**State Committeeman Report**

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The NY State Democratic Committee (NYSDC) is holding its convention later this month at the Marriott Marquis in midtown Manhattan, on the 16th and 17th, to nominate candidates for statewide office. Each member of the state committee gets a vote, weighted to the voter turnout in the last gubernatorial election. The 69th Assembly District consistently has among the highest, if not the highest, voter turnout of any district in the state, so the vote from the 69th AD carries the most weight. There are roughly 450 members of the NYSDC, so if it were split evenly between all the members, Lynn Thomas and I would each have one-quarter of one percent of the vote. But in actuality, we each have about twice that – meaning that together Lynn and I have more than 1% of the vote combined.

Why does this matter? Because a candidate for state-wide office only needs 25% of the vote of the NYSDC to get on the ballot (rather than collecting signatures to get on the ballot from across the state – a time-consuming, labor-intensive and expensive process). Considering the momentum behind Governor Kathy Hochul’s campaign to be elected this year, along with her Lt. Governor, Brian Benjamin, and incumbents Attorney General Letitia James and State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli seeing re-election, it seems likely that all four will get on the ballot with ease. So far, no credible candidates have emerged for LG, AG or Comptroller, the question is whether NYC Public Advocate Jumaane Williams and Congressman Tom Suozzi each have the support from enough committee members to gain access to the ballot.

Were Gov. Hochul not an incumbent there is some history of approving all legitimate candidates for statewide office – an arrangement that would be predetermined prior to the convention. This happened in 2010 when there were five candidates running for Attorney General, and all of them were granted ballot access. One might pause and ask how if 25% is required, all FIVE got on the ballot, as that math would be out of whack, as I recall it involved series of votes and something about the entire Bronx delegation briefly leaving the room, and then returning. This is not always the case though – note that Tish James got 85% of the vote at the 2018 NYSDC convention, over Zephyr Teacher and Leecia Eve, to succeed Eric Schneiderman as AG.

Hochul has been working the phones to line up support – which I have publicly committed to her – and all of the clubs in the 69th AD have been clear that they – or will very shortly – endorse her for election. Considering the close race for LG in 2018 – again between Hochul and Williams, one might have expected a tight race again this time around, but Hochul, to her credit, has been pushing a number of progressive policies and making inroads among the left in the Democratic Party. It is not total, to be sure, but she has largely avoided the left vs. center battles of days past and seems well positioned to prevail in the June Primary.

Just a side comment that as expected, with the Independent Redistricting Commission deadlocked between the two parties, the plans were voted down by the NYS legislature which will now redraw the lines. As it is completely controlled by Democrats the eventual new lines will protect Democrats and incumbents and impact the districts of Republicans and retiring legislators. As I mentioned in last month’s column, I do not expect to see the 69th AD lines change very much, with some possible extension to the east at the north end of Central Park, picking up some of the formerly 68th AD election districts.