

## Campaigns look to millennials, women on Primary Day and beyond



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(Photo: Patrick Oehler/Poughkeepsie Journal)

Eighteen-year-old Emily Purtill will be heading to the polls Tuesday for the first time as a voter.

The Wappingers Falls resident's first Primary Day will be a big one.

The registered Republican will choose between billionaire businessman [Donald Trump](#), Texas Sen. [Ted Cruz](#) and Ohio Gov. [John Kasich](#). While New York has had little impact on past primaries with races decided well before now, the tight races among the Republicans and Democrats make Tuesday's vote essential.



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[Primary polling sites in Dutchess, Ulster counties](#)

(<http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/news/local/2016/04/16/primary-polling-sites-dutchess-ulster-counties/83144172/>)

"It's unprecedented to have New York be on the path to the convention for both parties," said Lee Miringoff, director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. "There's no incumbent, so both parties are vying for it. What we're seeing is very unusual for New York to be so crucial, and it's made so because of the vast number of delegates New York has."

Purtill falls into two groups that have been courted aggressively — millennials and women.

"I'm a Trump supporter because he has new ideas that sound promising," said Purtill. "He's not a lifelong politician. He has a different view than some who have spent their whole life in politics. I think that's what we need."

In [Dutchess County](#), 20.5 percent of registered voters are younger than 35, according to data from the Dutchess County [Board of Elections](#). While small compared to the 55 and older group with more than 40 percent of registered voters, millennial voters are seen as a way to grow a party's membership and long-term strength.

With hot-button topics including abortion, immigration reform, and income inequality remaining key issues throughout the election, presidential candidates of both parties have worked to appeal to millennial voters locally and across the nation.

In the Democratic primary, the youth vote has been key, with Sen. [Bernie Sanders](#), who held a rally Tuesday at Marist College, appealing to younger voters who say they are looking to break the status quo. In Poughkeepsie and Kingston Sunday, [Chelsea Clinton](#) is expected at [Get Out The Vote](#) events for her mother, [Hillary Clinton](#). Chelsea Clinton has ties to the mid-Hudson Valley. Chelsea Clinton married her husband, [Marc Mezvinsky](#), in [Rhinebeck](#). They wed at Astor Courts, an estate on River Road, on July 31, 2010.

Of the county's 22,376 voters ages 18 to 34 able to vote in the primary, 64 percent are Democrats. Of those Democrats, 57 percent are women. Out of the 7,977 millennial Republican voters in the county, 56 percent are men.

Women outnumber men among registered voters in Dutchess in every age group. Overall, there are 90,172 women registered to vote compared to 80,379 men.

A registered Republican, Keri Rizzi, 33, of Hyde Park, said she plans to vote in the New York primary, but she is mostly disappointed in the candidates.

"Trump turned me off with his views on women," Rizzi said. "I'm still looking into Kasich, but I am intrigued by Sanders, specifically with his economic views."

Rizzi said she would rather focus on the individual candidates than feel tied down by her party affiliation, a sentiment that could make her part of swing voters key to winning in a general election.



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[As Trump runs, Dutchess has another connection to a presidential race](#)

(<http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/news/local/2016/01/19/trump-runs-dutchess-has-another-connection-presidential-race/78768006/>)

As of April 14, the total number of Dutchess residents registered as Democrats has increased by 771 voters since 2014's election cycle, from 57,237 to 58,008. In contrast, the number of county residents registered as Republican has dropped by 918 within the same time period, from 51,744 Republicans to 50,828.

The number of residents registered with the [Independence Party](#) and no-party voters have increased, according to the board of elections data. Independence voter enrollment increased by 29 voters from the 10,142 registered voters in 2014, while no-party enrollment grew from 46,172 to 47,019.

But with New York holding a closed primary election, not everyone will be heading to the polls to support their preferred candidate, according to political

science professor Gerald Benjamin, director of The Benjamin Center at [SUNY New Paltz](http://www.sunynewpaltz.edu/).

"A lot of people in Dutchess County are not enrolled to vote, or are enrolled in the Independence Party," he said. "New York has a closed primary election. Unless you are enrolled as a Democrat or Republican, you can't vote in the primary."



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VIDEOS, PHOTOS: Bernie Sanders storms Poughkeepsie

(<http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/news/local/2016/04/12/bernie-sanders-poughkeepsie-marist-rally/82937880/>)

A lifelong Republican, Stanfordville resident Manual Gonzalez, 66, said it was his "embarrassment" of the [Republican Party](http://www.republicanparty.com/) over the past eight years that caused him to switch parties last month and enroll as a Democrat.

"Watching this presidential season, I thought more about who supports the middle class," Gonzalez said. "When we had the 2008 meltdown — the financial meltdown — big banks were absolutely the cause. No one went to jail. Nothing was done, besides we bailed them out."

Gonzalez said Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders is the only one who truthfully stands for the middle class, a class Gonzalez said is "under assault" in America.

"Of all the candidates that actually mention the middle class, Bernie Sanders is the only one. Hillary says she's for the middle class, but she doesn't walk the walk," he said.

But Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton has a strong grasp on New York with a consistent double digit lead, according to Miringoff, and that hold will likely not break.

A [NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist poll](http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/2016-presidential-election/poll/NBC%20News_WSJ_Marist%20Poll_New%20York_%20Annotated%20Questionnaire_April%202016%20pdf%20%282%29.pdf) ([http://msnbcmedia.msn.com/i/MSNBC/Sections/A\\_Politics/NBC%20News\\_WSJ\\_Marist%20Poll\\_New%20York\\_%20Annotated%20Questionnaire\\_April%202016%20pdf%20%282%29.pdf](http://msnbcmedia.msn.com/i/MSNBC/Sections/A_Politics/NBC%20News_WSJ_Marist%20Poll_New%20York_%20Annotated%20Questionnaire_April%202016%20pdf%20%282%29.pdf)) released Friday shows Clinton leads Sanders by 17 points with 57 percent of the state's Democratic primary voters in the contest for the Democratic presidential nomination, compared to Sanders' 40 percent.

Jennifer Cannizzaro, of [Newburgh](http://www.newburgh.com/), will be voting for Clinton in the Democratic primary.

"I think she has the most experience and understanding of how the system works, which will allow her to get more done," Cannizzaro said.



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Marist Poll: Clinton's lead grows in New York

(<http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/news/local/new-york/2016/04/15/marist-poll-clintons-lead-grows-new-york/83075080/>)

Clinton's high approval rating during her time as a senator of New York has been crucial to her success, according to Benjamin, adding that she is "broadly known" from her time in public office and has political connections in the state.

"That was a time New Yorkers looked very favorably upon her, so when she's here, she will bring that up," Miringoff said.

And while New York Democrats often do vote for the more progressive candidate in primaries, Sanders' socially and economically progressive platforms are offset in the state by Clinton's key demographic of voters 45 and older, Miringoff said.

According to enrollment data, that demographic comprises almost 62 percent of all Democrat voters in the county. Voters younger than 45 are more likely to vote for Sanders, Miringoff said.

But not Purtill. While Sanders may appeal to some because of his "free college and everything else," Purtill said his lofty ideas will put the country in more debt.

"And Hillary Clinton? She's questionable," Purtill said.

Miringoff said among Republican voters, Trump has the "home court advantage" and name recognition capable of securing the primary win. New York does not have the Evangelical or Tea Party voters that statistically back Cruz, and Kasich is not as well known, he said.

The business mogul and reality television host owns Trump National Golf Club, Hudson Valley, in Stormville and Trump family members own property locally.

Trump is scheduled to have a rally at 3 p.m. Sunday at the Mid-Hudson Civic Center in the City of Poughkeepsie.

Trump leads in New York with 54 percent of the vote compared to 21 percent for Kasich and 18 percent for Cruz, according to the NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist poll released April 11.

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#### Election results

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