

NYC 2025 Mayoral Election

Primary Recap and General Election Outlook



September 25, 2025

Created For AARP NY

 By Gotham Polling & Analytics, LLC.



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## Executive Summary

AARP New York engaged Gotham Polling & Analytics to produce a research brief examining voter registration and turnout dynamics in the 2025 New York City mayoral primary, with emphasis on generational patterns and their implications for the upcoming general election. Drawing on official Board of Elections data and L2 voter files, the analysis tracks first-time voters, new registrants, and turnout trends across the 2017, 2021, and 2025 cycles. The results point to an unprecedented surge of under-50 participation in 2025, overturning the long-standing dominance of voters age 50+, and raising key questions about whether this youth-driven shift is a one-time anomaly or a lasting realignment in New York City politics.

## Key Takeaways

* **Youth Surge Delivers Upset Primary Victory:** In the June Democratic primary, 33-year-old Assemblyman Zohran Mamdani scored a stunning win, powered by an unprecedented surge in younger voters. For the first time in recent memory for any primary election, under-50 voters actually comprised a **majority (51%) of Democratic primary turnout**, up from just 41% in 2021. Meanwhile, the share of voters age 50+ fell below half – a dramatic departure from past NYC elections where older voters dominate. An Election Day heat wave (nearly 100°F) may have **suppressed older turnout** while Mamdani’s youthful base braved the heat in force[[1]](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/more-than-830000-new-yorkers-vote-in-mayoral-primary-amid-blistering-heat/#:~:text=Temperatures%20soar%20to%20around%20100%C2%B0F,in%20the%20city%20since%202012).
* **Mamdani Leads a Fractured Field:** As the race turns to November, Mamdani holds a **commanding lead** in a five-way general election contest – but with only pluralistic support. A AARP/Gotham poll conducted in August finds **Mamdani at 41.8%**, well ahead of former Governor Andrew **Cuomo (23.4%)**, Republican Curtis **Sliwa (16.5%)**, incumbent Mayor Eric **Adams (8.8%)**, and others[[2]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=EN%20ESPA%C3%91OL%20,undecided). Mamdani’s ~42% “hard floor” reflects a loyal progressive base, but also a **firm ceiling below a majority** in this deep-blue city[[3]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CMamdani%20sits%20on%20a%20hard,and%20Analytics%20President%20Stephen%20Graves). Nearly 58% of voters prefer **“Anyone-But-Mamdani,”** split among three high-profile rivals. This fractured opposition currently enables Mamdani to lead with well under half the vote[[2]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=EN%20ESPA%C3%91OL%20,undecided).
* **Older Voters Could Tip the Balance:** Although Mamdani maintains an edge in every scenario tested, **voters age 50+ emerge as the potential kingmakers**. In a hypothetical head-to-head matchup with Cuomo (all other candidates dropped), Mamdani’s lead shrinks to 11 points (42% to 31%)[[4]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=%2A%20Head,to%2031.0), with fully **27% of voters still undecided**. Crucially, nearly **eight in ten of those undecideds are over age 50**[[5]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=In%20a%20head,the%20balance%20of%20the%20race). This older, mostly moderate bloc could swing decisively – they are the voters most skeptical of the young insurgent and most resistant to him in polls. If they break heavily against Mamdani, and if older adults return to their usual high turnout levels (historically 60%+ of NYC general electorates[[6]](file:///%5C%5Cfile-LQYXo3XAk8dp16EWAYyVWy#:~:text=,of%20voters)), the dynamic shifts dramatically. **Internal modeling suggests that if 50+ voters make up ~56% or more of November’s voters (closer to normal levels) – and consolidate behind a single opponent – Mamdani could actually be vulnerable to an upset.** Conversely, if the youth-driven turnout patterns of the primary persist, Mamdani remains the clear favorite.
* **High Stakes and Pressure to Consolidate:** These findings upend the assumption that a Democrat is automatically safe in NYC’s general election. They indicate a **plausible (if challenging) path for a centrist challenger to defeat Mamdani**, a scenario few anticipated. Such an outcome would reverberate nationally. Expect growing pressure on trailing candidates to **unify the anti-Mamdani vote**. Indeed, Cuomo has openly urged that any contender not leading by early fall should drop out and back the runner-up[[7]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=Mamdani%20%E2%80%94%20a%20democratic%20socialist,up). (So far Adams and Sliwa **refuse to bow out**[[8]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=leading%20in%20September%20drops%20out,up).) The prospect of a divided field handing City Hall to a far-left nominee may spur last-minute dealmaking. According to reports, Trump advisers have even floated offering Mayor Adams a job in a future administration if he quit the race to boost Cuomo’s chances[[9]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=independents). In short, New York’s normally predictable mayoral general election has become **an unprecedented wildcard**, with older voters poised to play the decisive role.

## The Primary Upset: Youth Voters vs. the Heat and the Machine

New York City’s 2025 Democratic mayoral primary produced a political earthquake. Zohran Mamdani, a little-known 33-year-old democratic assemblyman, defeated former Governor Andrew Cuomo and a broad field of candidates to become the Democratic nominee[[10]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=The%20most%20influential%20political%20figures,lead%20over%20his%20nearest%20challenger)[[11]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=Kathy%20Hochul%20%2C%20the%20New,with%20him%20on%20every%20issue%E2%80%9D). Mamdani’s victory was powered by **an extraordinary turnout wave of young voters**, which swamped the traditional dominance of older voters in NYC elections. Typically, New York primaries (especially local ones) are dominated by the 50-plus electorate – for instance, **in 2024’s statewide primaries, 71% of Democratic voters were age 50 or older**[[12]](file:///%5C%5Cfile-LQYXo3XAk8dp16EWAYyVWy#:~:text=4,2024). But Mamdani flipped that script. According to official Board of Elections tallies, **under-50 voters actually accounted for about 51% of all Democratic mayoral primary votes in 2025**, while 50+ voters fell to ~49%. (By contrast, in the last open mayoral primary in 2021, nearly 59% of Democratic primary voters were over 50.)

Several factors have likely driven this unprecedented youth turnout. Mamdani’s campaign, inspired by progressive figures like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, **ignited enthusiasm among younger New Yorkers**, registering new voters and mobilizing communities that often sit out local elections[[13]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=%E2%80%9CHe%20was%20in%20the%20polls%2C,Mamdani%20had%20to%20his%20campaign). At the same time, the primary was held amid a **brutal heat wave** – temperatures hit 100°F, the city’s hottest day since 2012[[1]](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/more-than-830000-new-yorkers-vote-in-mayoral-primary-amid-blistering-heat/#:~:text=Temperatures%20soar%20to%20around%20100%C2%B0F,in%20the%20city%20since%202012). Polling suggested that Mamdani’s base of younger voters would brave the heat (“expected to turn out... at higher numbers”), whereas older voters were more likely to stay home for health and comfort[[14]](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/more-than-830000-new-yorkers-vote-in-mayoral-primary-amid-blistering-heat/#:~:text=The%20heat%20has%20played%20a,the%20heat%20at%20higher%20numbers). Indeed, then-candidate Cuomo **pushed for bottled water and air-conditioned polling sites** to accommodate his older supporters in the heat[[15]](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/more-than-830000-new-yorkers-vote-in-mayoral-primary-amid-blistering-heat/#:~:text=younger%2C%20according%20to%20polling%2C%20and,the%20heat%20at%20higher%20numbers). These efforts were only partially successful. Turnout increased overall – over **1.07 million voted in the primaries** (exceeding the 2021 primary turnout)[[16]](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/more-than-830000-new-yorkers-vote-in-mayoral-primary-amid-blistering-heat/#:~:text=Turnout%20is%20set%20to%20be,than%201%20million%20voters%20participated) – but the *composition* skewed much younger than usual, to Mamdani’s clear advantage. Bottom line, is that there were **146k more under-50 voters than in 2021 and 39k fewer over-50, a total delta of 185k voters.**

  The two bar charts show how this generational surge materialized: first-time Democratic primary voters under 50 exploded to nearly 46,000 in 2025 (almost all newly registered), tripling the 2021 level and far surpassing earlier cycles, while first-time participation among those 50+ actually declined. Similarly, new registrations in the 12 months leading up to the primary rebounded sharply from their 2021 dip, climbing back above 120,000—with the vast majority under 50. In other words, the surge of young registrants was not just a paper increase but translated into real turnout. This is the “how” behind the 185,000 net delta noted above: 146,000 more under-50s casting ballots compared to 2021, offset by 39,000 fewer over-50s.

Looking more closely at those ~130,000 who registered between late 2024 and the 2025 primary, the file shows that only about 80,000 enrolled as Democrats. Both major parties actually lost share compared to prior cycles: Republicans accounted for just over 9,000 new registrants (7%), while the fastest growth came from independents and non-partisan voters, who made up nearly 30%. The pie chart above illustrates this distribution—roughly **62% Democratic, 29% Independent, 7% Republican, and 2% Other**. Importantly, L2 also tracks which of these new registrants turned out in the primary. The Democratic registrants who did participate skewed heavily younger, while independents tended to be only slightly older. Taken together, these dynamics suggest that the youth-heavy registration wave was a critical driver of the 2025 primary’s unusual composition.

**Bottom line:** while younger Democrats carried the surge in primary turnout, the fact that independents make up an ever-larger share of new registrants signals that the long-term electorate may not remain as lopsidedly Democratic. For 2025, however, it was the infusion of younger Democratic registrants converting into first-time votes that delivered the historic 185,000-voter generational swing.

Mamdani ultimately secured the nomination through NYC’s ranked-choice voting (RCV) system. He led first-choice votes with roughly 44% to Cuomo’s 36%, a gap of 82k vote and was able to win decisively in the final round of counting[[3]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CMamdani%20sits%20on%20a%20hard,and%20Analytics%20President%20Stephen%20Graves)[[13]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=%E2%80%9CHe%20was%20in%20the%20polls%2C,Mamdani%20had%20to%20his%20campaign). (Adams was eliminated and Cuomo, who had entered the Democratic primary late, finished as runner-up in the RCV tally – Mamdani beat Cuomo by double digits after transfers, according to campaign accounts[[3]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CMamdani%20sits%20on%20a%20hard,and%20Analytics%20President%20Stephen%20Graves)[[10]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=The%20most%20influential%20political%20figures,lead%20over%20his%20nearest%20challenger).) Mamdani’s primary coalition combined **younger progressives, renters, and many voters of color**. Notably, he carried or tied for first among **Black, Hispanic, and Asian Democratic voters** in the city – each of those groups gave him ~45–48% support, reflecting broad multiracial appeal[[17]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=The%20survey%20shows%20that%20Mamdani,voters). However, he struggled with some older and more conservative Democratic constituencies, particularly white ethnic voters and pro-Israel Jewish Democrats. (Cuomo, for instance, led among Jewish voters in the primary and continues to do so – 38% of Jewish voters prefer Cuomo in polling, vs 22% for Mamdani[[18]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=demographic%20groups,voters).)

The primary results rattled the city’s political establishment. Mamdani, a democratic socialist and member of the DSA, is generally considered to be left of the party machine. Republican leaders immediately seized on his win to paint Democrats as extreme[[19]](https://apnews.com/article/zohran-mamdani-nyc-mayor-election-cuomo-59f6a66cd40d4c2b750fdfd06a4f5da1#:~:text=President%20Donald%20Trump%20calls%20him,New%20York%20City%20more%20affordable)[[20]](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/mamdanis-stunning-upset-new-yorks-democratic-mayoral-primary-carries-risks-2025-06-26/#:~:text=Mamdani%27s%20stunning%20upset%20carries%20risks%2C,The%20reactions%20underscore%20both). Meanwhile, many prominent Democrats offered only tepid support. Well into September, New York’s top Democratic officials had been slow to endorse Mamdani[[10]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=The%20most%20influential%20political%20figures,lead%20over%20his%20nearest%20challenger). Governor Kathy Hochul eventually endorsed him in mid-September, stressing she isn’t “aligned with him on every issue”[[21]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=Kathy%20Hochul%20%2C%20the%20New,with%20him%20on%20every%20issue%E2%80%9D). This hesitation by centrist Democrats underscores how Mamdani’s win disrupted the usual party unity: the *Democratic establishment’s* older, moderate base largely did not vote for him in the primary, and some remain uneasy about fully embracing the nominee[[10]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=The%20most%20influential%20political%20figures,lead%20over%20his%20nearest%20challenger)[[22]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=Some%20believe%20there%20are%20political,beneficial%20for%20the%20Republican%20party).

In summary, the June primary revealed a generational fault line in NYC politics. Mamdani’s insurgent campaign demonstrated that under the right conditions (inspiration of a bold progressive candidate + favorable turnout factors), younger voters *can* overwhelm the typically decisive older vote. However, that primary electorate might not mirror the general election electorate – which historically skews older and more moderate. The question heading into November is whether Mamdani’s youthful coalition will hold up, or if the city’s more reliable older voters will reassert themselves to check his left-wing momentum.

## General Election Landscape: Mamdani vs. “the Field”

The November general election ballot will feature five candidates for mayor:

* **Zohran Mamdani (Democrat):** The Democratic nominee and de facto frontrunner. A 33-year-old democratic socialist from Queens, running on a platform of housing-for-all, free public transit, and taxing the ultra-wealthy. Mamdani has energized young progressives but faces skepticism from moderates. Republicans are actively demonizing him as a radical[[23]](https://apnews.com/article/zohran-mamdani-nyc-mayor-election-cuomo-59f6a66cd40d4c2b750fdfd06a4f5da1#:~:text=match%20at%20L1852%20President%20Donald,New%20York%20City%20more%20affordable)), hoping to peel centrist voters away from the Democratic line.
* **Andrew Cuomo (Independent):** Former NY Governor (and lifelong Democrat until this race) running as an independent under the “Forward NYC” banner. At 67, Cuomo appeals to many older and moderate Democratic voters uneasy with Mamdani. He touts his experience and more centrist policies (and pointedly contrasts his pro-Israel stance to Mamdani’s criticism of Israel[[24]](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/more-than-830000-new-yorkers-vote-in-mayoral-primary-amid-blistering-heat/#:~:text=Polls%20show%20that%20the%20two,a%20state%20assemblymember%20from%20Queens)). Cuomo has considerable name recognition and a core base, but also high negatives from the 2021 sexual harassment scandal that ended his governorship. The AARP/Gotham poll shows Cuomo firmly in **second place with ~23%** support citywide[[2]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=EN%20ESPA%C3%91OL%20,undecided) – the strongest of Mamdani’s challengers.
* **Curtis Sliwa (Republican):** The Republican nominee (again) and founder of the Guardian Angels. Sliwa, 69, is running on a law-and-order, anti-crime message. He has a devoted following in parts of the city (he won ~28% in the 2021 general against Adams) and solid support among Republicans – the AARP/Gotham poll finds Sliwa wins half of registered GOP voters in the city[[25]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20poll%2C%20Mamdani,splitting%20much%20of%20the%20remainder). However, Republicans make up only ~11% of NYC’s electorate, and Sliwa’s overall poll number (~16.5%[[2]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=EN%20ESPA%C3%91OL%20,undecided)) reflects that ceiling. Sliwa is a factor mainly to the extent he pulls votes from the anti-Mamdani pool that might otherwise go to a more moderate alternative like Cuomo. He has thus far refused calls to drop out or endorse Cuomo, insisting he will stay in the race[[8]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=leading%20in%20September%20drops%20out,up).
* **Eric Adams (Independent):** The incumbent Mayor, who decided not to run in the Democratic primary, opted to continue his campaign as an independent (on the “Support Our City” line). Adams, 63, retains some support in Black and Latino communities and among older Democratic voters who credit him for reducing crime. But his base has eroded significantly after the primary loss and various City Hall controversies. In the poll, **Adams draws only about 9%** of voters[[2]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=EN%20ESPA%C3%91OL%20,undecided) – a distant fourth place. He thus risks functioning as a spoiler for Cuomo in the general. (Notably, Adams and Cuomo compete for many of the same moderate Democratic voters.) Adams too has rejected the notion of withdrawing, despite pressure from Cuomo’s camp[[7]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=Mamdani%20%E2%80%94%20a%20democratic%20socialist,up). However, behind the scenes, discussions continue about uniting the “Stop Mamdani” forces – including extraordinary rumors like the Trump team’s reported overture promising Adams a federal job if he exited to help Cuomo[[9]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=independents). For now, Adams remains in, stressing that the campaign is young and he has “energy on the ground” to mount a comeback in the weeks that remain[[26]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=In%20a%20statement%2C%20Adams%E2%80%99%20campaign,doubt%20on%20the%20survey%E2%80%99s%20accuracy).
* **Jim Walden (Independent):** A little-known attorney and civic activist running an independent campaign. Walden was polling at ~1–2%[[2]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=EN%20ESPA%C3%91OL%20,undecided) before he suspended his campaign in August. Yet, because of the election rules, his name will still appear on the ballot as will any other candidate above who may drop out in the future – not a significant factor except that every sliver counts in a close race.

**Polling snapshot:** According to the mid-August AARP New York/Gotham Polling survey of 1,376 likely voters, Mamdani is **in first with 41.8%** of the vote – a strong **plurality** but not a majority[[2]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=EN%20ESPA%C3%91OL%20,undecided). Cuomo is the runner-up at 23.4%, Sliwa has 16.5%, Adams 8.8%, Walden 1.4%, and about 7.9% of voters remain undecided[[2]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=EN%20ESPA%C3%91OL%20,undecided). Subsequent polls by other organizations have reported similar numbers, and together underscore a few key points:

* **Mamdani’s Ceiling:** Roughly **3 in 5 New Yorkers are *not* currently supporting Mamdani**. His 42% is impressive for a progressive Democrat in NYC, but it also represents a possible ceiling in a city where many moderates, conservatives, and even some traditional Democrats harbor reservations about him. Gotham Polling President Stephen Graves observes that Mamdani “sits on a hard floor around 40%” – meaning his base is solid – *but* likely “has a firm ceiling below a majority”[[3]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CMamdani%20sits%20on%20a%20hard,and%20Analytics%20President%20Stephen%20Graves). In other words, he may have maxed out his appeal among the current electorate; the remaining voters are either undecided or prefer someone else.
* **Opposition Split:** The ~**58% “anti-Mamdani” majority is splintered** among three well-known rivals. Each appeals to a different constituency: Cuomo to moderate Democrats (especially older ones and some in the Jewish community)[[17]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=The%20survey%20shows%20that%20Mamdani,voters), Sliwa to Republicans and conservative-leaning independents, and Adams to a segment of centrist Democrats and some minority community voters. The poll confirms Mamdani actually leads (albeit narrowly) *within* almost every demographic subgroup – he even edges out others among Black, Hispanic, and Asian voters, and ties with Cuomo among white voters[[17]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=The%20survey%20shows%20that%20Mamdani,voters). This suggests his opposition is not concentrated in one bloc but rather diffused. **The one exception is age:** Mamdani’s support skews much younger, while **his opponents’ support (especially Cuomo’s and Sliwa’s) skews heavily older**. For example, **nearly 80% of Cuomo’s voters are age 50 or above**, compared to roughly 48% of Mamdani’s voters[[5]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=In%20a%20head,the%20balance%20of%20the%20race). (Mamdani’s base is about half under-50, half over-50, whereas Cuomo’s base is four-fifths over-50.) Likewise, Sliwa’s supporters are roughly 78% age 50+. Adams’ supporters fall in between (about 60% over 50). This age polarization is critical, and we explore it more below.
* **Dissatisfaction with City Direction:** It’s worth noting the broader mood – only 9% of NYC voters think the city is “headed in the right direction” in this poll, while a majority say it’s on the wrong track[[27]](https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/voter-research/politics/new-york-city-mayoral-poll-2025/#:~:text=Voters%20express%20significant%20dissatisfaction%20with,very%20pessimistic). Top concerns are **affordability, housing, and public safety**[[28]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=Majority%20Of%20Voters%20Say%20City,Housing%2C%20and%20Safety%20Top%20Concerns). This angst provides fertile ground for an outsider challenge. Mamdani’s message is that bold progressive policies are needed to fix these issues; his opponents argue his ideas (e.g. city-run grocery stores, higher taxes) are too extreme and would backfire[[29]](https://apnews.com/article/zohran-mamdani-nyc-mayor-election-cuomo-59f6a66cd40d4c2b750fdfd06a4f5da1#:~:text=match%20at%20L1890%20Perhaps%20nowhere,%E2%80%9Cdrag%20us%20down%20a%20path). The overall discontent means voters are looking for solutions, and many remain persuadable.

In sum, the general election race begins with Mamdani as a **strong frontrunner** due to the fractured opposition. However, his inability to crack 50% in any poll so far leaves an opening – *if* the other candidates or voting blocs can somehow coalesce.

## The Pivotal Role of 50+ Voters

If the primary was about *young* voters reshaping the electorate, the general election may well be about the enduring influence of *older* voters. Historically, voters age 50 and up dominate New York City’s general elections. For example, in the last mayoral race (2021), about **63% of voters in the general election were age 50+**[[6]](file:///%5C%5Cfile-LQYXo3XAk8dp16EWAYyVWy#:~:text=,of%20voters). Even higher shares were recorded in earlier midterm cycles (NYC’s 2017 mayoral general saw ~59% over-50, and statewide midterms like 2022 saw 62–72% over-50 turnout[[6]](file:///%5C%5Cfile-LQYXo3XAk8dp16EWAYyVWy#:~:text=,of%20voters)[[12]](file:///%5C%5Cfile-LQYXo3XAk8dp16EWAYyVWy#:~:text=4,2024)). These older New Yorkers are the city’s most reliable voters, showing up in disproportionate numbers, especially in low-turnout elections.

In 2025, there is every reason to expect a reversion toward an older electorate in November. The general election will presumably draw many infrequent voters who skipped the primary – and historically, those late-engaging voters skew older. Furthermore, November weather will be cooler, and the stakes of a Democrat vs. Republican/Independent contest are clearer to traditional voters, which should motivate the 50+ crowd to turn out strongly (especially those who might be alarmed by a left-wing Democrat leading the ticket). **All campaigns are keenly aware that the 50+ will likely be the deciders in November.** As AARP New York’s primary election analysis bluntly stated: older voters “remain the most engaged and influential voting segment” – they *always* show up[[30]](file:///%5C%5Cfile-LQYXo3XAk8dp16EWAYyVWy#:~:text=suggesting%20a%20shift%20in%20political,engaged%20and%20influential%20voting%20segment)[[31]](file:///%5C%5Cfile-LQYXo3XAk8dp16EWAYyVWy#:~:text=50%20years%20old%2C%20but%20older,age%2050). Even Mamdani’s team, which excelled with youth, knows it must court older voters for November.

Current polling underscores both the challenge and opportunity the 50+ bloc presents:

* **Older Voters Lean Away From Mamdani:** In the full five-way race, Mamdani’s support is strongest among younger voters, while the **50+ voters largely prefer someone else.** Although detailed cross-tabs haven’t been fully released publicly, we know Mamdani captured over **50% of voters under 50** in the poll (he’s extremely popular with the under-35 group especially), but far less than 50% of those over 50. In fact, internal data show Cuomo actually *leads* Mamdani among voters aged 65+ in a head-to-head scenario, and runs roughly even among those 50-64, even as Mamdani dominates the under-35 vote. This age gap is apparent in the undecided pool as well: as noted, the **undecided voters in a Mamdani–Cuomo matchup are almost 80% age 50 or older**[[32]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=In%20this%20matchup%20%E2%80%94%20with,5) – i.e. most younger voters already picked a side (largely Mamdani), whereas many older voters are holding out, uncertain whom to support. These older undecideds are precisely the moderates and traditionalists who are wary of Mamdani but not yet sold on an alternative.
* **Return of the “Gray” Electorate:** If the age turnout patterns normalize closer to historical levels in November, the electorate will include a **much larger proportion of 50+ voters** than we saw in the anomalous primary. The AARP/Gotham poll’s likely voter model already anticipates a somewhat older electorate than the primary – but perhaps not fully to 2017/2021 levels. (The poll’s sample was about 55% age 50+, according to the weighting data, reflecting an assumption of higher youth engagement than usual.) But what if that’s wrong? **If older voters end up comprising 60%+ of the electorate on Election Day, Mamdani’s path gets rockier.** As Gotham’s Stephen Graves points out, NYC general elections are typically “low-turnout, older electorates,” which historically favor more center-left candidates[[3]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CMamdani%20sits%20on%20a%20hard,and%20Analytics%20President%20Stephen%20Graves). Mamdani, as a self-described socialist, does not fit that mold – but Cuomo very much does. It’s notable that **Cuomo’s campaign strategy explicitly centers on older voters**: he has been visiting senior centers, emphasizing public safety and property taxes, and reminding longtime Democrats of his experience. Similarly, Sliwa’s base (though smaller citywide) is almost entirely older voters (many of whom are ethnic white seniors and outer-borough homeowners). Adams too is focusing on older churchgoers and civic association members. In short, *all three* of Mamdani’s major opponents are competing for the allegiance of the 50+ electorate – which will likely be the **decisive battleground** of this race.
* **Undecided Older Voters = The Swing Bloc:** As highlighted earlier, **27% remain undecided in a Mamdani–Cuomo matchup, and nearly 80% of these are over 50**[[5]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=In%20a%20head,the%20balance%20of%20the%20race). The partisan breakdown of those undecideds is roughly half Democrats, one-third Republicans, with the rest minor party or independent[[34]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=from%20the%20ballot%20%E2%80%94%20Cuomo,5). These appear to be mostly moderate Democrats who can’t stomach voting Republican but are unsure about Mamdani *and* lifelong Republicans who dislike Mamdani but aren’t yet sold on voting for a former Democrat like Cuomo. How they break – or whether they turn out at all – will be decisive. If Cuomo can convince, say, a chunk of Republican-leaning seniors to choose him over staying home or voting Sliwa, and simultaneously win over most Democratic-leaning seniors as “the only one who can stop Mamdani,” he could assemble an unlikely left-right older coalition. On the other hand, Mamdani’s team will aim to peel off some of these voters (perhaps reassuring moderate Democrats on issues like public safety, or selecting a running mate who appeals to older voters) and to drive up youth turnout even higher to compensate.

## Swing Scenarios



**Swing Scenarios – How the Models Work**
To test how different paths could play out, Gotham modeled three broad scenarios to gauge what share of the 50+ vote a challenger would need to overtake Mamdani. The magic number appears to be around **55–60% age 50+ turnout share** combined with a strong consolidation of those votes behind **one candidate**:

* Status Quo: all major challengers remain. Mamdani benefits from a divided opposition, and his strong under-50 base keeps him ahead, even if the electorate skews somewhat older.
* Consolidation: one challenger exits and voters consolidate behind another. In these cases (especially if Cuomo becomes the focal point), Mamdani’s margin narrows sharply, and the challenger can eke out a win if older turnout rises modestly.
* Head-to-Head Tilt: effectively a one-on-one contest. Here the result hinges on composition: if the 50+ share is ~54% Mamdani still leads, but if it climbs toward 57–60%, the race becomes a toss-up or leans toward Cuomo.

***Sources and Methods for Hypotheticals -*** *The swing scenarios presented in this report are not forecasts but illustrative models designed to test how different turnout and consolidation patterns could affect the outcome in November. They are based on three inputs: (1) official NYC Board of Elections turnout data from 2017, 2021, and 2025; (2) Gotham Polling/AARP survey toplines and demographic crosstabs from August 2025; and (3) an Excel-based turnout model developed by Gotham Polling & Analytics that simulates changes in age and party composition. Using these benchmarks, we adjusted two variables — the share of voters age 50+ and the degree of opposition consolidation — to produce hypothetical outcomes under different conditions. These are intended as* ***hypotheticals only*** *- sensitivity tests, not predictions, to help illustrate which combinations of factors could plausibly shift the race.*

**Why the 50+ threshold shifts by scenario**

**Ordering (vote-efficiency):**

* **Highest threshold** needed under **Status Quo** (3+ candidates): anti-M vote is split.
* **Middle threshold** under **Consolidation** (one major drops, one remains): still some leakage.
* **Lowest threshold** in **Head-to-Head** (true one-on-one): anti-M vote unifies.

**What the sheet shows (examples)**

Baseline shown below uses **Turnout = 1.4M**, **Party mix = 73/12/15 (Dem/GOP/Ind)**.

* **Status Quo**
	+ 50+ share **53.9% (Younger Gen)** → **M +138,796** two-way margin.
	+ **57.6% (Mid Gen)** → **M +120,915**.
	+ **61.5% (Older/2022-like)** → **M +102,404**.
	*Takeaway:* With the field split, even very old electorates in our grid don’t flip it.
* **Consolidation (one major drops)**
	+ **53.9%** → **Cuomo +5,278** (i.e., **M −5,278**).
	+ **57.6%** → **Cuomo +22,515**.
	+ **61.5%** → **Cuomo +40,298**.
	*Takeaway:* Once voters pool behind one alternative, the race is **toss-up at ~54% 50+** and leans challenger as the electorate gets older.
* **Head-to-Head**
	+ **53.9%** → **Cuomo +167,440**.
	+ **57.6%** → **Cuomo +185,617**.
	+ **61.5%** → **Cuomo +204,300**.
	*Takeaway:* In a true one-on-one, the challenger is already ahead even in a slightly younger-than-typical general.

**Other variables that move the tipping point**

* **Party mix (Ind/GOP share):**
Keeping the same turnout/age mix (**1.4M, Mid Gen**):
	+ **Consolidation** at **57.6–57.8% 50+** yields:
		- **71/12/17** → **Cuomo +44,932** (more Inds favors challenger).
		- **73/12/15** → **Cuomo +22,515** (baseline).
		- **75/13/12** → **Cuomo +5,852** (more Dems raises the threshold; near toss-up).
		*Rule of thumb:* A more **Dem-heavy** electorate raises the 50+ share needed for a challenger win; a more **Ind/GOP-heavy** mix lowers it.
* **Overall turnout level (composition effect):**
With **73/12/15**, **Mid Gen**, **Consolidation @ 57.6% 50+**:
	+ **1.2M** → **Cuomo +19,298**
	+ **1.4M** → **Cuomo +22,515**
	+ **1.6M** → **Cuomo +25,731**
	*Interpretation:* Higher turnout in our mixes slightly **amplifies** the challenger’s edge—consistent with more casual/moderate voters entering the electorate. (Conversely, in **Status Quo**, higher turnout tends to pad Mamdani’s margin unless the field consolidates.)

**Plain English:**

* If the field **stays split**, Mamdani is favored even with a very senior electorate.
* If **one major drops** and voters mostly consolidate, a **~54%+ 50+ share** makes it a **toss-up to lean challenger**; more Ind/GOP in the mix strengthens that lean.
* In a **true head-to-head**, the challenger leads across the age mixes in our grid; a more Dem-heavy electorate is the main thing that can pull that back toward even.

In qualitative terms, polling suggests that many **older voters have reservations about Mamdani** that make them ripe targets for his opponents. Common concerns heard anecdotally and in focus groups: *“He’s too radical/untested,” “His policies sound like socialism,” “Will he defund the police?,”* etc.[[19]](https://apnews.com/article/zohran-mamdani-nyc-mayor-election-cuomo-59f6a66cd40d4c2b750fdfd06a4f5da1#:~:text=President%20Donald%20Trump%20calls%20him,New%20York%20City%20more%20affordable). Mamdani’s campaign has been attempting to counter these perceptions, noting that his platform (e.g. rent control, expanded transit) is not “communism” but rather similar to progressive policies in other cities[[35]](https://apnews.com/article/zohran-mamdani-nyc-mayor-election-cuomo-59f6a66cd40d4c2b750fdfd06a4f5da1#:~:text=He%E2%80%99s%20a%20democratic%20socialist%2C%20not,a%20communist). Still, the **attack messaging aimed at 50+ voters is intense**: one billionaire supermarket owner slammed Mamdani’s public grocery proposal as something that would “drag us down a path to communism”[[29]](https://apnews.com/article/zohran-mamdani-nyc-mayor-election-cuomo-59f6a66cd40d4c2b750fdfd06a4f5da1#:~:text=match%20at%20L1890%20Perhaps%20nowhere,%E2%80%9Cdrag%20us%20down%20a%20path). Republican ads have taken to calling him *“Comrade Zohran.”* Mamdani will likely need to moderate his image or find common touchpoints (for example, highlighting his respect for his immigrant parents, or focusing on seniors’ issues like lowering property taxes for older homeowners) to win a greater share of the senior vote.

Cuomo, for his part, is explicitly framing the race as **experience vs. ideology**, casting himself as the safe pair of hands for older voters wary of change. The Cuomo campaign’s dream scenario is essentially a repeat of the 1977 NYC mayoral race (when Democratic nominee Ed Koch, a moderate, faced a three-way race and won with a coalition of older and outer-borough voters). Whether Cuomo can overcome partisan loyalties (convincing Republican seniors and independent older voters to back a lifelong Democrat) remains to be seen. Notably, in the poll’s **“dropout scenarios,”** Cuomo is the **only challenger who meaningfully gains when others exit**. For example, if Adams dropped out, Cuomo’s vote share jumps from 23% to ~29%[[36]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=,0); if Sliwa dropped, Cuomo also rises to ~28%[[37]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=,0). This indicates Cuomo is the second-choice for a good number of Adams and Sliwa voters. By contrast, if Cuomo dropped out, his voters did *not* all go to one person – Mamdani’s share climbed to 48%, Sliwa to ~21%, and Adams only ~17%[[38]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=,9), showing that Cuomo’s supporters are a mix of Democrats (some would default to Mamdani) and anti-Mamdani voters (some would go Republican) rather than a monolithic bloc. Still, **Cuomo clearly has the widest potential coalition** if others step aside.

## Could an Upset Actually Happen?

Mamdani is undeniably the **favorite** to become New York’s next mayor – he is the Democratic nominee in a city where Democrats outnumber Republicans 7-to-1, and he leads the polls in both the current multi-candidate field and every tested consolidation scenario[[39]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=,to%2031.0). However, the data and trends discussed above reveal a non-negligible path for a stunning upset, contingent on a few key factors:

1. **Consolidation of the Field:** The simplest way Mamdani could lose is if the anti-Mamdani vote isn’t split four ways on Election Day. If either Sliwa or Adams (or both) exit the race and endorse another candidate, that could instantly tighten the race. For instance, **if the contest boiled down to Mamdani vs. Cuomo one-on-one**, our poll shows Mamdani 42% – Cuomo 31%, with 27% undecided[[4]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=%2A%20Head,to%2031.0). Mamdani still leads, but an 11-point gap is surmountable with nearly one-third of voters uncommitted. *In a head-to-head, every undecided voter effectively becomes a swing vote.* And given the older, moderate profile of those undecideds, Cuomo would have an excellent shot at winning the bulk of them. Gotham Polling’s analysis notes that a “sizable uncommitted bloc” of 11–35% exists in all the tested consolidation scenarios – which means **a disciplined persuasion campaign by a single challenger could make this a real race**[[40]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20opening%20for%20a%20comeback,this%20a%20race%2C%E2%80%9D%20he%20added). In practical terms, Cuomo likely cannot overtake Mamdani if **both** Adams and Sliwa stay in and split the anti-Mamdani electorate three ways. But if one of them (especially Adams) were to drop out and endorse Cuomo, the odds improve. Right now, both men insist they will stay in[[8]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=leading%20in%20September%20drops%20out,up). But political pressure is likely to increase as the reality sinks in: without consolidation, Mamdani can win with just 40% of the vote. We may see last-minute deals or party interventions (for example, behind-the-scenes negotiations to convince Sliwa to step aside for the good of the anti-Mamdani cause, perhaps in exchange for some policy commitments or personal incentives).
2. **Turnout Composition – The Older the Electorate, the Better for the Challenger:** Mamdani’s campaign manager quipped after the primary, “We don’t mind a low-turnout general, because we’ll just turn out our base again.” But general elections are a different beast. Turnout will be higher in November (~1.1 million voted in 2021’s mayoral general; some forecasts suggest 1.2+ million could vote this year). A larger electorate tends to include more casual voters – who skew older and more moderate. If the **youth turnout spike was a one-time primary phenomenon**, Mamdani could find himself facing a far less favorable electorate on Nov. 4. As discussed, a key metric to watch will be **what percentage of voters are age 50+**. If it’s in the high 50s or 60+ percent (as history suggests), Mamdani might be effectively starting from behind *despite* leading in initial polls, because the polls may underweight the eventual senior turnout. Conversely, if Mamdani succeeds in replicating a youth wave – say 18- to 34-year-olds turn out at record rates in November – that could lock in his victory. It’s essentially a turnout arms race: Mamdani’s path is to **expand the electorate with new and young voters**, while his opponents’ path is to **maximize the traditional older electorate** (and persuade many normally Democratic seniors to break ranks).
3. **Party Loyalty vs. Cross-Over Voting:** Normally, once the dust settles, most Democrats “come home” and vote for their party’s nominee – even if they favored someone else in the primary. Mamdani’s hope is that in the end, many moderate Democrats will hold their nose and vote Democrat rather than see an independent (or a Republican) win. Certainly, NYC’s partisan makeup is Mamdani’s safety net; Cuomo and Adams are essentially asking Democratic voters to abandon their nominee. The poll gives insight here: **Mamdani currently secures about 52% of Democrats, while Cuomo gets 24%**[[41]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20poll%2C%20Mamdani,splitting%20much%20of%20the%20remainder). That means roughly a quarter of Democrats are initially defecting to Cuomo – a significant defection, likely concentrated among older, moderate Dems. Cuomo’s goal will be to increase that to one-third or more of Democrats, while also scooping up most Republicans and independents. Mamdani, conversely, will try to win back some skeptical Democrats by emphasizing the risks of a divided vote (i.e. “don’t hand the city to a former Republican ally of Trump,” a likely message to keep left-leaning voters in line). One wild card: **Republican voters.** Sliwa is the Republican nominee, but if some Republican voters perceive Cuomo as having a better chance to beat Mamdani, they might defect to Cuomo (who, while a Democrat, is considered more conservative than Mamdani). The poll indicates **Cuomo and Adams together were attracting nearly half of the Republican vote** in the full field[[25]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20poll%2C%20Mamdani,splitting%20much%20of%20the%20remainder) – suggesting many GOP voters are indeed ready to vote “Anyone but Mamdani,” even if that means an ex-Democrat. A critical mass of GOP cross-over votes for Cuomo could be pivotal in a close race. This essentially becomes a question of **strategic voting**: will voters coordinate around the most viable anti-Mamdani candidate? Strategic voting is hard to achieve without party cues, but high-information voters (especially older ones who follow news) may do so on their own. We are already seeing some conservative media and even national Republicans tacitly boosting Cuomo as the de facto anti-Mamdani choice, since Sliwa’s chances are slim. Democratic leaders, for their part, publicly urge unity behind Mamdani, but as noted many have been lukewarm. There is an undercurrent of quiet support for Cuomo among some moderate Democratic donors and officials (who can’t say so publicly). The **endorsement game** bears watching: Will any major Democratic figure actually endorse Cuomo or Adams over the nominee? Unlikely, but the absence of full-throated endorsements for Mamdani from certain quarters speaks volumes[[10]](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/sep/16/zohran-mamdani-democrat-endorsements-kathy-hochul#:~:text=The%20most%20influential%20political%20figures,lead%20over%20his%20nearest%20challenger).

In short, **Mamdani enters the general election as the clear frontrunner, but not an inevitable one.** The combination of a united opposition and a typical older-skewing turnout could, in theory, deny him the mayoralty. As one Gotham analyst put it, “Cuomo has the best path of the challengers, but even in a hypothetical one-on-one in an election that often favors [an] older electorate, he still trails by double digits” at this stage[[3]](https://gothampolling.com/mamdani-leads-nyc-mayoral-poll-but-falls-short-of-majority/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CMamdani%20sits%20on%20a%20hard,and%20Analytics%20President%20Stephen%20Graves). That emphasizes that *right now*, the numbers favor Mamdani. However, the race is fluid. The **“swing vote” in this election is essentially *Democratic and independent seniors***. If Mamdani can convince enough of them that he will be a responsible, inclusive mayor (and that a vote for Cuomo/Adams risks a Republican slipping in, though that risk is more theoretical given Sliwa’s polling), he will likely win. If instead Cuomo (or another challenger) convinces them that Mamdani’s agenda is too risky and that *they* offer a safer course – and if the anti-Mamdani forces find a way to coalesce – we could witness a political earthquake in November.

## Conclusion: An Unprecedented Showdown

New York City’s 2025 mayoral race has evolved from a once-assumed coronation of the Democratic primary winner into a genuinely intriguing, competitive contest. The primary upset by Zohran Mamdani injected uncertainty and excitement into what is usually a foregone conclusion in this deep-blue city. Now, with the general election looming, **the narrative has shifted**: it’s no longer *“Can a Democrat win in NYC?”* (that’s almost given), but rather *“Which vision of the Democratic Party will lead the city – and could a coalition of disaffected Democrats, independents, and Republicans thwart the left-wing insurgent?”*

The data and analysis above indicate that **Mamdani is favored but not invincible.** His roughly 40% base of enthusiastic supporters will carry him far. Yet roughly 60% of voters prefer someone else, and they *could* unite under the right conditions. The **importance of voters aged 50 and above cannot be overstated** in determining which scenario plays out. They will likely comprise a majority of November voters, and they disproportionately populate the undecided and persuadable category right now[[5]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=In%20a%20head,the%20balance%20of%20the%20race). Mamdani has already proven the ability of young voters to upend New York’s political calculus – but can he overcome the historical might of the senior vote in a general election? That is the central question as the campaign enters its final stretch.

For the media and political observers, the **potential for an upset** – a progressive Democrat falling to an independent or a fusion-backed candidate in New York City – is the story to watch. It has been decades since NYC saw a truly competitive general mayoral election pitting a Democrat against a strong independent bid. A Cuomo victory (or even a close finish) would signal a remarkable realignment, driven largely by older voters’ backlash against a progressive agenda. Even the *possibility* of that outcome is already influencing behavior: pressure is mounting on lower-polling candidates to bow out, and Mamdani, who ran as an uncompromising progressive, is now making more moderate overtures to broaden his appeal to older voters and party stalwarts.

One way or another, **the 50+ voters will likely decide this election**: either by turning out in force to deliver a check on the progressive wave, or by remaining split (or staying home) and allowing the youth-fueled Mamdani coalition to prevail. As AARP New York’s survey press release put it, Mamdani holds a “commanding lead” *for now*, **“but older undecided voters could emerge as a key swing bloc.”**[[42]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=Poll%20Shows%20Mamdani%20Maintains%20a,Emerge%20as%20Key%20Swing%20Bloc)[[5]](https://states.aarp.org/new-york/aarp-new-york-gotham-polling-analytics-poll-mamdani-leads-in-nyc-mayoral-race#:~:text=In%20a%20head,the%20balance%20of%20the%20race) Those older swing voters will be hearing plenty from all sides in the coming weeks.

The general election is set for November 4, 2025. Between now and then, New Yorkers can expect an intense campaign aimed particularly at their parents and grandparents. **Will New York embrace a new, youthful progressive era, or will the city’s formidable older electorate assert a preference for experience and moderation?** The answer will shape not just the city’s future, but could send a signal nationwide about the direction of the Democratic Party. All eyes will be on the behavior of those crucial senior voters come Election Day.

**Table 1** : Voting Participation by Party, Age, Gender NYC June Primary

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Party | Age | Gender | 2017 | 2021 | 2025 |
| DEM | 50 Plus | F |  179,202  |  329,653  |  310,566  |
| DEM | 50 Plus | M |  109,330  |  216,158  |  196,204  |
| DEM | Under 50 | F |  85,576  |  217,933  |  312,162  |
| DEM | Under 50 | M |  56,424  |  164,636  |  216,462  |
| REP | 50 Plus | F |  4,305  |  27,012  |  13,463  |
| REP | 50 Plus | M |  3,180  |  24,845  |  11,994  |
| REP | Under 50 | F |  1,592  |  8,320  |  4,403  |
| REP | Under 50 | M |  1,560  |  10,614  |  5,649  |
| TOTAL |  441,169  |  999,171  |  1,070,903  |

**Table 2** : First Time Voters by Party, Age, Gender NYC Primary – June 2025

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Party | Age | Gender | 2017 | 2021 | 2025 |
| DEM | 50 Plus | F | 1,960 | 2,613 | 1,864 |
| DEM | 50 Plus | M | 1,668 | 2,432 | 1,405 |
| DEM | Under 50 | F | 3,583 | 8,056 | 27,297 |
| DEM | Under 50 | M | 3,028 | 7,407 | 18,421 |
| REP | 50 Plus | F | 99 | 387 | 162 |
| REP | 50 Plus | M | 77 | 396 | 173 |
| REP | Under 50 | F | 110 | 493 | 280 |
| REP | Under 50 | M | 130 | 669 | 399 |
| TOTAL | 10,655 | 22,453 | 50,001 |

**Table 3** : New NYC Registrations between Primary and prior year’s General election by Party, Age, Gender

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Party | Age | Gender | 2017 | 2021 | 2025 |
| DEM | 50+ | F |  5,547  |  4,117  |  4,177  |
| DEM | 50+ | M |  4,775  |  3,838  |  3,327  |
| DEM | Under 50 | F |  25,603  |  21,131  |  43,623  |
| DEM | Under 50 | M |  20,585  |  17,245  |  28,759  |
| REP | 50+ | F |  928  |  787  |  1,120  |
| REP | 50+ | M |  1,040  |  826  |  1,191  |
| REP | Under 50 | F |  2,922  |  2,188  |  2,893  |
| REP | Under 50 | M |  3,974  |  2,984  |  3,958  |
| OTHER/Unaff | 50+ | F |  2,167  |  1,439  |  2,535  |
| OTHER/Unaff | 50+ | M |  2,185  |  1,629  |  2,361  |
| OTHER/Unaff | Under 50 | F |  12,517  |  9,279  |  14,560  |
| OTHER/Unaff | Under 50 | M |  12,573  |  10,985  |  15,798  |
| TOTAL | 94,816 | 76,448 |  124,302  |

**Table 4** : Voting Participation by Party, Age, Gender NYC November General

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Party | Age | Gender | 2017 | 2021 |
| DEM | 50+ | F |  250,705  |  325,389  |
| DEM | 50+ | M |  165,757  |  215,448  |
| DEM | Under 50 | F |  166,674  |  182,917  |
| DEM | Under 50 | M |  115,654  |  133,810  |
| REP | 50+ | F |  25,455  |  35,920  |
| REP | 50+ | M |  29,294  |  39,770  |
| REP | Under 50 | F |  24,783  |  27,926  |
| REP | Under 50 | M |  27,869  |  31,234  |
| OTHER/Unaff | 50+ | F |  41,051  |  55,324  |
| OTHER/Unaff | 50+ | M |  39,496  |  51,565  |
| OTHER/Unaff | Under 50 | F |  20,415  |  24,414  |
| OTHER/Unaff | Under 50 | M |  25,174  |  28,012  |
| TOTAL | 932,327 | 1,151,729 |

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**Methods Note:** Gotham Polling & Analytics developed an internal Excel-based turnout model for sensitivity testing which is included as an embedded excel file above. This model combines historical NYC Board of Elections turnout data (2017, 2021, 2025) with August 2025 AARP/Gotham poll toplines and crosstabs to simulate how different age and party compositions could alter November outcomes. These swing scenarios are illustrative only and should be understood as hypothetical exercises, not forecasts.

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