

SUFFOLK COUNTY COMPTROLLER - CANDIDATES



John M. Kennedy Jr.

Republican
(Incumbent)

BACKGROUND: Kennedy, 62, is running for his second term on the Republican, Conservative, Independence and Reform party lines. Kennedy graduated with a bachelor's degree from Stony Brook University, a master's degree from Adelphi University and a law degree from St. John's University. Before he was elected comptroller, Kennedy represented the 12th district in the Suffolk County Legislature for 10 years. Kennedy, an attorney who said he has served in government for more than 40 years, previously was the Official Examiner of the Title for the County Clerk's Office. He also worked for several county executives.

ISSUES: Kennedy said he wants to "continue with the reforms and progress" he put into place, including upgrading outdated financial systems and conducting more audits. Kennedy, of Nesconset, said that the county has saved \$35 million by refinancing its \$640 million in debt. He touted the success of a fraud hotline and of his office's audits that have led to the closure of two allegedly fraudulent homeless housing agencies and the recovery of \$1.1 million in unpaid taxes and fees from the Beach Hut, a former parks concessionaire. Kennedy said his office overhauled the financial management system to comply with state law, and he plans to upgrade the county payroll system to help monitor employee time. He said he wants to procure capital budgeting models and a system to track vendor orders.



Jay Schneiderman

Democrat

BACKGROUND: Schneiderman, 56, is running on the Democratic, Working Families, Women's Equality and Protect the Taxpayer party lines. Schneiderman has a bachelor's degree from Ithaca College and a master's degree from SUNY Cortland. He is currently in his second term as Southampton Town Supervisor after hitting the 12-year term limit as a Suffolk County legislator. He previously served as East Hampton Town Supervisor. He co-owns the Breakers motel in Montauk.

ISSUES: Schneiderman said he wants to advise the county legislature on policy and work to develop a "sustainable budget model." Schneiderman said he would advise the legislature on any potential impacts to sales tax revenue — the county's main funding source — before it votes on any action. He said he wants to shape policies to grow the economy to boost consumer spending. Schneiderman said he is trying to come up with an equation to predict the impact the new federal tax law will have on county sales tax. Schneiderman said he believes the county's bond rating was too far downgraded, so he would bring the credit rating agencies in to appeal for a higher one to get lower interest rates. Schneiderman touted that he has not had to raise taxes in his 19 years in government. He said that Southampton Town has a top bond rating and had no reportable deficiencies in audits in the last two years. Schneiderman said he would want to modernize the comptroller's office and streamline processes for nonprofit aid applications.