

NJ-09 District Primer

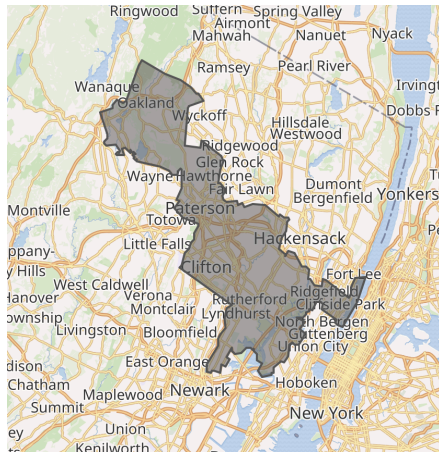
In 2024, Democrat **Nellie Pou** won this seat by **12,575 votes**. **That's close!** With a winning margin of *just three votes* per precinct, we can't afford to lose a single vote. With your help, we're going to **HOLD** this key seat and secure a Democratic House majority in 2026.

Key dates
Filing Deadline: March 23
Primary: June 2
Midterms: November 3

Recent Election Results

2024 Presidential Election	2024 House Election	2022 House Election
Trump: 140,858 (49.2%) Harris: 137,598 (48.1%)	Nellie Pou (D): 130,514 (50.8%) Billie Prempeh (R): 117,939 (45.0%)	Bill Pascrell (D): 82,457 (55.0%) Billy Prempeh (R): 65,365 (43.8%)

District Facts & Stats



Largest Cities

- Paterson: ~160,000
- Clifton: ~90,000
- Passaic: ~70,000

Geography

NJ-09 occupies a narrow, irregular slice of the north part of the state from Pompton Lakes and the suburb of Franklin Lakes southeast to Paterson and Clifton, including Teaneck and parts of Kearny and Secaucus. It is connected to New York City (where many residents work) by the George Washington Bridge and a train system.

Citizenry

The district (~772K) is 41% Hispanic, 37% white, 8% Black and 9% Asian. 55.7% of households speak a non-English language at home, primarily Spanish. The northern part of the district includes relatively wealthy, right-leaning NYC bedroom communities. South Paterson is home to a large Arab-American community (25K), while a 1300-household community of Orthodox Jews lives in Passaic Park.

The Local Vibe

ICE has been active and unpopular in the district. Large numbers of demonstrators have come out in Passaic against ICE raids. In 2025, Trump sued Paterson for its sanctuary policies and even vengefully attempted to terminate the Gateway Project, a rail tunnel connecting Manhattan and NJ.

Cuts to Medicaid and SNAP have hit the district hard. In Passaic County, 25% of residents rely on Medicaid (NJFamily Care), including 43% of children and 22% of seniors. One in five households relies on SNAP.

A new ballot-curing process signed into law in January 2026 makes it easier for voters to fix simple errors on their ballots.

Key Issues

- **Transportation:** For the district residents who commute to NYC, road and rail safety and congestion are extremely important. The Gateway Project, which Trump threatened, means a lot to them.
 - **Taxes:** Although Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill" raised the SALT deduction cap to \$40,000 for joint filers, the cap will revert to \$10,000 in 2030, and Pou voted against the measure because the increase in the cap, while desired by her tax-squeezed constituents, is only temporary—and insufficient as well.
 - **Immigration:** Federal immigration enforcement activities have residents on edge and angry. The FIFA/World Cup matches scheduled for this summer at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford may exacerbate existing tensions regarding immigration enforcement.
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About the Candidates

Nellie Pou | Democratic Incumbent

The first Latina elected to the House from New Jersey, **Nellie Pou** is the daughter of working-class parents who arrived from Puerto Rico in 1953. Born in Paterson, Pou attended Kean University in NJ and served as the City of Paterson's Director of Human Services before being elected to the NJ Assembly and then to the NJ Senate. She was elected to represent NJ-09 in the US House after the death of the incumbent, Bill Pascrell (D), in 2024. In Congress, Pou serves on the House Committees for Homeland Security and for Transportation and Infrastructure, and on four subcommittees: Counterterrorism and Intelligence, Aviation, Highways and Transit, and Water Resources and Environment. She has deep roots in the district and is a popular candidate, winning local elections by large margins.

Rep. Pou has been extremely vocal in her opposition to Trump's attempt to cancel the Gateway Tunnel Project which is critical for commuters. She has also taken up the cause of flight safety, as Teterboro Airport is in her district and Newark Airport is a hub for many of her constituents. In her first term in Congress, she sponsored a number of bills, notably including the PLATE Act, which would require ICE and CBP agents to display the license plates on their federally-funded vehicles. As a state legislator, she sponsored a law to broaden the definition of, and increase the penalties for, human trafficking.

Pou has earned endorsements from Gov. Mikie Sherrill, Emily's List, Elect Democratic Women, End Citizens United, the League of Conservation Voters, Planned Parenthood Action Fund, and numerous labor unions and Puerto Rican political and community leaders.

Rosemary Pino | Republican Challenger

Born in the Bronx to Ecuadorean immigrants, **Rosemary "Rosie" Pino** is a Latina public official in Clifton, a former Democrat and a Rutgers graduate who has worked in the Dept. of the Treasury as a bank examiner. She ran unsuccessfully for the Clifton School Board in 2011 but won her bid for a seat on the Clifton Board of Education in 2013. She was elected to the Clifton City Council in 2018. The organization she founded, Latino Leaders for Clifton, actually endorsed Nellie Pou in 2024. Pino lives in Clifton with her husband and their eleven children.

The contrast: It is clear from the bills Rep. Pou has sponsored, both as NJ-09's representative and as a member of the state legislature, that she is focused on the concerns of her constituents, for whom she is a fearless champion fighting aggressively against Trump's vindictive attempts to punish the district for its sanctuary policies. Her opponent, whose experience has been limited mainly to local government in Clifton, seems certain to act as a Trump-MAGA rubber-stamp in Congress, who can't be counted on to stand up to Trump and MAGA when the best interests of the district are at stake.