

Know Before You Go: NY-22 District Primer

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

In the last election, Republican Claudia Tenney won this district by only 15,178 votes (5.5%). That's close! With your help, we're going to win this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

About the Incumbent

Introduction: Republican Claudia Tenney won her first term as NY-22's representative in 2016. She calls herself the top conservative legislator in New York and has been endorsed by the Tea Party and NRA. She was a New York State assemblywoman from 2010 to 2016. She was also a lawyer and conservative talk-radio host in Utica.

Issues: Tenney overwhelmingly supports Trump's positions. She has promised to repeal Obamacare and Dodd-Frank.

Committees: Tenney sits on the House Committee on Financial Services.

Recent Elections: In 2016, Tenney won the three-way Republican primary for NY-22 with 44% of the vote. The general election for NY-22 was also a three-way race that Tenney won with 129,444 votes (46.5%). Her opponent, Democrat Kim Myers, got 114,266 votes (41.1%) and a third-party candidate got 34,638 votes (12.4%).

Strengths: After six years as a New York state assemblywoman, Tenney is an experienced legislator. As a conservative talk-radio host, she is a strong public speaker. A vocal Trump supporter, her positioning as a political outsider makes her popular in NY-22 where Trump won.

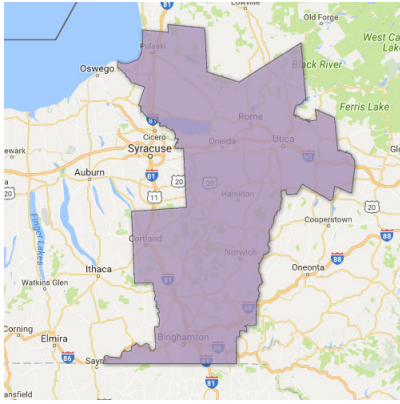
Potential Weaknesses: Her far-right positions, vocal support for an unpopular administration, and public record of partisan statements make her too extreme for NY-22. Tenney supports Trump's restrictive refugee policies, even though Utica, the largest city in NY-22, has a refugee population of more than 16,000. Tenney also supports repealing Obamacare and replacing it with an unproven free-market solution.

About the Challenger

Introduction: Democrat Anthony Brindisi was born, raised, and still lives in Utica, NY. He attended Mohawk Community College and earned a BA from Siena College and a JD from Albany Law School. He served on the Utica School Board and has represented the deep-blue 119th NY State Assembly District, comprising the urban core of Rome/Utica, since 2011. Brindisi is a named partner at Brindisi, Murad, Brindisi and Pearlman, a law firm founded by his father. He is married with two children.

Issues: Brindisi wants to end big money in politics and, unlike his opponent, has refused to accept corporate PAC money. A strong supporter of public education, he would increase funding for public education, especially in underfunded school districts, early childhood education, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) for those not college-bound, as well as easing burdensome student debt. Brindisi would protect Social Security and Medicare from attempts to privatize or reduce benefits, and would lower prescription drug prices by allowing Medicare to bargain directly with Big Pharma. He would increase funding to fight the opioid epidemic. Brindisi supports the ACA. He supports investing in research to create clean energy jobs that support middle-class families and protect the environment, and he believes that government should partner with entrepreneurs to encourage investment and job creation. Brindisi supports improvements to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) and supports universal gun background checks across the country.

Strengths: Brindisi is a moderate Democrat whose campaign is designed to appeal to the political center. He stresses his ability to work across party lines. The loss of his mother to cancer at an early age has made him personally passionate about health care issues, and his service on the Utica School Board makes him a credible spokesman for public education. He's been endorsed by End Citizens United and Gabby Giffords.



NY-22: Better Know the District

NY-22: Facts & Stats

Population Centers

- Utica, 62,235
- Binghamton, 47,376
- Rome, 33,725
- Cortland, 19,504
- Johnson City, 15,174
- Endicott, 13,392

2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 114K (39%)
- Trump: 159K (55%)

2016 House Results

- Myers (D): 114K (41%)
- Tenney (R): 129K (46%)
- Other: 35K (13%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 175K
- Eligible, not registered: 116K

2014 House Results

- Hanna (R): 130K (74%)
- Blank/Void: 45K (26%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 309K

Geography

NY-22 covers more than 5,000 square miles of central New York and has two large metro areas: Binghamton in the southern part and Utica-Rome in the northern part. Between them lies the city of Cortland. Driving from Utica-Rome to Binghamton takes two hours. The rest of the district is predominantly rural, with some small cities, and a number of towns and villages along the three main State Routes 5, 8, and 12 and Interstate 81 in the western part of the district.

Citizenry

NY-22 has a little more than 700,000 residents, with 85% living in the three main metro areas. The other 15% are spread across rural towns and villages. Registered Republicans and Democrats are roughly 50/50 in the urban areas, but the rural areas are strongly Republican. More than 25% of the population earns less than \$25,000 annually. The district is mostly white, with just over 12% African American, Hispanic, Asian, and other (almost evenly split).

Elections

NY-22 was redistricted in 2010 and currently leans Republican. When accounting for its current district lines, the area went for Republican presidential candidates in the last three races. Trump won by 16%. The district was, however, represented by a Democrat for one term after the redistricting (2011-2013).

Higher Education

There are eight colleges and universities in NY-22, some public and some private. SUNY Binghamton, SUNY Cortland, and SUNY Polytechnic Institute–Utica Campus have more than 20,000 students combined. Mohawk Valley Community College and SUNY/Broome County Community College have more than 14,000 combined. Colgate University, Utica College, and Hamilton College have more than 9,100 students total.

Industries

The top five industries providing employment in NY-22 are health care and social assistance, retail trade, manufacturing, accommodation and food services, and finance and insurance. Binghamton University and Lourdes Hospital/Health Care system are the two largest employers in the Binghamton area. Turning Stone Resort and Casino (the region's largest employer) and Mohawk Valley Health Network are large employers in Utica-Rome.

Tourism

Tourism is not a large part of the district's economy. However, NY-22 is the home of a few regionally notable destinations, including the Bundy Museum, Turning Stone Resort and Casino, the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, and the Fort Stanwix National Monument.