SwingLeft

Know Before You Go: NY-03 District Primer

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In the last election, Democrat Tom Suozzi won this district by only 17,000 votes (6%).
That's too close! With your help, we're going to keep this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

About the Incumbent

Introduction: **Democrat Tom Suozzi** is NY-03's freshman representative. He succeeded Democrat Steve Israel, who retired after 16 years. A familiar face in New York politics, Suozzi was Nassau County Executive and mayor of Glen Cove, and ran for governor in 2006, losing to Eliot Spitzer in the primaries. As Nassau County Executive, Suozzi created and retained thousands of jobs, sparking county-wide economic development. Suozzi's efforts to allocate tax revenue towards infrastructure within NY-03 is popular amongst constituents. Suozzi is passionate about the environment and working to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil.

Committees: Suozzi serves on the House Armed Services Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee. So far, he has not been the primary sponsor of any bills, but he has co-sponsored 22, some of which have focused on redistricting reform, support for Israel, resources for veterans, funding for immigration-related legal services, expanding Medicare coverage, and investigating the president's financial practices.

Recent Elections: Suozzi is in his first term and won by a margin of less than 17,000 votes. The district narrowly leans Democratic in presidential elections.

Strengths: Suozzi's strengths include his experience in public office, having served as county executive and mayor. His experience and approachability make him a popular candidate. In Congress, Suozzi is known for supporting clean energy and environmental protection, Medicare and Social Security, measures that support veterans, and affordable education and healthcare. His commitment to jobs and infrastructure has bipartisan support. NY-03 includes parts of highly diverse Queens, and Suozzi has introduced himself to constituents in Hindi, Hebrew, Italian, Polish, Chinese, and Korean.
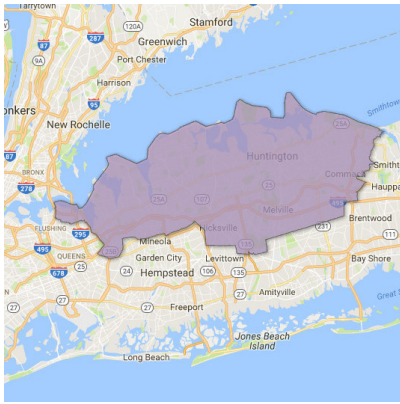
About the Challenger

Introduction: **Republican Dan DeBono** has lived in Northport, NY all his life and comes from a family of Army veterans. DeBono himself served in the US Navy during Gulf War I and Bosnia. He spent most of his career in finance and investing, advising large media and telecommunication companies before becoming an institutional investor for public pension funds, university endowments, and other individuals and institutions. DeBono currently serves as a committeeman for the Town of Huntington Republican Committee and has assisted both Mitt Romney and Rudy Giuliani in their presidential campaigns.

Issues: Dan DeBono is running on a platform focused on strengthening middle-class jobs and middle-class wages through increasing competition, fostering small business growth, and deregulation. He also supports increasing funding for the military and veterans, modernizing infrastructure, and protecting the 2nd Amendment.

Strengths: Constituents in NY-03, where taxes are high, may be drawn to a candidate promising to lower them. NY-03's Long Island region includes wealthy voters as well as more middle- and upper-middle-class voters, to whom a candidate with finance and investment backgrounds may appeal. In addition, the predominately white district may lean towards DeBono's anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Potential Weakness: As the national conversation heats up around immigration policy, DeBono is portraying Suozzi as favoring "open borders," and therefore disloyal to the US and destructive to American families. This positioning is likely to alienate voters in ethnically diverse Queens neighborhoods in NY-03. DeBono's support of Trump's immigration stance and the disrespect Trump shows for our European allies could be negatives for district voters.

Learn more at **swingleft.org/resources/NY-03**

NY-03: Facts & Stats

Population Centers
- Oyster Bay, 297,000
- Huntington, 204,000
- Smithtown, 118,000
- Hicksville, 42,000
- East Meadow, 38,000
- Commack, 36,000
- Glen Cove, 27,000

2016 Presidential Results
- Clinton: 178K (52%)
- Trump: 157K (46%)

2016 House Results
- Suozzi (D): 163K (53%)
- Martins (R): 146K (47%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 240K
- Eligible, not registered: 112K

2014 House Results
- Israel (D): 90K (55%)
- Lally (R): 74K (45%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 337K

NY-03: Better Know the District

Geography
NY-03 covers three counties: a sliver of northeastern Queens, the northern half of Nassau, and northwestern Suffolk. The district is mostly made up of large (100K+) and mid-size (20K-45K) suburban towns and is within commuting distance to NYC.

Citizenry
District 3 is predominantly white, non-Latino (70%), with significant Asian (14.2%) and Latino (10.4%) minorities. There are several very wealthy areas with multimillion dollar homes along the coastline in addition to more middle- and upper-middle-class areas. The neighborhoods in Queens are very diverse, with a strong Democratic majority. Nassau and Suffolk Counties lean slightly Democratic but are much more divided politically, and the margin is tight. Canvassing may require several strategies to reach the ultra-wealthy, middle-class, and working-class residents of Long Island.

Elections
NY-03 leans Democratic in presidential elections. Clinton won in 2016 with 52%, and Obama won in 2012 with 51%. New York was redistricted in 2013, and NY-03 was redrawn significantly.

Higher Education
There are six colleges and universities in the district, with the largest being SUNY Farmingdale (9,000 students), followed by Long Island University (8,500 students), State University of New York College at Old Westbury (4,300 students), NYIT at Old Westbury (undisclosed, but estimated under 5,000), and the United States Merchant Marine Academy (1,000). Students are a great organizing resource and could be mobilized for voter registration efforts and canvassing.

Industries
Educational services, health care, and social assistance are the leading industries in NY-03, employing more than one-quarter of residents. Another quarter of residents are employed in a combination of finance, insurance, real estate, professional, scientific, management, and administrative and waste management services. Retail employs about 10% of the population.