



## Murphy struggles to counter months of McMahan ads

By Mark Pazniokas - October 9, 2012

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**Meriden** -- It was a friendly setting. Democrat Chris Murphy picked a tour of an aerospace manufacturer in his congressional district to press his argument that Republican Linda McMahan's jobs plan is a rehash of trickle-down tax policy, not a substantive prescription for economic development.

But the reach of McMahan's saturation advertising in the U.S. Senate race was evident when a worker asked, seemingly with more concern than criticism, about one of McMahan's derisive talking points: Was Murphy's own jobs plan really only "a work in progress?"

"If that's true, it's probably not really good for you at this point," said the worker, one of several dozen who gathered to listen to Murphy in the company cafeteria at Jonal Laboratories. "Have you changed your stance on that? Can you clarify that?"

"That's a common Linda McMahan attack point," Murphy replied.

The exchange at Jonal, whose owner effusively praised Murphy's work as a congressman, illustrated a challenge facing Murphy, who was outspent 3-1 on television through most of September: McMahan's ads are seen often by 84 percent of voters, and they are rated more effective than his, according to a recent poll.

In her second run for U.S. Senate in as many elections, the former World Wrestling Entertainment chief executive has aggressively branded herself since the spring as a "jobs creator" and her campaign as the source of a "six-point jobs plan" outlined in a glossy 16-page booklet, "Reviving the Economy."

Now, less than 30 days before the election, Murphy has to convince voters that all McMahan really has are scripted talking points and a brochure touting well-worn ideas to cut taxes, not an economic blueprint of any intellectual heft or originality.

"My jobs plan is rooted and anchored here in Connecticut," he told reporters Monday. "Linda McMahon's jobs plan seems to be anchored in right-wing Republican talking points that may benefit that political party, but don't benefit the people of this state."

### **The plans**

Murphy's plan includes a temporary continuation of the Bush-era tax cuts, though not for the richest 1 percent of Americans, and a simplification of the U.S. tax code. He also would promote U.S. manufacturers, invest in transportation infrastructure, education and renewable energy.

On the day after their first televised debate, where Murphy and McMahon also engaged in sharp exchanges over their plans, he toured Jonal, a company he assisted as a three-term congressman representing the 5<sup>th</sup> District, which encompasses Meriden, and took questions from reporters.

The central points of McMahon's plan are common to many Republican campaigns: Make the Bush-era tax cuts permanent, freeze the tax rate on investment income at 15 percent and create a 25 percent top bracket for all business income.

"This is a very serious plan put forth by a proven job creator," said her campaign manager, Corry Bliss. "This is a plan centered around a middle-class tax cut that should and can attract bipartisan support."

In a section entitled "end job-killing regulations," McMahon endorses the REINS Act, or Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny. It would make regulations subject to stand-alone congressional votes.

Murphy's campaign says elements of her plan, especially the sections on REINS, is drawn from conservative sources such as the Cato Institute and some of it can be found in the materials of other Republicans.

"I have a 14-year record of public service, a 14-year record of voting and fighting for the things I care about," said Murphy, a state legislator for eight years before his election to Congress in 2006. "All Linda McMahon has is a plan."

With his tour of Jonal, a family-owned business that manufactures high-tech seals, gaskets and other rubber parts for spacesuits, helicopters and jet engines, Murphy tried to draw a contrast with McMahon. She is the former chief executive of World Wrestling Entertainment, the company run by her husband, Vince McMahon, and the source of the personal fortune underwriting her campaign.

"As a CEO, she wasn't fighting for her workers, she was fighting for her bottom line," Murphy said. "If you want to look to see what I care about, you don't have to go to my website. You can look to see what I've done."

McMahon's campaign sent reporters a press release before the event, noting that Murphy voted against two defense authorization acts that contained Buy American provisions -- and funding for programs that benefit Connecticut defense contractors.

In both cases, Murphy supported the Buy American provisions, then voted against final passage of the bill, saying he opposed the open-ended commitment for the war in Afghanistan.

McMahon's release also hit Murphy again over his attendance record at committee meetings.

"He is a chronic slacker," Bliss said.

As of Monday night, neither campaign had announced any public campaign events for Tuesday. They face each other again in a debate Thursday at 7 p.m. to be televised on FoxCT.