before, this administration is completely and totally a  
81 black box."

82 A black box is defined as a system, object, or process  
83 where inputs and outputs are known, but the inner workings are  
84 hidden.

## 85 Other money

86 Recently, the nonprofit investigative political website  
87 NOTUS reported that Balint's net worth was upward of \$1.6  
88 million, according to her 2024 financial report. This was a  
89 startling figure for someone who was a school teacher, then a  
90 Vermont senator and then a congresswoman with a yearly  
91 standard base salary of \$174,000.

92 The story, shared by VTDigger, emphasized that Balint  
93 does not own any stocks and does not in any way take advantage  
94 of insider trading. Her money is in shared accounts with her wife,  
95 attorney and opera singer Elizabeth Wohl, as well in college  
96 saving accounts for her two children.

97 "I absolutely married up," Balint said. "But I'm surprised  
98 to hear that report. I don't own individual stocks. All the money  
99 that we have is in mutual funds and indexed investments. There's  
100 money I have been able to save to guarantee that both my  
101 teenagers can go to college. The investments that I've made over  
102 the course of the last 30 years have put me in a safe, secure place  
103 financially, and it's really important to me that other people have  
104 the same opportunities to have that kind of security."

105 But NOTUS's bottom-line estimate of \$1.6 million "has  
106 not been confirmed or verified by us in any way," Balint's  
107 spokeswoman, Catherine White said.

108 In the article, the publication said it "analyzed the assets  
109 and liabilities listed on lawmakers' annual financial disclosures  
110 and calculated the median of their minimum net worth —  
111 minimum total assets minus maximum liabilities — and  
112 maximum net worth — maximum total assets minus minimum  
113 liabilities."

## The upcoming election

114  
115  
116  
117  
118  
119  
120  
121  
122  
123  
124  
125  
126  
127  
128  
129  
130  
131  
132  
133  
134  
135  
136  
137  
138  
139  
140  
141  
142  
143  
144  
145  
146  
147

The upcoming elections will be vital in returning values of democracy to the country, Balint said. And her optimism about “flipping the House” is palpable, despite the current Republican attempts to gerrymander electoral district boundaries to its advantage in light of recent court rulings.

On April 29, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling that “eliminated the law’s protections against lawmakers drawing maps that dilute the political power of minority voters,” according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

And, days after a special election in Virginia approved the redrawing of the state’s congressional district map to favor Democrats, the state’s Supreme Court overturned the change on procedural grounds.

Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, and Louisiana are already redrawing district lines to eliminate districts that might have a propensity to vote for Democrats, including some that are predominantly African-American.

“We’re absolutely concerned about all of this redistricting that is going to take place because of the Supreme Court — in what I see is as disastrous decision around gutting the Voting Rights Act — and then about the Supreme Court in Virginia overturning their maps,” Balint said.

But she cited a “huge margin” — between 10% and 15% — that national polls are showing for a generic ballot, which measures party preference and not individual candidates or races.

Balint said she believes that Trump’s support is falling apart.

“Whether it is among Latino voters or whether it is among working-class voters who feel betrayed that he is not bringing down costs, his support is down,” Balint said. “We see a lot of younger voters moving away from him because of this illegal war in Iran.”

148 And even on issues that previously favored Republicans,  
149 “their support has bottomed out, whether it’s on immigration, on  
150 the economy, or on the war,” she said.

151 Everywhere Balint goes, she said, voters ask one  
152 question: Will this be a free and fair election?

153 The Democratic caucus has also been working with  
154 outside groups focused on election security, as well as law firms  
155 specifically focused on access to the ballot and election security.

156 “We’re working with attorneys general across the  
157 country,” Balint said.

158 “I want Vermonters to know I just came from a long  
159 meeting in the Democratic caucus in which we are focused very  
160 much on what can we put in place to ensure that we have a safe  
161 and secure election,” she said. “The task force within the House  
162 on the Democratic side has been working on that.”

163 She said the group has looked at more than 160  
164 scenarios about how the administration of Trump, who was  
165 impeached for his role in overturning the results of the 2020  
166 contest, “may try to interfere with the election.”

167 “We’re not taking anything for granted,” she said. “It’s  
168 still going to be absolutely the fight of our lives, because there’s  
169 deep concern that if the House Republicans retain control, there  
170 will be no check on this presidency.”

171 There is a list of things Vermonters can do to help secure  
172 a fair election, Balint said. Soon the Democrats will be issuing an  
173 election toolkit, but in the meantime, Balint’s office provided a  
174 guide. *[See sidebar.]*

175 Balint said the Republicans might very well gerrymander  
176 themselves out of office.

177 “The Republicans have created districts that are much  
178 more competitive in trying to shave off parts of Democratic  
179 districts so they can create more Republican districts,” Balint  
180 said. “They now have put many of their seats in play that  
181 wouldn’t have been in play before.”

182 She pointed to Florida.

183           “Many of my Florida colleagues are calling it a  
184 ‘dummymander,’ because districts that were very safe for  
185 Republicans before are now much more in play,” Balint said.

186           To create those new Republican districts, they had to  
187 move reliable voters from districts where Trump won by seven  
188 points or more (a “Trump-plus-seven” district) and move them  
189 into a new district that is “just a Trump-plus-two or a Trump-plus-  
190 three district, which, in this climate, is very gettable.”

191           It might also be difficult for Republicans to win another  
192 election with gas prices climbing so fast, Balint pointed out.

193           “And obviously, it’s not just gas prices,” Balint said.  
194 “Whenever you have an increase in fuel, that absolutely drives up  
195 the cost of everything. It’s driving up the cost of groceries,  
196 because you need to transport all of those goods, whatever those  
197 goods are, including agricultural products. It’s making housing  
198 much more expensive because of the inputs that you need to  
199 build homes.”

200           As a result, she said it will be “critically important” for  
201 Democrats to focus on “the price gouging that is clearly going on  
202 among the some of the major players within the petroleum  
203 industry.”

204           Trump is floating the idea of a gas tax holiday to give  
205 Americans some relief at the pumps. Balint believes his proposal  
206 is misguided because “essentially he’ll be raiding the trust fund  
207 we have to give states money to be able to build bridges and do  
208 road repairs,” she said.

209           “What we should be doing is taking away all the  
210 subsidies that these gas and oil companies are getting right now  
211 from the federal government, which would more than cover the  
212 cost of reducing the federal gas tax for people at the pump,”  
213 Balint said. “The priorities are all in the wrong place.”

214           More and more, ordinary Americans believe that  
215 Republicans are not working to help them, Balint said.

216           “We know that Americans do not believe that this  
217 president or this Republican majority in the House or in the

218 Senate are working to lower prices, and that is the most  
219 important issue for Americans right now,” she said. “The cost that  
220 they’re paying at the pump. The cost of health insurance.”

221 She claimed that Americans “do not believe that  
222 Republicans will give them any relief, especially as more of the  
223 cuts that came from the so-called Big Beautiful Bill, like the cuts  
224 to Medicaid, are going to have more of an impact on  
225 Vermonters.”

226 “More Vermonters will lose their health care because of  
227 those cuts, and also because of cuts in the Affordable Care Act,”  
228 Balint said. “But it’s not just particular to Vermont. That’s true  
229 across the country, and people are mad about it, and rightly so.”

230 She also pointed out the consequences of Trump’s  
231 military action in Iran — “absolutely a war of choice that didn’t  
232 need to happen” — including the ongoing blockade of the Strait  
233 of Hormuz and the rising price of oil.

234 Those results have raised fears of possible future scarcity,  
235 such as the country saw in 1979, which was triggered by the  
236 Iranian Revolution, but Balint does not see that happening.

237 “We still have resources in the National Petroleum  
238 Reserve that can be released in emergencies,” Balint said. “So  
239 certainly, I hope that doesn’t come to pass. But we’re in a bind  
240 right now because of what’s happening in the Strait of Hormuz.”

## 241 **‘It’s absolutely necessary’**

242 Democrats are fired up, Balint said. Independents are  
243 angry. And that anger is showing at the polls.

244 “When you look at all of the special elections that have  
245 happened across the country in the last year and a half,  
246 Democrats have won every single one,” Balint said. “So we’re  
247 talking about money, but also about volunteers to knock on  
248 doors. We’re talking about old-fashioned retail politics, making  
249 sure people can get to the polls.”

250 So the questions become: “How do we get folks in  
251 Vermont who want to help make phone calls into these out-of-

252 state districts? How do we make it easy for them to sit at their  
253 homes in Vermont?" she said.

254 Since Vermont, as a rule, does not unseat its incumbents,  
255 Balint envisions spending some of her campaign time assisting in  
256 other races around the country.

257 "That is my hope, absolutely," she said. "I was actually  
258 just having a conversation with a couple other members on the  
259 floor yesterday about how we can pool our resources to make  
260 sure that we're all doing our part with this."

261 It can't just fall to the people in those much more  
262 competitive districts, Balint said.

263 " We all have to be talking to members who certainly are  
264 in the fight of [...] their political lives, right now in the Deep  
265 South," she said, noting that Alabama Rep. Terri Sewell "has  
266 really been engaged with us about how we harness the power of  
267 people across the country in districts that are less competitive, so  
268 that we can do our part to flip the House.

269 "It's absolutely necessary," Balint said.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

270

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

271

0

####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

272

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

273

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

274

####END LOGLINE####