

Kennedy's in the race

Chides Bellone in run for Suffolk County executive

BY RICK BRAND
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Suffolk Comptroller John M. Kennedy Jr. declared his Republican candidacy Monday to take on two-term Democratic County Executive Steve Bellone, saying he “deserves an F” grade for repeated Wall Street downgrades of county bonds.

“We’re saying enough is enough,” said Kennedy. “We will stop the hemorrhaging. We will stop the bleeding. We will cut up the credit cards. We will start to pay our debts.” He continued, “We will get back to black, and we will save Suffolk.”

Kennedy, 62, made his announcement in front of the H. Lee Dennison Building with about 80 supporters. On two trucks parked nearby, large illuminated signs read, “John M. Kennedy Jr. a true friend of labor.” Kennedy also had a chart on an easel detailing the seven bond rating downgrades Suffolk has received since Bellone became



John M. Kennedy Jr. announces his candidacy for county executive.

county executive in 2012.

Among the supporters were GOP town supervisors Edward Romaine of Brookhaven and Angie Carpenter of Islip, Republican county legislators, along with Rep. Peter King (R-Seaford) and Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-Shirley).

“Under County Executive Steve Bellone, our fees have gone up, our debts have gone up, our deficit has gone up,” said Zeldin. “The only thing he’s brought down is our bond rating.”

Bellone enters the race with more than \$2 million in his campaign account, compared with Kennedy, who has about \$120,000. Kennedy downplayed Bellone’s financial edge, noting

he has twice won countywide races in which opponents outspent him.

Bellone has said he saved money by cutting county payroll, closing the county nursing home and turning county health centers over to non-profit operators.

He also points to his efforts to protect water resources, fight gangs and opioids and create a rapid north-south bus transit system.

Bellone declined to comment on Kennedy’s candidacy, saying he was more focused on governing than politics. Noting that political parties have yet to announce their candidates, Bellone

said, “There’s plenty of time for politics . . . And I will be very proud to talk about our record of protecting taxpayers in Suffolk County.”

Bellone spokesman Jason Elan called Kennedy “a financial phony.” He said, “No one has opposed government reform or voted to increase spending and debt more than John Kennedy.”

Suffolk Legis. Rob Trotta (R-Fort Salonga), who has announced a county executive campaign, welcomed Kennedy.

“This is what democracy is all about,” said Trotta. “No one knows better than John what a financial mess the Bellone administration has created.”

Larry Zicarese, a Republican who ran unsuccessfully for Suffolk County sheriff and had expressed interest in running for county executive, announced Monday after a lunch meeting with Kennedy he would not run. Zicarese pledged his “unwavering support” for Kennedy.

John Jay LaValle, Suffolk GOP chairman, who is warring with Suffolk Conservatives, endorsed Kennedy for county executive on Friday. On Monday, the party’s executive committee voted unanimously to back Kennedy and set Feb. 25 for the county nominating convention.

Ller says Trump firm bilked her of \$298G

BY RACHELLE BLIDNER
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A Floral Park woman has gone to court, claiming President Donald Trump’s now defunct mortgage company still owes her nearly \$300,000 that she says a judge ordered the firm to pay her a decade ago.

Jennifer McGovern, a former employee of Trump Mortgage LLC, claims in court papers that she has received none of the \$298,274.41 that a judge determined she was owed in commission, legal costs and interest in February 2009.

“We wound up running up a bit of debt after that,” McGovern, 46, said of her family’s financial situation. “We knew we could survive it, but it hurt.”

She filed to renew the judgment in state Supreme Court in Manhattan on Jan. 28 to act as a

lien on any Trump Mortgage properties. McGovern said in an interview that she believes her chances of recouping the judgment are “slim to none.”

McGovern said she worked at Trump Mortgage as a part-time loan officer, connecting lenders and borrowers for real estate deals, from October 2005 to May 2006. The mother of three said she took the job, which paid only in commissions, to supplement her husband’s income as a technician for Verizon.

In February 2006, she said, she orchestrated a \$26.5 million deal over an industrial complex. That deal should have given her a \$238,000 commission under her contract, which entitled her to 45 percent of any Trump Mortgage commission, according to the lawsuit.

McGovern, now a bookkeeper



Jennifer McGovern says she did not receive commission she was owed.

for Sacred Heart Academy in Hempstead, said she was fired a few months later after she refused to sign papers capping her commissions at \$10,000.

McGovern said that while she was paid about \$20,000 in other commissions she earned from Trump Mortgage, she had to use her and her husband’s savings to pay for client meals and commuting to Manhattan

from Franklin Square, where she lived at the time.

She was not paid her biggest commission before Trump Mortgage closed its doors in 2007.

Raymond Nardo, McGovern’s attorney, estimates his client is now owed \$538,847 with interest.

The Trump Organization did not respond to a request for comment Monday night.

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CORRECTIONS

A graphic that accompanied an article Sunday about student loan debt compared the 2017 median weekly earnings for bachelor’s degree recipients, those with an associate degree, high school graduates and high school dropouts. The headline incorrectly characterized the data.

Latoya Moe, 31, of Brooklyn, is facing charges that include fourth-degree grand larceny and assaulting an officer after she was arrested Friday at Roosevelt Field, Nassau County police said. She gave a fake name to officers, police said, and was incorrectly identified in a news brief Sunday.

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

- 1809** Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, was born in a log cabin in Hardin (now LaRue) County, Kentucky.
- 1909** The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded.
- 1959** The redesigned Lincoln penny — with an image of the Lincoln Memorial replacing two ears of wheat on the reverse side — went into circulation.
- 1973** Operation Homecoming began as the first release of American prisoners of war from the Vietnam conflict took place.
- 1999** The Senate voted to acquit President Bill Clinton of perjury and obstruction of justice.