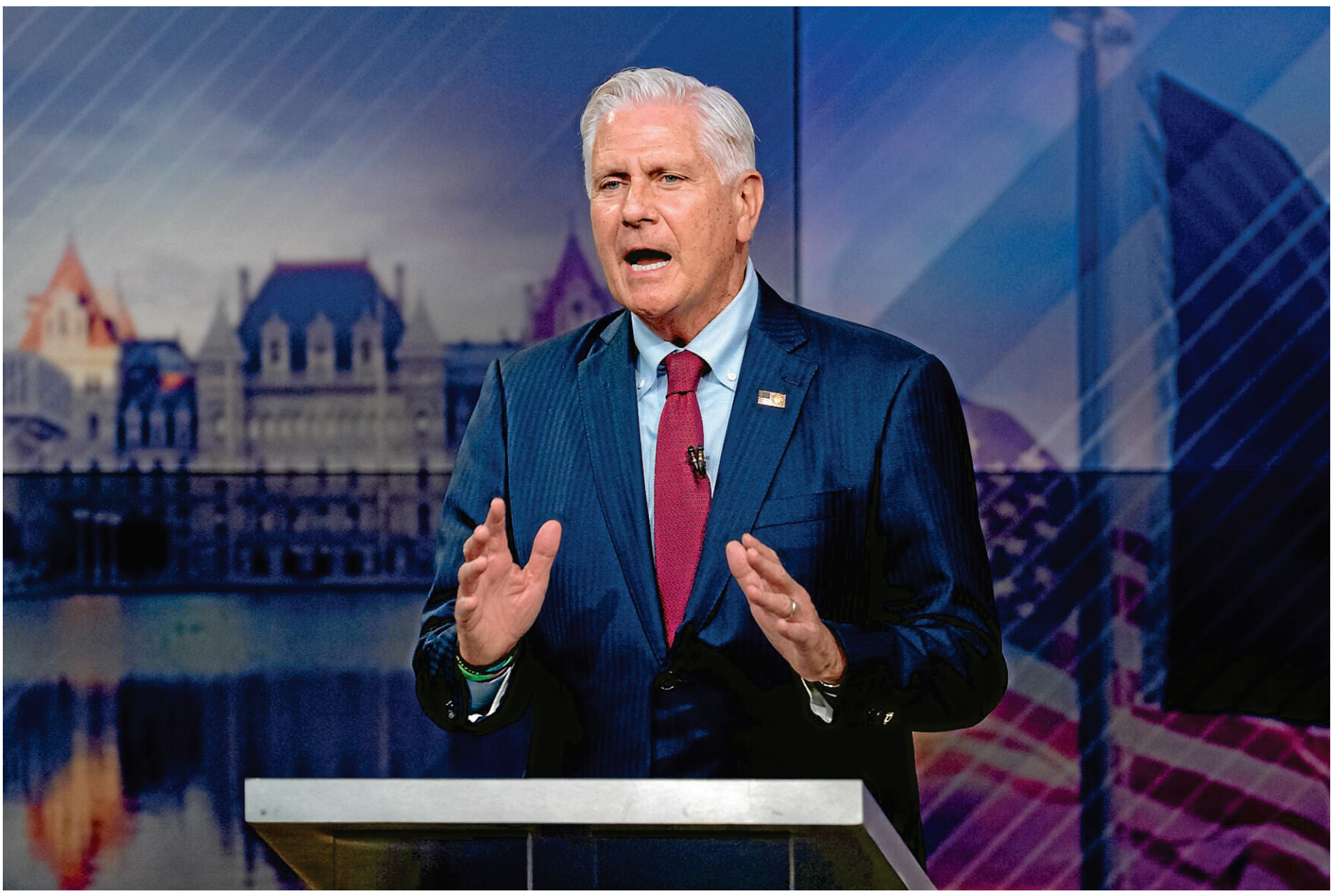
The Citizen

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POLITICS

FINGER-POINTING



ANNA CONNORS, REUTERS

On Thursday, Bruce Blakeman tore into fellow Republican Rep. Elise Stefanik on social media.

GOP bitterness follows historic election losses in NY

ROBERT GAVIN
The Buffalo News

A year ago, Rep. Elise Stefanik and Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman were slamming Gov. Kathy Hochul as they prepared campaigns to become New York's next Republican governor.

Now, Hochul has breezed to re-election over Blakeman – and Stefanik and Blakeman are slamming one another.

On Thursday, Blakeman tore into Stefanik on the X social media platform, in an apparent response to Stefanik's criticism of his campaign one day earlier in the New York Post. Hochul, a Buffalo-born Democrat, defeated Blakeman with about 60% of the vote to roughly 40% for Blakeman. It was among Democratic victories around the country, including the flipping of both houses of Congress and Democrats winning statewide elections in former GOP strongholds such as Texas, Georgia and Kansas.

Stefanik launched a bid for governor in November 2025, then dropped out the next month, leaving Blakeman a clear path to the GOP nomination. The potential for an interparty battle was averted – until this week.

"Elise Stefanik is a selfish, do nothing politician that didn't lift a finger to help Republican candidates in New York this year," Blakeman said on X. "She had one moment of glory in what was otherwise an unremarkable career."

In response, Stefanik issued a statement on X that mentioned her previous success and the "historic loss" of Tuesday.

"I know feelings are raw in the aftermath of Tuesday's result so I will cut some slack because while I don't know from experience, as I have never lost any of my seven elections, I know that this is a tough loss in NY and I imagine it takes time to process," Stefanik said. The Saratoga County-based lawmaker is leaving Congress at the end of the year after serving as one of its highest-ranking members.

Stefanik said she voted for Blakeman.

Please see **FINGER-POINTING**, Page A2

CRIME

Charge: State police sergeant had child sex abuse images

BRENDAN J. LYONS
The Albany Times Union

A State Police sergeant from Orange County was arrested Thursday on charges of sexual exploitation of children and possession of child sexual abuse material.

The arrest of Steven P. Calderon, 43, of Crawford, came 11 days after he was arrested on felony and misdemeanor assault charges by the Crawford Town Police Department. The day of that first arrest, State Police conducted a court-authorized search of Calderon's residence in connection with the assault investigation and seized various electronic surveillance equipment and storage devices.

State Police and federal prosecutors said the devices contained "thousands of sexually explicit images and videos of children, including prepubescent children, as well as numerous videos that appear to have been taken surreptitiously by Calderon in a bathroom in Calderon's residence."

"The review of these videos revealed that, on or about July 25, 2026, Calderon surreptitiously recorded a 10-year-old child… undressing in a bathroom in order to capture sexually explicit images of (the child) and then edited the recording to create a short clip of (the child) in which she appears to be engaging in sexually explicit conduct," the agencies said in a news release.

In February, Calderon allegedly secretly recorded a 9-year-old child also undressing in a bathroom "in order to capture sexually explicit images of (the victim) and created a sexually explicit screenshot of (the child) from the recording," police and prosecutors said.

Calderon, who appeared before a U.S. magistrate judge in White Plains on Thursday, remains in custody. He has been a sergeant with the State Police since 2022 and joined the agency in 2017. He has been suspended without pay since his Oct. 25 arrest on the assault charges, which remain pending.

"Steven Calderon's alleged crimes are all the more disturbing knowing he committed these alleged acts while serving as a law enforcement officer — a position entrusted with protecting the public including its most vulnerable members," said U.S. Attorney Jamie McDonald. "The defendant's alleged acts are a profound betrayal of the public trust and the oath he swore to uphold."

State Police Superintendent Steven G. James called the allegations "deeply disturbing and … in direct opposition to the oath every member of the New York State Police takes to protect and serve."

"Our responsibility to protect children and investigate allegations of abuse does not change when the accused wears our uniform," James added. "We remain committed to supporting the victims and working with the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and our local partners to ensure a thorough investigation."

The agencies said there "may be other victims" and asked anyone with information to contact the FBI at 1-800-CALL-FBI (225-5324) or https://tips.fbi.gov.

The two counts of sexual exploitation of a child each carry a potential maximum term of 30 years in prison and a mandatory minimum term of 15 years in prison if convicted. He is also charged with one count of possessing child pornography, which carries a maximum term of 20 years in prison.