WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2026 FINAL EDITION AFFILIATED WITH NJ.COM

The Star-Ledger



Trade potential: Giants eye star Indianapolis Colts running back and South Jersey native Jonathan Taylor. F1

ELECTION 2026 7TH CONGRESSIONAL DIST.

BENNETT TOPS KEAN IN MIDTERM MELEE



Democrat Rebecca Bennett celebrates on election night Tuesday in Bridgewater after defeating Tom Kean Jr. in 7th Congressional District race. *Anna Connors, Associated Press*

Hotly contested race was closely watched across the U.S. as voters sent a message to Trump allies in Congress.

Brianna Kudisch, Brent Johnson, Nicole Rosenthal and Jelani Gibson
NJ.com

Democrat Rebecca Bennett — a former U.S. Navy helicopter pilot and healthcare executive — flipped New Jersey's 7th Congressional District blue Tuesday night, ousting the two-term incumbent Republican Tom Kean Jr.

The Associated Press called the race at 9:48 p.m., less than two hours after the polls closed.

Bennett, 39, won the seat amid an energetic blue wave at President Donald Trump's midterm, as Democrats were predicted to sweep seats across the country and take back the U.S. House of Representatives.

The contest between Bennett and Kean, 58, was closely-watched in New Jersey and the nation in the heated fight for control of Congress.



U.S. Rep. Tom Kean Jr., a Republican, has represented the 7th Congressional District in New Jersey for the past four years. *Amanda Brown, for NJ.com*

One Democratic operative attributed Bennett's win to her strong candidacy and Democratic enthusiasm across the country in repudiation of President Donald Trump.

"We're seeing a huge surge in turnout," the Democrat said. "And you're seeing depressed Republican turnout. So I think it's a perfect storm."

Reporters were barred from covering Kean's Election Night party at the Olde Mill Inn in Basking Ridge, a longtime gathering spot for his campaigns. Staffers also declined to be interviewed.

"It's not like '24," said one attendee as he walked in.

Although it tilts Republican, the 7th is a purple stretch encompassing both staunchly conservative towns in Hunterdon County and cities in Union County that bleed blue.

It's been represented by both parties, but has been held by Kean for the last four years. From the outset, Democrats eager to take back the seat targeted Kean.

Several factors loomed over the critical election.

First, there was Kean's mysterious absence.

In March, Kean abruptly disappeared from Congress. His staff refused to disclose much information, saying only that he was dealing with a personal medical issue. The mystery became a national story.

Kean resurfaced in June to explain he'd been hospitalized with depression.

There was also the unstable political ground all Republicans were teetering on, thanks to an unpopular war in Iran and sky-high prices fueled by Trump — along with the president's actions on significant local issues.

Three weeks before Election Day,
SEE BENNETT, A3

TRANSPORTATION

Commuters say ferry service is a step backward

As county clashes with NY Waterway over safety incident, company pledges to improve.

Larry Higgs *NJ.com*

Commuters and Monmouth County officials are still facing safety and other reliability issues with New York Waterway ferry service — the latest being an incident in which door fell off a ferry and into a passenger area when it was departing New York.

The minor incident occurred Oct. 23, a few weeks after a ferry departing the Belford terminal in Monmouth County struck a piling, breaking windows.

It's the latest in a series of complaints that's left some riders signing a petition requesting the ferry service be returned to the prior company in charge.

A NY Waterway spokesman described the incident as a minor one.

"A latch that helps secure a storage cabinet door containing life vests became disengaged." said Adam Pockriss, an NY Waterway spokesperson. "The cabinet door was quickly re-secured and posed no risk to passenger safety. The latch has since been replaced."

A passenger on the ferry said the Oct. 23 incident, which happened as the ferry was departing Brookfield,
SEE FERRY, A7

FEDERAL COURT

Finance planner guilty in $9.7M Ponzi scheme

At least 65 investors swindled, according to prosecutors.

Jana Cholakovska *NJ.com*

The couple couldn't reach their financial planner.

For nearly two decades, Paul Beers had been the man they trusted with their future — first as a college planner for their kids back in 2007, later with their retirement savings. So, when they couldn't get him on the phone last year, they tried logging into the account with the insurance company that supposedly held their money.

The portal didn't recognize them, according to court records. When they called customer service, a bewildered representative told them they had no record of them at all. The numbers Beers had provided as their credentials had too few digits to be real. They gave the representative their Social Security numbers to try and find the accounts. Still nothing.
SEE FRAUD, A2

2ND DIST.

Van Drew concedes

Republican Rep. Jeff Van Drew, a former Democrat turned Trump ally, concedes to Zack Mullock in South Jersey.

SENATE A3

3rd term for Booker

Democrat Cory Booker wins a third term representing New Jersey in the U.S. Senate, beating Republican Justin Murphy.

NATION C2-3

A midterm rebuke

Voters nationwide deliver a negative progress report for Trump-aligned Republicans in the midterm election.

