

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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[ARTICLE]

Spectator's guide to the New York primary election

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GOVERNOR

Democratic Primary: Governor Mario Cuomo is expected to be fighting his most difficult re-election campaign ever when he tries to win a fourth term in November's general election. But first he needs to get past what many feel is only a token primary challenge from perennial candidate Lenora Fulani, a founding member of the New Alliance Party.

Republican Primary: While four New York State Republicans vied for the party's endorsement at its June convention, only two remain in the race to see who will oppose Cuomo in November. Freshman State Senator George Pataki, the former mayor of the City of Peekskill in Westchester County, is backed by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, and is generally considered the favorite. But if the electorate is dominated by old-line, liberal Republicans, former state Republican committee chair Richard Rosenbaum could pull off the upset.

- Pataki, 49, gained statewide attention when he went against the state senate's Republican leadership and voted against the state budget, saying that state spending should be cut further. He supports the death penalty and measures to protect the environment.

- Sixty-three-year-old Rosenbaum, an attorney and former state Supreme Court Justice, is running on a pledge to restore the death penalty, enact tougher crime-fighting laws, cut personal income taxes by 24 percent, limit welfare benefits, and protect abortion rights. While he is trying to win the Republican nomination, Rosenbaum has gathered enough petitions to form an independent party, the "Independence Fusion Party," and will appear on general election ballots regardless of whether he wins today.

UNITED STATES SENATE

Democratic Primary: The Reverend Al Sharpton is running for the Democratic nomination for U.S. Senate for the second time, after finishing third in a four-way primary in 1992. His support among black voters is strong, but he is unlikely to overcome the enormous popularity of the three-term incumbent chair of the Senate Finance Committee, Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

- Sharpton, 39, argues that Moynihan has been slow in converting his legislative power into benefits for New York state, and calls for a more liberal program than the incumbent, including advocacy for a single-payer health care plan.

- The 67-year-old Moynihan, who is the highest-ranking New York senator in years, points out the billions of dollars in federal grants to New York that he has secured, and supports reforming the federal welfare system and protecting New York's health care industry. He also recently proposed legislation that would make Social Security into an independent agency reporting directly to the president and Congress.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Democratic Primary: This is a hotly-contested four-way race between the incumbent, Oliver Koppell, a former member of the state assembly from the Bronx; Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes; Karen Burstein, who resigned from her job as a Family Court judge in order to run; and former Manhattan District Attorney Eliot Spitzer.

- Koppell, 53, who was appointed by the Assembly less than a year ago to finish the unexpired term of former Attorney General Robert Abrams, emphasizes his efforts in support of gun control, law enforcement, and consumer and environmental protection. While incumbency is usually a powerful tool, the fact that he was elected by the Assembly and not by the state's voters has not helped him establish strong name recognition throughout the state.

- Hynes, 59, who has run a "tough on crime" campaign epitomized by his slogan, "If we don't fight crime, no other fight matters," calls for expanding the role of attorney general beyond consumer and environmental protection into matters of public safety.

- Burstein, 52, the only woman in the field and the first open lesbian to run for a New York state office, has pledged to undertake a comprehensive anti-violence program targeting domestic violence through law enforcement and education. She supports tough environmental laws, Medicaid-funded abortions for poor women, and increased efforts

to counter illegal drug and gun trafficking. Burstein has already secured the Liberal party's nomination, so she will appear on the general election ballot regardless of the outcome of tomorrow's vote.

- Spitzer, 35, is the only candidate to support the death penalty. He is noted for a proposal to issue serial numbers to bullets so they can be traced, and claims he will: prosecute criminals who violate environmental laws, sentence violent juvenile offenders as adults, support abortion rights, support the denial of bail to repetitively violent felons, and aggressively prosecute consumer fraud and government corruption.

Most statewide polls have been unable to predict a winner in this race, and the candidate with the strongest "get out the vote" organization is likely to have a large advantage. There is no provision for a runoff, meaning that the eventual candidate could be elected with the support of only 25.01 percent of the state's registered Democrats before facing Republican-Conservative nominee Dennis Vacco, a former U.S. Attorney from Buffalo. The crowded field has left many contending that Burnstein, as the only woman in the race, and Hynes, as the only non-Jew, will have an advantage. Democratic primary voters are traditionally more liberal than their general election counterparts, and this may aid Burstein and Koppell, the most liberal candidates in the field.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

EIGHTH DISTRICT

Democratic Primary: This race pits three very liberal Manhattanites in a tight contest to represent a district that starts just south of Columbia and snakes along Manhattan's West Side, in addition to covering a strip of southern Brooklyn from Red Hook out to Brighton Beach.

- The incumbent, Columbia College alumnus Jerrold Nadler, 47, is a strong advocate of transportation infrastructure projects. Nadler is a gay rights and labor supporter who is both a conservationist and pro-choice.

- His chief opponent, City Councilmember Thomas Duane, 39, is the council's only openly gay and HIV-positive member. He has called for more AIDS research, better federal civil rights protection for gays and lesbians, and federal support for tenant rights.

Deborah Green, a co-founder of the New Alliance Party, rounds out the field.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

15TH DISTRICT

Democratic Primary: Longtime incumbent Charles Rangel is facing the toughest reelection campaign of his career, as he fights to continue representing the Columbia area, most of Harlem, and parts of the South Bronx.

- Rangel, 64, who is widely rumored to be a likely successor to House Ways and Means Committee Chair Dan Rostenkowski, has run with the slogan "Keep the Power." Rangel has won federal funding for hospitals, AIDS research, drug treatment, and veterans benefits, and was the chief sponsor and architect of federal Empowerment Zone legislation that will bring millions in federal funds into impoverished areas of six cities and three rural communities around the nation.

- Adam Clayton Powell IV, 32, son of the legendary Harlem politician Rangel beat in his first run for the House, says he is "angry for change" and has complained that Rangel has not used his influence effectively to help the district. Powell's Puerto Rican upbringing and fluent knowledge of Spanish is considered an advantage in a district in which Latinos are now the largest single group.

Albert Davis, 39, an entrepreneur from Central Harlem, is also on today's ballot.

At a glance

Office: Governor

Term: Four years

District: Statewide

Democratic Primary candidates:

Mario Cuomo (incumbent)

Lenora Fulani

Republican Primary candidates:

George Pataki

Richard M. Rosenbaum

At a glance

Office: United States Senator

Term: Six years

District: Statewide

Democratic Primary candidates:

Daniel P. Moynihan (incumbent)

The Rev. Al Sharpton

At a glance

Office: Attorney General

Term: Four years

District: Statewide

Democratic Primary candidates:

Karen S. Burstein

Charles J. Hynes

Oliver Koppell (incumbent)

Eliot Spitzer

At a glance

Office: U.S. Representative,
Eighth District

Term: Two years

District: West Side of Manhattan,
south of Columbia. Parts of Red
Hook, Brighton Beach, and Sheeps-
head Bay in Brooklyn.

Democratic Primary candidates:

Thomas K. Duane

Deborah Green

Jerrold Nadler (incumbent)

At a glance

Office: U.S. Representative,
15th District

Term: Two years

District: Harlem, Washington and
Morningside Heights in Manhattan.
Part of Astoria in Queens.

Democratic Primary candidates:

Albert Davis

Adam Clayton Powell IV

Charles Rangel (incumbent)