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PETER LUCAS: Shiva's got what Mass. GOP needs -- authenticity

By Peter Lucas

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He is Shiva, the "real" Indian.

He is a 53-year-old Republican entrepreneur from Belmont with four degrees from MIT, and he is running for the U.S. Senate.

Born in India, V.A. Shiva Ayyadurai -- known as Shiva -- has already made news by challenging incumbent Democrat U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren to take a DNA test to prove her alleged American (Cherokee) Indian background.

Warren refused, of course. She has avoided the issue for years.

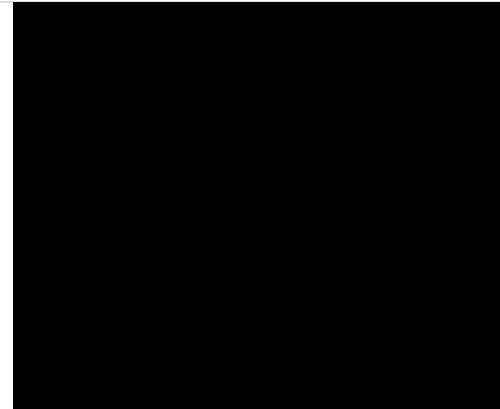
Shiva said he was "deeply saddened" by the refusal from the woman President Trump mockingly calls Pocahontas, which is tied to Warren's old and unsubstantiated claim to be descended from American Indians.

Warren's critics have charged that the Cambridge professor used her so-called "minority" status as a Native American to climb the academic ladder that led to a professorship at Harvard.

Shiva made the proposal as a birthday gift of a 23&Me DNA Test Kit. Warren, who is seeking re-election in 2018, turned 68 on June 22.

It is a campaign gimmick, to be sure, but it is also a way for Shiva to gain some much-needed media recognition. You can almost predict the next campaign gimmick that will go something like this: "Vote Shiva. The real Indian."

It will take more, much more, than campaign gimmicks to get this campaign off the ground, however. Right now it is a campaign that is financed with Shiva's own money.



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Warren, who has become national figure with her sharp attacks on President Trump, has already raised some \$11 million in campaign donations.

Also, Shiva must be able to win enough GOP convention delegate votes -- 15 percent -- to get on the Republican primary ballot. Then he must win the primary before he can even dream of taking Warren on.

Also running for the Republican nomination is state Rep. Geoff Diehl of Whitman, who was active in the Trump campaign.

Speaking of Trump, Shiva is a supporter. He donated \$2,700 to the Trump victory fundraising committee in August. Shiva also donated \$2,000 to John Kerry's presidential campaign in 2003.

Shiva is a long shot. But he is successful, charismatic and smart.

He brings to the GOP in Massachusetts something it has never had before. Shiva is a candidate who was born outside of the United States, meaning that he is a real immigrant who is living the American dream.

One would think the GOP would fall all over itself to field such a candidate like Shiva, who migrated to the U.S. from Bombay, India, in 1970 with his parents when he was 7.

He excelled in school, mastered calculus and was enrolled in a computer program for promising high school students at New York University. Shiva has degrees from MIT in computer science and electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, visual studies and biological engineering.

He has launched several successful startup companies, one of which provides training in health care techniques that combine Western medical practices with traditional Asian techniques.

Shiva would certainly break the GOP mold in Massachusetts, although the state is known for electing by popular vote the first African-American to the Senate in 1966.

That was when Republican Attorney General Edward W. Brooke defeated former Democrat Gov. Endicott "Chub" Peabody for the seat vacated by old line Republican Sen. Leverett Saltonstall. Brooke was beaten after serving two terms by Democrat Paul Tsongas in 1978. All are gone now, like the era in which they served.

Sounding a lot like Trump, Shiva said, "What stands in the way are the old guard of career politicians, political hacks, lawyer-lobbyists and academics who pervade Washington and local government with corruption and crony capitalism that chokes and suffocates these innovations and solutions from reaching us."

"America becomes great when innovators, entrepreneurs, working people with skills, and those committed to common sense and reason run this country. The Founding Fathers of America were blacksmiths, engineers, soldiers, architects, entrepreneurs, scientists. They actually worked for a living."

Shiva has Warren in his sights. Shiva, and others, believe that Warren has been all talk and no action. She blames everything on millionaires and billionaires, big banks and Wall Street, the very people and organizations that she is taking money from to run her campaign for re-election.

If she has made a substantial difference in improving the lives of the people of Massachusetts it has escaped notice.

Will the real Indian please stand up?

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