

THE VOICE



Fall 2026

2026 Midterms:

Why
your vote
matters

UALBANY PROF JAZZES THINGS UP • UUP MEMBERS RECEIVE AWARDS

The Voice is a publication of United University Professions (UUP), bargaining agent for the more than 38,000 academic and professional employees of the State University of New York.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Our country at a crossroads

A voter's guide to issues affecting UUP members the most

10

18

ALSO INSIDE

To the Point.....	3
Labor Notes.....	4
Awards recognize UUP members	6
Solidarity forever: Labor Day events	8
Every vote counts: The midterms take on unprecedented importance.....	10
Country at a crossroads: How did everything we value unravel so fast?	14
NY races that matter: Key House battles, endorsements and issues.....	18
Nano Jazz: UAlbany chemistry prof unwinds with his jazz combo	30
Benefits	36



30

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A MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION

This year's midterm election is one of the most important elections in U.S. history. Maybe the most important.

Certainly, we've heard this before—in 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024. The elections of 1860 and possibly 1932 and 1940 were also big.

But here's what makes this year's midterms so crucial: The last two years of the Trump administration hinge on Nov. 3.

Will voters check the president's power, or will they allow him to continue doing as he pleases, unrestricted? The Supreme Court seems to be rediscovering its constitutional duty, but I'm not convinced.

We know the chaos at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. is handing families soaring prices for gas, groceries and heat. A cruel immigration crackdown and the war against Iran continue. Higher education researchers, educators and healthcare providers face relentless attacks.

As you will read in these pages, UUP backs candidates who support labor and our work. I call on members to help get out the vote for them.

Inevitably, some will argue that UUP should stay out of politics and focus on our terms and conditions of employment.

But we are about to enjoy the fruits of a historic collective bargaining agreement with the state. This wouldn't be possible if we "stayed out of politics." We are public workers. Everything we do is political.

Some will criticize UUP—and me specifically—for favoring Democrats. But remember, this union was more critical of Gov. Andrew Cuomo than any public sector union in New York.

Remember the Voice issue with the Cuomo cover and the headline: WRONG? Remember our massive media campaign that attacked Cuomo's devastating cuts to SUNY? Remember when sexual harassment allegations against him became public? UUP was the only statewide public sector union to call for his resignation.

Cuomo is a Democrat. Our opposition triggered criticism from labor colleagues and threats from the Cuomo regime. A Cuomo staffer told me, "Don't go to war with us. We do war!" I made tough choices in go-

ing after Cuomo, and we earned his grudging respect (until we called on him to resign, of course) with a decent contract in 2016.

UUP has major sway in endorsements by NYSUT and the New York State AFL-CIO. Among the candidates we support are Republicans running for state Legislature and Congress.

UUP is nonpartisan. We defend our work and our values. Our friends, regardless of party, will get our help. Candidates aligned with those wishing us harm won't.

These midterms are about human decency. They're about preserving freedom and democracy. We face what I call a Hungarian Moment: We either come together to stop our slide into authoritarianism or we risk losing our freedoms and the work we love.

Check out the UUP website to see all the battles we're engaged in to defeat the Trump administra-

“ These midterms are about human decency. They're about preserving freedom and democracy. We either come together to stop our slide into authoritarianism or we risk losing our freedoms and the work we love.”

tion's efforts to control what we teach, how we teach, what we research and how we work.

We are at a crossroads. It's time to ask yourself: Are you OK with what you see? And then vote.

I know how I'm going to vote. I hope you'll support our UUP-backed candidates; I believe they will bring the positive change this country so desperately needs.



Frederick E. Kowal
President, UUP

» Read the 2025 issue of *The Voice* referenced above on UUP's criticism of Gov. Andrew Cuomo which actually paved the path for a good contract.

bit.ly/VoiceJanFeb2015



Maritime ship called up for national duty

The cadets at SUNY Maritime have lost their floating classroom, for now.

Maritime College President John Okon

announced in late August that the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) activated the Empire State VII for a classified national security mission “after determining that no other suitable vessel is available to meet an urgent Military Sealift Command requirement,” the maritime publication gCaptain reports.

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported the ship is expected to support U.S. forces stationed in the Indian Ocean.

Maritime Chapter President Roland Aragon said it is not unheard of for MARAD to take Maritime’s teaching ship. In the past, the ship was used for humanitarian purposes, including responding to natural disasters in Louisiana and Puerto Rico.

The ship has been commissioned for its new mission for 170 days, which means it could be back in its Bronx port by mid-February. If the ship is not available by spring, Maritime may have to reach out to other states’ maritime academies to provide in-person experience for cadets aboard a ship.

Until then, the approximately 500 cadets enrolled at the college will attend classes on land instead of aboard the ship; Maritime has inland classrooms equipped with simulators.

Aragon said no UUP members will be displaced from



their jobs. In the past, members of UUP, such as the chief engineer, chief mate and first, second and third mates stayed with the ship as crew for the redefined missions. Aragon said that is not the case this time.

Empire State VII was delivered to MARAD in September 2023 and assigned to SUNY Maritime as the first of five National Security Multi-Mission Vessels built for the nation’s state maritime academies. It is not equipped with weapons.

While operated by the academies, the ships remain federal property and components of the National Defense Reserve Fleet.

Read more at

bit.ly/MaritimeInsider

bit.ly/MaritimeCaptain



Contract raises, retroactive pay begin

By the time UUP members read this, they will have received a 4.5% raise and retroactive pay—negotiated in UUP’s new five-year contract with the state—in their Oct. 7 paychecks.

“This salary increase and the gains we negotiated in our new contract with the state are well deserved,” UUP President Fred Kowal said in announcing the raise and retroactive pay. “This is the power of UUP and of organized labor.”

Nearly 98% of eligible voters cast ballots to approve the contract in a late-July ratification vote.

The contract guarantees members across-the-board salary

increases each year of the pact. It also addresses the threat of artificial intelligence. UUP is one of the first unions in the country to negotiate such stringent protections against AI.

You can read more about what’s in the contract at
bit.ly/UUPcontractpress

Members can read a summary of the contract agreement at
uupinfo.org/contract/





AFL-CIO hits ICE over covert surveillance

Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bernie Burnham blasted federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement after learning his union was listed by ICE as one of several organizations affiliated with defendants in a criminal conspiracy case brought by the government.

The government has said that it is not arguing that the AFL-CIO or any other organizations listed in the case were part of the conspiracy; simply that the organizations had connections to the defendants.

Even so, Burnham issued a statement in which he said the government is “bringing back McCarthyism.”

At issue is a federal criminal case against protesters charged after last winter’s surge of ICE agents in Minnesota as part of a massive crackdown on immigrants. The case has revealed that ICE agents infiltrated meetings at which Minnesota residents discussed the surge and planned protests.

The meetings took place at churches, schools, restaurants and libraries, and ICE agents compiled dossiers on some attendees.

One government document presented to grand jurors shows a PowerPoint slide depicting a web of 18 organizations with the label “The Conspiracy.” A DHS agent testified to the grand jury that it showed organizations with whom the defendants in the conspiracy case were affiliated.

The other organizations included a local teachers union and a bicycle repair shop, in addition to the statewide AFL-CIO.

Read more at
bit.ly/AFLCIOice



Scholarships recognize students

Seven SUNY students who exemplify personal achievement, academic excellence and determination are this year’s winners of four UUP student scholarships.

The scholarships are the UUP College Scholarship Fund Undergraduate Scholarship, the William E. Scheuerman Post-baccalaureate Scholarship, the Jo Schaffer Second Chance/Returning Student Scholarship and the Steve Street Award.

The recipients are:

Undergraduate Scholarship: \$3,000

Rebecca Higgins, who is majoring in accounting and minoring in American Sign Language at the University at Buffalo.

Scheuerman Post-Baccalaureate Scholarship: \$3,000

Laura Marquez is pursuing a Master’s degree in Human-Computer Interaction at SUNY Oswego. Alexa Grimley is in the Speech Language Pathology program at Stony Brook University. Helena Lubin is in the Master’s program for Early Childhood/Childhood and Special Education at Binghamton University.

Jo Schaffer Second Chance/Returning Student Scholarship: \$3,000

Melissa Payne, SUNY Canton; and Angel Vazquez, SUNY Oswego. The Scholarship Committee especially noted that both students overcame extreme hardships in their quest to return to college.

Steve Street Award: \$500

Johnny Dona, SUNY Farmingdale. Dona, a civil engineering student, is a Haitian immigrant who advocates for social justice. He is a Department of Transportation employee and a Brooklyn food pantry volunteer.

Find out more about
UUP’s scholarships at
uupinfo.org/awards/



UUPers honored for service

Three deserving members and a UUP retiree were honored for their outstanding service and dedication to UUP.

Mike Green, who helped secure UUP's 2026-2031 contract as part of UUP's Negotiations Team, was awarded the Faye Samuel Award for Courageous Service by Part-Time Academic and Professional Faculty award. Green is a Polytechnic Chapter member who also teaches part time at SUNY Oneonta.

Albany Chapter member David Banks and Polytechnic Chapter member Alexander Bulson shared the Anne Wiegard Award for Courageous Service by Full-Time Contingent Academic and Professional Faculty.

The 2026 Pearl H. Brod Outstanding Retiree Award went to Stony Brook HSC retiree member Doreen Day. There were no nominees for UUP's highest award, the Nina Mitchell Award for Distinguished Service.

The awards were presented in early October at the 2026 UUP Delegate Assembly in Albany.

Mike Green: Committed to UUP

Mike Green didn't have much in the way of job security when he agreed to join UUP's Negotiations Team in 2025 as it prepared to hammer out a new contract with the state.

Green, an adjunct professor of history and politics at SUNY Polytechnic Institute who doubles as an adjunct in SUNY Oneonta's Composition Writing Program, only had a one-year term, part-time appointment. That means no seniority and no job security.

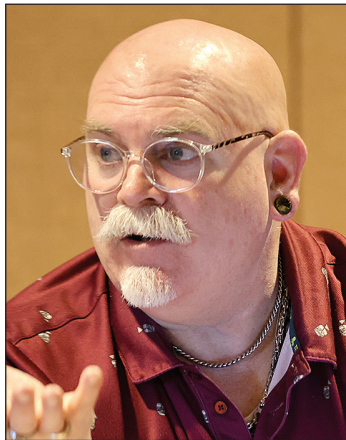
"Mike has been active only a brief time in UUP but has clearly shown exceptional courage and activism, despite the extreme precarity of his own position, because he truly believes in representing

our most vulnerable members," Jaclyn Pittsley, a longtime SUNY Cortland lecturer, member of UUP's statewide Executive Board and co-chair of the statewide Contingent Employment Committee (CEC), wrote in her nomination letter for Green.

Green didn't join the team in name only. He was an active, committed member who made significant contributions, despite his multiple job obligations and family responsibilities, she wrote.

Green has been very active on the CEC and secured screenings of the movie "Adjunct" for members for Campus Equity Week in 2025. He's also a member of the Higher Education Labor United's Contingency Task Force.

"Despite having spent less time than other folks active in UUP on the statewide level, Mike already has a lasting legacy of awe-inspiring contributions," Pittsley wrote.



Mike Green

Wiegard winners step up

The winners of this year's Anne Wiegard Award for Courageous Service by Full-Time Contingent Academic and Professional Faculty believe in UUP's mission and in organized labor.

Albany Chapter member David Banks is an activist who routinely shows up to union-sponsored rallies, protests and events. He's also not afraid to speak truth to power and stand with his fellow members.

When a UAlbany adjunct professor was arrested in 2023 after unplugging an electric anti-abortion display, Banks—the chapter's officer for contingents—attended court hearings with that member. He led an effort to stop a contract between UAlbany and a private contractor that "was contributing to bargaining unit erosion," according to his May 11 nomination submission.

Bulson, a Polytechnic Chapter member, began



David Banks

his UUP service in 2014, serving as chapter officer for contingents and vice president of academics—despite the uncertainty of working as a contingent.

A member of UUP's CEC, Bulson is a full-time lecturer in writing at SUNY Polytechnic Institute. Like Banks, he has not been shy when it comes to standing up for full-time and part-time contingent members.

As his chapter's officer for contingents and its vice president for academics, Bulson has strived to achieve structural changes to the terms and conditions of employment for UUP-represented workers on the Polytechnic campus. He's advocated for issues like academic freedom, workload, promotion and tenure.

"Alex has fought hard for structural changes to the terms and conditions of employment for both full-time and part-time contingents at SUNY Poly," Pittsley wrote in her April 1 nomination letter for Bulson, who also served as a UUP regional membership specialist.

Banks began his union service in 2019 as a department representative in UAlbany's Department of Geography, Planning and Stability, where he works as a lecturer and program director in globalization studies. As chapter membership committee chair, he rebuilt the chapter's new employee orientation (NEO) process and still oversees the NEO program.

Statewide, Banks serves on the CEC and the Future of Public Higher Education Committee and has been a UUP regional membership specialist since 2023. He is a UUP delegate and a Capital District Area Labor Federation delegate.

One active retiree

When it comes to UUP, Doreen Day always shows up. A longtime Stony Brook HSC Chapter member who

retired in 2018, Day is a UUP delegate, a statewide Outreach Committee member and a VOTE-COPE team member who gives presentations to retirees about the importance of donating to VOTE-COPE.

She's active in NYSUT as well, serving as the NYSUT PAC coordinator for Long Island.

And you can always count on her to be at chapter advocacy events.



Alexander Bulson



Doreen Day

"Doreen can be relied upon to always show up!" Stony Brook Chapter President Bruce Kube wrote in Day's March 30 nomination petition. "She is a role model for the active UUP membership. We rely heavily on Doreen to impart her knowledge and experience to the 'retirees in training.'"

During the coronavirus pandemic, Day joined the Suffolk County Medical Reserve Corps where she tested first responders for COVID and later helped with vaccine distribution.

Day is a member of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Stony Brook University and served on the OLLI executive board and several other committees. She's also a member of the Suffolk County and Brookhaven Town Democratic committees.

UUP awards recognize members' service

The **Fayez Samuel Award** for Courageous Service by Part-Time Academic and Professional Faculty recognizes contingent members who have served the union with courage and distinction on the chapter or state level. The late Fayez Samuel of SUNY Farmingdale was a pioneer in the fight for fair treatment of SUNY part-time contingent faculty.

Created in 2024, the **Anne Wiegard Award** for Courageous Service by Full-Time Contingent Academic and Professional Faculty recognizes the efforts of full-time contingent UUP members who have served the union with courage and

distinction at the state or chapter level. Wiegard, who retired in 2020, was an academic delegate and fierce fighter for part-time and full-time SUNY contingent employees.

The **Pearl H. Brod Outstanding Retiree Award** recognizes UUP retirees who are outstanding community volunteers and who have provided exemplary service to UUP and SUNY after retirement. The late Pearl Brod of Farmingdale was a longtime academic delegate who served as chair of the statewide Committee on Active Retired Membership from 1999-2003. The award was renamed in her honor in 2011.

MEMBERS CELEBRATE SEPTEMBER

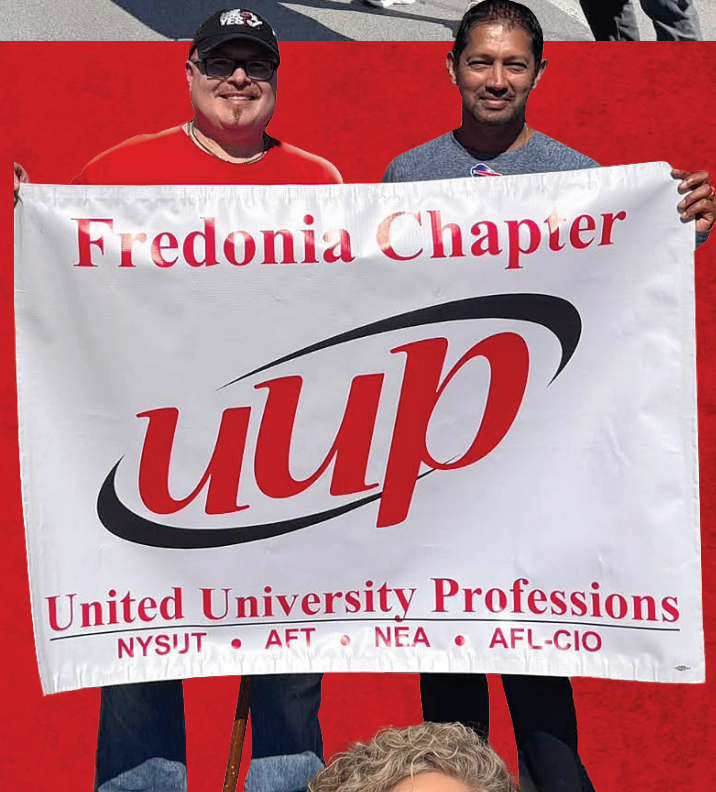
September is a time of special chapter solidarity for UUP members. They're at Labor Day marches, they're in parades highlighting community connections and they're gathering at chapter events to mark the new academic year. These observances took on special meaning this September, as members saw raises and retroactive pay from the new contract with the state, and as they showed support for the labor movement at a time of unprecedented federal attacks on unions.



UUP President Fred Kowal joins members at the Labor Day Parade in Buffalo.



Top: Downstate members celebrate at the West Indian American Day Parade Sept. 7 in Brooklyn. **Bottom:** Members, including Upstate VPP Nakeia Chambers, left, statewide Secretary-Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee (center), Morrisville Chapter President Stephen Hinkle and Upstate Chapter member Mindy Heath (far right) march in the New York State Fair Labor Day Parade in Syracuse. (All photos by UUP members.)



Clockwise from top: Canton and Plattsburgh members march in the 46th Annual Labor Day Solidarity Day Parade in Massena; Fredonia Chapter President Chris Taverna, left and Buffalo State Chapter MDO Jude Jayatilleke show their union pride at the Buffalo Labor Day parade; Courtney Ignarri, Binghamton Chapter MDO, enjoys the welcome-back barbecue for members; NY AG Letitia James, left, with UUP Downstate Chapter President Redetha Abrahams-Nichols at the West Indian American Day Parade in Brooklyn; and members march in the Labor Day parade in Cortland. (All photos by UUP members.)

insure domestic Tranquillity
and our Posterity, All for

and our Father

Every vote counts

{ Why voting in the midterms
matters more than ever }

By Leigh Hornbeck

Elections are our one tangible opportunity to have a say, whether it's on the school budget or candidate for city mayor, state representative or higher office. Voting is a concrete action: "Yes, spend the taxpayers' money," "Yes, this candidate best represents my interests," "No, this man is destroying the nation."

Historically, the national midterm elections result in a rejection of the sitting president — or at least a bucket of cold water tossed on his agenda—when voters bounce members of the president's party out of office in favor of the opposition.

In 2010, when President Barack Obama was in office, Republicans took 63 seats in the House and weakened the Democrats' majority in the Senate. A similar Republican surge killed healthcare reform under President Bill Clinton in 1994. While there have been midterms where voters have favored a popular president, it doesn't happen often.



From the perspective of UUP and all we hold dear, the stakes couldn't be higher for the coming midterm elections—and the opportunity to thwart President Donald Trump's remaking of America.

Trump and like-minded members of Congress have already tried to seed distrust in our election system with unfounded allegations of fraud during the 2020 election and attempts to dismantle mail-in voting.

From trying to bully the GOP-led Congress into passing his so-called SAVE Act—which would force voters to show documents like passports or birth certificates to vote in federal elections, among other restrictions—to pressuring states into purging voter rolls, election experts say Trump is attempting to preserve his power by wresting control of elections from the states.

At the state level, there have been redistricting efforts to

break up voting blocs and laws passed to restrict voting. Although states historically have simply required people registering to vote to swear or affirm that they are citizens, and voting by noncitizens is extremely rare, several states now require documentary proof of citizenship for people registering to vote.



Tim Weaver

University at Albany

History repeats itself

UUP member Tim Weaver, associate professor of political science at the University at Albany, is confident the election will proceed, despite ongoing efforts to undermine it.

“We can expect intimidating behavior — immigration police at polling places, for example, as well as legal challenges and questionable actions from the administration — but it will proceed and with net wins for the Democrats, probably a significant majority,” Weaver said. “The next hurdle will be seating the newly elected representatives.”

Republican Speaker of the House Mike Johnson delayed a newly elected representative in 2025, stalling for seven weeks before swearing in Democrat Rep. Adelita Grijalva after she won a special election in Arizona in 2025.

Weaver urges his students to view today's political climate through the lens of history. While the upheaval around us now is significant, nearly every decade has major upheavals and threats to constitutional stability.

Most of Weaver's students aren't much older than 18. They were 10 in 2016 when Trump was first elected. A political landscape influenced by Trump's brand of politics is all they know on a national scale. Weaver said there is a contrast to what he saw among students in 2012 and 2018. Today, the students seem burdened.

“They know things are not going well in many respects,” he said. “They feel it in their families. I have a lot of working-class



» *SUNY Geneseo Associate Professor of Political Science Hanna Brant prefers the Constitution on the U.S. Senate website that shows how the document changed as it was amended.*

bit.ly/USsenateSite



We have elected officials who don't know the Constitution. I want students to know it — when their rights and civil liberties are threatened, it's important they know what the 14th Amendment says.

Hanna Brant

students and for them, cost of living is a problem. They are not very hopeful. They think it's going to be impossible to buy a house and get a job, or AI will take the jobs that are out there. Apart from [New York City Mayor] Zohran Mamdani, who they are excited about, they are used to expecting the worst out of politicians. In a different era, there was excitement around real change; now they doubt anything will make a difference, regardless of the outcome of the midterms."

Learning the Constitution

Across the state at SUNY Geneseo, UUP member Hanna Brant, an associate professor of political science, brings her students back to the Constitution. She prefers the version on the U.S. Senate website (see QR code opposite page) that shows how the document changed as it was amended.

"I like to focus on what the Constitution says and how it has changed. In the context of American exceptionalism, here it is — here's the document that has survived all this time," Brant said. "Our Constitution lays out the rules of the game. We have elected officials who don't know the Constitution. I want students to know it — when their rights and civil liberties are threatened, it's important they know what the 14th Amendment says."

Each semester, without telling them what it is, Brant gives her students the U.S. citizenship test. Most people fail it. They have a chance to take it again at the end of the class. Brant also encourages students to vote — New York state residents can cast a ballot at school or at home. When they tell her individual votes don't matter, she reminds them of close local elections that have been decided by a handful of votes.

The outcome of the midterms has special weight for Brant. She is taking a sabbatical next semester to work with a member of Congress as part of the American Political Science Association Congressional Fellowship Program.

She doesn't know yet whose staff she will join; the rules state it cannot be a newly elected member. She knows for certain she will not share what she does for a living in casual conversation on the plane to Washington, D.C. — she's stopped doing that.

"People always want to know my perspective and my principles," Brant said. "And it's not about that. It's about teaching people enough so they can make up their own minds."



Hanna Brant
SUNY Geneseo





Our country *at a* crossroads

**The world's most successful
democracy was supposed to
have built-in protections
against autocracy ...**

**How did those
guardrails fail so fast?**

President Donald Trump has been telling supporters at rallies that they should vote in the midterms as if he is on the ballot—meaning, if they approve of his performance, then they should express that approval by voting for candidates he endorses.

Tens of millions of other voters who oppose the second Trump administration may also be voting as if the president is on the ballot, although not as he intended.

How did one person take a level of power that his predecessors largely held in trust to be handled with the utmost care, and in less than two years, unravel so many norms, so many commonly held conventions of democracy and decency?

How did we get here?

Constitutional scholars and historians may debate that question for years. Americans planning to vote in the midterm elections Nov. 3 won't have that luxury of time; for them, the window in which to make choices is rapidly closing.

Voters' conflicted feelings are reflected in the president's polling numbers. As this issue of *The Voice* went to press, Trump's approval rating had hovered around an average of 38% for months, with fluctuations in both directions, based on reports by the *New York Times*.

That 38% average is not a record—Harry S. Truman and Richard Nixon had lower final approval ratings of 32% and 24%, respectively—but Trump's numbers are low enough that some Republican candidates are distancing themselves from him. Numerous reports have documented independent voters moving away from Trump. Election strategists attribute Trump's polling problems to economic chaos, his immigration crackdown and a long list of other issues.

An election imbued with urgency

A combination of factors has set the country up for a midterm election like none in recent memory, and very possibly like none in our history.

It is urgent that we vote as though our country's future depends on it, because our country's future depends on the people of the United States taking back their democracy through the midterm elections.

"Every national election in this country should be treated like the most important election of our times, but in this case, that description should be taken with the utmost seriousness," UUP President Fred Kowal said. "This is not a presidential election, but for a country teetering on the verge of autocracy, it might as well be. It is urgent that we vote as though our country depends on it, because our future does depend on the people of the United States taking back their democracy through the midterm elections."

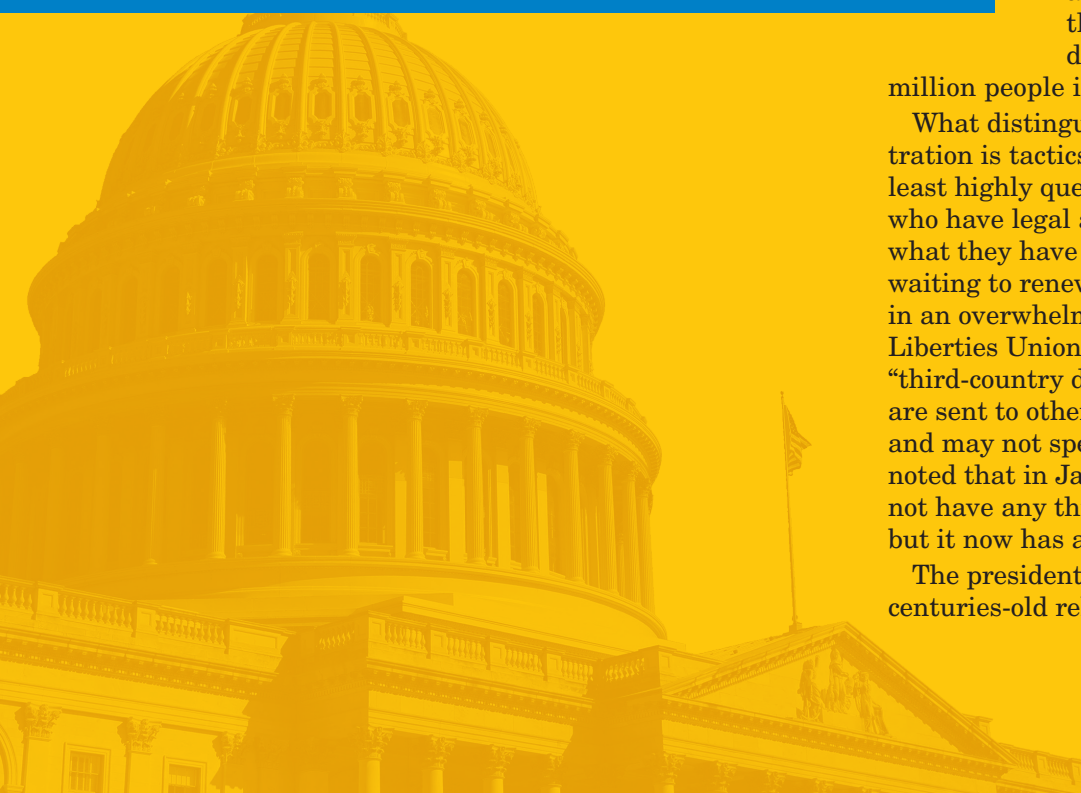
Trump faces numerous challenges. An unpopular, undeclared war against Iran is heating up again. He is again imposing tariffs, finding another dubious avenue for these unpopular charges—which are shouldered by the American people—after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled his earlier tariffs unconstitutional. The result so far: a silly trade war with Canada that pushed the spiteful Trump to use an executive order to change the name of Lake Ontario to Lake America in retaliation.

Record numbers of immigrants—many of them in the United States legally, with no criminal record—have been swept up in the federal crackdown on immigration, amid claims of inhumane treatment—including children languishing in ICE holding centers.

It cannot be unequivocally stated that this administration holds a deportation record. Changing definitions of what count as deportations make comparisons to past administrations difficult. A *New York Times* analysis of Trump's immigration actions in 2025 showed that about 230,000 people were deported from inside the country; another 270,000 at the border. By some measures, the Obama administration holds the deportation record—more than 3 million people in eight years.

What distinguishes the second Trump administration is tactics that have been called illegal or at least highly questionable, such as deporting people who have legal asylum status, targeting people for what they have written or said and targeting people waiting to renew lapsed immigration documents in an overwhelmed system. The American Civil Liberties Union has blasted the administration for "third-country deportations" in which immigrants are sent to other countries where they have no ties and may not speak the language. The ACLU has noted that in January 2025, the United States did not have any third-country deportation agreements, but it now has at least 35.

The president has taken a sledgehammer to centuries-old relationships with ally nations, and





We need to do more than just win back our country; we need to do so with an overwhelming show of support for our Constitution, our democracy and our future.

his love of headline-grabbing statements is wearing thin with some of those allies. Trump is defying the longtime presidential practice of avoiding even the appearance of a financial conflict. Instead, he has enriched himself and his businesses and maintains stock holdings that have benefited from his presidency.

A shifting balance of power

Would any of this have happened had it not been for Congress and the Supreme Court? An introduction to the Constitution posted on the U.S. Senate's website (see QR code opposite page) provides guidance. The introduction sets out how the Senate envisioned presidential power, and reads in part:

"For over two centuries the Constitution has remained in force because its framers successfully separated and balanced governmental powers to safeguard the interests of majority rule and minority rights, of liberty and equality, and of the federal and state governments. More a concise statement of national principles than a detailed plan of governmental operation, the Constitution has evolved to meet the changing needs of a modern society profoundly different from the eighteenth-century world in which its creators lived."

The question of how balanced our governmental powers are right now is at the heart of the midterms. President Trump has undoubtedly benefited from a Republican-majority Congress that has ceded many of its powers to him, including the power of the purse. He has also benefitted from a Supreme

Court with a conservative majority of justices—several of whom adhere to the concept of a strong executive branch of the government.

The country will soon know one answer: How will the final two years of the Trump administration play out?

Kowal believes that answer will come through a resounding turnout in the midterm elections. He encourages all UUP members to vote their consciences.

Said Kowal: "The only way we can send a strong signal to all three branches of government that this is not the direction we want for the United States is to send that signal by such a substantial margin in favor of democracy that our government cannot ignore the will of the people. We need to do more than just win back our country; we need to do so with an overwhelming show of support for our Constitution, our democracy and our future."

» Read an introduction to the Constitution at bit.ly/USsenateSite





WHY WE CARE

UNION ISSUES THAT MATTER TO UNION MEMBERS

In any election, union members examine candidates' positions on certain issues that reflect the values of organized labor. For UUP members, those issues typically center on support for higher education, especially public higher education, of course, but they often extend beyond that most basic concern. In this midterm election, the issues that matter to UUP members reflect unprecedented attacks by the federal administration on so many parts of members' lives that it was difficult to choose which ones to highlight. In addition to higher education, we decided on the federal administration's targeting of the labor movement, and devastating cuts to social services.

This is why we care; these are issues that cut to the heart of our work as unionists.

Higher Education. Colleges and universities were already having a tough time in 2024 as a population dropoff of young adults led to declining enrollment. Then Donald Trump won his second term as president, took office and took aim at higher education.

What followed was an unprecedented scrutiny of higher education. The administration issued dozens of threats of funding cuts to universities for numerous reasons, including its dissatisfaction with admissions and disciplinary policies, students speaking out against the Gaza war, academic programing, international student visas, transgender athletes on sports teams and the content of individual courses.

The administration has also attacked Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs, ordering K-12 schools and universities to cut such programs or face funding cuts. Federal courts have issued mixed responses to the federal order, but the overall result has been upheaval in DEI programs.

Elite private universities have been especial targets, but the overall message to both private and public higher education is: You are being watched.

Many of these threats were overturned in federal court decisions, but that doesn't negate the expense and disruption that they have caused. Maybe that was the point all along: Authoritarian regimes often target colleges and universities, which by their very nature encourage free thinking.

Social Services. If one measure of a democracy is how it takes care of its most vulnerable citizens, then historians will likely assign a failing grade to the current Republican-led administration.

History aside, Americans are now seeing lifeline social programs reduced or terminated at an astonishing rate. Most reductions stem from the tax-and-spending bill that President Trump rammed through a Republican Congress in 2025. He calls this his "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" but critics refer to it simply as "OBBBA," with the detrimental effects of the bill usually cited along with the acronym. Here they are:

The Center for American Progress in Washington calculates the bill will give nearly \$2.3 trillion in tax cuts to the rich. To achieve this, the bill slashes more than \$1 trillion from food assistance, Medicaid and other programs. The Fiscal Policy Institute calculates that 1.5 million New Yorkers will lose health insurance.

According to Becker's Hospital Review, as many as 700 rural hospitals are at risk of closing because of severe financial challenges caused by OBBBA. Desperate people will likely turn to teaching and regional medical centers like SUNY's public teaching hospitals for medical care; by law, the hospitals cannot refuse treatment to patients admitted through the emergency department. SUNY hospitals face the threat of closing due to federal Medicaid cuts.

Labor Organizing. The president likes to say he supports working people, yet he has steadily undermined unions and workplace safety from the moment he took office for his second term. Labor unions have fought back every step of the way.

Trump signed an executive order terminating contracts between the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), which affected more than 1 million federal employees, and followed it up by unleashing Elon Musk's unapproved Department of Government Efficiency. DOGE fired thousands of people without cause, gutting agencies Americans rely on for health and safety regulations. Liz Shuler, president of the AFL-CIO, called Trump's moves "the largest single act of union-busting in our history."

Lawyers for AFGE have been successful in the courts, winning judgements blocking plans to restructure federal agencies and lay off workers. In September, a federal district judge ruled with a coalition of unions and blocked the Trump administration from asking people who apply for federal jobs to "identify one or two relevant Executive Orders or policy initiatives that are significant to [the applicant] and explain how [the applicant] would help implement them if hired."

The ruling was only temporary and the legal battles to protect working people continue.



THE POWER OF A LABOR ENDORSEMENT

When a union endorses a political candidate, that union puts its membership into action for the candidate, through phone banking, door-knocking and rallies. Candidates appreciate these endorsements; they matter.

UUP is an affiliate of two major statewide unions: the New York State AFL-CIO and NYSUT. As an affiliate, UUP does not independently endorse candidates, but does participate in the endorsement process for its two larger state affiliates.

Many UUP members are politically active through UUP, through pro-democracy organizations such as Indivisible or regional labor federations, so UUP members bring expertise to the endorsement process.

NYSUT and the NYS AFL-CIO endorse based on a candidate's support for issues important to labor. For this reason, both unions endorse candidates from either major party, or even independents who share union values.

"Regardless of party, local candidates and statewide lawmakers often have an intimate understanding of the issues important to UUP—on support for public higher education, working families and the democratic process," UUP President Fred Kowal said. "We work with individuals based on their views, not on their political affiliation."

This year, concern about the economy is at play. Fuel prices are at or near record levels from the undeclared war against Iran. Americans face rising costs and reduced services because of federal spending cuts to pay for tax breaks to the rich.

So UUP members have much to consider for this midterm election. Endorsements can help inform members in their decisions on how to vote. Members can know that a vote for an endorsed candidate is a vote for someone whose positions are aligned with their union.

In the end, however, the most important thing about voting is to actually vote. At a time when the federal administration is making an unprecedented effort to interfere with voting, there's never been a more important year to exercise that privilege.

UUP members can know that a vote for an endorsed candidate is a vote for someone whose positions are aligned with their union.



NY-3 TOM SUOZZI

Congressional candidates like to demonstrate that they really know their district, and both contenders in this competitive rematch in New York's 3rd Congressional District are making that claim.

★ **TOM SUOZZI:** Incumbent Democrat Tom Suozzi served three terms in the 3rd District from 2017 to 2023, left Congress to unsuccessfully run for governor and then won his seat back in a special 2024 election after Congress expelled Republican George Santos from the 3rd District seat.

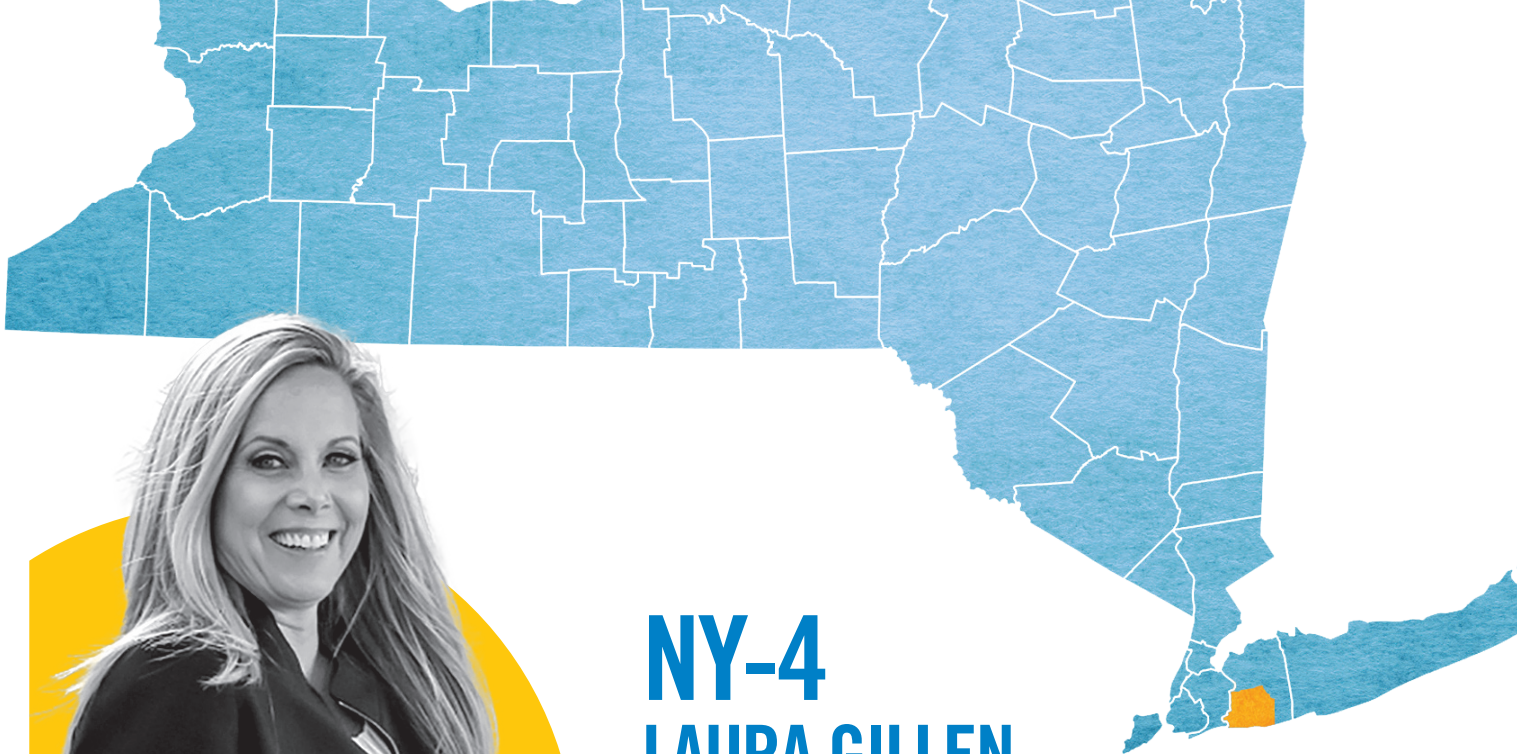
Suozzi defeated Republican Michael LiPetri Jr., in that 2024 special election and faces him again in this race. A moderate on what City & State New York, a noted New York City-based politics magazine, calls "an increasingly conservative Long Island," Suozzi touts "mainstream" views and "common-sense gun safety."

He strongly supports workers' rights. He co-sponsored the SHARE Plan Act (Share Holder Allocation for Rewards to Employees Plan Act), which

would provide tax breaks to companies for broadly sharing ownership with their employees.

Michael LiPetri Jr. is a conservative Trump-backed Republican whose positions on many issues reflect his connection to Trump. LiPetri's campaign website statement on immigration makes a sweeping reference to the need to deport illegal immigrants who have committed crimes. It omits the fact that the majority of detained immigrants have no criminal record and many have lawful status through asylum or other programs.

His statement on healthcare reform envisions "personal, portable, and preventative care" without noting that the massive Trump-backed One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) tax-and-spending law of 2025 forced the end of pandemic-era subsidies that kept Affordable Care Act premiums affordable. That same bill is forcing huge cuts to food stamps, Medicaid, mental health counseling and substance-abuse treatment—programs that in many cases help their recipients maintain good health.



NY-4 LAURA GILLEN

★ **LAURA GILLEN:** Gillen is a first-term Democratic representative. The Cook Political Report has the district leaning Democratic in Gillen's race against Republican Jeanine Driscoll. The district has flipped from Democratic to Republican and back to Democratic in the past 11 years.

The 4th District, in central and southern Nassau County, is one of the richest House districts in the country. Federal Reserve economic data for Nassau County shows a per-capita personal income of \$109,400 in 2024, the most recent year for which that figure is available.

Gillen, a former supervisor of the Nassau County town of Hempstead, supports abortion and reproductive rights. She supported extending pandemic-era

subsidies on Affordable Care Act premiums; the failure of the Republican-majority Congress to extend those subsidies earlier this year led to jarring increases in healthcare costs for the those who depended on the subsidies.

Even with views on many issues of interest to UUP—the environment, gun safety, healthcare and immigration—Gillen is known for working across the aisle with Republican colleagues. She joined a bipartisan effort in June to back a bill that would address antisemitism in American society, including on college campuses.

Jeanine Driscoll: An attorney and the receiver of taxes for Hempstead, Republican Driscoll hasn't put forth many specific policy positions. Her website claims she will work to protect Nassau taxpayers and restore the full State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction. She promises to "ensure the southern border can never be opened again."



NY-17 CAIT CONLEY

★ CAIT CONLEY

Democratic insurgent Cait Conley is a U.S. Army combat veteran with six overseas deployments. She has worked in national security roles, including at the National Security Council and as a senior advisor at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). She is a graduate of the United States Military Academy and holds graduate degrees from the Harvard Kennedy School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

According to her website, Conley said she will work to:

- Lower the cost of drugs and healthcare premiums by holding major drug companies and insurance companies accountable and creating a public option for health insurance
- Ban Congress and the White House from trading stocks
- Cut utility bills by holding monopoly utility companies accountable, tying profits to performance and banning pass-through costs to ratepayers for private jets, lobbying fees and campaign donations

Michael Lawler: Republican incumbent Lawler was elected in 2022. He previously served in the New York State Assembly (97th District) and held local and party leadership roles, including executive director of the New York Republican State Committee.

Lawler claims to be a moderate but his voting record—and a number of websites—say otherwise.

Lawler was a reliable vote for the president in 2025 and remains one so far in 2026. Lawler has voted with President Trump 94% of the time in 2025, according to Media.CQ.com. He has voted for:

- Trump's 2025 OBBBA tax-and-spending plan that will force massive cuts to social programs to fund tax breaks for the rich
- The Laken Riley Act, a law that requires detention without bond of undocumented immigrants charged with certain crimes
- The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act (SAVE America Act), which mandates voters to provide proof of citizenship to register, and photo ID to vote. The bill passed the House but not the Senate.
- A bill for a Constitutional amendment to keep the number of U.S. Supreme Court justices at nine



NY-19 JOSH RILEY

★ **JOSH RILEY:** Elected in the 19th Congressional District in 2025, Josh Riley has been a strongly pro-labor member in the House.

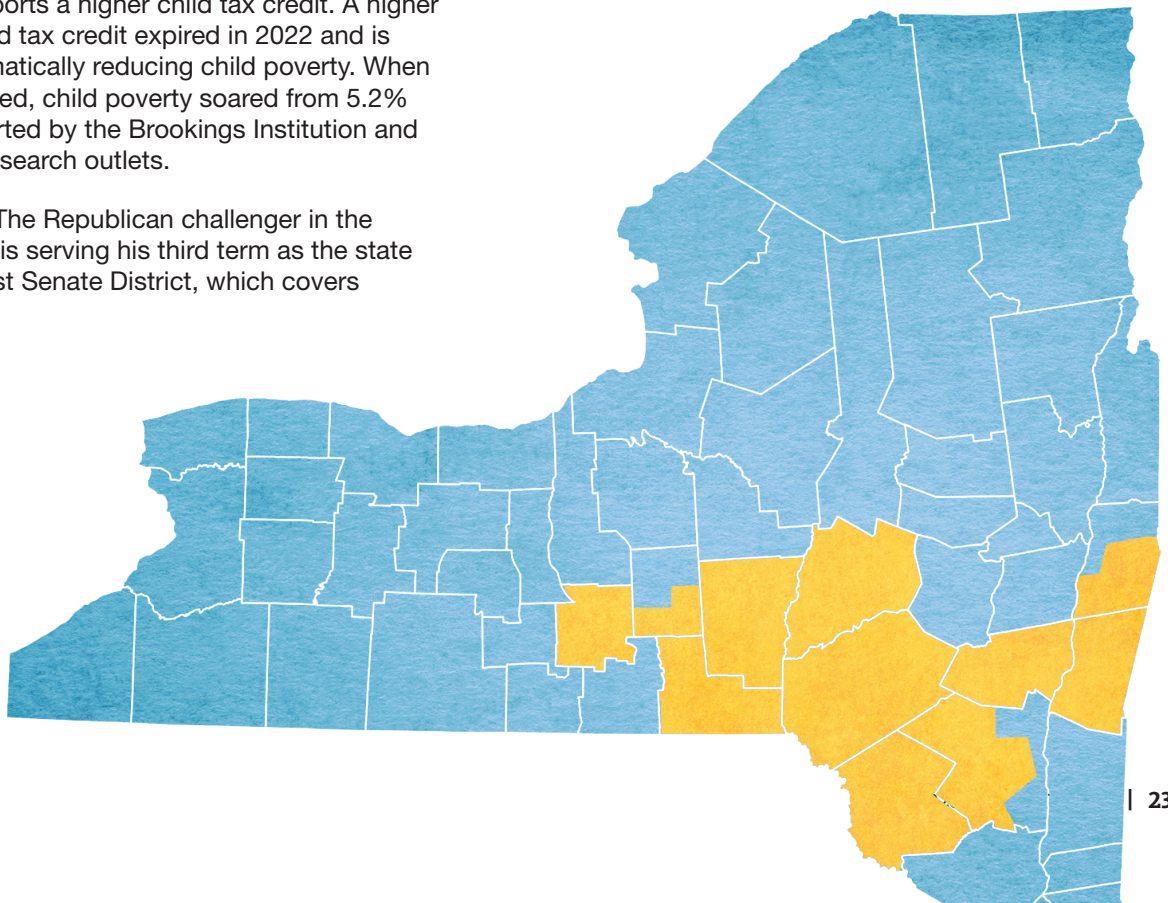
In September 2025, he introduced the Faster Labor Contracts Act, which would require employers to begin contract negotiations within 10 days of a union vote. The bill passed the House in June 2026.

Riley also favors reproductive rights and easier access to Medicaid, Social Security Disability and special education access, as well as stronger funding for rural hospitals. He supports a higher child tax credit. A higher pandemic-era child tax credit expired in 2022 and is credited with dramatically reducing child poverty. When that tax credit ended, child poverty soared from 5.2% to 12.4%, as reported by the Brookings Institution and numerous other research outlets.

Peter Oberacker: The Republican challenger in the 19th District race, is serving his third term as the state senator for the 51st Senate District, which covers

Delaware, Otsego, Schoharie and Sullivan counties and parts of Broome, Chenango and Ulster counties.

City & State summarizes his policy positions as emphasizing lower taxes, reduced spending, affordability and support for small businesses. City & State ranks him as having mixed/centrist positions on healthcare and conservative positions on immigration, reproductive rights, climate and energy and gun policies.





NY-21 BLAKE GENDEBIEN

★ **BLAKE GENDEBIEN:** North Country native and second-generation dairy farmer Blake Gendebien is in a tough race in a largely rural, conservative 21st district against his Republican opponent.

Gendebien is a political newcomer whose elective experience so far is as vice chair of the cooperative board of the Agri-Mark dairy cooperative. He favors immigration reform that, as his campaign website puts it, makes it “harder to enter our country illegally, but easier to enter legally.” He favors access to safe, legal abortion and he wants to advance rural healthcare and make it more affordable for healthcare professionals to live and work in the North Country.

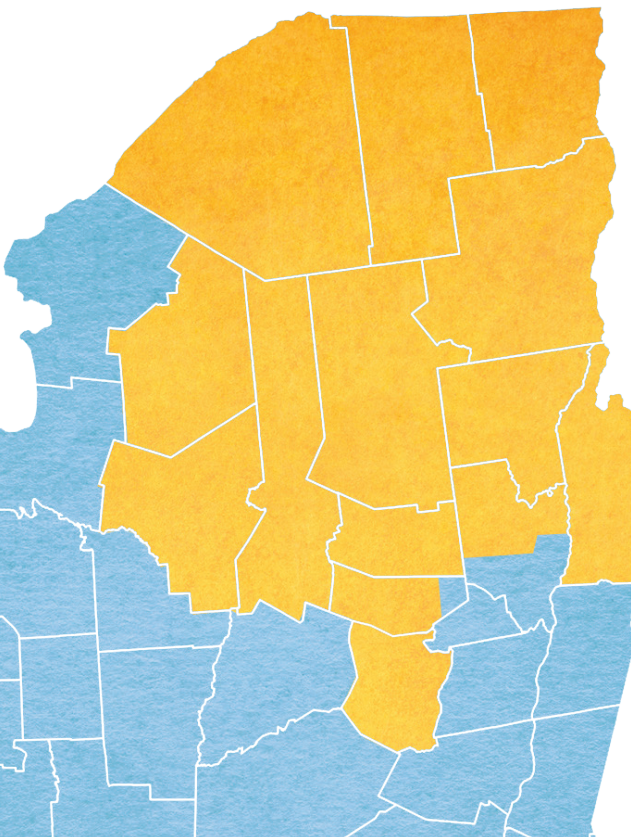
He wants Congress to invest in roads, bridges, and rural broadband to improve transportation and connectivity for businesses and rural families. He favors the creation of programs that support young farmers and entrepreneurs in the North Country, through the expansion of vocational and trade school opportunities.

He favors government reform that would address stock trading by members of Congress, would end the presidential pardon power and would establish term limits of three House elections for representatives.

Anthony Constantino: Republican nominee Anthony Constantino is a flamboyant Trump cheerleader and

chief executive officer of an online printing company in Amsterdam, Montgomery County. He is a strong Trump supporter who backs Trump’s policies and has been endorsed by Trump.

Constantino, who claims to be “Nobody’s man but yours” in his political television ads, is such a Trump fanboy that in October 2024, he erected a massive lighted Vote for Trump sign on top of his company’s building in Amsterdam. He released a hip-hop album titled “Thank You President Trump” in December 2025 and commissioned a \$250,000 statue of Trump—titled “Defiance Monument”—that he gifted to the president in July.



A low-angle, blue-tinted photograph of the Statue of Liberty against a cloudy sky. The statue is holding a torch in its right hand and a tablet in its left. The image is framed by a white decorative border with leaf-like motifs at the corners.

FIGHTING FOR THE VALUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR MEMBERS.

Democracy. Diversity.
Equality. Compassion.
Respect.

These are the ideals that have inspired
our union since its founding.



UUP SUPPORTS THE VALUES THAT
ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR MEMBERS.

NYS AFL-CIO 2026 ENDORSEMENTS



UUP is proudly affiliated with the AFL-CIO, which endorses candidates for public office each year. A delegation from UUP participated in this endorsement process Aug. 26-28 as part of the New York State AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention in Albany. Delegates endorsed candidates for state congressional seats, New York state Senate and Assembly and in the races for governor, attorney general and comptroller.

In deciding endorsements, unions typically consider a candidate's positions on issues of importance to the labor movement, including support for public higher education, the right to organize, affordable healthcare and policies that help the middle class through a strong job market and secure retirements.

As the following endorsements show, the NYS AFL-CIO does not limit its endorsements to any political party, but instead supports candidates who stand strong on these issues.

Important Dates

The general election is on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.
Early voting is October 24 through November 1, 2026.

STATEWIDE ELECTION ENDORSEMENTS

Governor: Kathy Hochul

Attorney General: Letitia James

Comptroller: Thomas DiNapoli

If a district is not listed, that means the NYS AFL-CIO chose not to endorse in that race.

**Indicates early endorsement*

U.S. Congress

NY-2	Andrew Garbarino (R)
NY-3	Tom Suozzi (D)
NY-5	Gregory Meeks (D)
NY-6	Grace Meng (D)
NY-7	Claire Valdez (D)
NY-8	Hakeem Jeffries (D)
NY-9	Yvette Clarke (D)
NY-12	Micah Lasher (D)
NY-14	Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D)
NY-15	Ritchie Torres (D)
NY-16	George Latimer (D)
NY-17	Cait Conley (D)

NY-18	Pat Ryan (D)
NY-19	Josh Riley (D)
NY-20	Paul Tonko (D)
NY-21	Blake Gendebien (D)
NY-22	John Mannion (D)
NY-23	Aaron Gies (D)
NY-24	Alissa Ellman (D)
NY-25	Joseph Morelle (D)
NY-26	Tim Kennedy (D)

New York State Senate

District 1	Anthony Palumbo (R)
District 2	Mario Mattera (R)
District 3	Dean Murray (R)

District 4	Monica Martinez (D)
District 5	Steven Rhoads (R)
District 6	Siela Bynoe (D)
District 7	Rory Lancman (D)
District 8	Jarett Gandolfo (R)
District 9	Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick (R)
District 10	James Sanders, Jr. (D)
District 11	Toby Ann Stavisky (D)
District 12	Aber Kaws (D)
District 13	Jessica González-Rojas (D)
District 14	Leroy Comrie (D)
District 15	Joseph Addabbo (D)
District 16	John Liu (D)

District 17 Larry He (D)
 District 18 Julia Salazar (D)
 District 19 Roxanne Persaud (D)
 District 20 Zellnor Myrie (D)
 District 21 Kevin Parker (D)
 District 22 Sam Sutton (D)
 District 23 Jessica Scarcella-Spanton (D)
 District 25 Jabari Brisport (D)
 District 26 Andrew Gounardes (D)
 District 27 Grace Lee (D)
 District 28 Liz Krueger (D)
 District 29 Jose Serrano (D)
 District 30 Cordell Cleare (D)
 District 31 Robert Jackson (D)
 District 32 Luis Sepulveda (D)
 District 33 Gustavo Rivera (D)
 District 34 Nathalia Fernandez (D)
 District 35 Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D)
 District 36 Jamaal Bailey (D)
 District 37 Shelley Mayer (D)
 District 38 Joe Rand (D)
 District 40 Peter Harckham (D)
 District 41 Michelle Hinchey (D)
 District 42 James Skoufis (D)
 District 45 Daniel Stec (R)
 District 46 Patricia Fahy (D)
 District 47 Erik Bottcher (D)
 District 48 Rachel May (D)
 District 50 Chris Ryan (D)
 District 51 Michele Frazier (D)
 District 52 Lea Webb (D)
 District 53 Joseph Griffo (R)
 District 54 Pamela Helming (R)
 District 55 Samra Brouk (D)
 District 56 Jeremy Cooney (D)
 District 59 Kristen Gonzalez (D)
 District 60 Patrick Gallivan (R)
 District 61 Jon Rivera (D)
 District 63 April Baskin (D)

New York State Assembly

District 1 Tommy John Schiavoni (D)
 District 3 Josh Slaughter (D)
 District 4 Rebecca Kassay (D)
 District 5 Douglas Smith (R)
 District 6 Philip Ramos (D)
 District 7 Trish Kopp (D)
 District 9 Michael Durso (R)
 District 10 Steve Stern (D)
 District 11 Kwani O'Pharow (D)
 District 12 Craig Herskowitz (D)
 District 13 Charles Lavine (D)
 District 14 John Brooks (D)
 District 16 Kim Keiserman (D)
 District 17 John Mikulin (R)
 District 18 Noah Burroughs (D)
 District 19 Edward Ra (R)
 District 21 Judy Griffin (D)
 District 22 Michaelle Solages (D)
 District 23 Pesach Osina (D)

District 24 David Weprin (D)
 District 25 Nily Rozic (D)
 District 26 Edward Braunstein (D)
 District 27 Sam Berger (D)
 District 28 Andrew Hevesi (D)
 District 29 Alicia Hyndman (D)
 District 30 Patrick Martinez (D)
 District 31 Khaleel Anderson (D)
 District 32 Nathaniel Hezekiah (D)
 District 33 Clyde Vanel (D)
 District 34 Brian Romero (D)
 District 35 Larinda Hooks (D)
 District 36 Diana Moreno (D)
 District 37 Samantha Kattan (D)
 District 38 David Orkin (D)
 District 39 Catalina Cruz (D)
 District 41 Kalman Yeger (D)
 District 42 Rodneyese Bichotte Hermelyn (D)
 District 43 Brian Cunningham (D)
 District 45 Joey Cohen-Saban (D)
 District 46 Chris McCreight (D)
 District 47 William Colton (D)
 District 48 Simcha Eichenstein (D)
 District 49 Joyce Xiaoqiong Xie (D)
 District 50 Emily Gallagher (D)
 District 51 Marcela Mitaynes (D)
 District 52 Jo Anne Simon (D)
 District 53 Maritza Davila (D)
 District 54 Christian Celeste Tate (D)
 District 55 Latrice Monique Walker (D)
 District 56 Eon Huntley (D)
 District 57 Phara Souffrant Forrest (D)
 District 58 Monique Chandler-Waterman (D)
 District 59 Jaime Williams (D)
 District 60 Nikki Lucas (D)
 District 61 Charles Fall (D)
 District 62 Michael Reilly (R)
 District 65 Illapa Sairitupac (D)
 District 66 David Siffert (D)
 District 67 Linda Rosenthal (D)
 District 68 Diana Ayala (D)
 District 69 Eli Northrup (D)
 District 70 Jordan Wright (D)
 District 71 Al Taylor (D)
 District 72 Manny De Los Santos (D)
 District 73 Vanessa Aronson (D)
 District 74 Keith Powers (D)
 District 75 Tony Simone (D)
 District 76 Rebecca Seawright (D)
 District 77 Landon Dais (D)
 District 78 George Alvarez (D)
 District 79 Chantel Jackson (D)
 District 80 John Zaccaro Jr. (D)
 District 81 Jeffrey Dinowitz (D)
 District 82 Michael Benedetto (D)
 District 83 Carl Heastie (D)
 District 84 Amanda Septimo (D)
 District 85 Emerita Torres (D)
 District 86 Yudelka Tapia (D)

District 87 Karines Reyes (D)
 District 88 Amy Paulin (D)
 District 89 J. Gary Pretlow (D)
 District 90 Frank Jereis (D)
 District 91 Steven Otis (D)
 District 92 MaryJane Shimsky (D)
 District 93 Chris Burdick (D)
 District 94 Matt Slater (R)
 District 95 Dana Levenberg (D)
 District 96 Patrick Carroll (D)
 District 97 Aron Wieder (D)
 District 98 Karl Brabenec (R)
 District 99 Christopher Eachus (D)
 District 100 Paula Elaine Kay (D)
 District 101 Brian Maher (R)
 District 103 Sarahana Shrestha (D)
 District 104 Jonathan Jacobson (D)
 District 106 Didi Barrett (D)
 District 108 John McDonald III (D)
 District 109 Gabriela Romero (D)
 District 110 Phil Steck (D)
 District 111 Angelo Santabarbara (D)
 District 112 Mary Beth Walsh (R)
 District 113 Carrie Woerner (D)
 District 114 Matthew Simpson (R)
 District 115 Michael Cashman (D)
 District 116 Scott Gray (R)
 District 117 Dennis Gordon (D)
 District 119 Jonathan Lipe (D)
 District 120 Timothy Allers (D)
 District 121 Vicki Davis (D)
 District 122 Brian Miller (R)
 District 123 Daniel Norton (D)
 District 125 Anna Kelles (D)
 District 126 Ian Phillips (D)
 District 127 Albert Stirpe, Jr. (D)
 District 128 Pamela Hunter (D)
 District 129 Maurice Brown (D)
 District 131 Philip Fleming (D)
 District 132 Philip Palmesano (R)
 District 133 Andrea Bailey (R)
 District 134 Josh Jensen (R)
 District 135 Jen Lunsford (D)
 District 136 Sarah Clark (D)
 District 137 Demond Meeks (D)
 District 138 Harry Bronson (D)
 District 140 William Conrad III (D)
 District 141 Leah Halton-Pope (D)
 District 142 Patrick Burke (D)
 District 143 Ryan Taughrin (D)
 District 145 Nathan McMurray (D)
 District 146 Karen McMahon (D)
 District 149 Adam Bojak (D)

NYSUT 2026 ENDORSEMENTS



Each year, UUP's statewide affiliate NYSUT endorses candidates for federal offices and state legislative races. NYSUT also takes positions on any ballot initiatives before the voters. UUP members participate in this endorsement process. What follows are the NYSUT endorsements for the midterm elections.

Important Dates

The general election is on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.
Early voting is October 24 through November 1, 2026.

STATEWIDE ELECTION ENDORSEMENTS

Governor: Kathy Hochul

Attorney General: Letitia James

Comptroller: Thomas DiNapoli

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**Indicates early endorsement*

U.S. House of Representatives

Congressional District

District 3	Tom Suozzi
District 4	Laura Gillen
District 5	Gregory Meeks
District 6	Grace Meng
District 7	Claire Valdez
District 8	Hakeem Jeffries
District 9	Yvette Clarke
District 10	Brad Lander
District 11	Michael DeCillis
District 12	Micah Lasher
District 13	Darialisza Avila Chevalier
District 14	Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
District 15	Ritchie Torres

District 16	George Latimer
District 17	Cait Conley
District 18	Pat Ryan
District 19	Josh Riley
District 20	Paul Tonko
District 21	Blake Gendebien
District 22	John Mannion
District 23	Aaron Gies
District 24	Alissa Ellman
District 25	Joseph Morelle
District 26	Tim Kennedy

State Senate Endorsements

Senate District

District 1	Anthony Palumbo
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District 2	Mario Mattera
District 3	Dean Murray
District 4	Monica Martinez
District 5	Steve Rhoads
District 6	Siela Bynoe
District 7	Jake Blumencranz
District 8	Jarrett Gandolfo
District 9	Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick
District 10	James Sanders Jr
District 11	Toby Ann Stavisky
District 12	Aber Kawas
District 13	Jessica González-Rojas
District 14	Leroy Comrie
District 15	Joseph Addabbo
District 16	John Liu
District 17	Larry He

District 18 Julia Salazar
 District 19 Roxanne Persaud
 District 20 Zellnor Myrie
 District 21 Kevin Parker
 District 22 Sam Sutton
 District 23 Jessica Scarcella-Spanton
 District 25 Jabari Brisport
 District 26 Andrew Gounardes
 District 27 Grace Lee
 District 28 Liz Krueger
 District 29 José Serrano
 District 30 Cordell Cleare
 District 31 Robert Jackson
 District 32 Luis Sepúlveda
 District 33 J. Gustavo Rivera
 District 34 Nathalia Fernandez
 District 35 Andrea Stewart-Cousins
 District 36 Jamaal Bailey
 District 37 Shelley Mayer
 District 39 Lisa Radhika Kaul
 District 40 Peter Harckham
 District 41 Michelle Hinchey
 District 42 James Skoufis
 District 44 Jim Tedisco
 District 45 Daniel Stec
 District 46 Patricia Fahy
 District 47 Erik Bottcher
 District 48 Rachel May
 District 49 Mark Walczyk
 District 50 Chris Ryan
 District 51 Michele Frazier
 District 52 Lea Webb
 District 53 Joseph Griffo
 District 54 Pamela Helming
 District 55 Samra Brouk
 District 56 Jeremy Cooney
 District 57 Victoria Guite-Williams
 District 59 Kristen Gonzalez
 District 61 Jon Rivera
 District 63 April N.M. Baskin

State Assembly Endorsements

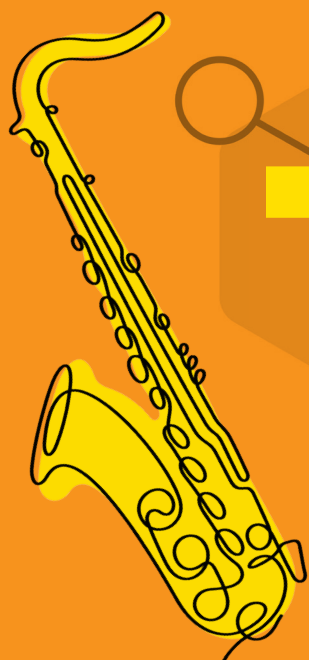
Assembly Districts

District 1 Tommy John Schiavoni
 District 2 Jodi Giglio
 District 3 Josh Slaughter
 District 4 Rebecca Kassay
 District 5 Doug Smith
 District 6 Philip Ramos
 District 7 Trish Kopp
 District 8 Lynn Trupiano-O'Keefe
 District 9 Michael Durso
 District 10 Steve Stern
 District 11 Kwani O'Pharrow
 District 12 Craig Herskowitz
 District 13 Charles Lavine
 District 14 John Brooks
 District 15 Dean Tarulli
 District 16 Kim Keiserman

District 17 John Mikulin
 District 18 Noah Burroughs
 District 19 Edward Ra
 District 21 Judy Griffin
 District 22 Michaelle Solages
 District 23 Pesach Osina
 District 24 David Weprin
 District 25 Nily Rozic
 District 26 Edward Braunstein
 District 27 Sam Berger
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 District 102 Janet Tweed
 District 103 Sarahana Shrestha
 District 104 Jonathan Jacobson
 District 105 Brooklyn Talarico
 District 106 Didi Barrett
 District 108 John McDonald
 District 109 Gabriella Romero
 District 110 Phil Steck
 District 111 Angelo Santabarbara
 District 112 Mary Beth Walsh
 District 113 Carrie Woerner
 District 114 Matthew Simpson
 District 115 Michael Cashman
 District 116 Scott Gray
 District 119 Jon Lipe
 District 120 Timothy Allers
 District 122 Brian Miller
 District 123 Daniel Norton
 District 125 Anna Kelles
 District 126 Ian Phillips
 District 127 Albert Stirpe
 District 128 Pamela Hunter
 District 133 Andrea K. Bailey
 District 134 Josh Jensen
 District 135 Jennifer Lunsford
 District 136 Sarah Clark
 District 137 Demond Meeks
 District 138 Harry Bronson
 District 140 William Conrad
 District 141 Leah Halton-Pope
 District 142 Patrick Burke
 District 143 Ryan Taughrin
 District 145 Nathan McMurray
 District 146 Karen McMahon
 District 149 Adam Bojak
 District 150 Thomas Carle





Tasty licks

**UAlbany chemist
combines love of
teaching and music**

By Leigh Hornbeck

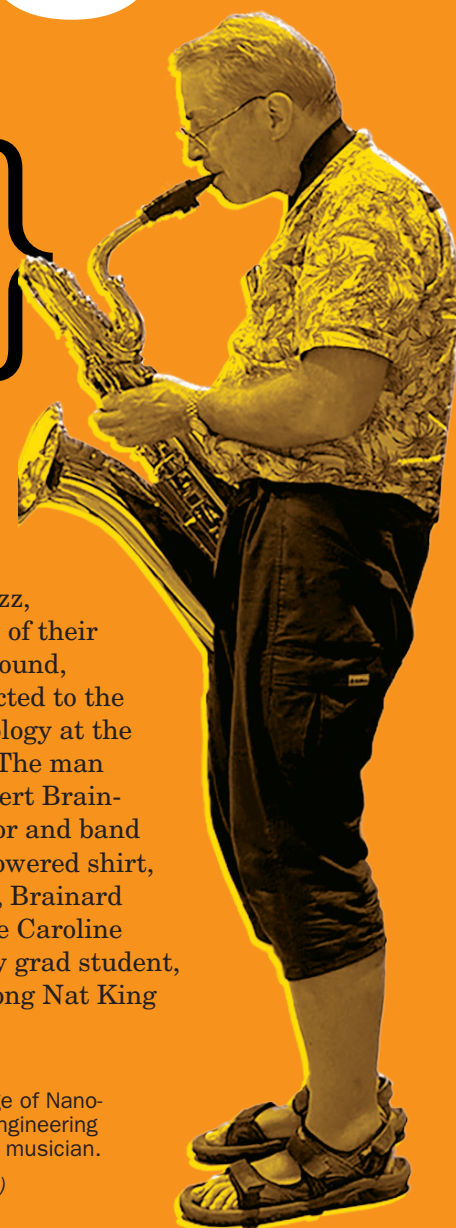
Central Rock Gym hums with the sounds of an after-work crowd on a muggy, late-summer evening. Outside, a storm to the north turns the sky exotic colors over the Hudson River. Inside, the clink of metal-on-metal and the zip of a rope through a carabiner mix with conversation.

Drifting over it all, something unusual for the setting: live music from a sextet on the loft, 35 feet above the gym floor.

The band is NanoJazz, named not for the size of their instruments or their sound, but they are all connected to the College of Nanotechnology at the University at Albany. The man on baritone sax is Robert Brainard—chemist, professor and band leader. Dressed in a flowered shirt, capri pants and Tevas, Brainard plays the melody while Caroline Rafizadeh, a psychology grad student, sings “L-O-V-E,” the song Nat King

Albany Chapter member Robert Brainard (facing page) is a professor in the College of Nanotechnology, Science, and Engineering, the Department of Nanoscale Science & Engineering and the Department of Chemistry at the University at Albany. He is also a lifelong musician.

Photos by Patrick Dodson (University at Albany) and Leigh Hornbeck (UUP)



Cole made famous. Later, the band transitions to “Fly Me to the Moon,” “Nighttime is the Right Time” and other standards.

The setting is an abrupt departure from the classrooms and yellow-lit cleanrooms where the musicians spend their days. Yet after decades of doing both science and music, Brainard, 69, has come to see parallels between the two and how his dual roles as musician and chemist influence one another. He calls himself an inventive chemist.

“Creativity is a state of mind when you’re open, prepared and playful,” Brainard says.

But, like an audience wants to hear good music, not noise for the sake of making noise, Brainard says making something new is not enough.

“I estimate 5,000 new molecules are made on earth every day,” he said. “It’s not that hard in chemistry to make something that has never existed before. The interesting part is to design a molecule that has the properties you want.”

Two creative passions: music and chemistry

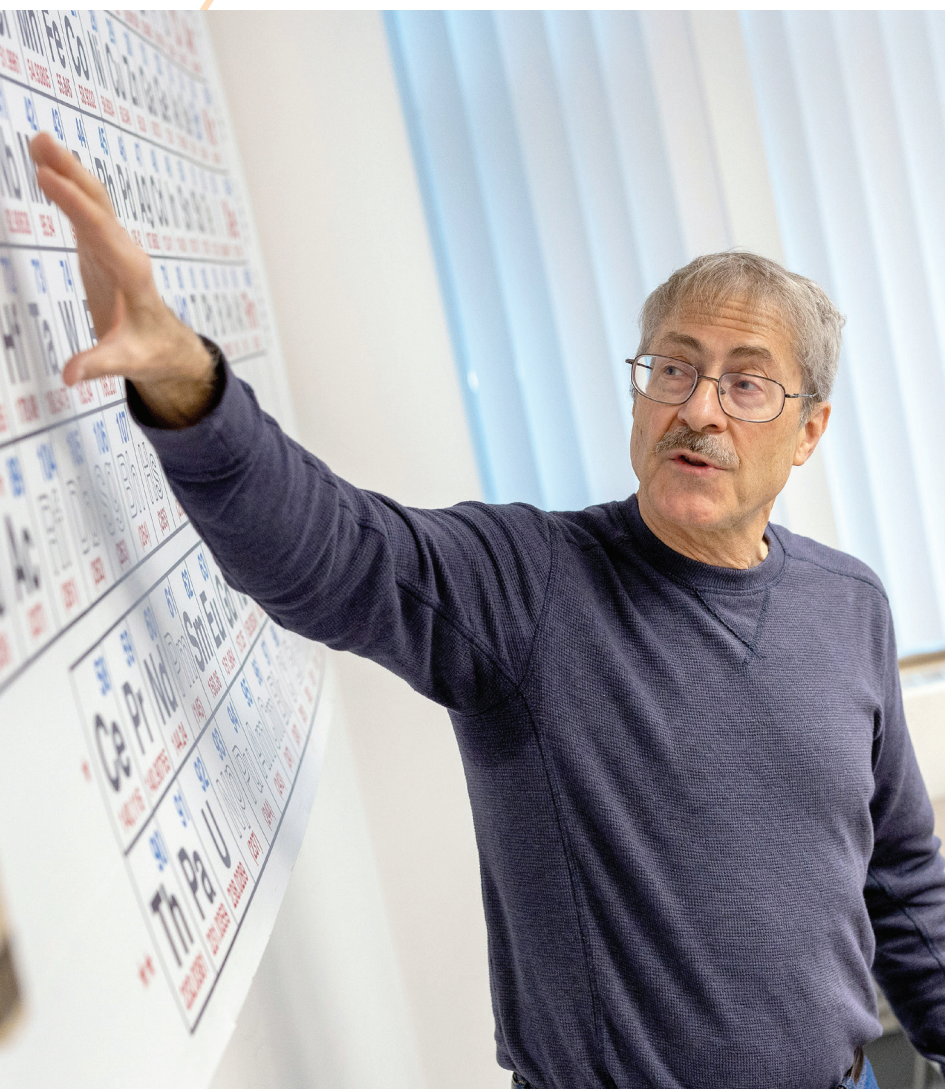
Brainard leads groundbreaking research at UAl-

bany in the development of photoresists: the thin, light-sensitive chemical coatings used to create patterns on silicon wafers that make up the logic and memory chips in smartphones, cars and data centers. In 1998, while working for the chemical manufacturer Shipley/Rohm & Haas, Brainard was the first person in the world to design photoresists for extreme ultraviolet lithography (EUV).

After decades of doing both science and music, Brainard has come to see parallels between the two and how his dual roles as musician and chemist influence one another.

In 2005, Brainard followed his dream of becoming a teacher when he came to UAlbany. He is now a tenured professor and has invented 2,000 molecules over the last 12 years, all in the pursuit of chemicals that will make good photoresists. The nanocollege is a hub for photoresists, work that must go hand in hand with the constant push to make smaller and smaller chips.

Brainard first picked up the sax in fifth grade in



Prof. Brainard is only one of numerous members who play music off the clock. A partial list is as follows:

Jim Mauck, Buffalo Center, is in a Chicago tribute band.

Tim Nekritz, Oswego, is a singer/songwriter and plays with The Condescenders and Whiskey Spirits Band. In addition to members of the music faculty at Oswego, retiree member **Ranjit Dighe**, **James Early**, **John Kane** and **Shashi Kanbur** are musicians.

From the Geneseo chapter, **Beata Golec** is a pianist, theorist and composer; **Jordan Kleiman** plays bluegrass and music historian **Jim Kimball** focuses on the music and dance traditions of upstate New York.

Tom Baker (Potsdam) plays in the band Animal Crackers with retiree **Frank McLaughlin** and retiree member **Matt Bullwinkel**. Immediate past president and current Officer for Retirees **Kevin Smith** plays in the band Mose Crossing with Crane School of Music retiree **Greg Wanamaker**. **Jen Kessler** plays in the cover band Firefly.

Mark Dziuba (New Paltz) plays with The Robert Kopec Quartet.

Kyle Anderson and **Peter Ikeler** are both guitarists from the Old Westbury chapter and **Sheila Washington** is a singer from the OW chapter.

Santa Cruz, Calif., where he grew up. He considered music as a career, then decided chemistry was a more natural fit. Throughout his education and career, he continued to organize bands, book gigs and arrange music. One incarnation was “Jazzmin,” a name he used as a graduate student for a band and later as a professor. He also used “Covalence,” a chemistry term which means “equal sharing of electrons.”

At UAlbany, Brainard was quickly introduced to Prof. Angus Mackie because Mackie, now retired as the director of business development at the nanocollege, plays the upright bass — and bass, as every musician knows, is the rhythm and foundation of music. In the early days, Brainard and Mackie regularly played at university events — holiday parties and graduations. Brainard began recruiting students for the band. He asks first-year students every fall if anyone plays an instrument and then holds auditions. This summer, two managers from Tokyo Electronics Limited (better known as TEL) joined the NanoJazz line up.

Brainard tells his students not to worry about making a mistake. A mistake in the lab — as long as it’s not a safety mistake — can lead to new discoveries, just like playing the wrong notes can lead a piece of music to evolve.

Queen, a sophomore at UAlbany from Bangladesh, created new molecules over the summer in Brainard’s lab. It was a thrill to name them after herself, Q1, Q2 and so forth. Chemistry is the closest thing to magic, she says.

“Often, the best way to start is with a paper and pencil and boil it down to simple concepts, leaving the chemistry out and decide, “What do I want to accomplish?” Brainard says.

Atoms become molecules, notes become licks

Chemistry starts with atoms, jazz starts with notes. Atoms come together in molecules. Notes come together in licks. Jazz is known as the most improvisational genre of music, but it is not entirely random. It starts with a little groove and a structure, then grows from there. Jazz musicians create by first hav-



Robert Brainard, on saxophone, played a gig at Central Rock Gym in Troy, Rensselaer County, with NanoJazz on Aug. 27 along with Beckett Loomis on drums, Sam Martens on bass, Harry Weinstein on piano, and Caroline Rafizadeh and Angelique Raley on vocals. Photo by Leigh Hornbeck (UUP)

ing the discipline to learn the groove and the chords. Chemists learn how the molecules will interact with each other and waves of light.

Teaching is its own performance, Brainard says, and a teacher is smart to consider his audience. At Central Rock Gym, he is both bandmate and teacher. He listens to music like he is watching an experiment with a team. He steps in to play his part, then watches the others, adding words of encouragement. Between songs, the climbers whose hands are not occupied holding them dozens of feet off the floor favor the band with applause. Brainard compliments the drummer seated at a sparkly gold kit. Beckett Loomis is an undergraduate and newcomer to the lineup.

“Nice,” Brainard says. “Nice and tasty.”

2026 AFT CONVENTION ATTENDANCE

Name	Chapter	GS	Div	Con	GS	GS	GS	GS	Ele	GS
Anselmi, Lisa Marie	Buffalo State	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Avril, Micheline	Downstate HSU	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ayo, Solomon	Farmingdale	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Baker, Natalie	Downstate HSU	X				X	X	X	X	X
Benjamin, Bret	Albany	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bowman, Emma	Empire State	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bradley, Lauren	Maritime	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bryan, Rebecca	Cortland	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Burke, Thomas	Buffalo Center						X	X	X	X
Ecker, David	Stony Brook	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Flanagan, Amanda	Stony Brook	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Flax, Henry	Downstate HSU									X
Floss, Frederick	Buffalo State	X	X	X	X	X				
Hartshorn, Kim	Plattsburgh	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hinkle, Stephen	Morrisville	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hoey, Thomas	Albany	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Huang, Lei	Fredonia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Jayatilleke, Jude	Buffalo State	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Kane, Nancy	Cortland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Karl, Alissa	Brockport	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kowal, Frederick	Cobleskill	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Landy, Eileen	Old Westbury		X	X						
Lawhorne, Stephanie	Morrisville	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Littman, Michael	Buffalo State	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Malone, Pamela	Empire State	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Manning, Tina Maria	Stony Brook HSC	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Marquez, Samuel	Downstate HSU	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Marriott, Cheryl	Downstate HSU	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mathis, Andre	Binghamton	X	X	X	X	X				X
McGovern, Brendan	Binhamton	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Norton, David	Downstate HSU			X					X	X
O'Bryan-Losee, Jeriluanne	Morrisville	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reichert, Franziska	Binghamton	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Relan, Nand	Stony Brook HSC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Romain, Patrick	Albany	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Russell, Eric	Downstate HSU	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Smith, Meghan	Alfred	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spear, James	Maritime	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Tang, Chi Ming	Geneseo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tang, Jasmine	Geneseo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Torres, Idalia	Fredonia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Veenstra, Richard	Upstate Medical	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Walker-Ametewee, Greta	Stony Brook HSU	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wesnfske, Edward	Oneonta	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Whitney, Richard	Downstate HSU	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Zweig, Michael	Stony Brook	X	X	X			X	X	X	X

Affiliate Elections are run in conjunction with chapter elections. UUP members elect delegates to our affiliates, the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). These delegates represent UUP at affiliate conventions and meetings, take information to our affiliates to address the best interests of our members and bring information back from our affiliates to be shared with our members.

If you need any assistance or have any questions, please contact UUP Secretary/Treasurer Jeri O'Bryan-Losee at jobryan@uupmail.org or 800-342-4206.

ATTENDANCE CODES:

X = Present at Session

LA = Late Arrival

MEETING CODES:

GS= General Session

Div = Divisional Meeting

Con = Conv Comm Mtgs

Ele = Elections

2026 NYSUT REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY ATTENDANCE

Name	Chapter	GS1	Com	Brk	GS2	GS2 (cont.)
Arnavut, Ziya	Fredonia	X	X	X	X	
Baker, Natalie	Downstate HSU	X	X	X	X	X
Benjamin, Bret	Albany			X	X	X
Bowman, Emma	Empire State	X	X	X	X	X
Bryan, Rebecca	Cortland	X	X	X	X	X
Day, Doreen	Stony Brook HSC	X	X	X	X	X
Decker, Derrik	Fredonia	X	X	X	X	X
Doyle, Patrick	Binghamton	X	X	X	X	X
Ecker, David	Stony Brook	X	X	X	X	X
Floss, Frederick	Buffalo State	X	X	X	X	X
Gizzi, Carol	Stony Brook HSC	X	X	X	X	X
Hinkle, Stephen	Morrisville	X	X	X	X	X
Hoey, Thomas	Albany	X	X	X	X	X
Huang, Lei	Fredonia	X	X	X	X	X
Kamina, Penina	Oneonta	X	X	X	X	X
Kane, Nancy	Cortland	X	X	X	X	X
Karl, Alissa	Brockport	X	X	X	X	X
Koridis, Nicholas	Stony Brook	X	X	X	X	X
Kowal, Frederick	Cobleskill	X	X	X	X	X
Kube, Bruce	Stony Brook HSC	X	X	X	X	X
Kube, Carolyn	Stony Brook HSC	X	X	X	X	X
Lawrence, Zina	Albany	X	X	X	X	X
Littman, Michael	Buffalo State	X	X	X	X	X
Lyon, Michael	Upstate Medical Univ	X	X	X	X	X
Malave Lopez, Lilliam	Buffalo Center	X	X	X	X	
Malone, Pamela	Empire State	X	X	X	X	X
Mathis, Andre	Binghamton	X	X	X	X	X
Mcateer, Charles	Stony Brook	X	X	X	X	X
McGovern, Brendan	Binghamton	X	X	X	X	X
Melendy, Thomas	Buffalo HSC	X	X	X	X	X
Merritt, Amanda	New Paltz	X		X	X	X
Neretich, Justin	Cortland	X	X	X	X	X
Nichols, Robin I	Upstate Medical Univ	X	X	X		
O'Bryan-Losee, Jeriluanne	Morrisville	X	X	X	X	X
Reichert, Franziska	Binghamton	X	X	X	X	X
Relan, Nand	Stony Brook HSC	X	X	X	X	X
Romain, Patrick	Albany	X	X	X	X	X
Russell, EricΩ	Downstate HSU	X	X	X	X	X
Schneider, Robert	Brockport	X	X	X	X	X
Smith, Meghan	Alfred	X	X	X	X	X
Tang, Chi Ming	Geneseo	X	X	X	X	X
Tang, Jasmine	Geneseo	X	X	X	X	X
Torre, F Jason	Stony Brook	X	X	X	X	X
Torres, Idalia	Fredonia	X	X	X	X	X
Veenstra, Richard	Upstate Medical Univ	X	X	X	X	X
Walker, Michael	System Administration	X	X		X	X
Whitney, Richard	Downstate HSU	X	X	X	X	X
Woodruff, Otilie	Buffalo State	X	X	X	X	X
Zhang, Jie	Brockport	X	X	X	X	X

MEETING CODES:

GS= General Session
Brk = Breakfast

Com = Committees
Ele = Election

ATTENDANCE CODES:

X = Present at Session
LA = Late Arrival

» MEMBER BENEFITS

Benefit Trust Fund scholarships can help with college costs

Great news for UUP families: The UUP Benefit Trust Fund is proud to offer a \$850 per-semester scholarship to help ease the cost of higher education for the dependent children of our valued UUP-represented employees.

This is our way of investing in the next generation and celebrating academic achievement, and it's easy to apply for this scholarship.

Who Can Apply

This program is open to dependent children of active UUP-represented employees. The represented employee must be on payroll or approved leave during the semester's final pay period. The employee does not need to be benefit-eligible. It's a wonderful benefit built specifically for our working families.

What the Award Covers

The \$850 award is there to help with the everyday essentials of college life—books, fees and supplies—thereby making it a little easier to focus on learning rather than costs. Students can qualify for this support for up to eight semesters, meaning this benefit can travel with them through much of their academic

journey. If the parent has more than one child at a SUNY state-operated campus during a semester, more than one child can apply for the scholarship.

How to Qualify

Students who want to apply need to:

- Successfully complete 12+ credit hours toward their degree that semester
- Attend a state-operated SUNY school as the child of UUP-represented employees
- Achieve a 2.75 GPA or higher
- Send their transcript to benefits@uupmail.org.

A Tip on Timing

Don't wait around — submit the application promptly! You don't need to hold off until the transcript is ready to get started.



For information on
UUP Benefits, visit
bit.ly/BTFscholarship

