

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <https://www.djreprints.com>.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/after-abortion-vote-progressive-activists-remind-lawmakers-they-are-watching-11548633600>

STATE STREET

## After Abortion Vote, Progressive Activists Remind Lawmakers They Are Watching

Groups say they will support primary challenges against incumbents they believe aren't progressive enough



New York state Sen. Joe Addabbo broke ranks with his Democratic colleagues and voted against the Reproductive Health Act.

PHOTO: MIKE GROLL/ASSOCIATED PRESS



*By  
Jimmy*

*Vielkind*

Jan. 27, 2019 7:00 p.m. ET

The same activists who pushed Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez into office and helped oust members of the state Senate's former Independent Democratic Conference have a message for lawmakers: We're still watching.

Leaders of groups like No IDC NY and other progressive community organizations, many energized by the election of Donald Trump, immediately reacted last week when State Sen. Joe Addabbo broke ranks with his Democratic colleagues and voted against the Reproductive Health Act.

The measure, which easily cleared the Senate and was signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, takes the abortion language out of the penal code and creates a right to the procedure under the public-health law. Abortion will be allowed in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy or later, if doctors determine it necessary for the health of the mother.

Susan Kang, a Queens resident and co-founder of No IDC NY, noted her group successfully supported Democratic challenges to six members of the IDC, which was allied with Republicans. She and other activists are now watching Democratic lawmakers' votes on establishing a single-payer health-care system and expanding rent-control laws.

"I think Addabbo is on a lot of people's radar," Ms. Kang said.

Marva Kerwin, a co-founder of the progressive group Rockaway Revolution, said she was looking for a primary challenger to Mr. Addabbo and felt "bamboozled" by his vote. He was listed in a July press release issued by Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts as supporting the codification of Roe v. Wade.

Mr. Addabbo said he voted against the bill because it would allow abortions on viable fetuses, which he doesn't support. He said this goes beyond the standard set in the Roe case, and that his statement to Planned Parenthood didn't commit to the specific bill.

"I felt someone had to stick up for that child that could live outside the womb," Mr. Addabbo said.

His Queens district stretches from the Rockaways north through Howard Beach and Ozone Park to the neighborhoods of Middle Village and Forest Hills. Parts are dominated by white-ethnic Catholics who Mr. Addabbo said were supportive of his vote, but other areas have grown younger and more diverse.

Mrs. Kerwin said her group is growing, and that people like her helped Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, a Democratic Socialist and first-time candidate, defy political convention when she defeated 10-term Rep. Joe Crowley.

Mr. Addabbo said he worked hard to represent his constituents and should be judged holistically.

"Anyone can run against me," he said. "I love a good campaign and a positive campaign built on issues. I'd put my record before theirs."

**THE BILLS KEEP COMING:** In the first four full days of the legislative session, New York lawmakers have approved bills to strengthen voting rights, prohibit discrimination based on gender expression, roll back standardized tests in teacher evaluations, allow undocumented immigrants to use state tuition assistance as well as the abortion bill.

At the Capitol, any one might be considered a capstone measure of an entire legislative year. But now, in Albany, it's just a Tuesday.

This week lawmakers will take up the Child Victims Act, which would extend the criminal and civil statute of limitations for victims of child sex abuse, and a slate of gun-control measures.



New York State Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, center, walks in the Assembly Chamber on the opening day of the legislative session at the state Capitol in Albany on Jan. 9. PHOTO: HANS PENNINK/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, a Democrat from the Bronx, said they include bills to increase the amount of time gun dealers have to conduct background checks before selling firearms, ban bump stocks and undetectable guns, mandate safe storage and a “red flag bill” that lets family members petition to have guns taken from someone they believe to be dangerous.

Democratic dominance of both the Assembly and Senate makes things much easier, said Mr. Heastie, who said there is more coordination and pent-up demand since 2009, when Democrats last controlled all three pillars of the state’s governing troika.

“It’s now just details,” he said of negotiations with Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, a Democrat from Yonkers. “Not trading something I hate for something I like.”

— ADVERTISEMENT —



**THE QUESTION:** Roger Stone, who was charged Friday with lying to Congress about his interactions with WikiLeaks during the 2016 campaign, was an adviser to both Carl Paladino and Kristin Davis when they ran for governor in 2010. (Both lost to Mr. Cuomo.) Which gubernatorial candidate unsuccessfully sued Mr. Stone for defamation?

**LAST WEEK'S ANSWER:** U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand and Connie Britton won a lip-sync contest during a Fourth of July party they attended at the U.S. Embassy while studying abroad in China. Ms. Britton recounted the scene during a 2017 interview on “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert.” Ms. Gillibrand announced her presidential bid in the same forum.

—Know the answer? Have another question, or a tip? Write to [jimmy.vielkind@wsj.com](mailto:jimmy.vielkind@wsj.com)

**Write to Jimmy Vielkind at [Jimmy.Vielkind@wsj.com](mailto:Jimmy.Vielkind@wsj.com)**

Copyright © 2019 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers visit <https://www.djreprints.com>.