

Victory of Mamdani-backed candidates heightens crisis in Democratic Party

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28 June 2026

The victory in the June 23 Democratic primary elections for Congress of three self-described socialist candidates, all backed by Mayor Zohran Mamdani, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), has sparked alarm in both parties of the capitalist oligarchy.

It has intensified the crisis in the Democratic Party, with party leaders seeking to dismiss the significance of the elections and a group of “centrist” Democrats declaring their support for capitalism, law-and-order, restrictions on immigration, fiscal “discipline” and patriotism.

The reaction of the Trump administration and the Republican Party has been dominated by hysterical denunciations of “communism.”

The election victories reflect a profound shift to the left in the political orientation of masses of workers, youth, professional people and sections of the middle class, driven by the crisis of American and world capitalism. The escalation of imperialist war, including the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza and the criminal aggression against Iran, growing poverty and economic insecurity for the masses combined with mounting billions for the corporate oligarchy, the hated Trump regime’s erection of a fascistic dictatorship and the cowardice and complicity of the Democrats are fueling growing popular resistance and interest in a socialist alternative to the existing system.

This is what generates fear in ruling class circles, far more than the token reforms advocated by Mamdani and the DSA, who seek to channel the growing opposition from below behind the Democratic Party.

In addition to the three victories in New York congressional races, seven DSA candidates won primary elections for the New York state legislature. Earlier in June, DSA member Janeese Lewis George

won the Democratic primary for mayor of Washington D.C., and Nithya Raman, a DSA member, has advanced to a November runoff election against the incumbent Democratic mayor of Los Angeles, Karen Bass.

Mamdani endorsed and promoted the three congressional candidates—Claire Valdez, a state assembly member, Darializa Avila Chevalier, a doctoral student and former Columbia University anti-genocide organizer, and Brad Lander, former NYC comptroller. In all three cases, the candidates won against opponents backed by Governor Kathy Hochul and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries in what are considered safe Democratic districts.

In each of these campaigns, the DSA candidate’s opposition to the Gaza genocide and the arming of Israel by the Democratic Party establishment played a critical role, as did opposition to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) anti-immigrant rampage and the astronomical cost of living, especially in housing.

In response to the primary results, the *Washington Post* quoted Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut as saying, “What’s happening in New York will be really irrelevant” by the time of the elections in November.

Jeffries, the likely speaker of the House should the Democrats gain control of that chamber in November, said in a statement on election night, “A handful of primaries that go in one direction or the other, in a given state or two, aren’t going to reshape who we are as House Democrats.”

The *New York Times* quoted Matt Bennett, a co-founder of Third Way, a Democratic think tank, as warning: “What we’ve seen Republicans do very successfully before is weaponize the craziest ideas of

the activist left. And now the ammunition they've got is much, much more powerful."

A group of Democrats in the House signed an open letter titled "Promise to America" on Thursday. Co-leading this initiative are Thomas Suozzi of New York and Adam Gray of California. Signatories also include Representatives Josh Gottheimer (New Jersey), Susie Lee (Nevada), Don Davis (North Carolina), Vicente Gonzalez Jr. (Texas), Laura Gillen (New York), Janelle Bynum (Oregon), Kristen McDonald Rivet (Michigan), Maggie Goodlander (New Hampshire) and Jessica Killin (candidate in a Colorado Democratic primary).

The "Promise to America" declares, "We are capitalist, not socialist." It affirms the signatories' belief in "innovation, entrepreneurship, and ownership." It supports "secure borders."

Under the heading "Fiscal Discipline" it declares, "We will prioritize tackling the national debt honestly. We must pay our bills." Since the document says nothing about foreign wars or record military spending, the commitment to a balanced budget can only mean support for more drastic cuts in social spending.

Other subheads in the document include: "We want safety, not lawlessness"; "We believe government should solve problems, not create them"; "We are mainstream, not extreme"; and "We are proud, not ashamed of America."

The Republican Party has reacted with anti-communist hysteria, with Trump in the lead. At the Faith & Freedom Coalition's 2026 Policy Conference on Thursday, he said of the DSA, "Assassinations are a big deal for them. They're animals... The Democrats have taken a tremendous turn left... they're people that want to destroy our country. They hate our country. They hate our people."

The *Wall Street Journal* in a June 24 editorial urged its readers to take the election results seriously, writing: "The victories by Mayor Zohran Mamdani's slate of leftists will change the Democratic Party—and perhaps the politics of the country."

In an interview on ABC's Sunday talk show "This Week," Mamdani repeatedly advanced the DSA mantra of turning the Democratic Party into a party that "must stand for working people." He made clear that he and the DSA remain loyal to the Democratic Party, a party of Wall Street, the Pentagon and the CIA, referring several times to the Democrats as "our party."

Twice in the course of the interview, Mamdani made a point of stressing his role in maintaining law and order. He boasted that in his first six months in office "what we've delivered has been record lows when it comes to murders and shootings."

Meanwhile, Mamdani has not only retreated from his campaign promise of free buses, he has increased fare enforcement. On Friday, the Legal Aid Society took the city to court because, as one spokesperson said, "Mayor Mamdani is continuing the same aggressive enforcement approach as the Adams administration over a \$3 subway fare."

Last week, dozens of criminal justice and civil rights groups, including the New York Civil Liberties Union, sent a letter to Mamdani protesting the New York Police Department's continued crackdown on low-level crime (so-called "broken windows" policing) under its billionaire heiress police commissioner, Jessica Tisch. Opponents note that deaths in custody have increased, along with the number of arrests for non-violent offenses. These groups held a protest in front of City Hall on Thursday.



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