



Written by [Daniel Sayani](#) on September 13, 2011

Republican Bob Turner Poised to Replace Anthony Weiner

Voters in New York's Ninth Congressional District are coming out today to vote for their new congressman, who will replace disgraced former Representative Anthony Weiner, a Democrat. While the seat has been held by a Democrat consistently for the past 78 years (the last Republican to represent the district was Andrew Petersen, who represented the district from 1921-1923), political analysts and pollsters have strong reason to believe that history may be made tonight if Republican candidate Bob Turner (left) defeats his Democratic opponent, Assemblyman David Weprin.



While registered Democrats outnumber registered Republicans in the district by a three-to-one margin, polls suggest that the seat will turn Republican largely due to voter dissatisfaction with President Obama's handling of the economy, as well as opposition among the district's significant Jewish population to Obama's Israel policy and support of a Ground Zero Mosque. The largely white, middle class district is also home to a predominately [Reagan Democrat](#) demographic, making it significantly less progressive than other districts, accounting for Turner's surprising success in the polls. A Siena College [poll](#) on Friday, September 9th found Turner ahead with 50 percent of the vote, compared to Weprin's 46 percent, and a Public Policy Polling poll from Monday puts Turner ahead of Weprin with 47 percent of the vote, to Weprin's 41 percent. Dean Debnam, president of Public Policy Polling, said the president had emerged as a drag on Weprin. If Republicans win this race on Tuesday it's real world evidence of how unpopular Barack Obama is right now, Debnam said in a release accompanying the survey results. Approval polls are one thing but for the GOP to win in a heavily Democratic district like this would send a strong message about how unhappy voters are."

Turner's unprecedented success in the district is attributed to several factors. Turner has centered his campaign on tying Weprin to the policies of President Barack Obama, whose popularity has diminished in the Queens- and Brooklyn-area district. The Public Policy Polling results indicate that a dismal 31 percent of voters expressed a favorable view of Obama. Obama captured 55 percent of the vote in the district in 2008. Weprin, a career politician, is considered the hand-picked choice of the notoriously corrupt Queens Democratic Party machine, of which his father, Saul Weprin, was party boss, in the 1970s, a fact which the Turner campaign capitalized on, and which was cited by the left-leaning *New York Daily News* as one significant factor in its decision to [endorse](#) Turner last month. Additionally, Weprin does not reside in the district, and while publicly identifying himself as an Orthodox Jew, he is known for his support of socially liberal causes, which run counter to the traditional sensitivities of constituents in the Ninth District. Weprin's vote in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage in the New York State Assembly in June has especially proven to be disastrous to his prospects, as Orthodox Jewish, Catholic, and other voters in the district oppose efforts to redefine marriage.

In a stinging rebuke to Weprin's efforts to identify himself with the Orthodox community (which comprises 29 percent of the electorate in the district), rabbinical leaders signed a statement last week



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urging Orthodox Jews to vote for Turner. In the widely publicized statement, 40 rabbis [slammed](#) Weprin as reckless and said Mr. Weprin was well aware that this bill would diminish the religious liberty of all people of faith and cause distress to Torah Jews living in New York State. Mr. Weprin chose to ignore the pain that his action would cause. He also chose to ignore the eternal moral values of our tradition, justifying his action by pronouncing a distorted morality of his own creation. Mr. Weprin is now seeking to be elected to Congress to represent the same community whose values and views he so cavalierly disregarded. The 40 rabbinical leaders also stated, Make no mistake: Weprins fall from favor from the Jewish community is based solely on the spectacle he created for himself by loudly proclaiming his support for a social monstrosity explicitly condemned in the Torah and Talmud for gentiles as well as Jews. Our brother, David Weprin, has lost his way and he must be stopped from making much greater errors and embarrassments in the future. Our success and our protection comes only from honoring our Father in Heaven through His Torah. Stand up for Torah and vote against David Weprin.

In addition, Weprins public identification with and support for President Obama has led high-profile Democrats Ed Koch, former New York Mayor, and Dov Hikind, who represents the Orthodox community in the NYS Assembly, to endorse Turner. Koch said that the election was a referendum on Obamas harsh policy towards Israel and the 1967 borders, and likened the race to the Senatorial election in January 2010 to replace deceased Senator Ted Kennedy in Massachusetts. He also [commented](#) that Weprins election would be viewed by Obama as an acceptance of his anti-Israel policies by one of the nations most Jewish congressional districts:

David Weprin could not be an effective messenger. His election would be viewed by President Obama as simply that of another Democrat elected to office in what is one of the largest Jewish constituencies in the nation and accepting of the president, notwithstanding criticism of his positions. On the other hand, the election of Bob Turner in a normally safe Democratic district running against President Obama's position on Israel and against his own party's positions on the three entitlement programs of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid would send a message to his own party leadership as well as to President Obama. I believe Bob Turner's election could have the impact that the election of Scott Brown had when he won the Senate seat in Massachusetts - a seat that was held by the late Senator Ted Kennedy, the bluest senator from the bluest state in the union.

Hikind, a Conservative Democrat, endorsed Turner on Friday, and like Koch, said that a Turner victory would send a clear message to Obama. Both Koch and Hikind also cited Obamas dismal record on job growth and high rates of unemployment in the district as grounds for endorsing Turner. Hikinds [endorsement](#) of Turner marks another instance of the Democrat crossing party lines; he endorsed George W. Bush for President in 2004 and noted that most voters in the district get a sense that no one is in charge and the guy at the top doesn't really know what to do, referring to their negative perception of Obama and the Democratic Party leadership, which counts Weprin among its rank-and-file.

As voters made their way to the polls Tuesday, congressional leaders had mixed projections on the outcome of the race. Anthony Weiner [announced](#) he cast his vote for Weprin, and asked whether a Republican victory could be attributed to his scandalous conduct, he replied, If you made a list of 10 fervent defenders of Democratic ideals, I would be on it." Speaker of the House of Representatives John Boehner, the top Republican, said given the area's rich Democratic history and tilt, "This is not a district that we have any right to believe we can win. But we do have a good candidate," Boehner told reporters. "Hope springs eternal." House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer said of the New York race, "It



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is much closer than anyone thought it would be. Every election reflects on the person in charge," he said. "Do I think it is an overall statement on the president alone? No. Do I think it will be interpreted as a statement on Obama? That is probably correct." Republicans also expect to easily hold a Nevada House seat, the only other congressional election on Tuesday. The Nevada election is in a rural district that has never sent a Democrat to Congress.

Related article: [Republican Bob Turner Leads in Race for Weiners Former Seat](#)



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