
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

RE: 2025 Race Profiles

From: Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies

Date: May 5, 2025

OVERVIEW

New York City primary elections will take place on June 24th, 2025, and include races for the Mayor, Comptroller, Public Advocate, and all 51 New York City Council Districts. The primaries will once again utilize [Ranked Choice Voting](#), allowing voters to rank up to 5 candidates in order of preference. The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the upcoming primary races to watch in both the citywide races and select City Council races.

MAYOR

This year's Democratic primary for mayor is crowded, competitive, and complicated, with more than seven major candidates vying for the position. Incumbent Mayor Eric Adams, however, is bypassing the primary and instead running as an Independent in the November general election.

Incumbent Mayor Eric Adams:

In early April, incumbent [Mayor Eric Adams announced that he would run for reelection as an Independent](#) in the general election in November and would not be participating in the June Democratic Primary. This announcement came immediately after a judge dropped Eric Adams federal charges and against the backdrop of decreasing approval ratings for the incumbent mayor. The Manhattan District Attorney is continuing his investigation into Eric Adams. In addition, multiple [high-profile Democrats](#) have called on Adams to resign as mayor over the last several months, although most of these calls for resignation took place before federal charges were dropped.

Democratic Primary Candidates:

Now, two months from the Democratic primary, the finalized field features eight major candidates—including high-level current and former legislators from both the state and city levels. Former NY Governor Andrew Cuomo is currently the race's frontrunner, commanding [around 35%-45%](#) of first-round primary voting—more than twice the number of the second-place candidate, NY Assembly Member for the 36th district Zohran Mamdani, who is polling in the mid-teens. Mamdani, a Democratic Socialist candidate who was the first in the race to [reach the public finance cap for donations](#), is capturing on momentum from the left, while Cuomo is capitalizing on name recognition and extensive experience amongst more moderate voters. City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams seems to be gaining momentum with [recent endorsements from AG Tish James and several prominent unions including DC 37](#). This primary also features [several other well-known](#) candidates currently polling single digits, including NYC Comptroller Brad Lander, NYS Senators Zellnor Myrie (20th district) and Jessica Ramos (13th district), former NYC Council Member/NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer, and former NYS Assemblymember Michael Blake.

Adrienne Adams	* Current NYC Council Speaker (Queens)
Michael Blake	* Former NY Assemblymember (2015-2021, Queens) * Former Vice-Chair of the DNC (2017-2021)
Andrew Cuomo	* Former three-term Governor of New York (2011-2021) * Former NY AG (2007-2010), Assistant Secretary of HUD under President Bill Clinton (1993-1997), and HUD Secretary (1997-2001)
Brad Lander	* Current NYC Comptroller
Zohran Mamdani	* Represents the 36th NYS Assembly District (Queens) * Member of the Democratic Socialists of America
Zellnor Myrie	* Represents the 20th NYS Senate District (Brooklyn)
Jessica Ramos	* Represents the 13th NYS Senate District (Queens)
Scott Stringer	* Former NYC Comptroller (2014-2021), Manhattan Borough President (2005-2013), and NYS Assemblyman (1993-2005, Manhattan)

Polling Summary

Candidate	Honan (3/20)	Data for Progress (3/24)	Emerson (3/26)	NYT/Sienna (4/10)	Honan (4/17)
Andrew Cuomo	41	39	38	34	45
Zahran Mamdani	18	15	10	16	22
Brad Lander	8	8	6	6	8
Eric Adams	6	7	8	0	0
Scott Stringer	4	4	5	6	3
Adrienne Adams	4	5	4	6	4
Zellnor Myrie	2	2	4	4	2
Jessica Ramos	2	0	6	4	2
Michael Blake	0	1	1	1	0
Whitney Tilson	0	1	2	0	0

COMPTROLLER

With current NYC Comptroller Brad Lander running for Mayor, the open race for his current position is shaping up to be a competitive one between Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine and City Council Member / Council Finance Committee Chair Justin Brannan, with NYS Senator from the 21st district Kevin Parker—who has represented Brooklyn for over 20 years—and former NYC DCAS Manager Ismael Malave running as well. Borough President Levine has secured the backing of [several prominent elected officials](#), including Congressional representatives (Ritchie Torres, Jerry Nadler, Adriano Espaillat, and Dan Goldman), State Assemblymembers (Alex Bores, Harvey Epstein, and others), State Senators (Brad Hoylman-Sigal and Kristen Gonzalez), and a slew of Council Members. On the other hand, Council Member Justin Brannan received endorsements from a smaller number of state and local elected officials but has received [strong union support](#) with the endorsements of the Transport Workers Union, Teamsters Local 831, and the [Uniformed Firefighters Association](#).

Justin Brannan	* Current council member for the 47th District in Brooklyn * Chairman of the Committee on Finance
Mark Levine	* Current Manhattan Borough President * Former NYC council member for the 7th District (2014-2022)
Kevin Parker	* State senator from the 21st district (2003–present) and candidate for Comptroller in 2021
Ismael Malave	NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services Manager

PUBLIC ADVOCATE

The race for Public Advocate gained new intrigue at the beginning of the year as State Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar, a close ally of Mayor Eric Adams, entered the competition after dropping her candidacy for Comptroller. Rajkumar’s total private contributions sit at [over \\$440,000, about \\$100,000 more](#) than incumbent Jumaane Williams. What Williams lacks in the bank account, however, he makes up for in [widespread name recognition and general popularity](#). Also running in this race are [Marty Dolan](#), a retired insurance executive who unsuccessfully challenged AOC in 2024, and Angela Aquino, a [Conservative Party](#) candidate.

Angela Aquino	* Republican candidate
Marty Dolan	* Retired Wall Street insurance executive; unsuccessfully challenged AOC in 2024
Jenifer Rajkumar	* NYS Assemblymember for District 38 in Queens * Close ally of Mayor Adams
Jumaane Williams	* Incumbent Public Advocate

BOROUGH PRESIDENTS

Unlike current Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, who is running for Comptroller as described above, the other four Borough President incumbents are all running for reelection. Staten Island's Vito Fossella and Queens' Donovan Richards seem well-positioned to retain their offices. The Bronx and Brooklyn Borough Presidents have potentially competitive primary challenges, and the Manhattan Borough President race is extremely competitive for the open seat. In the Bronx, incumbent Vanessa Gibson is facing notable competition from term-limited Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr. At this stage in the race, Salamanca is out-fundraising Borough President Gibson by over \$100k, setting the stage for a serious challenge. In Brooklyn, residents are preparing for a [rematch of the 2021 race](#) between incumbent Borough President Antonio Reynoso and challenger Khari Edwards. Finally, the Manhattan race is perhaps the most competitive, as it lacks an incumbent. Here, West Side State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal is running against term-limited East Side Council Member Keith Powers. Hoylman-Sigal has secured key endorsements from [Reps. Dan Goldman and Jerry Nadler](#), while Powers maintains a [fundraising edge](#).

Bronx	<u>Democratic</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vanessa Gibson (i) • Rafael Salamanca Jr. • Dwight Peters
Brooklyn	<u>Democratic</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antonio Reynoso (i) • Khari Edwards <u>Republican</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janine Acquafredda <u>Independent</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shanduke McPhatter
Manhattan	<u>Democratic</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brad Hoylman-Sigal • Vincent Jenkins • Keith Powers • Calvin Sun
Queens	<u>Democratic</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donovan Richards (i) <u>Republican</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bashek Grimes • Henry Ikezi
Staten Island	<u>Republican</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vito Fossella (i) <u>Democratic</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Colombo

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL (non-incumbents/competitive)

Here are the candidates and primaries to watch from the districts in which the incumbent is term-limited, along with a few races where the incumbent faces notable challengers. For a full list of every candidate who has registered to run, please visit the New York Campaign Finance Board website [here](#).

<p>District 1</p>	<p>Incumbent Council Member Chris Marte has been subject to heavy criticism over his tenure due to his controversial opposition to City of Yes and congestion pricing—two issues that are extremely relevant to this downtown district. At this point in the race, Marte’s most notable challengers are CB 1 Member Jess Coleman and former NYPD policy head Elizabeth Lewinsohn. Coleman is receiving backing from Abundance New York, a pro-housing advocacy group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Christopher Marte (incumbent) ● Jess Coleman, Manhattan CB 1 member ● Elizabeth Lewinsohn, former Director of Policy and Plans for the NYPD's Counterterrorism Bureau; Gotham Park Chair; Manhattan CB 1 member ● Eric Yu, MTA director, Manhattan CB 1 member
<p>District 2</p>	<p>For term-limited Council Member Carlina Rivera’s seat, the race is incredibly competitive, featuring Community Board 3 Chair Andrea Gordillo, former de Blasio staffer Sarah Batchu, State Assemblymember Harvey Epstein, and former Congressman Anthony Weiner. Assemblymember Epstein’s overlapping district may give him the edge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sarah Batchu, nonprofit leader, former vice-chair of CB 3 ● Harvey Epstein, NYS Assemblymember ● Andrea Gordillo, Chair of Manhattan CB 3 ● Allison Ryan, community activist ● Anthony Weiner, former NY Congressman
<p>District 4</p>	<p>Term-limited Council Member Keith Powers’ seat is up for grabs as the Manhattan-based official runs for Borough President. In a district extending from Stuy Town to the Upper East Side, several candidates in this race are running strong campaigns with serious policy experience and major fundraising prowess.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vanessa Aronson, Lexington Democratic Club President and NYPS teacher ● Faith Bondy, Samuel J. Tilden Democratic Club President ● Lucas Florczak, Former Marine and Executive Board Member for Eleanor Roosevelt Independents Democrats ● Virginia Maloney, daughter of former Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and former Meta Project Manager ● Rachel Storch, former Missouri state legislator, COO of Fifth Avenue Synagogue ● Ben Wetzler, policy director at NYS Homes & Community Renewal
<p>District 8</p>	<p>With Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala being term-limited, the race for Council District 8 boasts a crowded field, including several former Council staff and Community Board members. Encarnacion may have the edge given expected support from Council Member Ayala.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clarisa Alayeto, Bronx CB 1 Chair ● Daniel Aulbach-Sidibe, educator and former UFT chapter leader ● Rosa Diaz, Bronx CB 11 Secretary ● Elsie Encarnacion, Chief of Staff for Diana Ayala ● Wilfredo Lopez, lawyer at Urban Research Institute, former staffer for CM Ben Kallos ● Raymond Santana, member of the “Exonerated 5”

<p>District 14</p>	<p>Incumbent Council Member Pierina Ana Sanchez is facing a challenge from her predecessor, Fernando Cabrera. Cabrera represented this Council District until term limits required he vacate the office in 2021. Most recently, he served as Mayor Adams' faith advisor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pierina Ana Sanchez (incumbent) ● Fernando Cabrera, former Senior Faith Advisor to Mayor Adams, Former 14th District Representative ● Bryan Hodge Vasquez, community advocate
<p>District 17</p>	<p>Term-limited Council Member Rafael Salamanca Jr.'s district is up for grabs, as the South Bronx politician is running for Borough President. This race currently has two frontrunners in Salamanca's preferred successor, Freddy Perez, and former Assembly staffer Justin Sanchez.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Justin Sanchez, NYS Sen. Nathalia Fernandez Chief of Staff, former president of the Stonewall Democratic Club ● Elvis Santana, former state committeeman (79th Assembly) ● Antirson Ortiz, state committee member ● Freddy Perez, party supply business owner and District Leader, endorsed by Salamanca ● Jasmine Uribe, Director of Operations at the Bronx Collab
<p>District 21</p>	<p>In term-limited Council Member Francisco Moya's district, the primary will be highly competitive, as the field is filled with local leaders with split, big-name endorsements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hiram Monserrate, former NYS Senator and NYC council member ● Erycka Montoya, Intergovernmental Affairs staffer for Speaker Adams ● Sandro Navarro, District Director for NYS Senator Jessica Ramos ● Shanel Thomas-Henry, LaGuardia Redevelopment Program community outreach liaison
<p>District 28</p>	<p>With the former Speaker Adrienne Adams term limited and running for Mayor, the race for her seat is running through several staffers and community leaders looking to make the jump to elected office. Key candidates to watch here are Adams' chief of staff Ty Hankerson and NYS Assembly staffer Latoya LeGrand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tyrell (Ty) Hankerson, District Chief of Staff for Speaker Adrienne E. Adams ● Romeo Hitlall, 2nd Vice District Governor of Lions District 20-K1; Community Board Member ● Latoya LeGrand, Constituent Services Representative for Assemblywoman Vivian Cook; Founder of Projects II Projects Inc.; Chairman of Education Committee CB 12 ● Japneet Singh, member of the NY Sikh Council and former Council candidate
<p>District 30</p>	<p>This district features one of the few truly bipartisan districts in the council. Term-limited Robert Holden, the departing Councilmember, is both a registered Democrat and co-chair of the conservative Common Sense Caucus. In addition, he has endorsed two of his staffers—Alicia Vaichunas (R) and Phil Wong (D)—in both primaries. The first two tests in this deeply competitive district are the June primaries. Smyth has major institutional support given his ties to the powerful teacher's union, UFT.</p> <p><u>Democratic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dermot Smyth, Political Coordinator for the United Federation of Teachers ● Paul Pogozelski, President of the Middle Village Property Owners and Residents Association

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phil Wong, CM Holden's Constituent Services & Budget Director <p><u>Republican</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jonathan Rinaldi, Consultant ● Alicia Vaichunas, CM Holden's Chief of Staff
District 39	<p>In this race, political newcomer Maya Kornberg is challenging incumbent Shahana Hanif, co-chair of the council's Progressive Caucus for this Brooklyn seat. Since entering the race shortly before the new year, Kornberg has mounted a serious fundraising push, nearly equaling the amount raised by the incumbent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shahana Hanif (incumbent) ● Maya Kornberg, Senior Research Fellow at the Brennan Center for Justice
District 47	<p>Term-limited Council Member Justin Brannan has backed his chief counsel to take his seat in this primary against two local leaders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anthony Batista, Veteran, Paralegal, Former Director of Constituent and Community Services for former Assemblywoman Frontus ● Linda Harrison, Member of Brooklyn CB 13 ● Kayla Santosuosso, Chief Counsel at Brannan's office, president of Bay Ridge Democrats