

NYC's Mamdani Gains Left-Wing Boost in Mayoral Bid

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NEW YORK CITY, Socialist mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani has received a significant endorsement from the Staten Island Democratic Party, marking a leftward shift even in one of New York City's most conservative boroughs.

Mamdani, 33, picked up the endorsement weeks after trailing former Governor Andrew Cuomo in the Democratic primary. Cuomo is now running as an independent alongside incumbent Mayor Eric Adams, while Republican Curtis Sliwa is representing the GOP.

Laura LoBianco, chair of the Staten Island Democratic Party, confirmed their support to the New York Post, stating, “Zohran is the Democratic nominee. The voters have spoken.” She added that the local party wants to ensure Staten Island has representation in city decisions.

This latest endorsement follows support from Brooklyn Democratic Chair Rodneyse Bichotte, who previously backed Cuomo but now backs Mamdani. Following the primary, Bichotte controversially referred to Mamdani as “100 percent communist.”

Mamdani is seeking further support from Democratic leaders in Queens, especially in neighborhoods that favored Cuomo during the primary. A campaign spokesperson claimed Cuomo’s support is “withering” as voters learn more about his past controversies, including accusations of sexual misconduct and allegations of political opportunism.

Mamdani’s policy platform has drawn strong reactions across the political spectrum. His proposals include \$9 billion in new taxes on high-income earners and corporations to fund government-controlled services such as fare-free buses, universal childcare, public housing, and state-operated grocery stores. He also advocates for \$65 million in funding for transgender medical services.

In previous remarks, Mamdani called for defunding the New York Police Department and controversially stated he would arrest Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu if he visited New York City. He also used the phrase “globalize the intifada,” a term critics say promotes violence against Israeli and Jewish communities.

Despite the backlash, LoBianco defended Mamdani’s appeal, noting that his campaign is attracting new Democratic voters. She said his plans address real issues like “food deserts” in low-income neighborhoods, and argued that the wealthy “should pay their fair share.”

Mamdani plans to kick off his general election campaign with a major event on Staten Island on August 17, aiming to close the gap with Cuomo, who led the primary vote with 46.5% to Mamdani’s 37.5%.

However, Staten Island's Republican leadership remains confident that Mamdani's agenda will not resonate with local voters. Republican Assemblyman and borough party chair Michael Tannousis called the Democrats' endorsement a "shotgun wedding" and said many centrist Democrats are likely to support Sliwa.

"There is no appetite for socialism and the socialist agenda," said Tannousis. "Curtis will win Staten Island. He may even outperform his numbers from four years ago."

Sliwa, who previously won 65% of Staten Island's vote in 2021, told the New York Post, "If I lose Staten Island, shame on me." He criticised Mayor Adams for allowing migrant shelters in the borough and said that discontent could drive voters toward the Republican ticket.

Cuomo's campaign is also distancing itself from Mamdani. Spokesman Rich Azzopardi referred to Mamdani as "Bill de Blasio 2.0," criticizing his anti-police and anti-capitalist messaging. "That rhetoric won't sit well on Staten Island," Azzopardi said, comparing Mamdani's politics to the former mayor's much-criticized style.

Political commentator Bill Maher addressed Mamdani's candidacy during a recent segment on his YouTube show Real Time. Warning of the Democratic Party's internal struggle, Maher said, "Are you on the side of Western values or the side of the terrorists?" Pointing to Mamdani's views, Maher added, "We've never had someone this radical... quoting Marxists like 'each according to their need.' That's straight-up communism."

Journalist and author James Kirchick, appearing alongside Maher, accused Democratic leaders of "cowardice and spinelessness" for refusing to denounce Mamdani, comparing their silence to the early GOP response to Donald Trump's rise.