



Warm temperatures coming to eastern U.S.

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ANALYSIS

Why third parties perform best in Northeast U.S.



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Region offers lessons about broadening voters' options

Bert Johnson
Middlebury College | THE CONVERSATION

A majority of Americans say they are “frustrated” or “angry” – or both – with Republicans and Democrats, according to the Pew Research Center. But that rarely translates into support for independent or third-party candidates.

One exception has been in the Northeast. Angus King of Maine and Bernie Sanders of Vermont are the Senate’s only independents. King, along with Lowell Weicker of Connecticut and Lincoln Chafee of Rhode Island, represent three of the five independent and third-party governors elected nationwide since 1990. And of the 23 current independent or third-party state legislators in the country, excluding technically nonpartisan Nebraska, 14 of them, or 61%, are in New England.

As a political scientist who has taught in Vermont for two decades, I was intrigued by the question of why third-party and independent candidates are so successful, relatively speaking, in the Northeast. And can this region teach us lessons about broadening the choices available to voters?

Market forces

In their classic book “Third Parties in America,” Steven Rosenstone, Roy Behr and Edward Lazarus argue that alternative parties succeed where motivation for third-party voting is high, constraints against doing so are low, or both. Those may sound like obvious points, but let’s explore them individually. First, motivation. Third parties do better when voters are frustrated with the two major parties and see them as incapable or unwilling to respond to their needs.

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U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont is one of only two independents in the Senate.

CHARLY TRIBALLEAU/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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In presidential voting, the Electoral College sinks third-party chances if their voters are not concentrated enough to win individual states. Running as an independent in 1992, businessman Ross Perot won 19% of the national vote but received zero votes in the Electoral College.

EUGENE GARCIA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Inmate allegedly attacked

Diane Turbyfill
Gaston Gazette
USA TODAY NETWORK

Two men facing murder charges are accused of attacking an inmate in the Gaston County jail.

Jamony Kennedy and Marquan Marshall have been charged with multiple offenses after they allegedly beat and stomped another inmate on Wednesday, April 8.

The two made their first appearances in court the following day.

According to prosecutors, video shows the two waited for deputies to leave the area before bursting out of their cells, using bottle caps to keep them from locking.

They reportedly rushed another inmate, threw him to the ground, stomped his head, beat him with a metal tray and used some sort of weapon to stab him.

Kennedy was already in jail, accused of killing a Gastonia teenager on Feb. 27, 2025.

Marshall is charged with three counts of murder including a double homicide in March 2025.

Both men now face charges of assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury, attempted first-degree murder and possession of a weapon by a prisoner.

Both were assigned public defenders, and each are being held without bond.

Gastonia teen missing for months found in FL

Diane Turbyfill
Gaston Gazette
USA TODAY NETWORK

On Oct. 31, 16-year-old Luis Tario, a junior at Ashbrook High School, told his parents that he was going to visit a friend. He was supposed to be back by 6:30 p.m.

He never came home.

The missing teen has been located in north Florida this week, according to Gastonia Police.

Investigators have not released the details around his disappearance.

Luis Tario was an honor student, and he spent most of his time at home, at work or at school, his family said in a previous interview.



Missing teen Luis Tario has been found in Florida. PROVIDED BY NATALY TARIO

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