

AUG 28, 2022

Four Elections in New York

This is *The Weekly Letter* for August 28, 2022. [About this newsletter](#)

Please note that the newsletter is taking next week off; the next issue will be out on September 11.

Big Story

Primary elections for U.S. House in New York were supposed to take place on June 28. But a redistricting mess—New York’s highest court [rejected the maps](#) drawn by Democratic state lawmakers and appointed a specialist to redraw the state’s districts—pushed them to Tuesday. These are the results and storylines from three primaries, as well as one special general election.

NY-10 Dem primary: Dan Goldman prevailed in a primary for the redrawn New York City district that contains parts of Manhattan and Brooklyn. Goldman benefited from a split vote between several more left-leaning candidates, including Carlina Rivera, incumbent Rep. Mondaire Jones, who represents the current 17th district, and Yuh-Line Niou, who lost to Goldman by about 2% of the vote. Niou received the endorsement of the Working Families Party (WFP) and is considering running in the general election against Goldman on the WFP line. (Sources: [Politico](#); [Washington Post](#))

NY-12 Dem primary: Reps. Carolyn Maloney and Jerry Nadler both have similar, broadly progressive views, and they are both committee chairs in the House. However, because the redrawn maps placed them in the same district, there is now only room in Congress for one of them. As it turned out, Nadler won comfortably with 55% of the vote to Maloney’s 24%. Suraj Patel, who ran against Maloney in competitive primaries in 2018 and 2020, won 19% of the vote. (Sources: [NY Times](#), [NY Times election results](#); [Ballotpedia](#))

NY-17 Dem primary: Incumbent Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney—who is the chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee—fended off a left-wing challenge from Alessandra Biaggi to win the Democratic nomination for the redrawn southern Hudson Valley district. Maloney had been criticized by other Democrats for running in the same district as fellow incumbent Mondaire Jones (Jones decided to move to the 10th district rather than run against Maloney). Maloney was supported by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, while Biaggi was endorsed by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Although Maloney was the favorite, his 67%-33% win is a disappointment for the party’s left. Maloney bluntly said in his victory speech, "Tonight, mainstream won." (Source: [Politico](#))

NY-19 special general election: Democrat Pat Ryan beat Republican Marc Molinaro 51%-49% in this swing Hudson Valley district. In the wake of the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade*, Ryan focused on defending abortion rights, while Molinaro emphasized crime and inflation. The special election to fill the seat for the remaining four months of the congressional term was scheduled when former Rep. Antonio Delgado left to become Lieutenant Governor. Because of redistricting, the 19th district in its current form will not exist in the next Congress. So, as if Tuesday’s elections weren’t confusing enough, both Molinaro and Ryan also ran in—and won—primary elections. Molinaro won the Republican primary for the redrawn 19th district, while Ryan won the Democratic primary for the redrawn 18th district. (Sources: [Politico](#); [Ballotpedia](#))

The Democratic win in the NY-19 special election appears to be part of a larger trend. [According to FiveThirtyEight](#), Republican candidates slightly overperformed (relative to districts’ “partisan lean” as calculated by *FiveThirtyEight*) in special elections during the Biden presidency through June 14 of this year. Then, after the Supreme Court handed down the *Dobbs* decision which eliminated the constitutional right to an abortion, Democratic candidates began overperforming. In the four special elections since the decision (including in NY-19), Democrats have had a “margin swing” of +9 percent. This trend is one of the elements that suggest Democrats may avoid the usual midterm rebuke of the sitting president’s party. In an opinion piece, [E.J. Dionne Jr.](#) blames Republican complacency for allowing Democrats to regain momentum and quotes Republican pollster Whit Ayres: “Oh, the irony... that a Supreme Court with three new Trump appointees has ended up helping Democratic electoral fortunes.”

Opinion

Dominique Baker, John W. Diamond, and Terri Friedline: Perspectives on Biden’s [student debt relief](#) plan. (The Conversation, 8/24)

Kenneth Walker: There is now partial justice for [Breonna Taylor](#). (Washington Post, 8/25)

Raphael Tsavkko Garcia: Brazil’s police continue to wage [war on the poor](#). (Al Jazeera, 8/23)

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