

Editorial: Darby Hills for Illinois 26th Senate District



State Sen. Darby Hills talks with a colleague during the legislative session at the Illinois State Capitol on Oct. 28, 2025, in Springfield. (John J. Kim/Chicago Tribune)

By [The Editorial Board](#) | Chicago Tribune

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This north suburban district stretches from Palatine and Barrington north to Lake County municipalities including Lake Zurich, Hawthorn Woods and Wauconda. Republican Darby Hills, 50, was appointed to the seat in early 2025 after fellow Republican Dan McConchie resigned to start a national nonprofit advocating for better access for the disabled. Hills, formerly a Barrington Hills village trustee, is running to be elected in her own right against Democrat Nabeela Syed, 27, an Illinois House member from Palatine in her second term.

This surely will be a close race; McConchie defeated Democrat Maria Peterson in 2022 by less than 400 votes.

Syed is one of the youngest members of the General Assembly, and we endorsed her for the House in 2024. She leans progressive in her policy views but has taken some fiscally conservative stances; for example, she voted against the fiscal 2025 budget because she said it was too heavy on tax increases while also failing to earmark any of that money for what at the time was a coming transit funding cliff.

Syed tells us she opposed the transit rescue legislation enacted in late 2025 because it included a “regressive” sales tax increase. Except she didn’t oppose it, at least on the floor of the House. As Hills points out to us, Syed didn’t vote on the package. For something so consequential to her constituents, Syed can’t have it both ways. She should have voted no if that was her position.

Hills did vote against the package in the Senate with the fair reasoning that transit-agency reforms should have preceded the hefty toll hike and sales tax increase that bailed out the system.

Hills has voted against her party leadership more than once, including on a measure this year to allow for state regulation of auto insurance rates for the first time, which was signed into law. The last thing the Illinois Senate needs is an even larger Democratic supermajority, and Hills has proven herself the sort of Republican who will work with the other side of the aisle. **Darby Hills is endorsed.**