

# [***Democrats retain upstate New York congressional seat in special election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXK-6PN1-JC5B-G057-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Democratic state Sen. Timothy Kennedy won a special election Tuesday for the New York congressional seat vacated by Democrat Brian Higgins.

Kennedy easily defeated Republican Gary Dickson for the upstate New York seat, helped by a 2-to-1 Democratic registration advantage in the district, which includes Buffalo, Niagara Falls and several suburbs.

Kennedy has been in the state Senate since 2011. Describing Washington as “chaotic and dysfunctional,” he said he would focus in Congress on reproductive rights, immigration and stronger gun laws like those passed in New York after a 2022 [*mass shooting*](https://apnews.com/hub/buffalo-supermarket-shooting) at a Buffalo supermarket.

“We need to elect pro-democracy, anti-MAGA candidates all around the country this November,” Kennedy said in a victory speech, “and it starts here in this room in Buffalo, New York, tonight.”

Registration wasn’t Kennedy’s only advantage. The Democrat raised $1.7 million as of April 10, compared with Dickson’s $35,430 total, according to [*campaign finance reports*](https://www.fec.gov/data/elections/house/NY/26/2024/). Kennedy spent just over $1 million in the off-season election, compared with $21,000 for Dickson as the candidates worked to remind voters to go to the polls.

Kennedy will serve in Congress for the rest of the year. He is on the ballot, along with Republican attorney Anthony Marecki, for the general election. On Tuesday, former town supervisor Nate McMurray, who planned to challenge Kennedy in a Democratic primary in June, said in a social media post that elections officials had removed him from the ballot because of insufficient signatures.

Earlier this year, the GOP’s slim House majority was narrowed in a closely contested Long Island-area [*special election*](https://apnews.com/article/george-santos-suozzi-pilip-special-election-be0140979ca3050921579e90507bfe1f) that followed New York Republican George Santos’ expulsion from Congress. That race, won by Democrat Tom Suozzi, was viewed as a test of the parties’ general election strategies on immigration and abortion.

Dickson, a retired FBI special agent, acknowledged the challenges of running in the upstate district when he announced his candidacy at the end of February, saying he was in the race to give voters a choice. He said he supports Trump as the Republican nominee for president, while describing his own ***politics*** as “more towards the center.”

After conceding the race, Dickson told supporters he had no regrets about running.

Voting took place with [*Trump on trial*](https://apnews.com/article/trump-trial-hush-money-opening-stormy-daniels-6beee9b99114898ee0dd60185d43bac5) in New York City in the first criminal trial of a former American president and the [*first of four prosecutions of Trump*](https://apnews.com/projects/trump-investigations-civil-criminal-tracker/) to reach a jury.

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