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## A Voter's Guide for NY-22

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# *A Voter's Guide for NY-22*



**Figure 1**  
*NYS Congressional Districts*



*Note.* Provided by NCPR website. 2021. Original location: National Atlas, U.S. Department of the Interior.

## Introduction:

Congressional campaigns are often difficult for voters to follow and understand, leading to an uninformed electorate voting for sometimes unknown representatives. In an effort to change that, this voter guide shares some information about the candidates in order to achieve a critical component of a representative democracy: an informed electorate. In swing districts, that is,

districts that “swing” from one party to the other due to almost equal ideological splits in the voter base, informed voters are especially crucial. The 22<sup>nd</sup> district of New York is one of these swing districts.

## Matchup:

The 2020 general election in New York’s 22<sup>nd</sup> district is likely to be a typical Democrat/Republican matchup—there are no obviously viable third-party candidates. The current representative (otherwise known as the “incumbent”), Anthony Brindisi, is a moderate

Democrat running against Claudia Tenney, a former Republican representative of the district—she represented the 22<sup>nd</sup> in Congress from 2017-2019 and was defeated by Brindisi in an extremely close 2018 midterm election. Tenney is the Republican nominee for Congress in the 22<sup>nd</sup>, having defeated two other Republican candidates. Representative Brindisi has endorsed former Vice President Joe Biden for the Democratic nomination, while Tenney has thrown her support to President Donald Trump. Additionally, President Trump endorsed Tenney early in her campaign. The president won the district by fifteen points in 2016 and remained popular with its voters through the election. In 2020, he won the district by eleven points.

### Legislative Records:

Being that both candidates have served in Congress for the 22<sup>nd</sup> district, their legislative records in terms of bills passed are quite similar. In fact, during his term, Rep. Brindisi re-introduced multiple bills or amendments that had been originally sponsored by former Rep. Tenney during her term, such as the SPOONSS Act (see next paragraph) and a bill expanding veterans' benefits, though she was unable to get them passed while in office. Brindisi, during the first year of his term, pushed four bills through Congress and signed into law by President Trump, while Tenney finished with no signed bills (for more information, see the table below). Their voting records differed when it came to the president's agenda. Brindisi voted with the president less than fifteen percent of the time, while Tenney voted with him on more than ninety percent of legislation (Project 538, 2021). During their terms, both enjoyed their own party having a majority in the House, while the Senate and the presidency were Republican-controlled throughout.

## Policy:

On tackling the major issues in the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the two candidates are similar in a legislative sense. For example, each has sponsored the SPOONSS Act, which landed an exclusive flatware contract with the Department of Defense for a flatware manufacturer in the district (the only one in the United States, in fact), during their respective terms. When it passed in late 2019 as part of the National Defense Authorization Act, it brought jobs back to the district, where job loss has been an issue since IBM left the region decades ago. However, they do differ on some major issues: the impeachment of President Trump, gun rights, and healthcare, among others. In December 2019, Brindisi voted to impeach the president, an action that has been fiercely criticized by Tenney, a staunch supporter of the president.

In addition, they differ markedly on the role of government in the economy. Tenney believes it is not the government's place to regulate business, including healthcare, instead relying on competition in the marketplace to lower prices and raise production quality for the consumer. This involves lowering existing taxes for consumers and businesses and putting American businesses before foreign companies. According to his campaign website, Brindisi believes that the government should play a role in stimulating the economy, while also lowering taxes and protecting American businesses. He wants to use regulation to lower the cost of living (particularly drug prices) and raise wages at the same time.

On the opioid crisis in the district, President Trump signed into law a bill proposed by Brindisi that prevents shipments of fentanyl from China, aiming to reduce the amount of opioids in NY-22. This bill had also been sponsored by Tenney, but wasn't passed by Congress. She also

sponsored or co-sponsored multiple bills to reduce opioid abuse and to obtain funding for substance abuse prevention, none of which reached the president’s desk.

**Election Results:**

The final result of the election in the twenty-second congressional district of New York was a victory for Claudia Tenney. On Election Day, November 4th, Tenney had a lead of more than 28,000 votes, but by November 20th it had shrunk to just 264. A four-month court battle followed, with multiple recounts resulting in the lead changing between Tenney and Brindisi four times. Brindisi twice held a small lead, but Tenney eventually won with a final margin of 109 votes, out of approximately 318,000 total votes (Ballotpedia, 2020). It was the last election to be resolved of all 435 races in the House, as it was mired in court battles over election procedures in certain counties. The election wasn’t decided until early February 2021, and Tenney was sworn in on February 11th. Since representatives are supposed to be sworn in on January 3rd, the district went un-represented in Congress for over a month.

Legislative Record	Candidates	
Name, Party, & Term in Congress	Claudia Tenney (R, 2017-2019)	Anthony Brindisi (D, 2019-present)
Opioid Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sponsored and cosponsored multiple bills in Congress to help prevent opioid abuse.</li> <li>Obtained funding for substance abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed amendment in bill to prevent fentanyl shipments from China, reducing opioids in NY-22.</li> </ul>

	prevention in NY-22.	
<b>Veterans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passed bill to increase VA oversight and transparency.</li> <li>• Co-sponsored bill to prevent veteran opioid abuse.</li> <li>• Introduced bill to expand burial benefits for veterans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bill aimed at preventing veteran suicides signed into law by President Trump.</li> <li>• Created programs to honor veterans.</li> <li>• Proposed bill for cremated veterans' benefits.</li> <li>• Proposed bill to help disabled veterans.</li> </ul>
<b>Population loss</b> → <b>job loss</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #RenewNY22 Growth Plan. Worked with local manufacturers to increase jobs.</li> <li>• Sponsored the SPOONSS Act in 2017.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SPOONSS Act (as an amendment in the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act) passage secured an exclusive flatware contract with the U.S. Defense Dept. for Sherrill Manufacturing in the district.</li> </ul>
<b>Flooding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reached out to President Trump after the 2017 Mohawk Valley floods for federal disaster declaration.</li> <li>• Appealed to FEMA to reconsider aid denial to homeowners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appealed to FEMA after they denied aid for homeowners after massive Halloween floods.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voted for omnibus spending bill that included money for infrastructure in NY-22.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Says he co-sponsored Fair Allocation of Highway Funds Act, to deliver an additional \$400 million to NY in infrastructure funding.</li> <li>• Procured \$272 million for Rome, NY, Air Force lab.</li> </ul>
<b>Agriculture (dairy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-sponsored WHOLE MILK Act to bring whole milk back to public schools, helping dairy farmers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced the Seeding Rural Resilience Act to assist farmers' mental healthcare.</li> <li>• Introduced bill to allow dairy farmers to hire temporary agricultural workers for</li> </ul>

## References

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