

Know Before You Go: NY-24 District Primer

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In the last election, Republican John Katko won 58% of the vote in 2016. With your help, we're going to win this seat for Democrats in 2018.

About the Incumbent

Introduction: Republican John Katko is a 2nd term congressman and former Assistant U.S. Attorney. While Katko is described as a moderate Republican, he has voted with Trump's position 90% of the time.

Issues: He opposes the ACA, calling it "the poster-child for government incompetence." Katko said he would tackle the district's opioid epidemic and poverty.

Committees: Katko serves on the Homeland Security, Transportation, and Infrastructure committees. He chairs the Transportation and Protective Security subcommittee.

Recent Elections: Katko beat incumbent Dan Maffei in 2014 by 20%, the largest margin for an incumbent that year, and was decisively reelected in 2016 against challenger Colleen Deacon.

Strengths: Katko was one of only 20 House Republicans to vote against TrumpCare, arguing that it was at best a partial replacement and citing the proposed measure's financial burden to his constituents. He is an effective legislator, authoring in his first term 14 bills that cleared the House and two that became law: HR719, which continues FY2016 appropriations to federal agencies and HR720, to improve intergovernmental planning for and communication during security incidents at domestic airports.

Potential Weakness: Despite being anti-choice, Katko promised on his 2014 campaign not to defund Planned Parenthood. Nevertheless, in 2015, he voted to do just that, in response to undercover videos that were later shown to be fraudulent. During the 2016 election, Katko called for Trump to leave the race after the Access Hollywood tapes surfaced; this could rile die-hard Trump supporters.

About the Challenger

Introduction: Democrat Dana Balter is a public policy professor at Syracuse University. Her academic research focuses on accountability in government, education policy, and public finance; she has taught courses in citizenship, policy, administration, and democracy. Following the November 2016 election, Balter began working as a community organizer to advance a progressive agenda in Central New York. This is her first run for public office.

Issues: Balter's top campaign issue is guaranteeing quality healthcare for all; she wants to preserve the Affordable Care Act while also working toward a Medicare-for-All system. On the economy, Balter points to the region's manufacturing history as a foundation for investing in green industries, such as the production of solar panels and wind turbines, arguing that a green economy will create better-paying, more dependable jobs for central New York. Balter supports closing tax loopholes for corporations and wealthy individuals as well as collecting taxes owed on offshore corporate profits. She highlights the need to reform the criminal justice system with a renewed focus on rehabilitation and fairness as well as the elimination of cash bail, excessive fines and fees, and private probation. On education, Balter's focus is on equitable, high-quality, fully-funded public schools; she also supports the establishment of universal pre-K so that all children have the foundation needed to succeed.

Strengths: Balter has an extensive network of grassroots supporters and volunteers in the district and has been endorsed by both local and national progressive groups, including the National Organization for Women, Indivisible, and the New York Progressive Action Network. Balter also has the support of all local Democratic parties and won more than 62% of the Democratic Primary vote.



NY-24: Facts & Stats

Largest Cities

- Syracuse, 145,151
- Auburn, 27,590
- Oswego, 18,158
- Fulton, 11,906

2016 Presidential Results

- Trump: 45%
- Clinton: 49%

2016 House Results

- Katko (R): 183K (58%)
- Deacon (D): 119K (38%)

2014 House Results

- Katko (R): 112K (60%)
- Maffei (D): 75K (40%)

NY-24: Better Know a District

Geography

NY-24 is made up of Onondaga, Cayuga, and Wayne counties and half of Oswego county. NY-24 was redistricted in 2013 resulting in the current boundaries. About 65% of the district's population lives in Onondaga County with the rest of the population spread through mostly rural areas, making NY-24 one of the least dense districts in New York. Many of the cities in this area were founded because of proximity to the Erie Canal and those cities now sit along the I-90 or I-81 corridors.

Citizenry

While the city of Syracuse is somewhat diverse, Cayuga, Oswego and Wayne counties are 90%+ white. The district is primarily rural with only the Syracuse-metro area being densely populated, so there will be significant differences in the living experiences and backgrounds of residents. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, the unemployment rate is 6.6%. The most commonly achieved level of education is a high school diploma or equivalency and the median household income is \$55,014. Based on the 2015 ACS 14.6% of all people and 9.8% of families in NY-24 live below the poverty line.

Elections

NY-24 has voted Democrat in the last three Presidential elections, but prior to that was mixed. Hillary Clinton won the district with 48.9% of the vote to Trump's 45.3%.

Higher Education

Syracuse University has an enrollment of 21,000+. Other colleges include: SUNY-ESF, SUNY Upstate Medical University, LeMoyne College, and SUNY Oswego.

Industries

Health care is the largest industry in NY-24, employing 21,000+ in Onondaga County alone. Education is the second largest industry with Syracuse University employing 4,600+ and local school districts, community colleges, and other higher learning facilities are top employers in other areas. Retail is the third most popular industry with large employers like Wegman's, WalMart, Price Chopper, and Home Depot. Carrier Corporation was the largest manufacturer in New York state in the 1970s. Production moved out of the area and it now employs about 1,300 at the DeWitt campus.

Tourism

The Great New York State fair is held at the Fairgrounds in Syracuse every summer attracting more than 1,000,000 attendees during its 13 day duration [LINK](#). Part of the Finger Lakes region is located in Cayuga and Onondaga counties which brings in visitors to see the waterfalls, gorges, lakes, and wineries.