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Know Before You Go: NJ-11 District Primer

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In the last election, Republican Rodney Frelinghuysen won this district by 19% but President Trump won by less than 1%. With your help, we're going to win this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

About the Incumbent

Introduction: **Republican Jay Webber** is a 5-term State Assemblyman representing New Jersey's 26th district, which includes communities is Essex, Morris, and Passaic counties. He also served as Chair of the state Republican party from 2009-2011. He lives with his wife and seven children in Morris Plains and practices law in Whippany.

Issues: Webber supports "cutting taxes" and "permanent tax relief" but doesn't specify a position on the recent tax bill passed by Congress; he also advocates for a balanced federal budget and federal spending caps. On immigration, he opposes sanctuary cities and wants to address border security before addressing status of DACA recipients. On foreign policy, Webber supported ending the Iran deal and the move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. Webber is anti-abortion and opposes federal funding of Planned Parenthood. As an Assemblyman, he co-sponsored the New Jersey Healthcare Choice Act, which would permit health insurers licensed in other states to provide coverage in New Jersey under certain circumstances. In 2017 he had a 93% approval rating from the National Rifle Association (NRA).

Recent Elections: Webber won the Republican primary for the NJ-11 seat with 40% of the vote in a field of five; he led the second place finisher by 10%.

Strengths: Registered Republicans outnumber Democrats in the district by 2%, but 40% are unaffiliated with either party. Most of the towns in Webber's Assembly district are part of NJ-11, giving him good name recognition.

Potential Weaknesses: Webber is extremely conservative in a state that has traditionally favored moderates. In the primary, Republican turnout lagged behind Democrats by 4,348 votes, suggesting a possible enthusiasm gap in the race. Webber received less than half as many votes in the primary as did his Democratic opponent, Mikie Sherrill.

About the Challenger

Introduction: **Democrat Mikie Sherrill** is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and Georgetown University Law School. She was a pilot in the U.S. Navy for ten years and later worked as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey. She lives in Montclair with her husband and four children. This is her first campaign for public office.

Issues: Sherrill opposes all of the Trump administration's signature issues: the recent tax bill, the rolling back of environmental regulations, withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, and attempts to destabilize the healthcare marketplace. She strongly supports reproductive rights and federal funding for Planned Parenthood. On the issue of gun violence, she supports universal criminal background checks and a federal assault weapons ban, as well as limits on the ability of suspected terrorists and convicted domestic abusers to purchase firearms.

Strengths: Merrill raised $2.8 million for her primary race and is poised to continue raising money at that rate for the general election race. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has designated her as one of their "Red to Blue" candidates in targeted swing districts, further raising her national profile and fundraising capacity. She won in a Democratic primary field of 5 candidates with a whopping 77.5% of the vote. While in late January 2018 the Cook Political Report rated the NJ-11 race as a toss-up, after the primary it reclassified NJ-11 as "lean Democratic."

Learn more at **swingleft.org/resources/NJ-11**

NJ-11: Facts & Stats

Population Centers
- Parsipanny-Troy Hills, 53,000
- Bloomfield, 49,000
- Montclair, 39,000
- Nutley, 29,000
- Morris, 23,000
- Montville, 22,000

2016 Presidential Results
- Clinton: 47.9%
- Trump: 48.8%

2016 House Results
- Wenzel (D): 38.9%
- Frelinghuysen (R): 58%

2014 House Results
- Dunec (D): 37.4%
- Frelinghuysen (R): 62.6%

NJ-11: Better Know the District

Geography
The district contains most of Morris County, excluding the southwest townships of Chester, Mount Olive, and Washington. NJ-11 also covers smaller portions of Essex County to the east (including parts of Montclair and Bloomfield), Sussex County to the northwest, and Passaic County to the northeast (including Wayne township).

Demographics
NJ-11 is the state's wealthiest and most educated district, with a median household income of over $108,000. Over half (54%) of all residents over 25 have a BA degree or higher. The district is 82% white, compared to the state average of 68%, and only 3% black, compared to 13% statewide. The district's Hispanic population of 11% is well below the state average of 20%. 18% of the district is foreign born, not far below 23% for New Jersey as a whole.

Elections
The district has been held by a Republican since 1984, when Dean Gallo defeated 22-year incumbent Democrat Joseph Minish following a redistricting that shifted the district from Essex to Morris County. Frelinghuysen secured the Republican nomination for the open seat after Gallo's death in 1994. He has won easily in every election since, the closest being an 18-point victory in 2012. NJ-11 is known for its economic conservatism, and went to George W. Bush, John McCain and Mitt Romney by at least five points in recent presidential elections. Donald Trump, however, only narrowly defeated Hillary Clinton here by a one-point margin.

Industry
The district is home to several large white-collar firms, including Nabisco, headquartered in East Hanover, and Honeywell in Morris Plains. The pharmaceutical industry also has a large presence, with Pfizer and Novartis both operating extensively in Morris County. NJ-11 is also home to many commuters to New York City.

Higher Education
There are seven private and public colleges and universities in NJ-11 including: County College of Morris; College of St. Elizabeth; Drew University; Caldwell College; Montclair State University; Berkeley College and William Paterson University with a combined total of approximately 45,000 students. Montclair and William Patterson represent over half the student population with approximately 26,000 students.