

2025 New Jersey Primary Elections: a Short Summary

By Sage

The 2025 New Jersey Primary, the first contested primary war in the state of New Jersey since 2007—the 2024 CD-08, CD-09, Presidential, and Passaic County Sheriff/Commissioner Primaries notwithstanding—poses the potential for a seachange in New Jersey that will have repercussions for the next two decades. Before we begin, a small note: The history of New Jersey politics has seen multiple Machine v Anti-Machine wars, many of which the Anti-Machine side has won. Examples include: the 1917 Jersey City Mayoral Election, the 1947 Hague v Kenny Freedom Ticket, the 1973 Machine Cleanup, the 1991/1993 Intra-Machine civil wars that saw McGreevy become Mayor of Woodbridge, and Nick Sacco become State Senator for the 32nd District, the 2001 NJ GOP gubernatorial primary which Bret Schundler won in an upset, the 2000 Democratic Senate primary between the South Jersey Machine and the North Jersey Machine, the 2007 Stack v Hudson County Democratic Organization War, the 2008 Rep. Rob Andrews upset challenge against the Elderly Lautenberg, and on and on they go. Of these, multiple anti-machine candidates win—Hague, Kenny, Sacco, and Stack among them—but the victories have never been long lasting because the need for relationships overpowers the desire to destroy the machine. Phil Murphy was once a pseudo anti-Machine Governor fighting the dominant Norcross Organization; and Steve Fulop—challenging the broad Machine with a string of alliances of people spurned by the various machines—has allied with the Notorious Mayor of North Bergen¹ Nick Sacco² in order to win his native Hudson County. New Jersey Politics is messy, with alliances shifting month to month and day to day, and while I will paint the cleanest

¹ <https://www.insidernj.com/the-ever-persistent-hudson-rivalry-of-stack-and-sacco-sacco-and-stack/>

² <https://newjerseyglobe.com/local/challenger-tied-to-sacco-intimidating-voters-in-union-city-woman-says/>

picture in this writeup of the whole primary, just know: everything is legal in New Jersey Politics.

Part 1: Governor DEM.

The Big Kahuna of the race is the Democratic Primary for New Jersey Governor, Pitting longtime New Jersey politicians like Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop and Steve Sweeney against the class of 2018 Representatives Mikie Sherrill and Josh Gottheimer—the later was elected in 2016 but gives off the vibes of a 2018 Freshman, with Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, and NJEA President Sean Spiller also making bids for the top Job. I will summarize each of their campaigns in the following segment but just know that there are three tiers of candidates. 1: the Top contenders, 2: The third place finishers and 3: yeah they also ran.

Mikie Sherrill: The obvious Frontrunner who has led in every poll to date³ is Representative for NJ-11 Mikie Sherrill; Congresswoman from the Progressive Bastion of Montclair repping parts of Essex, Morris, and Passaic Counties she is the frontrunner and for most of the State the ‘Machine’ pick. If I had to summarize her campaign in a short sentence, it

would be: A Noun a Verb and “I’m a Prosecutor, Mom, and Navy Helicopter Pilot”. That is the central theme in most of her ads⁴ and stump speeches, relatively lax on policy specifics, and—broadly speaking—running as a second term of Governor Phil Murphy’s

Poll source	Date(s) administered	Sample size ^[n]	Margin of error	Ras Baraka	Steven Fulop	Josh Gottheimer	Mikie Sherrill	Sean Spiller	Stephen Sweeney	Undecided
Emerson College ^[153]	May 11–13, 2025	386 (LV)	± 4.9%	11%	11%	11%	28%	10%	5%	24%
MDW Communications (D) ^{[154][A]}	May 11–13, 2025	1,100 (LV)	± 3.5%	17%	13%	7%	21%	7%	5%	30%
Global Strategy Group (D) ^{[155][B]}	May 10–13, 2025	600 (LV)	± 4.0%	15%	16%	11%	33%	6%	7%	12%
StimSight Research ^[156]	May 7–10, 2025	409 (LV)	± 4.9%	21%	19%	10%	31%	9%	9%	1%
MDW Communications (D) ^{[157][A]}	April 2025	1,200 (LV)	± 3.5%	14%	14%	9%	18%	11%	8%	26%
Rutgers-Eagleton ^[158]	April 1–10, 2025	556 (RV)	—	9%	12%	9%	17%	10%	7%	32%
Global Strategy Group (D) ^{[159][B]}	April 6–8, 2025	600 (LV)	—	13%	13%	15%	25%	12%	6%	16%
Hart Research Associates (D) ^{[151][C]}	March – April 2025	—	—	12%	14%	11%	20%	9%	9%	26%
Global Strategy Group (D) ^{[160][D]}	April 1–3, 2025	900 (LV)	± 3.0%	11%	13%	14%	19%	11%	5%	27%
MDW Communications (D) ^{[161][A]}	March 19–20, 2025	935 (LV)	± 3.0%	12%	9%	5%	14%	8%	5%	47%
GBAO (D) ^{[162][E]}	February 27 – March 3, 2025	800 (LV)	± 3.5%	14%	10%	9%	20%	15%	8%	24%
Hart Research Associates (D) ^{[151][C]}	February 2025	—	—	12%	12%	9%	25%	11%	5%	26%
MDW Communications (D) ^{[163][A]}	February 10, 2025	789 (LV)	± 3.0%	10%	5%	5%	16%	10%	3%	52%
Public Policy Polling (D) ^{[164][F]}	January 22–23, 2025	615 (LV)	± 4.0%	9%	9%	5%	16%	11%	9%	43%
Emerson College ^[165]	January 18–21, 2025	437 (LV)	± 4.6%	8%	4%	7%	10%	8%	7%	56%
Hart Research Associates (D) ^{[151][C]}	November 2024	—	—	12%	7%	6%	17%	10%	9%	39%
Upswing Research (D) ^{[166][G]}	November 23–27, 2024	803 (LV)	± 3.5%	13%	8%	10%	25%	7%	8%	30%
Global Strategy Group (D) ^{[167][B]}	November 20–24, 2024	800 (LV)	± 3.5%	9%	4%	9%	24%	5%	11%	38%
Renaissance Campaign Strategies (D) ^{[168][H]}	July 13–14, 2024	802 (LV)	± 3.5%	12%	7%	8%	18%	2%	8%	45%
GQR Research (D) ^{[169][I]}	March 7–12, 2024	603 (LV)	± 4.0%	20%	9%	5%	23%	—	12%	29%

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_New_Jersey_gubernatorial_election#Democratic_primary

⁴ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/governor/sherrill-super-pac-launches-new-seven-figure-ad-buy/>

second term: broadly deferential to the machine that would be credited with putting her in office. Now, this may be appealing to some people, Phil Murphy in his second term has governed closer to a tax-rebate, pro-union, hesitatingly pro-transit, but staunchly socially liberal governor—so Sherrill, per her campaign and backers, would be at the centre of governing philosophies in the Democratic party but broadly, this is an assumption based on who is backing her as well as her centre/centre-left—not-left-wing—record in congress. Onto her chances: they are very good. Evidence for this can be found in the behavior of her primary campaign: attacking Trump, occasionally hitting the Republican Frontrunner Jack Ciattarelli⁵; as well as the behavior of her opponents, most attacks from the other candidates—especially Fulop⁶ and Baraka⁷—are focused on her, attacks which have forced her to defend her record and past donations from Elon Musk⁸. This behavior (and the aforementioned polling⁹ lead) centres the entire primary discourse around Mikie Sherrill, and all these factors combined highlight that she should win, and possibly fairly comfortably. Spoilers for the Gov Race, but I believe that it is clearly a Leans Sherrill race, with wide bands for potential results.

Steve Fulop: Sherrill's primary opponent is the earliest candidate in this race¹⁰, Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop. Running on a technocratic Anti-Corruption, anti-machine, pro-transit anti-rich developer, and pro-affordable housing campaign, Fulop is running with the most detailed policy proposals of any Candidate in the race, "I have a plan for that" as Elizabeth Warren used to say in her 2020 campaign is the best way to describe Fulop's policy chops, but unlike the former Harvard Professor, he has the executive Experience to enact those plans and (crucially) is running not as the 'plan' candidate, but the anti-corruption candidate¹¹. In fact, most

⁵ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/campaigns/sherrill-hits-ciattarelli-in-new-ad/>

⁶ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/governor/fulop-pac-starts-spending-money-on-attack-ads-against-sherrill/>

⁷ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/governor/baraka-goes-after-sherrill-in-rare-negative-dem-ad/>

⁸ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/campaigns/super-pac-launches-ad-defending-sherrill-from-attacks-over-ethics/>

⁹ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/polling/sherrill-pulls-further-away-from-the-pack-in-her-latest-internal-poll/>

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13QZ8yIWly8>

¹¹ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/governor/fulop-backs-insurgent-slate-in-camden/>

primaries in New Jersey, and this entire ‘war’ is quite literally because of Fulop’s recruitment efforts, with some races—such as the Edison Mayoral Race, or the recurring South Jersey Democratic Organization campaigns—being ones which he affixed his name to in order to get an anti-machine boost. I will delve deeper into these races after I finish writing the Gov Race, but overall it can be said that Fulop is the likeliest candidate to come in second place—if not defeat Sherrill. I can say this because of the behavior of the Sherrill campaign. While a Frontrunner, she has attacked Fulop whilst she has left most other candidates alone, per reporting by Joey Fox at the NJ Globe, Fulop has been accused (with nothing coming of this) of “accepting [...] \$6.8 million [...] from real estate and development interests; [...] voter fraud [...] frequent unwillingness to release public records; [...] aligning with Atlantic City Mayor Marty Small despite Small’s criminal indictment; and [...] [not allowing] press to take photos or videos at a recent Israeli flag-raising ceremony”¹². Should Fulop win, this would create a situation where NJ likely has its first Anti-Machine Governor since Alfred Driscoll won in 1947 (or Brendan Byrne in 1973, depending on your definition of “anti-machine”); a sea change in the traditionally Political Machine Governed state. However, Fulop is not favored to win, and despite my voting for him, I stand by my rating of the primary being Leans Sherrill.

Ras Baraka: Onto the second tier, Ras Baraka. Mayor of Newark, Ras Baraka has run on a movement progressivism record, utilizing his own candidacy in order to appeal to New Jerseyans of all stripes, but focusing mostly on African Americans and Afro-Latinos, per his advertisements.¹³ Likewise Baraka is focusing on his progressive record as mayor, keeping communities safe, revitalizing them while also arguing that he would cut taxes and fund Transit¹⁴. Addressing the Elephant in the room, and the reason a large number of Progressive

¹² <https://newjerseyglobe.com/governor/sherrill-campaign-goes-on-offense-against-fulops-long-history-of-corruption/>

¹³ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/governor/new-baraka-digital-ad-follows-his-poetry-roots/>

¹⁴ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/campaigns/baraka-launches-ad-with-closing-message/>

voters are now opting for Fulop, Baraka's arrest, which made national headlines¹⁵, has fallen to the proverbial background in New Jersey, with neither Baraka's campaign—nor anyone else—bringing it up. This failure to capitalize on his ability to “fight” may represent the death knell of his campaign, as in an environment where Democrats are angry at their leaders for nit fighting, this event that in theory should've propelled him to second place, instead does nothing but let him languish in third. Unlike Fulop or Sherrill, Baraka hasn't been hit by anyone, but has a sufficiently large base of support as to land him in third place; but it is very improbable that he wins this.

The AlsoRans: Josh Gottheimer, Steve Sweeney and Sean Spiller, each of them big names in New Jersey Politics, at this point, seem like they're going to have to find or continue jobs outside of Drumthwacket. While all of them have spent truckloads of money—with Sean Spiller Spending \$40 Million of Teachers union dues on his campaign¹⁶—they have barely made a dent and are fighting to get into double digits in the polling. Summarizing each of their campaigns in a sentence Gottheimer is running on Cutting Taxes, and Making NJ more affordable, appealing to Orthodox Jews, Independents and Republicans in a Democratic Primary. Steve Sweeney is Running on his background as a Union Leader and an IronWorker, appealing to White working class Democrats in South Jersey—with that Machine running a strong turnout Operation for him. Lastly, Spiller is running as an ‘educator’ whilst running away from his record as Mayor of Montclair where he had been investigated in the past¹⁷. None of them have a realistic chance and while two of these candidates, Gotthemier and Sweeney, have Machine backing (Bergen For Gottheimer and Burlington, Atlantic, Camden, Gloucester, Salem, and

¹⁵ <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/06/newark-mayor-ras-baraka-ice-arrest-governors-race/>

¹⁶ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/governor/njea-has-funneled-40-million-into-pro-spiller-pac/>

¹⁷ <https://montclairlocal.news/2024/10/ag-office-ongoing-investigation-into-montclair-puts-spiller-in-spotlight/>

Cumberland counties for Sweeney)—they will be fighting for Fourth place; or third place if Baraka really Falter.

Overall, based on the coverage of this race and the behavior of the candidates, the overall state of the Race is Leans Sherrill, with her likewise being the most likely candidate to lead New Jersey over the next four years.

Part 2: Governor, GOP.

I can summarize the GOP Primary in Five words: Ciattarelli is going to win. No if, but or ands, unless Polling is wrong by >30%, he's going to win. He leads with as much as 54%, has the Trump Endorsement¹⁸, name recognition from two past runs for Governor, has been relentlessly attacking Spadea as a “I’m a little more liberal than my conservative friends”¹⁹—exhibiting the same message discipline that got him within 4% to oust Murphy—the man

Poll source	Date(s) administered	Sample size ^[m]	Margin of error	Jon Bramnick	Jack Ciattarelli	Edward Durr	Mario Kranjac	Bill Spadea	Other	Undecided
Emerson College ^[153]	May 11–13, 2025	330 (LV)	± 5.4%	8%	44%	–	2%	18%	4% ^[q]	23%
National Research Inc. ^{[242][J]}	May 6–8, 2025	600 (LV)	± 4.0%	10%	54%	–	2%	23%	–	11%
National Research Inc. ^{[243][J]}	April 8–10, 2025	600 (LV)	± 4.0%	9%	50%	–	3%	22%	–	14%
Rutgers-Eagleton ^[158]	April 1–10, 2025	258 (RV)	–	4%	42%	–	0%	12%	7% ^[r]	34%
March 24, 2025 Durr withdraws from the race										
KAConsulting (R) ^{[244][K]}	February 5–7, 2025	600 (LV)	± 4.0%	4%	42%	2%	2%	13%	–	35%
Emerson College ^[165]	January 18–21, 2025	334 (LV)	± 5.3%	4%	26%	2%	–	13%	10% ^[s]	47%
KAConsulting (R) ^{[246][K]}	June 12–14, 2024	606 (LV)	± 4.0%	3%	44%	2%	–	11%	–	38%

is all but assured to be the GOP Gubernatorial nominee for a second time in a row over hard right Conservative Radio Talk Show Host Bill Spadea. Not much more needs to be said unless Somehow Spadea pulls off the biggest upset since Ed Durr beat Steve Sweeney.

Part 3: Mayors Races

Edison: The top Mayoral Primary of the night will be the always contentious Edison Democratic Primary. Here, Incumbent Sam Joshi—with the backing of the Middlesex County

¹⁸ <https://x.com/Jack4NJ/status/1922789130909462686>

¹⁹ <https://x.com/Jack4NJ/status/191430228006916547>

Democratic Organization, and implicitly: Mikei Sherrill²⁰—is running against challenger, Businessman Lav Patel—who is hitching his wagon to Fulop in order to win²¹. Whilst I connected this to statewide politics, Edison possesses one of the most insular politics in the entire state, not because it is a heavily Indian-American municipality, but because its politics are just very local as a medium sized municipality. A race divided between the Joshi and Baghia factions of the Edison Democratic Party, much like in 2021²², the race is contentious—possibly even more so now. Undercovered because of the governor’s race, Joshi is facing unaddressed allegations of sexual assault against an unnamed woman²³—reported to the State AG Matt Plankin by local Edison Joshi Opponent, Councilman Rich Breschner,²⁴ with criticism of the handling by Middlesex County Prosecutor Yolanda Ciccone—an ally of Joshi—also hovering over the race. Claiming the allegations have been completely debunked²⁵ by Prosecutor Ciccone²⁶ these accusations, Joshi retains the support of the Middlesex Democratic Machine a significant advantage given their organizational prowess, and has beat back the Bhagia Faction—Majesh Baghia himself, who had lost²⁷ Middlesex Machine support before the time of his loss to Joshi due to scandal²⁸—by 61.5-32.5% once in 2021 eventually ousting Bhagia from his role as Edison Democratic Party Chair in 2023²⁹. The end result will be a divisive primary to lead this (D) Kamala Harris +9.68% Municipality, which in 2021 Sam Joshi only won by 10.5% in 2021³⁰—so regardless of who wins, the General could be competitive.

²⁰ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/campaigns/atlantic-city-edison-parsippany-and-plainfield-lead-lineup-of-10-n-j-mayoral-primaries/>

²¹ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/governor/fulop-forges-alliance-with-edison-mayoral-candidate/>

²² <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/indian-american-sam-joshi-wins-democrat-primary-for-mayor-of-edison-nj/articleshow/83463424.cms>

²³ <https://edisonreporter.com/survivor-publicly-details-sexual-assault-allegations-against-mayor-sam-joshi/>

²⁴ <https://edisonreporter.com/mayor-joshi-accused-of-sexual-assault/>

²⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nE1lo7WRhXM>

²⁶ <https://edisonreporter.com/a-survivors-story-ann-marie-pocklembo-shares-her-account-of-sexual-assault/#:~:text=On%20behalf%20of%20the%20Middlesex,taken%20as%20of%20this%20date.>

²⁷ <https://www.insidernj.com/edison-democratic-organization-nominates-mahesh-bhagia-mayor/>

²⁸ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/local/middlesex/joshi-beats-bhagia-for-edison-mayoral-nod/>

²⁹ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/local/joshi-wrests-control-of-edison-democratic-municipal-committee-away-from-bhagia/>

³⁰ <https://results.enr.clarityelections.com/NJ/Middlesex/110780/web.278093/#/detail/0026>

Atlantic City: The Atlantic City Mayoral Democratic Primary, A contest between incumbent mayor Marty Small Sr. and Former Casino Union Leader Bob McDevitt Promises to potentially be an exciting race. This is because Small Sr. has faced a litany of Controversy, pleading not guilty to witness tampering³¹ and of endangering his teenage daughter³² subjecting her “to physical and mental abuse”³³ causing him to attempt to ask her to recant the statements she made under oath that harmed him politically. Campaigning with Fulop, touting his handling of the Coronavirus Pandemic, the imploding of the Trump Taj Mahal, and remaining a substantial fundraiser—despite scandal—Small remains a force in Atlantic City politics, and could still win reelection³⁴. Challenging him is Former Casino Union Leader Bob McDevitt who’s running with a slate comprised of John Devlin, Mohammed Akbar Hussain, and Steve Young for city council³⁵. Popular with Casino workers, and touting his support for a 2016 Strike at the now-imploded Trump Taj Mahal³⁶, McDevitt poses a threat to Small Sr., but it remains to be seen if he can overcome Small Sr. 's incumbency, or if the latter can overcome Scandal.

Part 4: The Legislature

This is the first legislative primary without the everpresent county ballot line, as such in NJ there are a plethora of competitive Legislative Primaries. A non-exhaustive list (Courtesy of the good people over at the NJ Globe)³⁷ is such:

- LD-02 (D)
 - Fulop/Democrats for Change Slate:
 - Frm. Atlantic City Councilman Bruce Weekes
 - Linwood Board of Education member Lisa Bonanno

³¹ <https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/politics/atlantic-city-mayor-marty-small-court-witness-tampering/4079782/>

³² <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/atlantic-city-mayor-indicted-allegedly-asking-daughter-retract-claims-rcna184781>

³³ <https://www.casino.org/news/former-atlantic-city-casino-union-leader-running-for-mayor/>

³⁴ <https://www.insidernj.com/atlantic-city-mayor-small-burnishes-statewide-support-reelection-fundraiser/>

³⁵ <https://www.casino.org/news/former-atlantic-city-casino-union-leader-running-for-mayor/>

³⁶ <https://www.casino.org/news/former-atlantic-city-casino-union-leader-running-for-mayor/>

³⁷ <https://newjersevglobe.com/governor/heres-the-final-list-of-whos-running-for-n-j-governor-and-assembly-this-year/>

- Atlantic County Democratic Organization
 - Ret. attorney Maureen Rowan
 - Pleasantville Councilwoman Joanne Famularo
- LD-04 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Community activist Vonetta Hawkins
 - Assistant Dean at Rutgers University-Camden Brian Everett
 - Camden & Gloucester Counties Democratic Organizations
 - Assemblyman Dan Hutchison
 - Assemblyman Cody Miller
- LD-06 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Frm. Clementon school board member Becky Holloway
 - Analytics and Data Executive Kevin Ryan
 - Camden Democratic Organization
 - Assembly Majority Leader Louis Greenwald
 - Assemblywoman Melinda Kane
- LD-07 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Bordentown Mayor Eric Holliday
 - Burlington County Democratic Organization
 - Assemblyman Balvir Singh
 - Assemblywoman Carol Murphy (No Relation to Phil Murphy)

- LD-08 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Evesham Councilman Eddie Freeman
 - Burlington and Atlantic County Democratic Organizations
 - Assemblywoman Andrea Katz
 - Hammonton teachers union leader Anthony Angelozzi
- LD-17 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Piscataway Board of Education member Loretta Rivers
 - Somerset and Middlesex County Democratic Organizations
 - Assemblyman Joe Daniels
 - Assemblyman Kevin Egan
- LD-27 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Business executive Rohit Dave
 - Unaligned
 - Teacher Blake Michael
 - Essex and Passaic County Democratic Organizations
 - Assemblywoman Rosy Bagolie
 - Assemblywoman Alixon Collazos-Gill
- LD-28 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Assemblywoman Garnet Hall

- Essex & Union Counties Democratic Organization
 - Assemblywoman Cleopatra Tucker
 - co-chair of Newark's West Ward Democratic Committee Chigozie Onyema
- LD-31 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Assemblywoman Barbara McCann Stamato
 - Bayonne Councilwoman Jackie Weimmer
 - Hudson County Democratic Organization
 - Assemblyman William Sampson
 - Hudson County Commissioner Jerry Walker
- LD-32 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Assemblywoman Jessica Ramirez
 - Jersey City Councilman Yousef Saleh
 - Hudson County Democratic Organization
 - Director of the Hoboken Public Library System Jennie Pu
 - Manager at the Jersey City Department of Public Safety Crystal Fonseca
 - Bhalla/Brenan
 - Hoboken Mayor Ravi Bhalla
 - former Murphy administration official and housing expert Katie Brennan
- LD-33 (D)
 - Democrats for Change/Nick Sacco

- Frm North Bergen school board member Tony Hector
 - Frm. Union City GOP chairman Frank Alonso
- Hudson County Democratic Organization
 - Assemblyman Gabe Rodriguez
 - Businessman Larry Wainstein
- LD-34 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Belleville Councilman Frank Vélez
 - East Orange Councilwoman Brittany Claybrooks
 - Essex County Democratic Organization
 - Assemblywoman Carmen Morales
 - Assemblyman Mike Venezia
- LD-35 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Newark Corporation Counsel Kenyatta Stewart
 - Frm. Garfield Councilman Romi Herrera
 - Passaic and Bergen County Democratic Organizations
 - Assemblyman Al Abdelaziz
 - Passaic County Commissioner Orlando Cruz
- LD-36 (R)
 - Bergen County Republican Organization
 - Carlstadt Councilwoman Diane DeBiase
 - frm. Lyndhurst school board member Chris Musto

- Combat Veterans Fighting for You
 - 2023 LD-36 Senate candidate Chris Auriemma
 - 2023 LD-36 Assembly candidate Craig Auriemma
- LD-37 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Jewish Community leader Tamar Warburg
 - Tenafly Councilman Dan Park
 - Bergen County Democratic Organization
 - Assemblywoman Shama Haider
 - Assemblywoman Ellen Park
 - Unaffiliated Slate
 - Frm. Teaneck Councilman Yitz Stern
 - Small business owner Rosemary Hernandez Carroll
- LD-38 (D)
 - Democrats for Change
 - Attorney Donald Bonomo
 - President of the Glen Rock Board of Education Damali Robinson
 - Bergen County Democratic Organization
 -
- LD-39 (R)
 - Bergen County Republican Organization
 - Assemblyman Bob Auth
 - Assemblyman John Azzariti

- Pallotta Slate
- Frm. CD-05 Candidate Frank Pallotta.

Now that we have the list out of the way, I will give a few words on the most significant/competitive contests. Note I expect the various county machines to hold on to most of their incumbents (and every incumbent/past candidate south of Mercer county to win) so LD-02 through LD-16 will not be covered.

Significant Contests:

- LD-17 (D): A majority-minority seat in central Jersey held by two white men, Assemblyman Kevin Eagan and Joe Daniels are taking their challenge from Piscataway Board of Education member Loretta Rivers. Spending on ads, and attaining the endorsement of Machine-Progressive Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman³⁸ I would be surprised if either state legislator lost renomination.
- LD-28 (D): Due to Fundraising struggles³⁹ for Incumbent/Fulop aligned Assemblywoman Garnet Hall, and being passed over by local orgs⁴⁰ I expect Assemblywoman Cleopatra Tucker and co-chair of Newark's West Ward Democratic Committee Chigozie Onyema to become the nominees for this Deep Blue Essex/Union county seat.
- LD-31 (D): Backed by the Hudson County Democratic Organization and the likes of LaMonica McIver⁴¹, Assemblyman William Sampson and Hudson County Commissioner Jerry Walker are likely favored to win this seat. Supported by the Bayonne Democratic Party and Walker's own HCDO-friendly (for Jersey City) Ward B they likely have a

³⁸ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/legislature/watson-coleman-endorses-egan-in-ld-17-primary/>

³⁹ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/campaigns/garnet-hall-continues-fundraising-struggles/>

⁴⁰ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/legislature/firefighters-union-backs-mostly-incumbents-skips-garnet-hall/>

⁴¹ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/legislature/mciver-endorses-slate-of-assembly-candidates-including-tucker-sampson-walker/>

geographic edge over Assemblywoman Barbara McCann Stamato and Bayonne Councilwoman Jackie Weimmer—add to that African American voters in Ward F (who may choose the African American candidates Jerry Walker and William Sampson—and Baraka or Sherrill in the Gov race) and we have a contest that favors the HCDO—however, Fulop being mayor of Jersey City does provide an X-factor that could give his slate the win; competitive but HCDO favored.

- LD-32 (D): The most progressive slate in NJ, the HCDO candidates I mentioned above aren't even factors—and based on some rumors—it seems that firm. Murphy administration official and housing expert Katie Brennan—famous for a 2018 rape accusation against a top Murphy campaign aide has become clearly favored, leaving the second seat a tossup between Fulop/Jersey City's Jessica Ramirez, and Hoboken's Ravi Bhalla. Beyond this it would be a lie to say either was favored and—knowing the volatility of primaries—either could win
- LD-33 (D): I will refer to the Democrats for change candidate as the Sacco Slate and the HCDO as the Stack Slate—because that's what they are. A vicious intra party feud between the Italian-American North Bergen Boss and the Irish-American Union City boss, owing back to their three decade long louthing for each other (Cue What is this Feeling?) Their chosen gladiators are Firm North Bergen school board member Tony Hector & Firm. Union City GOP chairman Frank Alonso on behalf of Sacco, and Assemblyman Gabe Rodriguez & Businessman/2015/2019/2023 North Bergen Mayoral Candidate Larry Wainstein. Due to Stack's current turnout operation, and alliance with Albio Sires in West New York it is very likely his slate wins, but an upset by Sacco cannot be ruled out. Still, he's probably looking more to governor due to his dislike of

Steve Fulop; being instrumental in the Jersey City Mayor losing Backing in Hudson⁴² county and starting this Hudson Civil War.

- LD-35 (D): Due to the Ascension of Nellie Pou to Congress, and Benjie Wimberlie to the State Senate, and the retirement of Assemblywoman Shavonda Sumter this seat is fully open. Here, the County parties are backing Palestinian Assemblyman/Paterson Democratic Chair Al Abdelaziz and Passaic County Commissioner Orlando Cruz while Fulop & Baraka are backing Newark Corporation Counsel Kenyatta Stewart and Frm. Garfield Councilman Romi Herrera. Of note, Paterson voted for the non-Machine slate in the 2024 County Sheriff Primary so there's a decent chance Fulop's slate takes both seats, especially with the potential for racial voting as highlighted by the NJ Globe⁴³. Overall this primary is a tossup.
- LD-36 (R) In this newly Competitive Trump+5% District, the Bergen County Republican Organization is supporting Carlstadt Councilwoman Diane DeBiase and fr. Lyndhurst school board member Chris Musto against 2023 LD-36 Senate candidate Chris Auriemma and 2023 LD-36 Assembly candidate Craig Auriemma, who are running under the Combat Veterans Fighting for You Slate. Believing they can make gains if not oust Assemblymen Gary Schaer and Clinton Calabrese the BCRO hopes that they can beat the known commodity Auriemmas with their own, hopefully stronger candidates. While possible if the elected/former elected win, due in part to Down Ballot lag, Democratic-on-the-legislative level Orthodox-Jewish voters in Passaic City, and Strong Democratic Machines in Edgewater, Cliffside Park, Wood-Bridge, and Rutherford, even with both of the BCRO candidates this race would be an uphill climb, as also noted by

⁴² <https://archive.is/4uU7r>

⁴³ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/governor/heres-the-final-list-of-whos-running-for-n-j-governor-and-assembly-this-year/>

David Wildstein⁴⁴. Though upsets do happen (Just ask Senator Steve Sweeney!), but with the Auriemas—barring a ginormous Red Wave, and stronger-than-trump showing among Latinos by Jack—this seat would be all but fully off the table.

- LD-37 (D): The last likely-to-be competitive Legislative race on the Democratic side is the Palisades-centered LD-17. The core race here is between Muslim Assemblywoman Shama Haider and Fulop-aligned Jewish community leader from Teaneck Tamar Warburg, where Haider not supporting a pro-Israel resolution has sparked the controversy⁴⁵ that led to this challenge. Also on the Fulop Slate is Tenaflly Councilman Dan Park who will likely help the slate with Korean Americans in Tenaflly, Fort Lee, Palisades Park, and Leonia. Of note, the NJ Globe notes the possibility for a slate led by Yitz Stern and small business owner Rosemary Hernandez Carroll to be spoilers for the Fulop Slate. As one of My local seats, I have seen the efforts, of which The BCDO's outpace Fulop's, as such I believe that they are favored; though Haider and/or Ellen Park could potentially lose.
- LD-39 (R): A significant challenge from Frank Pallotta, who has—won off the line in this area before⁴⁶—the Bergen County Republican Organization is all hands on deck for Assemblymen Bob Auth and John Azzariti. Little has been published on this race but I will note its competitive nature; even if any result here would not surprise me.

Final Notes:

Beyond these, I will also be looking at some county races. Examples include the Bergen County Commisioner's race where Fulop is backing a Slate led by former Palisades Park Mayor

⁴⁴ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/the-inside-edge-with-david-wildstein/the-inside-edge-with-david-wildstein-gary-schaer-clinton-calabrese/>

⁴⁵ <https://jewishinsider.com/2025/05/tamar-warburg-new-jersey-legislature-jewish-community/>

⁴⁶ <https://newjerseyglobe.com/legislature/pallotta-joins-race-for-gop-assembly-nod-in-39th/>

David Chung, who lost renomination in 2022⁴⁷, a Slate in Somerset County⁴⁸, and Camden⁴⁹ among others. As well as another race in Hudson where Fulop is backing the incumbent Hudson County Sheriff Frank S. Schillari over Bayonne Mayor/HCDO candidate Jimmy Davis⁵⁰ in one of the most competitive primaries this cycle—where Schillari is attacking⁵¹ Davis over a “hostile work environment under the leadership of Davis, some racist and sexual in nature”⁵² Per the Jersey City Times and is supported by the HCDO dissenting Faction (led by Sacco and Fulop)⁵³.

Overall, The NJ Democratic machines have spent, and are working hard to earn renomination over an insurgent Fulop Slate. While I expect the machines to prevail in most of these contests, some, such as LD-32, LD-35, LD-37, and the Hudson Sheriff's race specifically are incredibly competitive, the rest, including the gubernatorial election, could see upsets which in turn could lead to a potential sea change in New Jersey. The Primary is this Tuesday so Buckle Up!

⁴⁷<https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/bergen/palisades-park/2022/06/08/palisades-park-nj-election-results-mayor-christopher-chung-loses-primary/7555411001/>

⁴⁸<https://newjerseyglobe.com/governor/fulop-unveils-county-commissioner-slates-in-bergen-somerset/>

⁴⁹<https://newjerseyglobe.com/governor/fulop-backs-insurgent-slate-in-camden/>

⁵⁰<https://newjerseyglobe.com/fl/governor-backs-jimmy-davis-for-hudson-sheriff-over-incumbent/>

⁵¹<https://hudsoncountyview.com/schillari-again-asks-davis-to-release-records-related-to-sexual-harassment-cases/>

⁵²<https://jcitytimes.com/hcdo-continues-to-back-davis-for-sheriff-as-schillari-attacks-rain-down/>

⁵³<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/bayonne/sections/elections/articles/sheriff-frank-x-schillari-s-bid-for-reelection-endorsed-by-7-hudson-county-mayors>