**Light Blue Pod News Clips**

**May 26, 2016; 11:00 AM EST**

[Today’s Key Stories 2](#_Toc452024753)

[**KS-03**: Democrats' internal poll shows tight race for Rep. Kevin Yoder but Republicans dismiss it [Topeka Capital-Journal, 05/26/2016] 2](#_Toc452024754)

[30% Democrat, 38% Yoder, & 23% Undecided. Survey also shows Clinton leads Trump in KS-03 2](#_Toc452024755)

[**NY-18:** Ban on LGBT discrimination finally clears House [Politico, 05/26/2016] 4](#_Toc452024756)

[Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor 4](#_Toc452024757)

[MN-08 Nolan 5](#_Toc452024758)

[Local News 5](#_Toc452024759)

[National News 5](#_Toc452024760)

[From The Campaigns 5](#_Toc452024761)

[What Is Stewart Mills III Hiding? [DCCC, 05/26/2016] 5](#_Toc452024762)

[Nolan to ITC: Make These Tariffs & Taxes Permanent [Rep. Nolan, 05/26/2016] 5](#_Toc452024763)

[Nolan calls for permanent cold-roll steel tariffs to protect American mining from China 5](#_Toc452024764)

[NY-18 Maloney 6](#_Toc452024765)

[Local News 6](#_Toc452024766)

[Malony’s LGBT Non-Discrimination Amendment Passes [Hudson Valley News Network, 05/26/2016] 6](#_Toc452024767)

[Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor 6](#_Toc452024768)

[National News 7](#_Toc452024769)

[House approves LGBT anti-discrimination measure [Washington Post, 05/26/2016] 7](#_Toc452024770)

[Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor 7](#_Toc452024771)

[House passes resurrected LGBT measure [The Hill, 05/26/2016] 9](#_Toc452024772)

[Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor 9](#_Toc452024773)

[House Passes Bill on LGBT Rights for Federal Contractors [AP, 05/26/2016] 11](#_Toc452024774)

[Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor 11](#_Toc452024775)

[Ban on LGBT discrimination finally clears House [Politico, 05/26/2016] 13](#_Toc452024776)

[Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor 13](#_Toc452024777)

[From The Campaigns 14](#_Toc452024778)

[Maloney celebrates passage of LGBT amendment [‏@RepSeanMaloney, 05/25/2016] 14](#_Toc452024779)

[CA-26 Brownley 14](#_Toc452024780)

[Local News 14](#_Toc452024781)

[Former president of Camarillo Fiesta Association arrested for allegedly stealing from group [Ventura County Star, 05/26/2016] 14](#_Toc452024782)

[Camarillo Fiesta association President arrested on embezzlement after anonymous tip to Brownley led to investigation 14](#_Toc452024783)

[National News 16](#_Toc452024784)

[From The Campaigns 16](#_Toc452024785)

[WA-01 Delbene 16](#_Toc452024786)

[Local News 16](#_Toc452024787)

[National News 16](#_Toc452024788)

[From The Campaigns 16](#_Toc452024789)

[CO-03 Tipton 16](#_Toc452024790)

[Local News 16](#_Toc452024791)

[Republican senate, congressional races main attraction for June 28 primary election [Steamboat Today, 05/26/2016] 16](#_Toc452024792)

[Tipton has refused Beinstein’s request for a debate, Beinstein will not support Tipton if he wins 16](#_Toc452024793)

[National News 18](#_Toc452024794)

[Latinos Warn Democrats Not To Get Too Cocky About Facing Trump [Huffington Post, 05/26/2016] 18](#_Toc452024795)

[Dems mounting challenge in previously safe GOP districts with large Latino populations, like CO-03 18](#_Toc452024796)

[From The Campaigns 20](#_Toc452024797)

[KS-03 Yoder 20](#_Toc452024798)

[Local News 20](#_Toc452024799)

[Democrats' internal poll shows tight race for Rep. Kevin Yoder but Republicans dismiss it [Topeka Capital-Journal, 05/26/2016] 21](#_Toc452024800)

[30% Democrat, 38% Yoder, & 23% Undecided. Survey also shows Clinton leads Trump in KS-03 21](#_Toc452024801)

[Congress should keep trying to pass Kelsey Smith Act (LTE) [The Wichita Eagle, 05/25/2016] 22](#_Toc452024802)

[Letter urges Congress to reconsider Yoder bill requiring telecom companies to provide information to law enforcement in emergencies 22](#_Toc452024803)

[Kansas Democrats push to keep members from jumping to GOP to vote for moderates [Topeka Capital-Journal, 05/26/2016] 23](#_Toc452024804)

[KA Dems urging members to stay in party in order to get more national resources for races like KS-03 23](#_Toc452024805)

[Huelskamp says he would have voted for Kelsey Smith Act [The Hutchinson News, 05/25/2016] 24](#_Toc452024806)

[Huelskamp missed vote on Yoder’s telecom bill that fell short 24](#_Toc452024807)

[National News 25](#_Toc452024808)

[From The Campaigns 25](#_Toc452024809)

Today’s Key Stories

KS-03: Democrats' internal poll shows tight race for Rep. Kevin Yoder but Republicans dismiss it [Topeka Capital-Journal, [05/26/2016](http://cjonline.com/news/2016-05-25/democrats-internal-poll-shows-tight-race-rep-kevin-yoder-republicans-dismiss-it)]

30% Democrat, 38% Yoder, & 23% Undecided. Survey also shows Clinton leads Trump in KS-03

U.S. Rep. Kevin Yoder, a Republican, faces challenges from his political left and right in 2016.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee claims an internal poll proves this year’s 3rd District congressional race will be tight, but Kansas Republicans have dismissed the survey as shoddy.

The poll of 536 likely general election voters in the eastern Kansas district found 39 percent favored an unnamed Democratic candidate, 38 percent favored U.S. Rep. Kevin Yoder and 23 percent were undecided.

The poll was conducted March 21-22, according to a DCCC official, and used both live surveyors and automated robo-calls.

Yoder, a Republican, faces one primary challenger and several Democratic challengers for a district national Democrats have targeted in hopes that Donald Trump’s presence on the November ballot will push independents and moderate Republicans to vote Democrat.

The DCCC poll found 32 percent of Yoder’s constituents approve of the job he is doing, 32 percent disapprove and 36 percent are unsure.

In the presidential race, 37 percent of those polled favor Democrat Hillary Clinton, 28 percent favor Trump and 28 percent are undecided, according to the poll.

However, there are reasons to be skeptical of the results. The poll was conducted internally by the DCCC and not an independent pollster, has a relatively small sample size and is 2 months old. The margin of error is 4.2 percent, according to the DCCC.

“This is not a poll. A poll has a pollster and publishes its methodology,” said Travis Smith, a Yoder consultant and the congressman’s former chief of staff. “Whatever this is, it’s wildly inaccurate, and anyone who believes it to be true is being horribly misled.”

Cate Duerst, Yoder’s campaign manager, said the congressman “is well-suited to win again in November.”

“Congressman Yoder is not focused on polling, let alone skewed polls being pushed by Washington Democrats,” she said.

Clay Barker, executive director of the Kansas Republican Party, called public polls like the DCCC’s “more drama than substance.”

Barker said the Kansas GOP has conducted its own polls but won’t be releasing the results or publicizing them. He criticized the media for its coverage of “wildly inaccurate” surveys of statewide races in recent years.

Tyler Law, a spokesman for the DCCC, said the poll should worry the Yoder campaign.

“The idea that Congressman Yoder is not in serious danger of losing his re-election is pure fantasy,” Law said. “After an entire career in politics, he clearly does not resonate with a large portion of his constituents — in no small part to Republicans and independents recognizing that the Yoder-Brownback agenda has been a disaster.”

Three Democrats — Jay Sidie, Reggie Marselus and Nathaniel McLaughlin — are vying for the chance to challenge Yoder, who also faces a primary challenge from Republican Greg Goode, of Louisburg.

Sidie, who announced last week he will run, is the candidate of choice for the DCCC. He owns Counterpunch Financial, an investment firm in Mission Woods.

Yoder, meanwhile, will launch his re-election campaign with a picnic in Overland Park on June 5. U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., is scheduled to attend, according to Yoder’s campaign.

Yoder was first elected to Congress in 2010 and has walked a relatively smooth path in congressional races. He won the 2010 race by 20 percentage points, didn’t face a Democratic challenger in 2012 and won re-election in 2014 by 20 points over former state Sen. Kelly Kultala.

NY-18: Ban on LGBT discrimination finally clears House [Politico, [05/26/2016](http://www.politico.com/story/2016/05/ban-on-lgbt-discrimination-finally-clears-house-223593)]

Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor

The House late Wednesday night passed a spending bill amendment that would ban federal contractors who discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people, putting into law a 2014 executive order.

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-N.Y.) had attempted to attach a similar amendment to a Veterans Affairs appropriations bill last week, but House Republican leaders held the vote open and persuaded enough members to change their votes to defeat the measure. But on Wednesday, Maloney's measure passed in a 223-195 vote as an amendment to an energy and water spending bill.

"Equality wins! We have a long way to go, but achieved big victory. Will keep fighting until every #LGBT American is safe, can pursue dreams," Maloney tweeted after the amendment passed.

The amendment earned Republican support when Maloney allowed Rep. Joe Pitts (R-Pa.) to add a line to the end saying, "except as required by the First Amendment, the Fourteenth Amendment, and Article I of the Constitution."

The addition would appear to be a way to create an exemption for people citing religious objections to the provisions. Maloney retorted that the House uses "the whole Constitution."

Republicans also promptly attached two amendments of their own offering support for a North Carolina law that requires people to use bathrooms according to their gender at birth. The amendment from Rep. Robert Pittenger (R-N.C.) would prevent the federal government from withholding funding as a way to punish North Carolina for the law, and another from Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-Ala.) supports religious exemptions.

The moves infuriated House Democrats. Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California said in a statement: "After Republicans worked so hard to defeat Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney’s anti-discrimination amendment last week, we are happy to see his amendment succeed in the Energy & Water bill. However, the success of the Maloney Amendment does not hide the reality that House Republicans have chosen to make enabling discrimination against LGBT Americans a top legislative priority."

The bill comes before the House on Thursday and must still be conferenced with the Senate measure.

MN-08 Nolan

Local News

National News

From The Campaigns

What Is Stewart Mills III Hiding? [DCCC, 05/26/2016]

DCCC, Minnesota DFL press Mills on financial disclosure

Chalk another one up to “privilege”: every year, federal campaign law requires congressional candidates file a personal financial disclosure form, to let the public know their net worth and their income. Most candidates turn them in when they are due — May 15th — in the interest of being fully transparent with voters and the people they are looking to represent.

Except if you’re Stewart Mills III. Because Mills blew past last week’s deadline, instead requesting a 30-day extension.

We can only assume Stewart Mills needs more time to hide just how much he personally made off of selling his family business to a notorious Wall Street buyout firm (and jeopardizing 8th District jobs in the process) amongst his already $3,260,000 and $17,195,400 worth of income from assets.

This comes on the heels of the Minnesota DFL Party calling for Mills to disclose the details of the sale, which would have been included in today’s form. As the DFL put it, “Mills should tell workers how much their job security went for on the auction block.”

“Apparently inheriting piles of money led Mills to believe the rules don’t apply to him and he can continue dodging questions over how much he made off of selling 8th District workers out to the highest bidder,” said Justin Perpich, 8th District DFL Chair. “Being an out-of-touch multi-millionaire up to now has meant Mills advocates for policies that give more tax breaks to the wealthy, while waffling on his support for a trade deal that would outsource Minnesota jobs, but now it also means Mills thinks he can withhold his financial records from voters.”

Nolan to ITC: Make These Tariffs & Taxes Permanent [Rep. Nolan, [05/26/2016](http://nolan.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/nolan-to-itc-make-these-tariffs-taxes-permanent)]

Nolan calls for permanent cold-roll steel tariffs to protect American mining from China

U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan today testified before the U.S. International Trade Commission, demanding that the tariffs (taxes) be made permanent in the case of cold-rolled steel flat products from China, Brazil, India, Japan, Korea, Russia, and the United Kingdom. The penalties include antidumping tariffs (taxes) of 266% and countervailing tariffs (taxes) of 256% on cold-rolled steel from China.

“On behalf of America’s iron mining and steel workers and all the businesses and families they support, I am here today to urge you as strongly as I possibly can to finalize these rulings and make these tariffs and taxes permanent,” Nolan said. “Iron mining, steel and manufacturing are the foundations of our national security and our economic security, and the penalties being considered today represent our profound obligation to protect the interests of the American people.”

More than 12,000 steel workers nationwide have lost their jobs to illegal foreign steel. The Department of Commerce and Customs and Border Protection are currently enforcing 161 anti-dumping and countervailing orders against foreign steel and other manufactured products and 38 new processors have been hired at the Department of Commerce to investigate trade cases.

The price of American iron ore has risen to more than $60 dollars a ton – up from $40 dollars a year ago. The domestic steel manufacturing industry is operating at about 75% of capacity, which is up from 60% at the beginning of the year but still in need of improvement.

A final determination will be made by June 30th.

NY-18 Maloney

Local News

Malony’s LGBT Non-Discrimination Amendment Passes [Hudson Valley News Network, [05/26/2016](http://hudsonvalleynewsnetwork.com/2016/05/26/malonys-lgbt-non-discrimination-amendment-passes/)]

*Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor*

Washington – After Republican Leadership rigged a previous vote on a similar bill, Representative Sean Patrick Maloney’s (NY-18) amendment to prevent federal contractors from discriminating against LGBT employees passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 223-195. The Maloney amendment was introduced tonight to the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2017, and would specifically prevent contractors paid by funds allocated for energy and water projects from discriminating against employees based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. After House Republican Leadership violated their own rules to strong-arm seven republicans into switching their votes to vote against Maloney’s amendment, the Maloney amendment passed tonight with 43 Republican votes.

“After House Republican Leadership broke their own rules to rig a vote and stack the deck for discrimination – tonight proved that equality will always win,” said Maloney, co-chair of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus. “Folks back home want to know that their government is on the level – and when last week’s vote went down under such extraordinary circumstances, my Republican colleagues went back home to their districts and heard them echo cries of, “Shame!” I offered my amendment today – through an open process – to give my colleagues a second chance to do the right thing and stand against discrimination. Tonight Congress took that chance and we claimed a victory for equality.”

Representative Sean Patrick Maloney is the first openly gay member of Congress from New York. After 22 years together, he married his husband Randy Florke in June 2014 in Cold Spring, NY where they live with their three children.

National News

House approves LGBT anti-discrimination measure [Washington Post, [05/26/2016](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2016/05/25/house-to-vote-again-on-lgbt-anti-discrimination-measure/)]

*Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor*

The House voted late Wednesday night to approve a measure to bar the government from paying federal contractors that discriminate based on gender identity or sexual orientation.

Members erupted into cheers Wednesday night after the measure, sponsored by Rep. Sean Maloney (D-N.Y.), was approved 223-195.

The Wednesday vote was the second in less than a week on an issue that divides Republicans as a party and is proving equally contentious among GOP lawmakers in the House.

Maloney, who is openly gay, resurrected his language as an amendment to the energy and water spending bill. The overall spending bill is scheduled for a final vote on Thursday.

Maloney celebrated after the vote by tweeting his thanks to the House members who voted for the bill.

But Republicans are pushing back in a broader effort to preserve “religious liberty” from Obama’s recent actions — one to prevent discrimination against LGBT employees of federal contractors and the other directing the nation’s public schools to provide bathrooms and locker rooms for transgender students that correspond to their gender identity.

The House also voted 233-186 to approve a measure introduced by Bradley Byrne (R-Ala.) that would exempt religious groups from Obama’s directives to contractors and public schools.

“We should have no problem ensuring that religious entities still enjoy the protections of the free exercise of religion,” Byrne said on the floor.

“It sounds like discrimination in the disguise of religious freedom,” said Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio).

Republicans successfully tweaked the Maloney amendment after Rep. Joe Pitts (R-Pa.) introduced his own language stating that “the administration must not run afoul of the 1st amendment, the 14th amendment and Article One of the Constitution” in its anti-discrimination effort.

Maloney said he had no objection to Pitts’s proposal, but clarified he didn’t think his measure violated those provisions in the first place.

“Far from being concerned about reconciling our activities with the Constitution, we believe they are perfectly consistent,” Maloney said. “What do you say we abide by the whole Constitution, including the parts that try to make it more progressive, more inclusive of people like me, of people of color, of women, of people who were shut out when it was written?”

LGBT rights have sparked an intense political debate around the country and last week, exploded onto the House floor when Maloney tried to include his language about federal contractors in a military construction and veterans’ affairs bill. The episode signaled the start of what is likely to be a long and controversial battle over so-called religious liberty and other LGBT measures in the context of the congressional budget process.

Because the 12 spending bills are among the only must-pass legislation on Congress’s plate, supporters and defenders of such measures are likely to use them as vehicles for such proposals.

Speaker of the House Paul D. Ryan (R-Wisc.) told reporters on Tuesday that the breakdown last week was the result of confusion about the amendment and a fear that the issue could undermine support for the overall bill.

“A lot of folks didn’t know what they were voting on,” Ryan said. “There was a real concern that this was going to jeopardize critical funding for our Veterans Administration and the military.”

Maloney said Wednesday that the intent of his proposal was clear.

“It said you can’t take taxpayer dollars and fire people just for being gay,” Maloney said on the House floor.

Last week, Maloney’s proposal looked poised to pass, 217 to 206, before GOP leaders seemed to begin a last-minute scramble to rally Republicans against it.

The language ultimately failed, 213 to 212. Democrats said seven GOP members who originally supported it — Reps. Darrell Issa, Jeff Denham, Mimi Walters and David Valadao of California; Greg Walden (Ore.), David Young (Iowa), and Bruce Poliquin (Maine) — wound up in the “no” column.

Several spokesman for those Republicans did not comment on whether they switched their votes. In a statement, Poliquin said he was “outraged that political opponents or members of the press would claim or insinuate that I cast a vote due to pressure or party politics.”

Democrats booed and shouted as the amendment failed, and party leaders unleashed a wave of criticism.

House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) spoke out on the episode Tuesday, saying GOP leaders pushed members to oppose Maloney’s amendment after conservatives threatened to tank the overall bill if it contained the language.

“Unless the bill allows for discrimination we’re not going to vote for it?” Hoyer said. “What kind of argument is that?”

As part of their pledge to maintain regular order, McCarthy and Ryan (R-Wisc.) have said they are committed to maintaining an open amendment process, allowing any member to introduce language once a bill hits the House floor.

Ryan has floated the idea of changing the House rules to require members to submit amendments in writing before they are debated on the floor. Those rules aren’t now in place, however.

“This is the second time in less than a week that Speaker Ryan has abandoned regular order in the name of furthering LGBT discrimination in this country,” said House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) in a statement. “Obviously, we are deeply disappointed that the House Republican leadership has apparently decided that discriminating against LGBT Americans is top a legislative priority.”

House passes resurrected LGBT measure [The Hill, [05/26/2016](http://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/house/281316-house-passes-resurrected-lgbt-measure)]

Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor

House Democrats on Wednesday resurrected a measure ensuring equal protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people after their last attempt erupted in chaos last week.

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-N.Y.) reprised his amendment to enforce an executive order President Obama issued in 2014 to prohibit federal contractors from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The House approved his amendment to an Energy Department spending bill in a 223-195 vote late Wednesday night, in contrast to a similar vote a week ago when the measure failed by a single vote. Forty-three Republicans joined with all Democrats to support the amendment.

Cheers broke out on the House floor after the amendment passed.

Maloney's proposal originally had enough votes to pass last Thursday on another appropriations bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). But House GOP leaders held the vote open for seven minutes as they frantically lobbied Republicans to change their votes so that it would fail.

GOP leaders warned that adoption of Maloney's amendment would have jeopardized passage of the underlying VA spending bill. The night before, the House had passed the annual defense authorization with a provision that effectively exempts religious organizations from complying with Obama's executive order.

While unveiling his reprised amendment, Maloney, who is openly gay, angrily recalled the events of last week as the votes in favor of his measure gradually switched against it.

"With all time expired, it was clear as could be that equality had won the vote. But when the world watched, something else happened. Something shameful happened," Maloney said. "Something about treating LGBT people fairly just wouldn't do. "

Republicans were more prepared this time for Maloney's amendment since it was clear ahead of time that it would come up for a vote. Last week's vote, meanwhile, came with little warning, which resulted in GOP leaders partaking in the last-minute arm-twisting.

Rep. Joe Pitts (R-Pa.) offered a counter-amendment so that Maloney's proposal would be modified by stating that no funds could be used in contravention of the LGBT executive order except as "required by the First Amendment, the Fourteenth Amendment, and Article I of the Constitution."

"Does anyone in this chamber seriously oppose Article I of the constitution, the First Amendment, or the 14th Amendment?" Pitts asked.

Maloney allowed Pitts's amendment to pass by voice vote, saying that he had no objection to simply stating adherence to the Constitution.

"What do you say we abide by the whole Constitution? The part that tries to make it more progressive, more inclusive of people like me, of people of color, of women, of people who were shut out when it was written. How about we include the whole Constitution? Can we do that?" Maloney said.

Ahead of the vote, influential conservative group Heritage Action urged Republicans to oppose Maloney's amendment and said that it would be including it on its legislative scorecard.

"Make no mistake: A vote for the Maloney amendment is a vote for President Obama’s radical transgender bathroom agenda," the notice reads.

Heritage Action further dismissed the change made by Pitts's counter-amendment, saying it had "absolutely no substantive effect."

"Simply adding a reference to the Constitution at the end of the amendment will in no way mitigate the amendment’s damage to religious liberty," it added.

Earlier Wednesday night, the House adopted, 227-192, an amendment from Rep. Robert Pittenger (R-N.C.) prohibiting the Obama administration from revoking funds previously appropriated to North Carolina in retaliation for the state's controversial transgender bathroom law.

The Justice Department filed a lawsuit earlier this month against North Carolina for its law, which requires people to use the bathroom corresponding with their birth gender instead of their current gender identity.

“We believe this is an egregious abuse of executive power and that the State of North Carolina should not be required to comply to the president’s wishes. The president is not a monarch, he is not a dictator, he does not issue fiats, we are a Constitutional divided government," Pittenger said.

Pittenger's office said he plans to offer similar amendments to upcoming appropriations bills.

The House also passed, 233-186, an amendment offered by Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-Ala.) to prohibit the use of funds in contravention of religious freedom.

All seven of the Republicans accused by Democrats of switching their votes last week - Reps. Jeff Denham (Calif.), David Valadao (Calif.), David Young (Iowa), Bruce Poliquin (Maine), Mimi Walters (Calif.), Greg Walden (Ore.) and Darrell Issa (Calif.) - voted for Maloney's amendment on Wednesday.

Young, who's one of the most vulnerable House Republicans up for reelection this cycle, said in a statement that the tweaked version of the Maloney amendment was a "commonsense solution which furthers policies that adhere to our nation's principles and religious beliefs."

Issa maintained to The Hill earlier this week that he had changed his vote before House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) approached him on the floor and that he intended to oppose the amendment.

"People hit the wrong button regularly," Issa insisted.

Maloney had the ability to force another vote on his proposal on Wednesday because the Energy Department spending bill was considered under a process that allows members of either party to offer unlimited amendments.

However, Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) laid out plans this week to require lawmakers to submit their amendments in advance for upcoming spending bills to avoid more political curveballs from Democrats like last week's chaotic vote.

House Passes Bill on LGBT Rights for Federal Contractors [AP, [05/26/2016](http://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2016-05-25/house-reverses-course-on-lgbt-rights-for-federal-contractors)]

Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House reversed itself late Wednesday and approved a measure aimed at upholding an executive order that bars discrimination against LGBT employees by federal contractors.

More than 40 Republicans helped Democrats power the gay rights measure over the opposition of GOP conservatives who dominate the chamber.

Conservatives did prevail in a separate vote designed to make sure federal funding isn't taken away from the state of North Carolina over its controversial bathroom law for transgender people.

Wednesday night's 223-195 tally reverses a vote last week on the gay rights measure. Then, GOP leaders twisted arms to defeat the legislation, causing several supporters to switch their vote, leading Democrats to erupt in protest.

Openly gay New York Democrat Sean Patrick Maloney returned to attach the measure to a funding bill for the Energy Department.

This time, GOP leaders let members vote as they wished; about a dozen Republicans, including several from California, rethought their opposition and Maloney's amendment made it through fairly easily.

It would prohibit agencies funded by the bill to award taxpayer dollars to federal contractors that violate President Barack Obama's executive order barring discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

"It says you do not take taxpayer dollars and fire people just for being gay," Maloney said.

Maloney said last week's vote "snatched discrimination from the jaws of equality."

Earlier, the House voted 227-192 to block several federal agencies from retaliating against North Carolina over its law requiring transgender people to use the bathroom of their original sex.

That amendment, by Robert Pittenger, R-N.C., came in response to warnings from the Obama administration that it may take federal funding away from North Carolina in response to the state law that blocks certain protections for gay people.

"The President and his emissaries have stated ... that funds should not be dispensed to North Carolina until North Carolina is coerced into complying with the legal beliefs of the President, and his political views," Pittenger said. "This is an egregious abuse of executive power."

The North Carolina law was passed after Charlotte passed an ordinance allowing transgender people to use restrooms of their chosen gender identity. The state law went further to take away federal protections for gays, putting the state at risk of losing a variety of federal funds.

Top House Democrat Nancy Pelosi of California blasted Republicans as favoring discrimination against gays.

"Republicans overwhelmingly voted to support ... the hateful and discriminatory state law in North Carolina, and to enable anti-LGBT bigotry across our country," Pelosi said in a statement. "History will not look kindly on the votes Republicans proudly took to target Americans because of whom they are or whom they love."

Maloney's proposal had appeared on track to pass last week, peaking at 217-206 as an amendment to a veterans' spending bill.

But GOP leaders prevailed on seven Republicans to switch their votes, including California GOP Reps. Jeff Denham, Darrell Issa, Mimi Walters and David Valadao. Swing-district freshmen David Young, R-Iowa, and Bruce Poliquin, R-Maine, also switched positions on last week's vote. Each of them switched back Wednesday, joined by several other Republicans who opposed Maloney's plan last week.

The energy and water projects bill is the second spending bill for the upcoming budget year to come to the House floor.

Ban on LGBT discrimination finally clears House [Politico, [05/26/2016](http://www.politico.com/story/2016/05/ban-on-lgbt-discrimination-finally-clears-house-223593)]

Maloney attaches LGBT bill to Energy Bill, 43 Republicans vote in favor

The House late Wednesday night passed a spending bill amendment that would ban federal contractors who discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people, putting into law a 2014 executive order.

Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-N.Y.) had attempted to attach a similar amendment to a Veterans Affairs appropriations bill last week, but House Republican leaders held the vote open and persuaded enough members to change their votes to defeat the measure. But on Wednesday, Maloney's measure passed in a 223-195 vote as an amendment to an energy and water spending bill.

"Equality wins! We have a long way to go, but achieved big victory. Will keep fighting until every #LGBT American is safe, can pursue dreams," Maloney tweeted after the amendment passed.

The amendment earned Republican support when Maloney allowed Rep. Joe Pitts (R-Pa.) to add a line to the end saying, "except as required by the First Amendment, the Fourteenth Amendment, and Article I of the Constitution."

The addition would appear to be a way to create an exemption for people citing religious objections to the provisions. Maloney retorted that the House uses "the whole Constitution."

Republicans also promptly attached two amendments of their own offering support for a North Carolina law that requires people to use bathrooms according to their gender at birth. The amendment from Rep. Robert Pittenger (R-N.C.) would prevent the federal government from withholding funding as a way to punish North Carolina for the law, and another from Rep. Bradley Byrne (R-Ala.) supports religious exemptions.

The moves infuriated House Democrats. Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California said in a statement: "After Republicans worked so hard to defeat Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney’s anti-discrimination amendment last week, we are happy to see his amendment succeed in the Energy & Water bill. However, the success of the Maloney Amendment does not hide the reality that House Republicans have chosen to make enabling discrimination against LGBT Americans a top legislative priority."

The bill comes before the House on Thursday and must still be conferenced with the Senate measure.

From The Campaigns

Maloney celebrates passage of LGBT amendment [‏@RepSeanMaloney, 05/25/2016]

Equality wins! We have a long way to go, but achieved big victory. Will keep fighting until every #LGBT American is safe, can pursue dreams.

After all of the division last week, it's refreshing to see so many friends, colleagues from both sides of the aisle support equality.

LGBT Equality Caucus ‏@LGBTEqCaucus 12h12 hours ago

BREAKING: US House passes PRO-#LGBT amendment to Energy & Water approps sponsored by @RepSeanMaloney, with bipartisan vote! #wearewithyou

CA-26 Brownley

Local News

Former president of Camarillo Fiesta Association arrested for allegedly stealing from group [Ventura County Star, [05/26/2016](http://www.vcstar.com/news/courts/former-president-of-camarillo-fiesta-association-arrested-for-allegedly-stealing-from-group-33ada77b-380880781.html)]

Camarillo Fiesta association President arrested on embezzlement after anonymous tip to Brownley led to investigation

A former president of the Camarillo Fiesta Association was arrested Wednesday on suspicion of embezzling nearly $26,000 from the nonprofit, Ventura County District Attorney Greg Totten said Wednesday.

Robert Capellini surrendered to a district attorney's investigator about 1:30 p.m. and was booked at Ventura County Jail on two felony counts of grand theft by embezzlement. He remained in custody in lieu of $10,000 bail late Wednesday afternoon with a scheduled court appearance at 9 a.m. Thursday.

Prosecutors said Capellini stole the money between April 2014 and February 2015 by writing checks to himself from association accounts. The association receives some public funding from the city of Camarillo.

Special Assistant District Attorney Michael Schwartz said the charges, one for each year of the alleged theft, are punishable by up to three years and eight months in jail. Capellini could also face fines.

He was charged even though he has paid back most of the money.

He could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

"I'd just as soon put this thing behind me," he said last month.

After the alleged theft was discovered by the association's board in early 2015, board member Mike Morgan, the current mayor of Camarillo, said he brought it to the attention of sheriff's Cmdr. Monica McGrath, who is Camarillo's police chief.

McGrath in turn asked Morgan to provide her with documentation of the alleged embezzlement so a detective could determine whether a crime had been committed, she said. Morgan told her a short time later that the association board had decided not to pursue charges, choosing instead to make repayment arrangements with Capellini, she said.

Capellini has since repaid $21,000 and agreed to repay an additional $3,000, Totten said. If convicted, Capellini could also be ordered to make any remaining restitution.

Some board members have said they decided not to seek charges against Capellini because if he were convicted and jailed, he would not be able to repay the funds needed to plan the annual Camarillo Fiesta & Street Fair every summer.

One of the city's premier events, it draws tens of thousands of people and raises thousands of dollars for local nonprofit youth groups. Now in its 52nd year, this year's fiesta is scheduled for July 7-10.

"Although an unpopular decision to some, we feel we made the best decision," current board President Nathaniel Hunnicutt said in a letter to The Star this week.

But Totten was critical of the decision.

"Neither the victim nor any private citizen has the authority to decide whether to file criminal charges," he said in a news release. "The victim of a crime does not have the legal authority to immunize the perpetrator from criminal prosecution."

The return of embezzled property is not a defense to the crime but may be considered by the court in imposing sentence, Totten said.

"The district attorney has sole authority to institute and prosecute criminal cases," he said.

"Courts and the Legislature have recognized the essential public interest in protecting the public treasury and have imposed stringent standards upon those entrusted with the safekeeping and disbursement of those funds."

Schwartz said the prosecutor's office began investigating the alleged theft in March because of the city funding the association receives.

A former association board member, Cynthia Glass, has accused Morgan of trying to cover up the alleged theft to spare himself political embarrassment in his current run for the Ventura County Board of Supervisors.

Morgan is one of seven candidates running to succeed retiring county Supervisor Kathy Long in the 3rd District.

Morgan, as well as some other past and present board members, have denied there was an attempted cover-up.

The alleged embezzlement did not become public knowledge until this year when an anonymous letter was sent to Rep. Julia Brownley, D-Westlake Village, asking her to investigate. The Jan. 30 letter, written by someone who claims to be a longtime Camarillo City Hall employee, was received by others, too, including The Star.

Morgan said Wednesday that authorities could have arrested Capellini in 2015 after he brought the alleged embezzlement to their attention.

"They could have done the same thing when I first told them about it," he said.

"They're always trying to make the messenger the bad guy," Morgan said.

In investigating the alleged theft, the District Attorney's Office said it determined that Morgan did not have a financial conflict of interest in serving as both an association board member and a city councilman.

National News

From The Campaigns

WA-01 Delbene

Local News

National News

From The Campaigns

CO-03 Tipton

Local News

Republican senate, congressional races main attraction for June 28 primary election [Steamboat Today, [05/26/2016](http://www.steamboattoday.com/news/2016/may/25/republican-senate-congressional-races-main-attract/)]

Tipton has refused Beinstein’s request for a debate, Beinstein will not support Tipton if he wins

Registered voters in Routt County who wish to change their party affiliation in time for the June 28 election have until May 27 to do so at the Routt County Courthouse, 522 Lincoln Ave., in Steamboat Springs.

However, it’s a different story for registered, unaffiliated voters, who can wait as late as election day to declare their affiliation as either a Republican or Democrat, according to County Clerk Kim Bonner.

In the case of Colorado’s 2016 primary election, there might be more motivation for a Routt County Democrat to change affiliation to Republican than vice versa; Bonner confirmed there are no contested primary races on the Democratic ballot, while there are several contested races at the state level on the Republican primary ballot, including in the 3rd Congressional District, where political newcomer Alex Beinstein is challenging three-term incumbent Scott Tipton.

Beinstein, a 27-year-old Carbondale resident who earned a law degree from the University of Maine, forced the primary race by collecting 40.3 percent of the delegates at the Republican State Convention in April.

Tipton has largely ignored his primary opponent, focusing instead on his Democratic challenger in the November election, former state Sen. Gail Schwartz, of Crested Butte.

Beinstein said May 25 that 42 days had passed since his campaign initially reached out to Tipton’s campaign to arrange a debate, an effort that has yet to yield results. He said his sense is that Tipton’s unwillingness to debate has worked in his (Beinstein’s) favor, adding that, should Tipton prevail in the primary election, he would not support him.

There is also a lively race to determine which Republican candidate will earn the right to challenge Democratic U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet in the November election. They include El Paso County Commissioner Darryl Glenn, who was nominated by his party’s state convention with 70 percent of the delegates, and four more candidates who petitioned their way onto the ballot: Ryan L. Frazier, Robert Blaha, Jack Graham and Jon Keyser.

There is also a contested Republican primary race for the State Board of Education.

Eligible people who are not registered to vote may do so as late as election day, June 28, as long as they have lived in Routt County for 22 days. Unregistered people may also register online at govotecolorado.com or at the Routt County Clerk’s office. Voters who affiliated or changed affiliation for the primary may choose to reverse that step as soon as June 29, also at govotecolorado.

Ballots will be mailed to all eligible voters June 6.

Beinstein advocates for local government

Beinstein, who spoke to the Bears Ears Tea Party Patriots, characterized Tipton as a “placeholder for a lobbying firm” and an example of “crony capitalism.”

He added this week that, in general, he is for local control of public education and energy policy.

“I do believe in the principal that the more local government is, the better off things are,” Beinstein said. “It’s more accountable and efficient,” that way.

However, he does support the provisions of the Colorado school finance law that provide for property tax revenues collected in affluent school districts being redistributed to support public education in less affluent districts.

And Beinstein, who said he learned a great deal from employment as a service worker in a luxury Aspen hotel, is in favor of increasing the minimum wage.

National News

Latinos Warn Democrats Not To Get Too Cocky About Facing Trump [Huffington Post, [05/26/2016](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/donald-trump-latinos_us_57460d74e4b03ede4413b865)]

Dems mounting challenge in previously safe GOP districts with large Latino populations, like CO-03

Latinos has created opportunities for them in otherwise out-of-reach House districts.

WASHINGTON — The GOP’s imminent nomination of Donald Trump has inspired Democrats to suggest they could retake the House in November. But civic engagement organizations that work with Latinos are warning Democrats that they need to do more to secure their votes to win down-ballot races, even with a nominee at the top of the ticket who frequently says nasty things about them.

Latinos are the fastest-growing group of voters in the country, according to the Pew Research Center. The number of eligible Hispanic voters has grown 17 percent since 2012, to 27.3 million eligible voters in 2016. While Trump said at a rally Wednesday that “the Hispanics are liking Donald Trump,” polling has shown the opposite. Just 9 percent of those polled had a “very” or “somewhat” favorable opinion of Trump in a recent poll of voters in battleground states.

But Latino civic engagement groups warn that voters won’t automatically link the reality television star to other GOP candidates who are on the ballot.

“Trump has the potential of being a motivating factor,” said Arturo Vargas, executive director of the NALEO Education Fund, but “people need to be informed that there’s more than just the presidency on the ballot.”

“This is where voter mobilization, voter education, is so key,” he added. “If you want to get people to vote in down ballot races you have to invest resources in making sure people understand that, and what their choices are, and not just thinking that if they’re going to vote against Trump they’re going to get to the end of the ballot,” past the presidential candidates.

Rafael Collazo, the national political director for the National Council of La Raza’s Action Fund, echoed Vargas’ concerns.

“As much energy as there is, and as much commitment as there is in the work that we do around electoral organizing, there still is going to need to be investments made,” he said. “Rhetoric, and headlines, and the initial energy we’ve seen around naturalization and voter registration in the beginning of this year doesn’t mean anybody can take the Latino vote for granted.”

Democrats would need to capture 30 additional seats to gain a majority in the House, which is a tall order considering they gained just 21 seats when now-President Barack Obama beat Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) by seven points in 2008. (And that was before Republicans captured a slew of state legislatures in 2010, helping them dominate the redistricting process that year, which in turn made it easier for them to win elections.)

There are 32 districts with Republican incumbents listed on the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee’s “Red to Blue” program, which identifies promising candidates in races the committee believes can flip in November, within a broader pool of over 60 districts the DCCC is competing in this cycle. But “there are no new districts that magically came on our battlefield because of Donald Trump,” cautioned Meredith Kelly, the national press secretary for the DCCC.

“The 2010 redistricting created a limit to districts that are at all competitive for Democrats,” she added. “It is just not an ever-expanding battlefield. There are certainly districts where we have known that we had the potential to be successful and that had some core Democratic elements, and Trump has allowed us to land some high-level, exciting recruits in those districts. But he’s by no means the only factor.”

Those sorts of recruits include former Colorado state Sen. Gail Schwartz, who got into the race to unseat Republican Rep. Scott Tipton relatively late. Tipton, whose district is roughly a quarter Latino but who hasn’t faced a strong challenge in past election cycles, has said he would support Trump (though he “has not supported everything Donald Trump has said or done.”)

“We’ve talked to Gail Schwartz in the past and local Democrats have urged her to run before,” Kelly said. “She sensed that opportunity and there’s a reason she got in this year, but it doesn’t mean Colorado’s 3rd didn’t always have some of those important elements that make them competitive for us.”

Democrats hadn’t mounted as strong a challenge to Tipton in the past, even with its high proportion of Latinos, but that is changing this year, with the potential for his oppenent to go hard on Tipton’s Trump association. House Majority PAC, the super PAC backing Democrats, has reserved more than $130,000 worth of television ads in Grand Junction, and upped its investment in the Denver television market, to target Tipton and boost Schwartz.

Other House Republicans who may be vulnerable have done more to distance themselves from Trump. Rep. Carlos Curbelo of Florida, who has said he will not support the presumptive nominee, told CNN he was “grateful” that House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) has so far refrained from endorsing Trump. (Registered voters who are Latino make up 60 percent of Curbelo’s district.)

California Reps. Steve Knight and David Valadao — whose districts have 24 percent of registered voters who are Latino and 58 percent, respectively — have so far held off on endorsing Trump. (Knight seems to be in denial that Trump is going to be his party’s nominee.)

GOP Rep. Will Hurd (Texas) has said he won’t endorse Trump until he “shows he can respect women and minorities.” (Fifty-seven percent of registered voters in his district are Latino.) And Rep. Mike Coffman of Colorado, who represents a district where Latinos comprise 20 percent of registered voters, has said Trump “needs to change his tone” toward women, minorities and veterans to earn his support. This gives the candidates wiggle room to eventually endorse Trump if he starts to talk about people of color and women in a less hostile manner, but it won’t help them win over Latinos who fear Trump’s policy positions.

Other incumbents in potentially competitive districts haven’t been as hesitant about Trump. Jeff Denham, who represents a California district where over 27 percent of registered voters are Latino, has said he would support the Republican nominee. And Rep. Cresent Hardy (Nevada) has said that the businessman’s tone toward people of color doesn’t bother him. (Fifteen percent of registered voters in Hardy’s district are Latino.)

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton is already setting up a shadow general election campaign infrastructure in states like Nevada, Florida and Colorado. But Latino-oriented organizations are frustrated that resources for their voter engagement efforts are scarce outside those states, though only a quarter of the Latino electorate lives in the traditional presidential battleground states.

“I’ve been asked by funders, ‘Why are you spending your time in Texas and California? You should be working in Florida and Colorado and Nevada,’” said Vargas. “That’s where all the money is going, but half of my electorate lives in California and Texas,” he said.

“One of the reasons why we have such a challenge in Latino voter turnout is because those people are consistently ignored,” he continued. “We’re doing all we can on a shoestring budget, because we have virtually been abandoned by the funding community for our voter engagement work.”

Editor’s note: Donald Trump regularly incites political violence and is a serial liar, rampant xenophobe, racist, misogynist and birther who has repeatedly pledged to ban all Muslims — 1.6 billion members of an entire religion — from entering the U.S.

From The Campaigns

KS-03 Yoder

Local News

Democrats' internal poll shows tight race for Rep. Kevin Yoder but Republicans dismiss it [Topeka Capital-Journal, [05/26/2016](http://cjonline.com/news/2016-05-25/democrats-internal-poll-shows-tight-race-rep-kevin-yoder-republicans-dismiss-it)]

30% Democrat, 38% Yoder, & 23% Undecided. Survey also shows Clinton leads Trump in KS-03

U.S. Rep. Kevin Yoder, a Republican, faces challenges from his political left and right in 2016.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee claims an internal poll proves this year’s 3rd District congressional race will be tight, but Kansas Republicans have dismissed the survey as shoddy.

The poll of 536 likely general election voters in the eastern Kansas district found 39 percent favored an unnamed Democratic candidate, 38 percent favored U.S. Rep. Kevin Yoder and 23 percent were undecided.

The poll was conducted March 21-22, according to a DCCC official, and used both live surveyors and automated robo-calls.

Yoder, a Republican, faces one primary challenger and several Democratic challengers for a district national Democrats have targeted in hopes that Donald Trump’s presence on the November ballot will push independents and moderate Republicans to vote Democrat.

The DCCC poll found 32 percent of Yoder’s constituents approve of the job he is doing, 32 percent disapprove and 36 percent are unsure.

In the presidential race, 37 percent of those polled favor Democrat Hillary Clinton, 28 percent favor Trump and 28 percent are undecided, according to the poll.

However, there are reasons to be skeptical of the results. The poll was conducted internally by the DCCC and not an independent pollster, has a relatively small sample size and is 2 months old. The margin of error is 4.2 percent, according to the DCCC.

“This is not a poll. A poll has a pollster and publishes its methodology,” said Travis Smith, a Yoder consultant and the congressman’s former chief of staff. “Whatever this is, it’s wildly inaccurate, and anyone who believes it to be true is being horribly misled.”

Cate Duerst, Yoder’s campaign manager, said the congressman “is well-suited to win again in November.”

“Congressman Yoder is not focused on polling, let alone skewed polls being pushed by Washington Democrats,” she said.

Clay Barker, executive director of the Kansas Republican Party, called public polls like the DCCC’s “more drama than substance.”

Barker said the Kansas GOP has conducted its own polls but won’t be releasing the results or publicizing them. He criticized the media for its coverage of “wildly inaccurate” surveys of statewide races in recent years.

Tyler Law, a spokesman for the DCCC, said the poll should worry the Yoder campaign.

“The idea that Congressman Yoder is not in serious danger of losing his re-election is pure fantasy,” Law said. “After an entire career in politics, he clearly does not resonate with a large portion of his constituents — in no small part to Republicans and independents recognizing that the Yoder-Brownback agenda has been a disaster.”

Three Democrats — Jay Sidie, Reggie Marselus and Nathaniel McLaughlin — are vying for the chance to challenge Yoder, who also faces a primary challenge from Republican Greg Goode, of Louisburg.

Sidie, who announced last week he will run, is the candidate of choice for the DCCC. He owns Counterpunch Financial, an investment firm in Mission Woods.

Yoder, meanwhile, will launch his re-election campaign with a picnic in Overland Park on June 5. U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy, R-S.C., is scheduled to attend, according to Yoder’s campaign.

Yoder was first elected to Congress in 2010 and has walked a relatively smooth path in congressional races. He won the 2010 race by 20 percentage points, didn’t face a Democratic challenger in 2012 and won re-election in 2014 by 20 points over former state Sen. Kelly Kultala.

Congress should keep trying to pass Kelsey Smith Act (LTE) [The Wichita Eagle, [05/25/2016](http://www.kansas.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/now-consider-this/article79645017.html)]

Letter urges Congress to reconsider Yoder bill requiring telecom companies to provide information to law enforcement in emergencies

The Kelsey Smith Act, named for the victim of a Kansas murder, fell short of the needed two-thirds procedural vote Monday in the U.S. House, with Kansas Reps. Mike Pompeo, Lynn Jenkins and Kevin Yoder voting “yes” and Rep. Tim Huelskamp not voting.

The Kelsey Smith Act, named for the victim of a Kansas murder, fell short of the needed two-thirds procedural vote Monday in the U.S. House, with Reps. Mike Pompeo, R-Wichita; Lynn Jenkins, R-Topeka; and Kevin Yoder, R-Overland Park; voting “yes” and Rep. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler/Hutchinson, not voting

. The surprising defeat for House leadership reflected representatives’ concern about privacy and police power. But the bill’s focus is narrow, requiring companies to quickly provide cellphone location data to law enforcement in emergency situations. The best argument for passage is what might have been if it hadn’t taken police four days to obtain cellphone data after the Overland Park teenager was kidnapped in 2007.

Yoder, who sponsored the legislation, said: “I look forward to the bill being brought back to (the) House floor when a simple majority vote can get it passed.” Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., has reintroduced a similar Senate measure, which mirrors laws passed by more than 20 states including Kansas. – Rhonda Holman

Kansas Democrats push to keep members from jumping to GOP to vote for moderates [Topeka Capital-Journal, [05/26/2016]](http://cjonline.com/news/2016-05-25/kansas-democrats-push-keep-members-jumping-gop-vote-moderates)

KA Dems urging members to stay in party in order to get more national resources for races like KS-03

Democrats are mounting an aggressive effort to keep their members from defecting to the GOP, worried some will jump ship to vote in hotly contested Republican races this August.

The Johnson County Democratic Party has released a barrage of videos, statements and letters urging Democrats to remain Democrats. The party argues that leaving will harm its ability to identify and recruit candidates and, ultimately, make electing Democrats more difficult.

The retention push in one of the state’s most populous counties comes amid dissatisfaction with the Legislature that has prompted a wave of moderate Republicans to challenge sitting GOP lawmakers in the August primary. This battle is perhaps most acute in the suburban Kansas City, Kan., area of Johnson County.

The Democratic Party worries the temptation to switch parties and tip the scales in favor of moderate GOP candidates will be high. Ahead of the June 1 deadline to switch party affiliations, Democrats are making the case for why voters should remain with them.

“If you’ve been paying any attention to what’s been happening over the past six years, you know we need a strong opposition party more than ever. But in recent election years, the myth that it’s a good idea for Democrats to register as Republicans to vote in the Republican primaries has gained popularity,” Tucker Poling, vice chair of the Johnson County Democratic Party, said in a video aimed at Democrats.

Democrats in Johnson County are telling their members that voting for moderates isn’t working. They argue that moderates in the Legislature over the past two years haven’t been able to block actions by conservative members or block conservatives from taking legislative leadership roles. They also have told their members that during the past three election cycles, a moderate Republican has been unable to oust a conservative elected official.

The county party has said that party-switching discourages national resources from coming into the state to aid Democrats. The issue of national resources is particularly sensitive at the moment as national Democrats hope to unseat U.S. Rep. Kevin Yoder, R-Kan., in the fall. Yoder represents suburban Kansas City, Kan.

Democrats point to their long-term viability in attempting to sway voters to stay. In the past 40 years, Democrats have served as governor about half the time. Democrat Paul Davis came close to unseating Republican Gov. Sam Brownback in 2014; Brownback won the election but garnered less than 50 percent of the vote.

Party-switching may hamper Democrats’ organizational ability and mobilization efforts, said Patrick Miller, a political science professor at the University of Kansas. But he expressed skepticism that changing affiliation translates into real effects on Election Day.

People who switch parties probably aren’t casual, semi-attentive voters, Miller argued. He said he is skeptical of claims that switchers won’t show up to vote in the general election.

“If someone is engaged and cares enough and is knowledgeable enough to be so calculating that they think even though they’re a Democrat, they’re going to register as a Republican and go strategically vote in the Republican primary — you know, that’s someone who is probably doing that because they have their party’s interest in mind or they’re wanting more moderate legislators,” Miller said. “This is someone who’s probably not going to stay home in November.”

For its part, the Republican Party is discouraging Democrats from switching for the sole purpose of voting in the primary. Kansas GOP director Clay Barker said affiliating with a party to only vote in its primary is unethical.

The political system only works, he argued, when people affiliate with the part that best represents their political philosophy. Parties are private groups comprised of people with common beliefs who try to elect members into office, Barker said, adding that people should be in the party with which they most agree.

Barker called working against party-switching a “smart strategy” for Democrats. Democrats know they need to build their own structure up to what it was between the 1960s and 1980s under former Govs. Bob Docking and John Carlin and party chairman Norbert Dreiling, known as the “father of Democratic politics” in Kansas.

“The ‘fusion strategy’ — relying on or trying to elect the other party’s candidates may be a short term stop-gap solution but is long-term political suicide,” Barker wrote in an email.

Huelskamp says he would have voted for Kelsey Smith Act [The Hutchinson News, [05/25/2016](http://www.hutchnews.com/news/elections/huelskamp-says-he-would-have-voted-for-kelsey-smith-act/article_025abd59-9a54-5830-81a7-573d721c3cda.html)]

Huelskamp missed vote on Yoder’s telecom bill that fell short

FILE - Rep. Tim Huelskamp answers a variety of questions during his town hall meeting held upstairs in the Hutchinson Public Library Wednesday morning, August 26, 2015.

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler/Hutchinson, was the only Kansan in the U.S. House of Representatives who did not vote Monday for fellow Kansas lawmaker Rep. Kevin Yoder's Kelsey Smith Act, which failed.

Huelskamp was not present and was among 46 members of the U.S. House of Representatives who did not vote. On Tuesday, Huelskamp said he would have voted for it.

"I voted for the Kelsey Smith Act in the Kansas Senate in 2009. Unfortunately, a family obligation prevented me from voting for it again in the U.S. House," Huelskamp said.

Smith was an Overland Park teenager abducted from a Target parking lot June 2, 2007, and discovered dead later by a lake in Missouri. A search was mounted after her disappearance, and the death led to legislation in states to force cell phone service providers to share information with authorities. This federal bill would require providers to give call location information to authorities conducting investigations "in an emergency situation involving risk of death or serious physical injury or in order to respond to the user's call for emergency services."

Yoder, R-Overland Park, introduced the Kelsey Smith Act in March. Three co-sponsors lined up: Reps. Lynn Jenkins, R-Topeka, Mike Pompeo, R-Wichita, and Emanuel Cleaver, D-Kansas City, Missouri.

On Monday, Yoder sought to suspend the rules and pass the bill. Because of the rules of debate, the motion required a two-thirds majority vote. The result was 229 in favor, 158 opposed. The other three Kansans in the House - Yoder, Jenkins and Pompeo - voted aye, but the majority vote was not great enough for the bill to pass.

“It’s clear the Kelsey Smith Act has the support of the majority of the House of Representatives. While I’m disappointed in Monday’s outcome, I look forward to the bill being brought back to the House floor when a simple majority vote can get it passed," Yoder said in a statement after the vote.

A Yoder spokesman said they expected the Kelsey Smith Act to be brought back for a vote "soon."

There also was a second roll call vote Monday, on Securing Access to Networks in Disasters Act. It sailed through the House with only two no votes. Forty-two lawmakers including Huelskamp, did not vote on that measure. Huelskamp said he would have voted for it.

National News

From The Campaigns