

## Candidates Spotlight August 2018 Update

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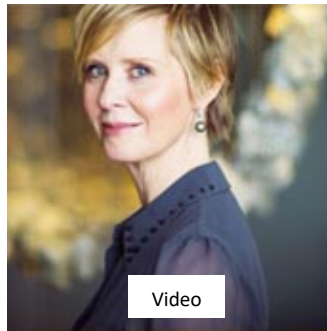
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**Cynthia Nixon**

**Governor New York**

**Democratic Primary – Thursday, September 13th, 2018**

**General Election – November 6th, 2018**

**Update: Lost with 34.4% of the primary vote**

**Cynthia Nixon** is a lifetime New Yorker, an actress, and an unapologetic education, LGBTQ, and reproductive rights activist ([video](#)). Raised by her single mother in Upper West Manhattan, she is New York Public School graduate and parent. Her dedication to public school is clear, in her role as the longtime spokesperson for the [Alliance for Public School Education](#), a successful statewide education and racial justice coalition of parents and community members that have increased state education funding by \$3.6 billion. Most impressive, is the scrappy, digital and grassroots campaign that is capturing the imagination of New Yorkers.

### **On the Issues**

1. According to the Fiscal Policy Institute, [the top 1 percent of New Yorkers earn 45 times more than the bottom 99 percent](#). Resulting in a new normal of extreme wealth and extreme poverty that stretches from New York City, the Hudson Valley (stretches from Albany and Troy, to Yonkers in Westchester County), or Upstate New York. By adopting her multi-pronged [people centered economic and workforce development plan](#), New York state will begin confronting the reality that it's the most unequal state in the country.
2. [Investing in education equity and stopping the school to prison pipeline](#). Fully funding the foundation aid, the state funding source for high needs, low income school districts, increase funding for special needs students, and increase funding social and emotional services like social workers, psychologists, or school nurses by reversing hotly contested Cuomo's corporate tax cuts.

3. Equitably funding and fixing the outdated and unreliable Metropolitan Transportation Authority (subways and buses) by adopting the multi-dimensional [Fast Forward plan](#).

**Status of Race:** Cook Report considers this a solidly Democratic seat. The [primary campaign to the left](#), launched by **Nixon** this past March, transformed a fairly sleepy primary for current incumbent (D) Andrew Cuomo into an early test for his 2020 presidential ambitions. Son of a former New York Governor and first elected in 2011, Governor Cuomo is considered a corporate Democrat by some of his opponents, who has [angered many Democrats](#) for incomplete and underfunded mandates for education, a crumbling transportation infrastructure, and effectively working against building a progressive majority in New York State Senate. For low income white people, communities of color and social justice organizations like [Community Voices Heard Power](#), [New York Communities for Change](#), [Citizen Action of NY](#) and [Make the Road Action](#), the situation is worst ([see memo](#) for more information).

**Dynamics of Race:** Overall, New York is an ideological battle ground state for the national Democratic Party as mainstream democrats and insurgent Democrats are in contested primaries from the top to the bottom of the ticket with the hope to take control of the State Senate, the upper chamber, and the Governor's Office. The New York State Assembly, the lower house chamber, is controlled by Democrats and has been since 1939, except for two years. The New York State Senate, is controlled by Democrats, including the Independent Democratic Caucus (IDC), a group of 8 (D) State Senators and one Brooklyn State Senator, [Simcha Felder](#), who caucused directly with Republicans even though the IDC was disbanded earlier this year. Cuomo has raised \$31.1 million compared to **Nixon's** \$660,000. The likelihood of a **Nixon** victory is a slim, [as Cuomo continues to widen his support among registered Democratic voters](#) at 59 percent, versus **Nixon's** 23 percent (July 2018). This election cycle, however, has shown that in some cases, women and people of color buoyed by **Deep Democracy** can emerge victorious (look at [Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, NY-16](#)). If she can increase voter turnout of people of color and white progressives across the state she can pull off a **Deep Democracy** victory. While she is running to left, Governor Cuomo is instead confidently [running against Trump](#).

**Nixon's Campaign:** The campaign has [earned the support](#) of the progressive let and grassroots infrastructure and has gained momentum from the unexpected victory [Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, NY-16](#). Running statewide, the dynamics of her race are more challenging than the NY-16 but they are running on the similar left agenda while also rejecting all corporate money. The **Deep Democracy** (other women and people of color running and social justice organizations that overlap with her path to victory) infrastructure behind her is the sweet spot to her victory. But to close the current margin between **Nixon** and her opponent, more of these candidates and organizations need direct financial support (501c3 and 501c4) for their voter engagement efforts, especially as it relates to American Rising Electorate and white progressives. To advance her message, her campaign is [attacking](#) Governor Cuomo's credibility among Democratic voters by pointing to his previous Trump

campaign donations and has a [clear left agenda](#). The status and dynamics of race of this race also demonstrate the importance of this campaign for the future ideological and policy direction of the state and national Democratic Party. This is particularly relevant as Democrats are poised to potentially take over the US House, more women and people of color joining the party ranks as voters and elected officials, and the Democratic Presidential field will begin to firmly shape up next year.

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**Jay Gonzalez**  
**Governor Massachusetts**  
**Democratic Primary – Thursday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**Update: Won with 64% of the primary vote**

**Jay Gonzalez** was the former Secretary of Administration and Finance under Governor Deval Patrick during the Great Recession. While in the Administration, he also served as Chairman of the Board of the Massachusetts Health Connector, where he oversaw implementation of Massachusetts' health care reform, and he co-chaired the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center. Afterwards, Gonzalez was chair of the Massachusetts Board of Early Education and Care and, most recently, was President and CEO of CeliCare Health and New Hampshire Healthy Families, leading the turn-around of an ailing health insurance provider that serves low-income people in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

#### ***On the Issues***

- Single-payer healthcare.
- Fixing our broken transportation system by ending Governor Baker's practice of outsourcing key functions of our transportation system, making the necessary investments in transportation, and expanding public transportation across the Commonwealth.
- Ensuring Massachusetts has the highest quality early education and childcare system in the country and that it is available and affordable to all.

***Status of Seat:*** With a 69% approval rating in a July 2018 Morning Consult poll, incumbent Republican Charlie Baker remains the most popular governor in the country. The Democratic primary field to take him on, as a result, has been shallow. Citing anemic fundraising that would make it hard for him to unseat Baker, former Mayor of Newton Setti Warren dropped out of the primary race in April, leaving just two primary challengers: **Jay** and Bob Massie, an environmentalist and entrepreneur. Setti Warren's exit highlights the challenges facing any Democratic nominee taking on this moderate, well-liked Republican governor in November. Governor Baker officially launched his re-election campaign this month with over \$8 million on hand. **Jay Gonzalez** reported having \$431,660 at the beginning of August and Massie \$109,057.

**Dynamics of Race:** There are few policy differences between **Jay Gonzalez** and Bob Massie. **Jay** is running a better campaign and is the stronger candidate. **Jay** has extensive experience in government, healthcare and education and is very detailed when talking about policy. His resume actually resembles Charlie Baker's; both were budget chiefs and led health insurers, allowing **Jay** to go head-to-head with Governor Baker without Baker being able to cite experience and know-how as differentiators. Though Bob Massie has an impressive background, concerns about his health have dogged his campaign and prevented him from being considered a serious candidate for Governor.

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### Zephyr Teachout

Attorney General New York

Democratic Primary – Thursday, September 13th, 2018

General Election – November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Update: Lost with 31% of the primary vote in a 3-way primary

**Zephyr Teachout** is a veteran constitutional and antitrust lawyer and tenure Fordham Law Professor and political activist. She is a nationally [acclaimed author](#) (*Corruption in America*) and recognized expert on the history of corruption and US antitrust laws. Recently, **Teachout** challenged incumbent (D) Governor Andrew Cuomo in the 2014 Democratic Primary, surprisingly capturing a surprising [34.3 percent of the vote](#). She also lost in the 2016 US House General Election in NY-19 and now has seized the open Attorney General seat, running on a [multifaceted justice agenda](#) she is nipping at the heels of current front runner, Letitia James, in a five way contested Democratic Primary.

### On the Issues

1. Rooting out corruption in New York State government through rigorous state ethic reforms and combating financial fraud white collar crimes.
2. [Stopping](#) the constitutional and democratic recklessness coming from the Trump administration by fighting back at all attempt to undermine the criminal justice system and systems of check and balances.
3. Addressing institutional racism that shape our criminal justice system, by leveraging the legal authority of the Attorney General's office by being a spokesperson for a more humane and just society.

**Status of Race:** This seat is considered a strong Democratic seat and is five way contested Democratic Primary. **Teachout** is facing four Democrats, including frontrunner Letitia James, former Brooklyn Public Advocate Defender, who has received the support from most establishment candidates, including Governor Cuomo, and leads the fundraising race at \$1.17 million and had \$991,000 in cash on hand; trailing behind her is US Representative Sean Patrick Maloney (NY-18), first openly gay member of Congress, who has raised \$1.17 million and had \$981,000 in cash on hand; followed by **Teachout**, who has raised \$390,000 and had

\$315,000 in cash on hand; and Leecia Eve, a lawyer and seasoned public servant, who has raised \$300,000 and had \$250,000 in cash on hand. Despite the front runner status of James in this race is still up for grabs with [42 percent of registered voters still undecided](#).

**Dynamics of Race:** Former Attorney General (D) [Eric Schneiderman resigned](#) in early May, due to physical assault allegations, triggering a temporary appointment from Albany and unexpected open Democratic Primary. If victorious, **Teachout** would become the first woman to serve as Attorney General of New York but in a race with so many diverse candidates its her legal and political activism that makes her uniquely positioned to take on Trump and ethic reforms in Albany. Even though she is second to last in fundraising, her progressive credentials have fueled her momentum, which is indicated as the [sole Attorney General candidates to endorse](#) insurgent NY-16 Democratic Primary candidate and winner Alexandria Ocasio Cortez.

**Teachout's Campaign:** Came out of the gate running and is increasing its momentum with her recent [Nation Magazine](#) and [New York Times endorsement](#). Unlike the Governor's race, this race is really wide open and a **Teachout** victory in a deep blue state like New York, can demonstrate the emergence of the **Purple Wave**. These are **Deep Democracy** seats won by ideologically more progressive women and people of color, supported by a multicultural and intergenerational caucus of the American Rising Electorate and white progressives. To help ensure that she can run a robust field program she needs more financial support as well as the social justice organizations focused on increasing voter turnout in this race. The status and dynamics of this race is further evidence of the ideological battleground that has emerged in New York for the state and national party.

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**Josh Zakim**

**Secretary of State**

**Democratic Primary – Thursday, September 4th, 2018**

**Update: Lost with 33% of the primary vote**

Boston City Councilor **Josh Zakim** is an attorney who was elected to the City Council in 2013. **Josh** began his career at Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) where he represented working families facing foreclosure on their homes. He also worked in the Public Finance group of the law firm Mintz Levin, specializing on municipal bond transactions for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, MassPort and the MBTA.

**Josh** currently chairs the City Council's Committee on Civil Rights and previously chaired the Committee on Housing & Community Development and the Special Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure, Planning & Investment. In his first term on the Council, **Josh** authored the Boston Trust Act, prohibiting the Boston

Police Department from detaining residents based on immigration status. He also successfully introduced an ordinance extending protections for tenants whose homes are converted to condominiums or co-ops, including increased financial safeguards for elderly, disabled, and low-income tenants.

**Josh's** father is the late civil rights activist Lenny Zakim who the famed Zakim Bridge in Boston is named after him.

**Josh** is running because, in Massachusetts, the birthplace of American democracy, both registering to vote and voting itself have become too difficult for too many people. He's running to be a champion of voting rights and voting access.

### ***On the Issues***

- **Same-day Voter Registration** - Over the past year, while **Josh** has been advocating for same-day voter registration, current Secretary of State Bill Galvin fought successfully in court to maintain the 20-day voter registration deadline. 17 other states and DC already have same-day registration..
- **Automatic Voter Registration (AVR)** - After **Josh** launched his campaign for Secretary of State in early 2018, citing AVR as a policy priority, Galvin publicly adopted the same stance in response. **Josh** called Galvin's push for AVR "long overdue." AVR was signed into law in early August 2018 because of the increased attention on AVR from this race.
- **Weekend Election Days** - If you're working two jobs, raising a family, or going to school full-time, voting during the week might not work for you. Moving our elections to the weekend is both a proven method of increasing voter turnout and an inclusive step towards accommodating our diverse schedules. Secretary Galvin scheduled this year's election day on the day after Labor Day, **Zakim** claims, in an effort to depress turnout.
- **Election Security** - If elected, **Josh** will create a 24/7 cybersecurity team within the elections division and modernize our antiquated election audit laws.

***Analysis of Campaign:*** **Josh** is taking on 24-year entrenched incumbent Bill Galvin whose nickname is "the Prince of Darkness." In a surprise and consequential upset, **Zakim** won the endorsement of the Democratic Party at the state convention, garnering 55% of delegate votes.

*The Boston Globe* deemed the Secretary of State race "the state's most nasty and personal race of 2018." Both campaigns are running negative ads. **Zakim's** ad highlights Galvin's record as a state legislator from 1975-1991 before he became Secretary of State: voting to ban abortion, to bring back the death penalty and to ban same-sex couple adoptions. Galvin's ad calls **Josh** "No-Show Zakim," saying he hasn't voted in 15 elections. Both candidates are trying to draw distinctions for voters, particularly because a June WBUR poll shows 34% of voters are undecided. The same poll showed Galvin had a comfortable lead: 46% to **Josh's**

17%, with Galvin popular among older voters. Name recognition is **Josh's** biggest challenge: 62% had never heard of him. With a substantial fundraising haul, Josh's ability to effectively use his resources to get his message out and turn out his (younger) voters will determine whether he wins on September 4th.

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### Robert Jackson

State Senate Sear 31 New York

Democratic Primary – Thursday, September 13th, 2018

General Election – November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Update: Won with 56% of the primary vote

**Robert Jackson** is a lifetime New Yorker, a seasoned education advocate, former New York City Council member (2002 - 2013) representing Manhattan, and School Board President. Raised in Harlem, with 8 other siblings, his personal experiences of growing up in New York City makes **Jackson** a fighter for all New Yorkers. He has done this his whole life. As School Board President in the 1990s, he led a class-action lawsuit against the New York state to fix the broken public school funding formula that redistributed over \$16 billion to New York Public Schools and included a 150 mile march to Albany. His third attempt at running for State Senate District 31, this time **Jackson** has momentum on his side and is challenging a controversial weak incumbent in a contested Democratic Primary.

#### **On the Issues**

1. [Addressing the affordable housing crisis](#) by sponsoring legislation that re-establishes give New York City local control of housing laws to avoid further and displacement and established affordability for all.
2. Fully funding [New York Public Schools](#) to address systemic budget shortfalls and supporting policies establishes both unionized charter schools and community schools.
3. Unlocking the progressive potential of state government by building a legitimate Democratic State Senate majority. This race is one of 10 battleground races for Democrats to win a governing majority in Albany, which can unlock years of stalled progressive legislation.

**Status of Race:** State Senate District 31 includes Marble Hill, Inwood, Washington Heights, Hamilton Heights, West Harlem, the Upper West Side and parts of Hell's Kitchen and Chelsea. Incumbent (D) State Senator [Marisol Alcantara](#) is a first-generation Dominican American, former labor leader, community organizer, card carrying progressive, and Bernie Sanders delegate, [who stunned many when she won in 2016 and chose to join the IDC](#). Alcantara is dodged by current campaign finance violations for receiving dark money from the IDC - who supported her first time candidacy in 2016 when establishment Democrats and Dominican Americans would not support her. This lack of support, she contends [is what drove her to join](#) the ranks of IDC.

**Dynamics of Race:** The New York State Assembly, the lower house chamber, is controlled by Democrats and has been since 1939 except for two years. The New York State Senate, the upper chamber, is controlled by Democrats, including the the Independent Democratic Caucus (IDC), a group of 8 (D) State Senators and one Brooklyn State Senator, Simcha Felder, who caucused directly with Republicans. In recent state senate special elections, Democrats emerged victorious, but State Senator Felder effectively stopped Democrats from taking a [32-31 majority](#), by continuing to caucus with Republicans [even though the IDC disbanded earlier this year](#). If victorious, **Jackson** could be a decisive Democratic pick up that can change the balance of power in the State Senate ([the General Election will be the final test for Republicans to maintain control with ten of twelve battle ground races](#)). The IDC is seen as block to all progressive legislation and incumbent (D) State Senator Marisol Alcantara is a member of this block (only woman, second Latino). Her decision to join the IDC in 2016, effectively ceded Republican control of the Senate and is [the wedge issue that she must address](#) and that **Jackson** is exploiting to ensure his path to victory. In fact **Jackson** has raised \$158,000 compared to \$107,000 raised by Alcantara.

**Jackson's Campaign:** has captured the support of [an impressive slate](#) of Congressional leaders, local elected officials, community members and grassroots social justice organizations while also holding onto fundraising advantage over his opponent. The Deep Democracy (other women and people of color running and social justice organizations that overlap with his path to victory) infrastructure behind this race makes a **Jackson** victory viable but it will come down to a strong field program that turnouts people of color and progressive white voters. The status and dynamics of this race also makes this race important to the ongoing debate about the ideological direction of state and national Democratic party in this political and economic climate. **Jackson's** victory in a deep blue state like New York, can demonstrate the emergence of the **Purple Wave** - these are **Deep Democracy** seats won by ideologically more progressive women and people of color, supported by a multicultural and intergenerational caucus of the American Rising Electorate and white progressives.

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**Tahira Amatul-Wadud**

**MA-1**

**Democratic Primary – Thursday, September 4th, 2018**

**Update: Lost challenge with 29% of the primary vote**

A black Muslim mother of seven, **Tahirah Amatul-Wadud** is a Springfield, Massachusetts attorney who runs her own law practice focused on civil rights law and domestic relations. A strong defender of religious freedom, **Tahirah** is legal counsel to a number of religious congregations across Massachusetts and New York. She serves on the board of the Council on American-Islamic Relations and as a Commissioner on the



Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, which helped pass equal pay in the state. She also serves on the Family Advisory Council of Boston Children's Hospital, where her daughter received life-saving heart surgery as a newborn.

**Tahirah** is running because, particularly in this post-Trump era, people are feeling hopeless and Congressman Neal has been missing for years. (Last year, Indivisible Williamsburg took out an ad in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette* with Congressman Neal's face next to the words: "Has anyone seen this man?") "I would always be responsive to the constituents," **Tahirah** says. "I sincerely believe that you cannot be a defender of democracy when you have a divided loyalty between your constituents and your financiers," she says in an interview with *The Nation*, referencing Neal. 75% of Neal's \$2.5 million campaign war chest is from PACs. **Tahirah**, meanwhile, has pledged not to accept any corporate campaign donations and advocates for the repeal of Citizens United.

### ***On the Issues***

- **Medicare for All** — Congressman Neal is against Medicare for All. Meanwhile, Medicare for All is a central part of **Tahirah's** policy platform. "I didn't have to make a decision about whether or not we could afford to have [my daughter] healed," **Tahirah** says about her daughter's heart surgery. "And I want every family to have that sense of assurance."
- **Opioid Crisis** — **Tahirah** grew up in "in a community that was ravaged by the crack cocaine epidemic." "If we had clinical and compassionate approach to how we dealt with addiction [during the crack epidemic], we would not have the opioid crisis. And if we did, we'd have a model for how to fix it," she says.
- **Infrastructure** — In a 97% rural district, state and federal investment into creating broadband internet infrastructure in the region is critical. "I consider it not only a quality of life issue, but an economic crisis issue" because people can't look for jobs without the internet, **Tahirah** says.

**Status of Race:** Congressman Neal is currently the longest-serving member of the Massachusetts delegation, having held this seat since 1989. The biggest and most spread out Massachusetts district in area, MA-1 includes 87 cities and towns in western and central Massachusetts. This is a safely held Democratic seat and the primary will determine the winner.

**Dynamics of Race:** Endorsements from progressive organizations ranging from Indivisible and Progressive Democrats of America to Rise Up Western Massachusetts and Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution (FCCPR) show **Tahirah's** strong grassroots support and the excitement among progressive activists about her campaign. Fundraising is **Tahirah's** biggest challenge as she takes on Congressman Neal's \$2.5 million campaign war chest. At the end of the last fundraising quarter, **Tahirah** had brought in \$72,047. This race will test the strength of **Tahirah's** ground game, and her ability to channel the excitement surrounding her candidacy into foot soldiers that can reach and persuade voters across this vast district.

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**Barbara L'Italien**  
**MA-3**

**Democratic Primary – Thursday, September 4th, 2018**

**Update: Lost with 15.2% of vote in 10-way primary; came in 3rd**

**Barbara** is currently a Massachusetts state senator and has been a state representative, a school committee member, an elder care social worker, and a mom on a mission to provide a better life for all, starting with our most vulnerable. When Rudy, the oldest of her four children, was diagnosed with autism, she fought for her son to get the basic services, care, and education he needed. She went on to run for the state House of Representatives in 2002, where she set out to make sure all kids with disabilities and their families are supported. She became the statewide leader on the issue, building the nation's strongest safety net for people with autism and leading on landmark legislation to allow people on the autism spectrum to get health insurance. **Barbara** has also been a leader in the fights for single-payer health care, quality public education for all children, equal marriage, better services and supports for seniors, and jobs and a fair economy. She led the charge in Massachusetts against the Kinder Morgan Pipeline, the NRA, and the school privatization industry. **Barbara's** running because our country is facing some of the biggest challenges we've ever seen. She wants to take her experience and success in Massachusetts to Washington to make sure we have a system that works for all of us, and especially those who need extra support to thrive.

#### ***On the Issues***

- **Public Education** — **Barbara** is focused on making a single system that works for every student and fighting against separate but unequal systems. The Massachusetts Teachers Association has endorsed **Barbara**.
- **Single-Payer Health Care** — Coverage doesn't mean access. **Barbara** wants to ensure that everyone can access the services they need.
- **Gun Control** — **Barbara** voted to make Massachusetts the toughest state on guns but Massachusetts is only as safe as its closest border. **Barbara** wants to work on exporting Massachusetts gun laws nationally, including the ban on assault weapons.

**Status of Race:** Ten candidates are running in this crowded Democratic primary to replace retiring Congresswoman Niki Tsongas. The Democratic nominee faces Republican Rick Green in an undoubtedly tough November general election. Rick Green has already been running paid negative ads against **Barbara** ahead of the Democratic primary, indicating that Republicans believe **Barbara** will win the Democratic primary. Though a Democrat is likely to win the seat, the district voted for Republicans Charlie Baker (Governor) and Scott Brown (US Senate).

**Dynamics of Race:** An August Boston Globe/UMass Lowell poll showed **Barbara** to be tied for 2nd place (at 13%) and the leading woman in the race. Dan Koh, former

chief of staff to Boston Mayor Marty Walsh, polled higher (at 19%), and **Barbara** is tied with former Ambassador to Denmark Rufus Gifford. Lori Trahan polled in 4th place (at 8%), Juana Matias in 5th (at 6%), Alexandria Chandler in 6th (at 4%) and Bopha Malone in the bottom tier (with less than 1%). The largest block of voters (29%) are still undecided with less than two weeks before the primary, meaning the race is still fluid and open.

**Barbara's** field operation is strong and active in deep democracy practices. Her campaign fully coordinates with the Yes on 1: Safe Patient Limits ballot campaign. They share door-knockers, put up each other's signs and Barbara even loans part of her campaign office to the Yes on 1 campaign.

Fundraising is **Barbara's** biggest challenge. She is being out-raised by three other candidates in the top tier: Dan Koh, Rufus Gifford and Lori Trahan. Her strong field operation gives her a strong chance to win. In these final days, if she is able to raise additional resources to reach more voters through TV and bolster an already strong field operation, she will be hard to beat.