



Written by [Daniel Sayani](#) on September 15, 2011

## Republican Bob Turner's Victory Raises Questions

After an intense summer of campaigning, political history was made last night in New York's Ninth Congressional District, as Republican Bob Turner (left) emerged victorious over his Democratic opponent, Assemblyman David Weprin. In a stinging rebuke to Weprin and to his litany of liberal, statist positions, which voters associated with Obama, voters in the heavily Democratic district turned out in droves for Turner, putting into Republican hands a seat which has consistently been held by a Democrat since 1921.



Turner's victory comes as a major upset to New York Democrats, who attempted to smear Turner by casting him as a Tea Partier whose allegedly radical views were out of sync with those of constituents in the Ninth District. Turner, a retired cable television executive, had won 53 percent of the vote, compared to Weprin's 47 percent, in the special election to succeed Rep. Anthony Weiner, a seven-term Democrat who resigned in June after a sexting scandal. What makes Turner's victory even more remarkable is the registration advantage Democrats hold over Republicans in the district, which spans the New York City boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, and where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by a three-to-one margin. Turner also successfully overcame Weiner's relative popularity in the district; according to pollsters, Turner's victory is more accurately attributed to voter dissatisfaction with national liberal Democratic policies than a backlash against the local Democratic Party due to the nature of the Weiner scandal. A Siena College Poll in June found that 56 percent of constituents believed Weiner should not have resigned and answered that they would have voted for his reelection. The dynamic involved in this election is therefore unlike the special election in New York's 26th Congressional District, where Republican Rep. Christopher Lee resigned in February due to a sex scandal involving Craigslist, and was replaced in May by Democrat Kathy Hochul.

The House seat opened up when Weiner was pushed by party leaders to resign after sending sexually provocative tweets and text messages to women he met online. The trouble for Weiner, who served seven terms, began when a photo of a man's crotch surfaced on his Twitter feed. He initially denied the photo was of him but later admitted it was. Weiner, who is married to State Department staffer Huma Abedin, resigned June 16 after two weeks of fighting off pressure to step aside. He apologized for the embarrassment that I have caused and said he hoped to continue to fight for the causes dear to his constituents. Unsurprisingly, Weiner cast his vote for Weprin Tuesday.

Turner's victory was largely considered a referendum on the policies of the Obama Administration, and voters clearly repudiated the progressive agenda advocated by Weprin. Analysts believe that Turner's success was largely made possible due to the unprecedented turnout of Orthodox Jewish voters in Brooklyn, who overwhelmingly supported Turner, unlike constituents in Queens, who came out largely for Weprin. (Turner received 70 percent of the vote in Brooklyn). Orthodox Jews, who tend to be conservative on social issues, expressed anger over Weprin's vote in the Assembly to legalize gay marriage, and followed the head of over 40 rabbinical leaders in voting for Turner. Other constituents



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associated Weprin with Obamas failed job policies; according to Assemblyman Dov Hikind, a conservative Democrat who endorsed Turner, residents across Queens and Brooklyn sent a clear message to President Obama that they will no longer tolerate the broken economy, the lack of jobs, and the countless Americans who are struggling financially and are out of work.

Turner previously ran against Weiner in November 2010, and although he lost to Weiner then, his success in the race was unprecedented for Republicans, as he earned an historic 42 percent of the vote, giving him name appeal and Republicans a strategic advantage in the race. Other factors playing in Turners favor include Weprins support for gay marriage (and Turners social conservatism). According to [Hikind](#), Bob Turners values were consistent with those of the district, unlike David Weprin, who stood up on the floor of the Assembly, identified himself as a practicing, Orthodox Jew, and proclaimed his unequivocal and proud support for gay marriage in New York State. Weprins vote crossed the line, and ultimately, it was the cause of his undoing in this election. Voters also communicated their displeasure with Mr. Obamas anti-Israel policies, his irresponsible spending programs, and his efforts to send Medicare and Social Security to the brink of bankruptcy. Hikind also referred to Weprins voting record as a New York City Councilman, including his vote in favor of a 20 percent property tax increase and his consistent refusal to support School Choice for private and parochial school parents.

Turner also earned coveted endorsements by former Mayor Rudy Giuliani and former Mayor Edward Koch, a Democrat, and from the New York Daily News, which proved successful, in spite of Weprins endorsements by Governor Andrew Cuomo and former President Bill Clinton, who heavily campaigned for Weprin.

### **Another Scott Brown Republican?**

Time will only tell whether Bob Turners success in the election is a victory for constitutionalist conservative ideology as much as a rebuke of Obamas liberalism. However, based on Turners campaign platform and other evidence, it is apparent constitutionalists have not found a kindred spirit in Turner, who for political expediency, strategically positioned himself as a fiscally moderate and socially conservative Republican. While Turner signed the Americans for Tax Reform No New Taxes pledge when he ran in 2010, he has since changed his stance on taxes, and says he is amenable to voting a tax increase on corporations, as long as it involves merely closing loopholes.

In addition, Turner has made his support for entitlements well-known, especially his support for maintaining funding for Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare at current levels. Turner never once raised the question of the constitutionality of these entitlement programs, and instead, positioned himself as a defender of Medicare, in an effort to draw votes from senior citizens, and to differentiate himself from Weprin, whose support for ObamaCare inherently entails support for Medicare cuts. Turner has consistently emphasized that he will not vote to change benefits for citizens now over the age of 55, and in fact, in his endorsement of Turner, former Mayor Edward Koch, a liberal Democrat, [enthusiastically stated](#) that Turners position on entitlements is perfectly acceptable to him.

Koch also did not hesitate to refer to Turner as a Scott Brown Republican, likening him to the Moderate Republican senator from Massachusetts, who, in a special election last year, won the Senate seat previously held by the late Democratic Senator Ted Kennedy. Turner also emphasized his lack of support for Rep. Paul Ryans Medicare Reform plan, which Turner charges will privatize Medicare. In fact, his campaign stressed that he would have voted against the Ryan Plan, effectively placing Turner within the Republican mainstream, as opposed to the Tea Party camp, which Turner has repudiated and refused proffered support from in the election.



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Turner was sworn in Thursday by House Speaker John Boehner, along with Mark Amodei, who was elected Tuesday to represent Nevadas Second Congressional District, in a special election to replace Rep. Dean Heller, who was appointed to replace former Sen. John Ensign, who resigned after a sex scandal. Analysts also say that Turners seat is likely to be eliminated next year, when the Republican-controlled New York State Senate votes on redistricting congressional seats. New York lost two Congressional seats, as indicated by Census counts, and it is expected that Turners district will be eliminated due to its otherwise Democratic proclivities.



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