

CIA Democrat wins New Jersey nomination for governor

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Representative Mikie Sherrill won the Democratic nomination for New Jersey governor Tuesday, defeating five rivals thanks to heavy fundraising and political support from the bulk of the party establishment. She will face Republican Jack Ciattarelli, a former state legislator who narrowly lost a previous gubernatorial race in 2021.

Sherrill's victory means that in the two main statewide elections of 2025, for the governorships of New Jersey and Virginia, the Democratic Party is nominating candidates drawn directly from the military-intelligence apparatus—what the WSWS has characterized as the “CIA Democrats.”

Sherrill was a helicopter pilot in the course of a decade in the Navy, and photos of herself in military uniform dominated her campaign website. Based at the Navy's European headquarters at Naples, Sherrill flew commanders and other top officials, and also served as a “Russian Policy Officer,” maintaining relations with the Russian Navy.

After winning an open congressional seat in 2018, a year in which she was one of more than 60 military-intelligence veterans to seek Democratic congressional nominations, Sherrill has been principally involved in national-security issues. She is a member of the Armed Services Committee, and was selected by the Democratic leadership to serve on the Select Committee on Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party. This committee was created with bipartisan backing to foment anti-Chinese war propaganda.

The primary campaigns set a new record for money raised and spent, and demonstrated the dominating role of Wall Street in the affairs of both capitalist parties. The outgoing two-term governor, Phil Murphy, is a multi-millionaire and former Goldman Sachs banker,

who bought the nomination in 2017 with an outlay of \$21 million from his personal wealth. This year the candidates have already spent \$88 million, the bulk of it in the Democratic contest.

Sherrill won 34 percent against a field of five rivals, winning by a plurality in 15 of the state's 21 counties, and easily outpacing her closest challenger, Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, who won 20.5 percent but carried only two counties. Jersey City Mayor Steve Fulop, aligned with the “progressive” wing of the party, received 16 percent of the vote and carried no counties.

Representative Josh Gottheimer, a right-wing pro-Zionist who has vehemently defended Israeli genocide in Gaza, raised the most money but won only 10.8 percent of the vote, carrying only Bergen County, where he lives and holds the congressional seat.

Sherrill had the support of the vast majority of Democratic Party county committees, which control the party apparatus and have an outsize role in intra-party contests. She was widely praised in the corporate media as the most “electable” Democrat, because of her military background and right-wing politics—Sherrill is a member of the Blue Dogs, a faction of conservative Democrats who promote bipartisan collaboration with the Republican Party.

With the cynicism typical of capitalist politics, Sherrill nonetheless sought to appease popular hatred of President Trump by posturing as an intransigent opponent of the Trump administration's attacks on democratic rights and social programs.

She is likely to keep up this pretense in the election campaign over the next five months, given that her Republican opponent, Ciattarelli, was endorsed for the party's nomination by Trump and is an enthusiastic public supporter of his policies.

The primary results suggested widespread hostility to

Trump, with nearly 800,000 voting in the Democratic primary and just over 450,000 voting in the Republican contest, where all the candidates pledged their loyalty to the fascist president.

Virginia will hold its primary election next Tuesday, June 17, but the result is a foregone conclusion. Former Representative Abigail Spanberger, who gave up her Seventh District seat last year to launch a gubernatorial campaign, has no opponents, after the Democratic Party establishment cleared the field for her. Republican Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears is also unchallenged for her party's nomination. Incumbent Republican Governor Glenn Youngkin is limited to a single term.

Spanberger was a CIA undercover operative in Europe for a dozen years, before leaving the agency to run for Congress in 2018. Along with Sherrill, she was one of 13 military-intelligence candidates to win seats in Congress that year as Democrats.

Since then, Spanberger has been one of the most vocally right-wing members of the House Democratic caucus. She played a critical role in 2019, as one of seven military-intelligence Democrats who penned an op-ed in the *Washington Post* urging that Trump be impeached for delaying military aid to Ukraine.

In 2020, after Joe Biden won the presidency, defeating Trump, but Democrats lost several seats in the House, Spanberger declared on a conference call of House Democrats, "We need to not ever use the word 'socialist' or 'socialism' ever again," blaming the party's election losses on the timid reformist rhetoric of Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

In nominating Sherrill and Spanberger as its candidates in the two main election contests of 2025, the Democratic Party is showing its class character, as a party of Wall Street and the national-security elite, incapable of any serious opposition to the fascist Trump coup.

The Democrats are unalterably hostile to the working class, to immigrants, and to young people who have protested the genocide in Gaza in large numbers. These two CIA Democrats represent the real character of the Democratic Party as a party of the military-intelligence apparatus, committed above all to the defense of the global interests of American imperialism, particularly in the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine.

While maintaining a caucus of about a dozen former

military-intelligence officers in the House of Representatives, the CIA Democrats extended their influence to the Senate last year, with two of the 2018 House victors, Elissa Slotkin in Michigan and Andy Kim in New Jersey, winning Senate seats.

The two CIA Democrats running this year for governor will be favored to win their races. Another CIA Democrat has already won a significant position, in the June 7 runoff election for mayor of San Antonio, a city of 1.5 million people in south-central Texas. Democrat Gina Ortiz Jones defeated Republican Rolando Pablos in the nominally nonpartisan race.

Ortiz Jones is a former Air Force intelligence officer and Iraq War veteran who was one of the CIA Democrats in 2018, although she lost her race that year and again in 2020. Both times she ran in the 23rd Congressional District, which extends from the San Antonio suburbs south and west to the Rio Grande, taking in a huge swath of rural territory. The district is currently held by Republican Tony Gonzales.

In 2021, President Biden named her assistant secretary of the Air Force, the second-highest civilian position, and she held that post until launching her mayoral campaign. She led in the primary vote in April with 27 percent to 17 percent for Pablos, with the balance of the vote divided among 25 other candidates.

Ortiz Jones is a Filipino American who ran a campaign based on identity politics—she is the second female and first openly gay mayor of San Antonio, the seventh largest US city. The city is heavily Hispanic, with a poverty rate over 20 percent and huge unmet social needs. None of the capitalist candidates offered any solution to this social crisis or the mounting attacks on democratic rights from the Trump administration.



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