

New York Democratic governor endorses Zohran Mamdani after he kowtows to billionaires

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15 September 2025

On Sunday, after a delay of 12 weeks, New York Governor Kathy Hochul endorsed Zohran Mamdani, the winner of the New York City Democratic mayoral primary in June. This comes only a few days after Mamdani met with billionaire former mayor Michael Bloomberg, the wealthiest Democrat in the city.

Bloomberg did not himself endorse Mamdani, but the meeting was the latest in a series of friendly get-togethers between the so-called socialist—Mamdani is a member of the pseudo-left Democratic Socialists of America—and Wall Street and real estate moguls.

Hochul's endorsement was the first break in the stonewalling of Mamdani by major state and national Democratic Party figures, including both New York senators, Chuck Schumer and Kirstin Gillibrand, as well as House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, whose district is in Brooklyn.

Mamdani is the frontrunner in the four-way November 4 election that includes former Governor Andrew Cuomo—defeated by Mamdani in the Democratic primary but running again as an independent—incumbent Mayor Eric Adams, also running as an independent, and Republican candidate Curtis Sliwa.

A bitter factional war over Mamdani is being fought out in the Democratic leadership. House members Pat Ryan and Gerry Nadler from New York, and Senator Chris Van Hollen and Representative Jamie Raskin from Maryland have endorsed Mamdani. Van Hollen upbraided fellow Democrats in Congress for not supporting the party's nominee in the mayoral contest.

The party leadership is deeply concerned that any support for a self-proclaimed socialist who is advocating even minor reforms will encourage the development of a mass movement in the working class and among young people against Trump's attempts to impose dictatorship and cut across Democrats' plans to promote a right-wing, militarist agenda in the 2026 midterm elections. But it is clear that

others, including former President Barack Obama, feel that given the widespread voter support for Mamdani, they have no choice but to use him and the DSA to prevent a political explosion in the city.

Trump, typically, responded to Hochul's endorsement with threats: "This is a rather shocking development, and a very bad one for New York City. How can such a thing happen? Washington will be watching this situation very closely. No reason to be sending good money after bad!" Trump has previously said that he expects Mamdani to win the election and characterized it as a "rebellion."

Given the violence of Trump's hatred and fear of even the word "socialist," it cannot be ruled out that the White House will seek to cut off all funding for New York City, send federal troops and agents into the city as it has already done in Los Angeles and Washington D.C., or even manufacture a pretext for calling off the election or refusing to recognize its results.

Hochul's endorsement, published as an op-ed in the *New York Times*, despite the insincere promotion of a common front with Mamdani against Trump, emphasized that she had put the Democratic candidate through his paces, notably, "making it very clear that our police officers should have every resource to keep our streets and subways safe. I urged him to ensure that there is strong leadership at the helm of the N.Y.P.D.—and he agreed."

This could well mean an agreement to retain New York police commissioner Jessica Tisch, daughter of entertainment and real estate boss James Tisch, whose family holdings, based on Loews Corporation, come to at least \$10 billion.

The governor also tried to distance herself from Mamdani's public opposition to the Gaza genocide by saying, "We discussed the need to combat the rise of antisemitism urgently and unequivocally." By "antisemitism" Hochul means the anti-genocide protests in New York and across the United States, which have

included thousands of Jews, over the last two years. Hochul has been a steadfast supporter of supplying weapons and funds to Israel.

Hochul is a thoroughly right-wing figure who, as a member of Congress, opposed granting driver's licenses to immigrant workers and who began last year to flood New York City's subway stations with hundreds of National Guardsmen and state law enforcement officers to search bags and deter the poor from entering subway platforms without paying the \$2.90 charge. About 1,000 soldiers remain on duty in the subways.

Her last notable statement on Mamdani was to say, in response to Mamdani's proposal for city-owned grocery stores, "I support free enterprise." That remark came at a business breakfast last month hosted by billionaire supermarket mogul John Catsimatidis, a close ally of Donald Trump.

It seems likely that the green light for Hochul's endorsement was the meeting that Mamdani had with the former three-term mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg on Thursday. Bloomberg, whose fortune is approaching \$100 billion, is the richest man in the city's ruling class, as well as the biggest donor to the Democratic Party. He backed Andrew Cuomo in the primary, to the tune of \$8 million, making him Cuomo's largest single contributor.

As mayor from 2002 to 2013, Bloomberg unleashed the New York Police Department (NYPD) in the hated "stop-and-frisk" campaign, which violated the constitutional rights of hundreds of thousands of working class youth, predominantly black and Hispanic. In 2003, Bloomberg also created the NYPD's notorious Demographics Unit, which conducted spying on and harassment of Muslims throughout the New York area. In 2013, Bloomberg provoked a strike of 9,000 city school bus drivers, attendants and mechanics, after which thousands lost their jobs and thousands more had substantial wage reductions.

While the meeting was characterized as "cordial" by the *New York Times*, Bloomberg's spokesman emphasized that the meeting was not an endorsement. The precise content of the conversation was not reported, aside from the topic of City Hall appointments. Mamdani is known to have had discussions with former Bloomberg staffers about positions in his administration.

Mamdani's endorsement by New York state's chief executive and his "cordial" meeting with the city's richest man highlight how ruling class figures and Democratic Party operatives have extracted increasingly blatant concessions from his campaign. These retreats began with the first primary debate on June 4, when he accepted the "right" of the Zionist occupation state to exist, and continued with his recent agreement to abandon the term "global intifada" in

relation to the Palestinian struggle.

In an interview in the *Times* on Thursday, Mamdani said that he would apologize to the NYPD for remarks he made on Twitter in 2020 during the height of the mass George Floyd protests against police violence, in which he said that the NYPD was "racist, anti-queer & a major threat to public safety," and called for defunding of the police. He told the *Times* that his view now was that "police will be critical partners in delivering public safety," and said that he would maintain the number of officers at its budgeted 35,000.

When he was asked about the role of the Strategic Response Group at protests, the NYPD's notoriously violent anti-terrorism unit, which he has indicated he will disband, Mamdani answered that this "is not to say that we should not have any [police] presence." Mamdani, in other words, will accept police presence—and the police violence that invariably accompanies it—at student anti-genocide protests.

This is par for the course for the DSA. One only has to recall New York Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's call for suppression of protests in New York City against the Israeli assault on Gaza in October 2023, or her votes to fund Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system.

The DSA leadership in New York even tells its members to expect Mamdani to betray his promises, and not to make too much of it. A recent article in the DSA-aligned *Jacobin* magazine declared: "We should resist the mindset that sees our relationship with socialist elected officials as primarily one of holding them accountable to campaign commitments and socialist principles."

Mamdani will do nothing to oppose the invasion of New York by federal agents and the National Guard, should Trump order it. As he said to the *Times* on Thursday, "I think that it is inevitable that [Trump] will seek to deploy the National Guard in New York City. I think it's incumbent upon all of us to be prepared for that as opposed to treating it as simply a possibility." Mamdani, like his Democratic counterparts in Albany and Washington, has consistently downplayed the danger of dictatorship. "Preparation," in this case, means passive acceptance, perhaps with a mild verbal protest.



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