

Know Before You Go: NJ-07 District Primer

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In the last election, Republican Leonard Lance won this district by 38,000 votes (11%). With your help, can flip this seat for the Democrats in 2018!

About the Incumbent

Introduction: Republican Leonard Lance has served NJ-07 since 2009. Previously, he served in the New Jersey State Senate from 2002 to 2009 and the state General Assembly from 1991 to 2002. Lance began his career as a moderate Republican, at times voting against his party. In recent years, he has become more conservative, possibly due to fear of a Tea Party challenger.

Committees: Lance serves on the House Energy & Commerce Committee and its Digital Commerce & Consumer Protection Subcommittee. In 2017 he was selected to serve on the House Ethics Committee.

Recent Elections: Lance is one of only 23 Republicans who won a congressional district that favored Clinton in 2016. Lance greatly outfunded his 2016 opponent, Democrat Peter Jacob, and Lance won by about 38,000 votes (54% to Jacob's 43%). More than half of the district (about 302,000 constituents) did not vote at all. The 2014 election saw a lower turnout, with about 175,000 votes cast (59% for Lance and 38% for Democrat Janice Kovach). NJ-07 has not been represented by a Democrat since 1981.

Strengths: Lance is in his fifth consecutive term, so he has experience, name recognition, and a reputation for strong constituent services. He portrays himself as a moderate and is vocal about issues where he disagrees with Trump. While some constituents perceive this as standing up to Trump, he has actually voted with Trump 93% of the time.

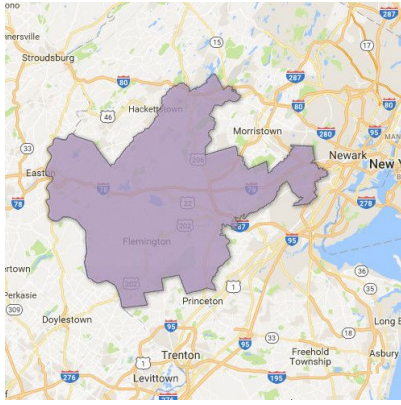
Potential Weaknesses: Lance's moderate talk versus his conservative voting record is key. While NJ-07 values environmental protection, and Lance voted in favor of the 2009 American Clean Energy & Security Act, he regularly votes along party lines to block environmental initiatives. Other sources of weakness include his efforts to repeal ACA and defund Planned Parenthood.

About the Challenger

Introduction: Democrat Tom Malinowski was born in Poland and came to the U.S. when he was six. A graduate of Princeton High School, he earned a B.A. in Political Science from U.C. Berkeley and a MA of Philosophy from Oxford. Tom interned for Senator Moynihan, was a speechwriter for Secretaries of State Christopher and Albright, and served on the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department. Tom also served as Bill Clinton's National Security Council Senior Director. After that, he was Director for Human Rights Watch in D.C. and was Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor under President Obama.

Issues: Tom Malinowski will protect and expand the ACA, including adding a public option, supports gun safety laws and will not take support from the NRA. He supports Planned Parenthood and women's reproductive rights, equal pay, and has zero-tolerance for sexual harassment in Congress. He supports climate change laws, and bills to protect the air and water and to create green jobs. He supports LGBTQ rights and will expand anti-discrimination laws to address gender identity and sexual orientation. He will protect Dreamers and will push law enforcement to monitor white supremacist groups. He will replace the regressive Republican tax law with one that lowers rates for the middle class, closes loopholes, and reduces the deficit.

Strengths: In a district which houses some of the last moderate Republicans, Malinowski is a great fit, being socially liberal and fiscally centrist. His life's work in human rights and women's rights will likely be well received by the district's progressive voters. His support of the ACA and a public option addresses many voters concerns about their healthcare. His call to repeal the latest Republican tax bill will help voters who feel squeezed by New Jersey's high tax rate. His long experience in D.C. can help him navigate the ins and outs of Democratic politics, and his work in the Obama administration could help him with voters who supported the President in '08 and '12.



NJ-07: Better Know the District

Geography

A wealthy and well-educated district, NJ-07 covers a diverse mix of geography. The westernmost county of Hunterdon stretches to the Pennsylvania border and includes both farmland and affluent suburbs made up of Philadelphia and New York City commuters. The easternmost towns are more moderate and are served by several commuter lines into NYC. NJ-07 is predominantly white (79%), followed by Asian (10%), and then black (5%). Ethnicity is 10% Hispanic. Median household income is \$141,966. Dover, in Morris County, is a growing town and has become majority minority with a significant Latino community, many small businesses (including manufacturing/engineering firms), and is a Democratic stronghold.

NJ-07: Facts & Stats

Population Centers

- Bridgewater, 44,464
- Hillsborough, 38,303
- Union Township (partial), 31,611
- Westfield, 30,316
- Mount Olive Township, 28,117

2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 181K (49%)
- Trump: 176K (48%)

2016 House Results

- Jacob (D): 148K (43%)
- Lance (R): 186K (54%)
- Other: 10K (3%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 181K
- Eligible, not registered: 121K

2014 House Results

- Kovach (D): 68K (39%)
- Lance (R): 104K (59%)
- Other: 3K (2%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 322K

Elections

Strongly Republican Hunterdon county voted 40% for Clinton but only 34% for Lance's Democratic challenger, Peter Jacob. Somerset and Union counties voted 54% and 66% for Clinton and 44% and 48% for Jacob, respectively. Despite lack of support for Trump, Republicans in these districts voted for Lance. The district went Romney in 2012, Obama in 2008, and Bush in 2004 and 2000.

Higher Education

Raritan Valley Community College serves Hunterdon and Somerset county. It is a two-year commuter college with approximately 8,500 enrolled.

Industries

While a large percentage of constituents commute to New York City, the largest industries in the district are insurance, hospitals, healthcare, and pharmaceutical. The top employers are Merck, J&J, Atlantic Health, Novartis, Metlife, Prudential, RW Johnson Health, and Barnabas Health.

Issues

Environmental issues such as the PennEast Pipeline (slated to go through Hunterdon and Mercer Counties) are important to constituents. High property taxes and the expense of commuting via an antiquated system (Governor Chris Christie cancelled the ARC tunnel expansion in 2010) are important issues to the large commuter constituency. Trump's Bedminster Golf Club in NJ-07 is a potential issue for constituents as Trump visits strain the area financially and logistically due to security requirements.