

# Know Before You Go: NJ-03 District Primer

*June 2018 • Researched, summarized, and edited by Swing Left's all-volunteer research team!*

**In the last election, Republican Tom MacArthur won this district by 59% of the vote.** With your help, we're going to win this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

## About the Incumbent

**Introduction:** Republican Tom MacArthur is running for his third term. Prior to Congress, he worked in health insurance at a claims management company. Formerly a member of the moderate Republican Tuesday Group, he resigned over differences with other members. MacArthur does not receive high ratings from the most conservative advocacy groups.

**Issues:** MacArthur voted in favor of TrumpCare, proposing an amendment that allowed states to waive Obamacare's ban on limiting coverage for people with pre-existing conditions while allowing insurers to charge sick people higher premiums (the MacArthur Amendment). He was the only member of the NJ delegation to vote in favor of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, which others asserted will have an adverse impact on NJ taxpayers.

**Strengths:** MacArthur has done well in the past two elections and is wealthy enough to put millions of his own dollars into his campaign. He champions many initiatives, e.g., fighting drug addiction, economic growth & jobs, future funding of local air force base, social security & Medicare, immigration reform with secure borders, veterans' benefits, flood insurance. He tends to focus on issues of local importance to his constituents.

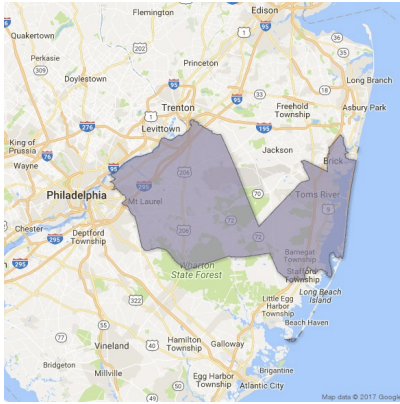
**Potential Weaknesses:** MacArthur was harshly criticized his constituents in town halls and during demonstrations in response to his support of the American Healthcare Act of 2017 (TrumpCare). He opposes common-sense gun control, abortion rights, and tax increases for the wealthy. Although he's supported several programs that would benefit FL-15, it's difficult to understand how he would pay for them, given his support of the Trump tax cuts and his opposition to federal spending in general. It's unclear if his strong support of Trump will play well in his district, given the President's unpopularity in the state.

## About the Challenger

**Introduction:** Democrat Andy Kim has spent his career as a public servant focused on foreign policy and national security issues. The son of South Korean immigrants, he grew up in Marlton and Cherry Hill. He attended Deep Springs College in California and the University of Chicago. During his time as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, he studied U.S. policy on Iraq. From 2013 until 2015 he served as President Obama's National Security Council Iraq director, and before that he was the Iraq director at the Pentagon within the Defense Secretary's office. He also served in Afghanistan under Gen. David Petraeus and Gen. John Allen.

**Issues:** In contrast to MacArthur, Kim favors expanding access to health care, including lowering prescription drug costs, promoting universal health coverage, providing permanent funding for the Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP), protecting access to health care for people with pre-existing conditions, and supporting community health centers. He supports a wide range of other measures as well, including programs to help veterans, to improve infrastructure, to lower taxes for the middle class, and to grow small businesses, along with investments in education, and the cessation of offshore drilling in response to climate change, among others.

**Strengths:** Though a newcomer to politics, Kim is a native of New Jersey and has seen increased popularity, marked by an impromptu town hall with nearly 100 people in attendance. He will bring his counterterrorism expertise to Congress and has promised to fight for affordable health care, equal pay, net neutrality, and a range of other issues affecting Americans daily. Kim has been endorsed by End Citizens United, MoveOn, Planned Parenthood, and the Sierra Club, to name a few.



## NJ-03: Better Know the District

### Geography

Southern New Jersey's 3rd District hugs the Delaware River and the Philadelphia suburbs to the west (most of Burlington County, 36 towns); to the east, it spans the conservative-leaning Pine Barrens and Ocean County (17 towns) on the Jersey shore. Most communities have fewer than 10,000 residents. The district's primary population centers are Brick (75,000) and Berkeley (41,000) in Ocean, and Evesham (45,000) in Burlington. Portions of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4th Congressional districts also cross these county boundaries.

### Citizenry

NJ-03's population was 746,035 as of 2017, and is largely white (77.2%); the next largest group is Black (10.5%) and then Hispanic (6.7%). Over 90% were born in the US. The median household income is \$73,500. The unemployment rate is 6.3%, and 5% of households are on food stamps.

### Elections

MacArthur is described as a Libertarian-leaning conservative. In 2014 he defeated Aimee Belgard in 2014 (54% to 44%; 100,471 to 82,537 votes) and succeeded a Republican congressman who retired. He spent \$5 million of his own money on that campaign. In 2016, he defeated Frederick Lavergne (59% to 39%; 194,596 to 127,526 votes). Although Obama carried the district in 2008 and 2012, Trump won it by six points in 2016. The district is seen as "leaning Republican" despite the fact registered Democrats outnumber their Republican counterparts by 10,000 (150,000 Democrats versus 140,000 Republicans). Democrat John Adler represented the district from 2009 to 2011.

### Higher Education

31% of residents hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.

### Industries

Health care accounts for 14.9% of jobs in the area, followed by retail (12.6%), education (10.4%), and government (7.5%). Burlington County includes much of the 42,000-acre Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, a military facility that includes the entire Air Force Activity/Headquarters of McGuire Air Force Base, and all of the main portions of the Army Support Activity. Fort Dix and most training grounds and shooting ranges lie within the county borders in New Hanover, North Hanover, Pemberton, and Springfield townships.

## NJ-03: Facts & Stats

### Population Centers

- Brick, 75,00
- Evesham, 45,000
- Berkeley, 41,000

### 2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 45%
- Trump: 51%

### 2016 House Results

- Lavergne (D): 39%
- MacArthur (R): 60%

### 2014 House Results

- Belgard (D): 44%
- MacArthur (R): 54%