

The Hyde Park Democrat

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Designating Petitions: A Democratic Step Forward

UNDER NEW YORK STATE ELECTION LAW, candidates for most public offices can appear on the ballot only by obtaining enough signatures by Democratic voters like you on **designating petitions**.

It wasn't always this way. There was a time when candidates were chosen by party leaders at closed-door conventions. Now, many states have abandoned "smoke-filled rooms" in favor of greater participation by rank-and-file voters. This year, the Hyde Park Democratic Committee will circulate **designating petitions** for our candidates for county office by coming to your door for signatures throughout March.

Voters new to the petition process are sometimes taken aback when approached for their signature. They may doubt whether they know enough about a candidate to sign a petition. As we prepare to come to your door, here are some points to consider:

- The Dutchess County Democratic Committee has endorsed these candidates. Its Executive Committee has vetted them. In circulating the petition, your Hyde Park Democratic Committeeperson is vouching for them. Feel free to ask any questions you have about the candidates to the person at your door.
- In signing a petition, you are not on record as supporting these candidates or committing to vote for them. You can take your time throughout the campaign to get to know them, just as we will. You are merely assuring that they can appear on the ballot.
- The **only way** a candidate for county office can appear on the ballot this fall is to receive enough petition signatures by registered Democrats. This fact puts a little governmental power in your hands, which is the intent. Honor this privilege and sign for our candidates if you believe that voters should always have a choice.

We are proud to carry our candidates' petitions to you again this winter, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

2023 Democratic Candidates

Tommy Zurhellen *for* County Executive

Tom Zurhellen is a noted veteran and professor of creative writing at Marist College who resides in the City of Poughkeepsie. He has worked tirelessly to prevent suicide and homelessness among veterans, walking across the United States in 2019 to raise awareness and funds for these efforts. As County Executive, he aspires to help small businesses still reeling in the aftermath of covid and to address food insecurity and housing affordability. He will focus on the causes of crime and drug overdoses and seek more resources for treatment and mental health services. Tom serves on the board of Hudson River Housing and of the Dutchess County SPCA. He is enthusiastically backed by fellow combat veteran Congressman Pat Ryan.

Anthony Parisi *for* District Attorney

A Dutchess County native from Millbrook, Anthony Parisi began his career as a Public Defender for the indigent. Four years later, he joined the Dutchess County District Attorney's office. Over the course of 25 years, he has been twice promoted and now serves as Chief of the Major Crimes Bureau. Anthony has created partnerships with police and the community to counter gun violence and prevent crimes from happening. As District Attorney, he will enhance support for crime victims and will appoint a conviction integrity unit to investigate facts-based claims of wrongful convictions or sentencing inequities. A priority is to create greater transparency for the public by finally codifying the department's policies. He lives in the Town of Beekman.

Kenya Gadsden *for* County Clerk

A thirty-year employee of a nonprofit that serves people with disabilities, Kenya Gadsden is an experienced manager skilled in delivering services to clients. She is running for County Clerk to make that office more responsive to the people of Dutchess County. If elected, she will establish mobile DMV sites around the county and will work to ensure that Dutchess residents better understand the full range of services the County provides. Kenya is a resident of Fishkill and a former member of the Fishkill Town Board and Beacon School Board.

James Rogers *for* Family Court Judge

James Rogers has served as a Deputy Attorney General for Social Justice and as a Deputy Commissioner for Worker Protection in the State Department of Labor. As a Senior Trial Attorney in the Legal Aid Criminal Defense Division, he argued many cases in Family Courts. He successfully lobbied the NYS Legislature to cap the caseload of attorneys (called Law Guardians) who represent children in Family Court, so they could more effectively serve their vulnerable clients. He lives in the Village of Red Hook with his wife and two daughters.

Brendan Lawler *for* Dutchess County Legislature District 4

Brendan Lawler is a social studies teacher at Arlington High School who has served Hyde Park on the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Audit Committee. Appointed to the County Legislature in 2021 to fulfill an incomplete term, Brendan prided himself on the careful stewardship of tax dollars. If returned to the Legislature this fall, he hopes to establish a fiscal oversight committee within that body. He further aspires to improve broadband infrastructure to encourage local tech development, and to create a public transit plan that would include making county buses free to ride for Dutchess County residents.

Thanks to Our 2022 Voters!

Your votes in November helped elect Congressman Pat Ryan, State Senator Michelle Hinchey, and Assemblywoman Didi Barrett. Some of these races were close, though, and we will need all our Democrats to turn out this November in our County and Town elections. **Resolve now** to vote in 2023!

NYS Primary Election—June 27, 2023; Early Voting—June 17-25, 2023
General Election—November 7, 2023; Early Voting—October 28 -November 5, 2023