

# [***New Jersey officials drop appeal of judge's order to redraw Democratic primary ballot***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRS-4DG1-JC5B-G3FY-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

PHILADELPHIA — New Jersey county clerks have withdrawn their appeals to [*a federal court ruling*](https://apnews.com/article/new-jersey-senate-primary-county-line-ballot-2b7646717848b254f45a7bf9691c4f55) requiring them to redraw primary election ballots that some argued favored candidates backed by the state's Democratic Party.

The 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals based in Philadelphia dismissed the appeals on Friday in response to the clerks' action.

U.S. Judge Zahid Quraishi had ordered Democrats to scrap a ballot that listed party-endorsed candidates together in a bracketed group on the ballot — commonly called the county line — while listing others outside the bracket. New Jersey is the only state to set its primary ballots in this way.

Democratic [*Rep. Andy Kim filed the lawsuit*](https://apnews.com/article/new-jersey-andy-kim-tammy-murphy-lawsuit-8432085d5661892d3e48259100ebf0e5) as part of his bid for the Senate seat held by [*indicted Sen. Bob Menendez*](https://apnews.com/article/menendez-bribery-senate-new-jersey-7a8cd625f5be3d2f2c4c1f2c2a72ff9e), who said he would not run in the primary. Republicans will not be affected by Quraishi's order; the judge said it applies only to Democrats and only to the June 4 election.

Asked why she dropped her appeal, one of the clerks, Hunterdon County Clerk Mary Melfi responded, “I just want to move forward. That's what my focus is.”

The Associated Press left a text message with Kim's spokesperson seeking comment Monday.

What exactly will happen in future primaries isn't clear. Democratic and Republican legislative leaders have issued joint statements saying they plan to consider legislation but they haven't specified just what that will look like.

Kim and two other Democratic candidates sued in federal court to block the county line primary system. He and many others in New Jersey ***politics*** contend that such a system gives the candidates who appear in the ballot's bracketed column an unfair advantage, while relegating candidates not backed by the party to “ballot Siberia.”

When he filed the suit, Kim's major opponent in the race for Menendez's Senate seat was Tammy Murphy, wife of Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy. Kim argued that because Murphy earned the backing of powerful county party leaders in populous areas, she was unfairly given a favorable ballot position.

Murphy [*has since dropped out*](https://apnews.com/article/tammy-murphy-new-jersey-us-senate-menendez-6157bad8de90950d9504153331c097ba) of the race, leaving Kim as a dominant candidate. Nonetheless, Kim has pledged to continue fighting the county line system.

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