

# Sanders, Clinton hold final events before New York primary

Sandy English, Patrick Martin  
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Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders held their final campaign events Monday before the April 19 New York primary, which will choose 291 delegates to the Democratic National Convention.

Most polls show Clinton with a double-digit lead in New York, but Sanders has been closing the gap in the final days, which have featured a series of large rallies in New York City attended by a total of more than 80,000 people.

A Gravis Poll published Sunday night showed Clinton up by only six points, 53 percent to 47 percent. Meanwhile an NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll showed Clinton up only two points nationally, 50 percent to 48 percent. This is the latest of several polls showing Sanders and Clinton in a near tie nationally, in terms of the preferences of Democratic Party voters and Democratic-leaning independent voters.

Clinton has a lead of about 250 convention delegates, but needs to win by large margins in New York Tuesday, and in five other East Coast states a week later in order to maintain or increase her lead.

Clinton's edge in New York polls is due more to the rules governing the primary than to her eight years as a US Senator in the state. Unlike Michigan and Wisconsin, where Sanders won, registered independents cannot vote in the Democratic primary in New York. The deadline for registered independents to re-register as Democrats was October 25, 2015, nearly seven months ago. Previously unregistered individuals could register as Democrats only until March 25, 2016.

The Sanders campaign has publicly downplayed its chances of an upset victory. An email sent out by the campaign on Monday noted the Gravis Poll result, then added, "We don't have to win New York on Tuesday, but we have to pick up a lot of delegates. This poll shows that if we keep fighting, we may actually have a chance to do

both."

The 2016 campaign is the first in 40 years in which a New York primary has been significant for either big business party's presidential nomination. A sizeable victory would strengthen the position of the two frontrunners, Clinton on the Democratic side, and billionaire Donald Trump on the Republican side.

Clinton was elected to the United States Senate from New York state in 2000 and 2006, and won the state easily over Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential primary. Only a few months ago, most media pundits took it for granted that Clinton would win New York, but Sanders comes into the state having won eight of the last nine contests, most of them caucuses in Western states but culminating in a sweeping victory in the Wisconsin primary April 5.

Sanders' self-identification as a "democratic socialist" and his rhetorical condemnations of social inequality and the "billionaire class" have found a broad popular response in New York among younger voters and among many workers. Clinton is widely regarded as the representative of the corporate and banking elite.

The Vermont senator is expected to win significant support across the upstate region, dominated by auto, steel and other heavy industries in deep crisis. Clinton aims to win her largest margins among minority voters in New York City, particularly Brooklyn, the Bronx and Harlem, where she has the full support of the Democratic Party machine and most elected officials.

The Clinton campaign has focused almost entirely on appeals to identity politics, including middle-class women as well as black and Hispanic voters. The former Secretary of State closed her campaign in Manhattan Monday with a rally featuring three other female endorsers: US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, former US Representative Gabrielle Giffords and Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards.

Clinton's remarks to the rally focused almost exclusively on domestic policy, particularly education, equal pay for women and abortion rights, although she found time to condemn the Chinese government for its "one child" policy and to pledge to defeat "terrorism, and ISIS in particular" by building "a coalition of nations to stand with us."

The former Secretary of State made no reference to the announcement Monday that the Obama administration is sending additional troops to both Iraq and Syria, or to the horrific death toll among refugees fleeing the war zones in which US warplanes and drone-fired missiles are laying waste to country after country—Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Somalia, Afghanistan, among others.

Bernie Sanders was likewise silent on the widening scope of US military intervention in the Middle East as he addressed much larger crowds than Clinton in the four main boroughs of New York City. He kicked off the final stretch of the New York campaign with a rally estimated at 18,500 in the Bronx; followed by last Wednesday's rally of some 30,000 at Washington Square Park in Manhattan; a rally Sunday afternoon at Prospect Park in Brooklyn attended by 28,000; and a final get-out-the-vote rally Monday evening at Hunts Point in Queens, where at least 5,000 turned out.

At Prospect Park, Sanders was introduced by Representative Tulsi Gabbard, a Democratic member of Congress from Hawaii, and by actor Danny DeVito. The crowd, as has been the case at Sanders' rallies all over the US, was motivated largely by anti-corporate and anti-establishment sentiment.

On Monday morning, Sanders walked through 15 blocks of midtown Manhattan, stopping traffic and being hailed by many passers-by. The main event was an appearance on the picket line of Verizon workers at a corporate office in midtown, where Sanders addressed the strikers over a megaphone, appealing to economic nationalism.

"We will not tolerate large profitable corporations sending jobs to low wage countries," he said, "throwing American workers out on the street, cutting back on health care benefits, and then playing their CEO \$18 million a year." He added, "That is the kind of greed that is destroying the American middle class."

Sanders is a bourgeois candidate operating within one of the oldest capitalist parties in the world and has made no proposals that threaten the present economic and social system or the profits of the banks and corporations. His campaign is designed to trap the leftward movement of

millions of working people and youth inside the Democratic Party.

At a Monday night rally in the borough of Queens, Sanders attracted about 5,000 supporters. The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to a number of those who had come to hear the candidate.

Tahir, a small business owner, said, "These people who control the system, who are behind the curtain, didn't expect the number of people who are supporting this candidate. From the point of view of the common people, we don't worry about a label. You have to have a home, food on the table and a job with decent wages, whatever you call it, progressive or liberal or socialist."

"The fact that nobody talked about socialism for so long is not good. If the system that isn't working is capitalism, then we need a way a challenge it, whatever it is called. There has to be a sustainable income to support everyone, whether it is a wage or a federal supplement because a lot of people are losing their jobs or their pay is going down. There should be a system that protects them. Sometimes it's more important to save the people who don't have things. But in the capitalist system they're only concerned about people at the top who do have things."

Charles Favre, 73 years old, told the WSWS: "The issue is that both parties feed from the corporate trough and Sanders is against politics heavily invested in the status quo. The one issue that has touched every American was [the economic crisis that began in] 2008. It goes beyond race, gender, ethnicity, gender preference. Every politician is shackled by funding from the status quo. Sanders is beholden only to the voters."

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