

## Around the Block with BCJAC

It's election season again! Participating in elections helps ensure our community's voice is represented on issues that matter to us, from public safety to education to support for Israel. Consistent participation helps demonstrate that we are an engaged and reliable constituency.

This year's June primary includes relatively few contested races, making it a straightforward opportunity to vote. Below is a practical guide to key information for Bergen County voters.

### Who can vote?

New Jersey has a semi-closed primary system. Registered Democrats vote in the Democratic primary and registered Republicans vote in the Republican primary.

Voters who are not affiliated with either party may choose a party and vote in that party's primary at the polls.

NJ residents living overseas, including students studying in Israel, can register and request ballots electronically. Step-by-step instructions are available through Teach Coalition at <https://teachcoalition.org/votefromabroad/>

### Key Dates

Voter registration deadline: **May 12**

Mail-in ballot request deadline (by mail): **May 26**

In-person early voting at the Rodda Center and other locations: **May 26-May 31**

Election Day: **June 2**

Sample ballots will be mailed beginning on May 20 and are also available online at the County Clerk's website: <https://www.bergenclerk.gov/services/88>.

### What's On the Ballot in Bergen County?

Because information about federal races is widely available, we focus first on county and local positions that often receive less attention but have meaningful day-to-day impact.

### **County Committee**

County Committee members are local party representatives who help select party leadership, endorse candidates, and organize grassroots political activity. Each voting district elects two members to serve two-year terms.

In many districts, candidates are running unopposed. In Teaneck, most Democratic seats are uncontested, including 15 candidates who emerged from BCJAC's 2024 efforts to increase Jewish representation to levels proportionate to the overall population. District 15 is a notable exception, with three candidates running for two seats (**Zachary Greenberg, Meir Brodsky, and Natasha Williams**).

On the Republican side, a number of districts (including Teaneck Districts 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11) have fewer candidates than available seats. If you're a registered Republican, and have been thinking about getting more civically engaged, consider running a write-in campaign among your neighbors!

## County Commissioners

County commissioners serve as Bergen County's legislative body, overseeing the budget, setting policy, and making appointments of members to boards and commissions. Each year, two or three commissioners are elected for staggered three-year terms.

This year, two seats are up for election.

- Democratic primary: **Joan Voss** and **Rafael Marte** (unopposed)
- Republican primary: **John Dinice** and **Maria Soledad Laman** (unopposed)

## Surrogate

The Surrogate oversees the Surrogate's Court, which handles probate matters, wills, estates, and guardianships. The position carries a five-year term. Michael Dressler served in the role from 1996-2025, when he passed away.

- Democratic primary: **Linda Schwager** (unopposed)
- Republican primary: **Daniel Ng** and **Joseph Stephen Conte**

## County Clerk

The County Clerk oversees public records, elections administration, business registrations, passport applications, and various licensing functions. The term is five years.

- Democratic primary: **John S. Hogan** (unopposed)
- Republican primary: **Timothy Walsh** (unopposed)

## County Executive

The County Executive functions as the chief executive officer of Bergen County, overseeing departments, implementing policy, and managing the county's \$750 million budget. The position carries a four-year term.

- Democratic primary: **James Tedesco III** (unopposed)
- Republican primary: **Todd Hennessy** (unopposed)

## U.S. House of Representatives

Most of Bergen County is in New Jersey's 5th Congressional District. Members of Congress serve two-year terms.

- Democratic primary: **Josh Gottheimer** (unopposed)
- Republican primary: **Sean Kirrane** (unopposed)

## U.S. Senate

U.S. Senators serve six-year terms. Every even numbered year, approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the 100 Senate seats are up for election.

- Democrat primary: NJ Senator **Cory Booker** (unopposed)

- Republican: There are four Republican candidates running for Senate in the primary: **Richard Tabor, Justin Murphy, Alex Zdan, and Robert Lebovics.**

Voters are encouraged to review candidate platforms and public statements. BCJAC is sending questionnaires to the Republican senate candidates to document their positions on Israel, antisemitism, and education policy. Responses will be shared in a future column ahead of the election.

### **Closing Thought**

Even in a low-drama primary, participation matters. Local elections, especially those that receive less attention, often influence relationships and policies that directly affect our lives. Taking a few minutes to vote is a small but meaningful way to stay engaged and make an impact.