THE NAKED AND UNBOUND AMBITION OF KYRSTEN SINEMA

As the kerfuffle over SB-1062 dies down, politics march on here at ground zero in Arizona. The GOP runs the key Executive Branch offices such as governor and Secretary of State but, more importantly in many respects, also the state legislature, and as long as they do state politics will continue to be dominated by clusterfucks and cleanups. But Arizona has issues with their statewide federal elected officials too. The current manifestation is not McCain, Flake, nor even the Pleistocene era brainfart known as Trent Franks.

No, today's issue is the once and forever self proclaimed liberal Democrat, Kyrsten Sinema. The transformation of Sinema, who aggressively sold herself as progressive liberal when seeking election, to a conservative Blue Dog toadie of the Minority centrist Dem leadership has been nothing short of astounding, especially for those of us who reside in her district and voted for her in 2012. She completely betrayed her base constituents in Arizona District 9. That is mostly a story for another day though, today's story is not about discrete policy issues, but wholesale admission of the deceptive nature of Kyrsten Sinema's incursion into AZ-9 to start with.

The baseline is this: Thursday, longtime Arizona Democratic Congressman Ed Pastor of AZ-7

announced his decision to retire and not seek reelection in 2014. Local politicians, from seemingly forever Maricopa Board of Supervisor's member Mary Rose Wilcox to new and fairly refreshing voices like state legislature member Ruben Gallego, were literally stepping over one another to announce they would be running for Pastor's seat. They are almost all minorities vying to represent a solidly minority district. And this is no small thing, as most all of them have to give up their current position to do so under Arizona's "resign to run" law.

I was asked early on Thursday, not long after Pastor's announcement, by a friend who supports liberal Dems nationwide, about Kyrsten Sinema jumping in. I thought it was a joke question and said so. Because it was crazy talk. The joke, however, was squarely on me and her other constituents in AZ-09. Yeah, Kysten Sinema, who pledged herself to AZ-09, started lusting after AZ-07 the second it was announced available.

Not that Kyrsten Sinema (see her Twitter feed, which is a litany of everything but her contemplated district switch) or her managers/spokespeople will admit it, or even address the subject, but she was ready to walk from second one. How do we know? Because the Arizona Republic/12 News (via the excellent Brahm Resnik) got a copy of an email to Sinema's inside staff proving it.

So, why is this a big deal? Because it shows that, for first term congresswoman Kyrsten Sinema, her own raw narcissistic ambition, in a dynamic situation, immediately trumps loyalty to her constituents and her party.

How it trumps her constituents is easy. Sinema represents AZ-09, which though a new district emanating out of redistricting from the 2010 Census, consists of a significant portion of John Shadegg's old district that was taken over by Ben Quayle after Shadegg's retirement. Sinema did not live in the still leaning conservative district, and explicitly came from an out of district seat in the state legislature to run

for the seat when it opened for the 2012 election. She painted herself as a classic liberal of the old Tucson school, who was a progressive and sexually liberated voice. It was a bill of goods, but Sinema was an extremely aggressive campaigner who worked her ass off thusly selling herself. She eked out a victory over a very weak Republican thanks in part to a helpful diversion of votes by a third party Libertarian candidate.

And, though she has been a disappointment to any liberal, at least we thought we had a Democratic representative of some sort for the foreseeable future. Sinema came here and took our votes, surely she was ours at least until she could run for a Senate seat or something larger, right? Apparently not.

Kyrsten Sinema has proved herself willing to leave her, apparently carpetbagged, home in AZ-09 at a moment's notice before even consummating a whole two year Congressional term.

But Kyrsten Sinema's knee jerk willingness to dally with AZ-07 does not just sell out her constituents in AZ-09, no it is contemplated treachery to her Democratic party and Congressional caucus as well. Why? Because there is no Democratic alternative to replace Sinema in AZ-09. None. Over the last few months, several of us Democrats here in AZ-09 toyed with the idea of finding a primary challenger for Sinema, because she has been so awful as to genuinely progressive ideas and votes in the House. But there simply are none; it was either Sinema or turn the seat back over to the GOP, which was a non-starter. At least for us. So, if Sinema leaves, AZ-09 is going to flip and the House Democrats are going to lose yet another precious seat.

What's worse is that if Kyrsten Sinema takes her big campaign war chest to try to claim AZ-07, she will be trying to suck up a seat that has been held by a member of the Latino minority, Ed Pastor, for over 22 years. Again, Arizona's

Congressional districts have evolved over that time, and AZ-07 is a somewhat a new creation. But the core that Pastor now represents, and has always represented, is well over 60% minority, with the majority of those being Hispanic.

Kyrsten Sinema is not only thinking HARD about abandoning her current constituents that she just came to represent, and abandoning a seat for Democratic caucus to the Republicans, she is thinking hard about trying to pilfer a minority seat away from what would otherwise almost surely be a minority Democratic replacement for Ed Pastor.

Why would Kyrsten Sinema think about doing such a loathsome thing? Raw, naked, selfish ambition is the only explanation. Sinema is an aggressive political climber. And her ability to get her mug in between any scene and the TV camera was clearly learned from the great Chuck Schumer and/or John McCain. She has that skill. What it boils down to is that Sinema is on the move, but a real higher office is not in the offing, either this election or next, as Arizona's two Senate seats are locked up – McCain appears to be running again in 2016, and Jeff Flake is young, just got elected, and may never leave.

So, Kyrsten Sinema is left to ply her trade in the House for the time being. Thing is, AZ-07, once you are in, is a lifetime sinecure for a Democrat. You wouldn't even have to work your ass off to stay elected, like Sinema will have to in the conservative trending AZ-09. In AZ-07, Sinema could kick back and build up her warchest for the future ambition she most surely holds, and if she never gets there, can ride out eternity in the seat easily and safely. That's why Kyrsten Sinema wants it. Oh, and it was effectively where she came from before she so benevolently decided to insincerely grace the good folks in AZ-09 with her naked ambition.

What Kyrsten Sinema does at this point is anybody's guess, and she is certainly not telling even top political reporters here in Phoenix (see: here and here). She is, however,

push polling aggressively in AZ-07 over the weekend. Whatever it may be, the real Kyrsten Sinema has been exposed, and it is not a pretty sight for whatever lucky duckies that may be her future district constituents. Blue dogs are going to hunt I guess.

[**UPDATE**: I was negligent in my attribution. I have been discussing, on Twitter and off, the Pastor/Sinema dynamic since news of Ed Pastor's retirement broke last Thursday. A lot of us were talking about Sinema from the start, but the actual first to go to print with the speculation was Rebekah Sanders of the Arizona Republic, who had this report Friday night, the 28th of February.]