

The Voters Backing Democratic Socialists

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Young and college-educated voters in denser urban areas formed a core bloc for many candidates aligned with the socialist left, primary election data found.

In recent months, several self-described democratic socialists and candidates backed by the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) won their primary races against centrist-leaning Democrats in cities on both coasts.

Frequent patterns among precinct data showed that young voters in densely-populated and higher-income areas tended to support the more left-wing candidates, while lower-income and non-college educated voters typically supported their opponents.

All three candidates endorsed by Democratic New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, a DSA member, won their races in New York's Seventh, Tenth and 13th Congressional Districts on June 23. Patterns showed the DSA candidates won among young, college-educated and higher-income demographics, while lower-income and non-college educated voters were more likely to vote for the non-DSA candidate.

In the 13th District, Mamdani-backed socialist challenger Darializa Avila Chevalier defeated five-term incumbent Democratic Rep. Adriano Espaillat 49.4% to 45.9%, after winning in higher-income areas. The Democratic socialist held a 5.1 point advantage in higher income areas, while Espaillat won lower income areas by 9.1 points, [The New York Times reported](#).

Chevalier, a DSA member, won college-educated and younger votes by significant margins, the Times' data showed. Younger residents backed Avila Chevalier by a 24.5 point margin, and she won in college-educated areas by a 20-point margin.

Espaillat outperformed in precincts with majority Hispanic populations by 56%, particularly in precincts in the Morris Heights, Fordham and Kingsbridge neighborhoods, according to the Times' results.

Chevalier won 61% of plurality white precincts and 55% of plurality black precincts, while Espaillat won 52% of plurality Hispanic precincts, [according](#) to VoteHub.

The Morris Heights neighborhood is predominantly Hispanic and African American with a median household income of \$34,619 per year, [according](#) to Niche. Fordham Heights was 71% Hispanic as of 2024 with a median [household income](#) of \$41,840 per year, while Kingsbridge [had](#) a 66% Hispanic population and a \$64,497 median household income.

Mamdani-endorsed Democratic New York assemblywoman and DSA member Claire Valdez defeated Brooklyn borough president Antonio Reynoso 56.1% to 35.8% in New York's Seventh District. Reynoso had the backing of retiring longtime Democratic New York Rep. Nydia Velázquez.

Valdez won support among higher-income earners, while Reynoso garnered more support in the lower-income communities, according to VoteHub. Reynoso won in lower-income areas by a 32.1-point margin, while Valdez won higher-income areas by a 33.7-point margin, [according](#) to The New York Times.

Valdez outperformed among white and Hispanic voters, winning majority Hispanic communities by 19.5 points. Orthodox Jewish voters in the South Williamsburg neighborhood overwhelmingly voted for Reynoso, [according](#) to the Times' breakdown. Voters in the Orthodox and Hasidic areas overwhelmingly voted for Trump in the 2024 election, [according](#) to data from Dave's Redistricting App (DRA).

Younger residents and majority college-educated areas overwhelmingly supported Valdez. The socialist won among younger residents 64% to 32% and in college-educated areas by a 36.4-point margin, according to the Times.

An NBC [poll](#) found Hispanics viewed socialism negatively by a 24-point margin. An earlier [survey](#) from 2022 found 41% of Latino voters expressed negative views on socialism, while 23% viewed it positively. A majority of Orthodox Jews were [affiliated](#) with the Republican Party and three-quarters of Orthodox Jews supported President Donald Trump in the 2024 election, [according](#) to the Jewish Electorate Institute.

[Young voters](#) were largely responsible for left-wing Democratic Seattle Mayor Katie Wilson's November 2025 electoral win against incumbent Mayor Bruce Harrell. She won in urban and densely populated precincts by wide margins, [according](#) to Capitol Hill Seattle. Wilson [campaigned](#) on establishing transit benefits, rent control, social housing and environmental protections.

While she identifies as a socialist, the now-mayor's run was not backed by the DSA.

Wilson stated in November she would not allow privately owned grocery stores to close and vowed that government-run grocery stores would be established. Her proposal emerged at a time when Mamdani promised to establish these stores throughout New York City.

Mamdani won mostly public transport commuters 62% to 32% against former Democratic New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo in the November 2025 mayoral election, the Times' mayoral race results [reported](#). The socialist — running as the Democratic nominee — also won precincts with pluralities of black, Hispanic and Asian residents, while Cuomo — running on an independent ballot line — won white voters by a 13-point margin.

The New York mayor's strongest support was among voters ages 18 to 34 years, non-religious voters and Asian Americans, [according](#) to Quinnipiac University. The Jewish community were Cuomo's strongest supporters. Exit polls [found](#) 75% of youth voted for Mamdani.

Mamdani-backed candidate Brad Lander, a former New York City comptroller, defeated incumbent New York Rep. Dan Goldman in a 65.8% to 34.0% [vote](#) on June 23. Lander had never identified himself as a DSA member but nevertheless [campaigned](#) alongside Mamdani, Chevalier, Valdez and socialist Independent Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Goldman won by large margins in the Borough Park neighborhood, a heavily Orthodox Jewish neighborhood where President Donald Trump received the most votes during the 2024 election, [according](#) to The New York Times. He won several precincts in that area with over 90% of the vote.

Borough Park had a 54% white population as of 2024 and a plurality of residents earned between \$100,000 and \$250,000 a year, [according](#) to the New York City Furman Center.

The incumbent congressman won in the Lower East Side, which is heavily Hispanic and Asian, [according](#) to DRA. However, Lander won in majority Hispanic precincts 67% to 33%, [according](#) to the Times.

Other precincts with majority white populations supported Lander, including the Park Slope neighborhood, where Lander secured 66% of the vote. White residents account for approximately 64% to 70% of the population, while a plurality of residents earned a master's degree or higher, [according](#) to Niche. The median household income stood at \$202,310 per year.

While Lander won among young, college-educated white voters, Goldman won in lower-income areas by a 13.8-point margin, according to the Times. Lander won in the higher-income areas by 40.6 points.

The trio of leftist wins in New York's June 23 primaries may set the stage for other victories by socialist aligned candidates in hotly-contested Democratic primaries.

Democratic socialist Melat Kiros will run against Democratic Colorado Rep. Diana DeGette's seat in Tuesday's primary. DeGette, who has served in Congress since 1997 — the year Kiros was [born](#), has [trailed](#) her leftist challenger in recent polling.