

Press Announcement  
March 30, 2018  
Merrilee Malwitz-Jipson  
352-222-8893

## **Merrilee Malwitz-Jipson to Run for Florida House of Representatives, District 10**

COLUMBIA COUNTY, FL – Merrilee Malwitz-Jipson, businesswoman, water advocate, artist, organizer, wife and mother, filed paperwork on March 29, 2018, to serve as Florida State Representative in District 10, which includes Alachua, Baker, Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties.

“I was encouraged to run by quite a few people who live in District 10,” Merrilee explained, “and I would be honored to serve the people of North Florida in the state legislature. My background gives me unique qualifications to be an effective advocate for the people and natural systems here in the Springs Heartland.”

Merrilee and her husband, Doug Jipson, own and operate Rum 138, a landmark destination, ecotourism business and community center in south Columbia County. There, they rent canoes and kayaks, sell food, and run an art gallery that features the work of local artists who are focused on North Florida’s rivers and springs. Merrilee and Doug live nearby on property that fronts the Santa Fe River. The couple has two sons, Verlyn and Merrill.

Merrilee has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Ringling College of Art in Sarasota. She is a founding member and past president of Our Santa Fe River, Inc., an educational nonprofit organization working to protect the aquifer, springs and rivers within the Santa Fe’s watershed. In addition to running Rum 138, she currently works as an organizer for Sierra Club Florida.

Merrilee’s platform is focused on:

- Environmental and community issues such as drinking water and natural systems protection
- Localized jobs in the creative economy, trades and services, and ecotourism
- Clean Energy
- Family farming sustainability
- Affordable health care
- Low impact development
- Supporting teachers and public education.
- Gun ownership reform and safety in public spaces
- Equity and justice for people of color, LGBTQ rights, Women’s rights, and for any and all people who are just like you and me that live, work and are a part of our community to make it a better place full of differences and yet included in all spaces.

“Since water is life, I’ve focused a great deal of attention on the springs heartland—the health and recharge of the Floridan aquifer along the middle and upper Suwannee River, the lower Santa Fe River, the Ichetucknee River and all the associated springsheds which are located within District 10,” Merrilee said. “I believe the health of our natural systems is directly connected to the health of our residents, communities and economy. That fact, along with a respect for different viewpoints and opinions, will guide my candidacy.”

For more information, call: 352-222-8893

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