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TOP STORY

Democratic Atlantic County clerk candidates disagree over ballot design

Michelle Brunetti Post
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Our first summer sizzle of 2021, your April 28 daytime forecast

An unusual April beach day is in store for South Jersey Wednesday. Bermuda high pressure will pump in the warm air. Meteorologist Joe Martucci explains if we'll break any records and what the rest of the week will hold.

The two Democratic candidates for Atlantic County clerk agreed many people are confused about voting rules and procedures in their online debate Tuesday night, and promised to emphasize voter education and outreach if elected.

But progressive candidate Mico Lucide, of Mays Landing, and Egg Harbor City Mayor Lisa Jiampetti disagreed when it came to supporting the current ballot design used in New Jersey.

The primary election is June 8, and the winner will face Republican Hammonton Councilman Joe Giraldo in the general election.

Lucide wants to see an end to bracketing candidates together, with those supported by party committees getting the best ballot placement together under candidates for governor and other higher offices.

"In some counties, a county chair makes the determination, and that is not fair," Lucide said. He acknowledged in Atlantic County it is a vote of the county convention that decides who gets the line. "The ballot is not giving candidates equal access to the eyes of the voter, and that is something we should change."



Polistina declines online debate against Grossman in GOP State Senate primary race

Jiampetti, on the other hand, said that coveted party line is earned by candidates, and she sees no reason to change the rules.

“I’ve been in politics for 15 years and been through many elections. The way I’ve known a person gets the line is party support,” Jiampetti said. “I think our system is working pretty well for the most part.”

The debate was sponsored by Stockton University’s William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy and the League of Women Voters of Atlantic County. A league member from Monmouth County acted as moderator.

Both candidates expressed support for New Jersey’s recent decision to allow early voting by machine starting in the November general election, for the state’s creation of an online voter registration option, and increased use of vote-by-mail ballots.

Jiampetti was an Egg Harbor City councilwoman for six years, and then was elected mayor three times. She was the city's first woman mayor.



“So much information has to get out to the public, and I want to make the clerk’s office an extension of the community and be there for (voters needing information),” Jiampetti said.

Lucide is an IT professional and progressive activist.

“I will be a county clerk who does more,” Lucide said, adding he will focus on outreach to communities with lower voter registration and turnout histories. “I will exhaust myself in service to this county.”

Earlier in the day, Lucide announced he has the endorsements of the LGBTQ Victory Fund, which calls itself the only national organization dedicated to electing LGBTQ people to public office; and Our Revolution, a national organization devoted to electing

progressives and fighting corruption in government.

Murphy endorses Jiampetti for Atlantic County clerk

Lucide also was recently endorsed by South Jersey Progressive Democrats, as well as former Atlantic County Commissioner Ashley Bennett and Northfield Councilwoman Susan Korngut.

Jiampetti has been endorsed by the Atlantic County Democratic Committee, as well as Gov. Phil Murphy, Atlantic County Sheriff Eric Scheffler and Assemblyman Vince Mazzeo, D-Atlantic.

The clerk's race is the only contested race in Atlantic County's Democratic primary this year.

Incumbent county Clerk Ed McGettigan declined to run for reelection.

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In my first job after college got paid to read the New York Times and summarize articles for an early online data base. First reporting job was with The Daily Record in Parsippany. I have also worked in nonprofits, and have been with The Press since 1990.