



**Nina Petraro Bastardi made the following remarks at a news conference on
Wednesday, May 20, 2009**

I'd like to extend my sincere gratitude to those here today.

Jay Jacobs, Tom Suozzi and Diane Yatauro, thank you all for your support. I also want to thank Steve Turman, Dave Mejias, Mike Santeramo and Lauren Corcoran-Doolin for their advice and more importantly, their friendship, as well as our next County Clerk, Carrié Solages, for his assistance and commitment to this race. And of course, I must thank my husband Chris for his support, counsel and dedication.

I was born into an Italian-American, Catholic family that was devoted to giving back to their community. Those values of community service were ingrained in me during my youth, as I helped my parents at the local Sons of Italy carnival, baked cookies with my grandmother for events at our church, and made baskets with my mother for the Parent Student Association supermarket bingo. It was through this sense of obligation and duty that I also helped my father collect signatures for candidates seeking public office.

My political activism began to take shape while attending Saint John's University. For many, college provides them with an awakening of sorts, as we prepare to enter the real world, unsure of the challenges that lie before us. At that time, I found myself reorganizing and revitalizing the dormant Young Republican organization here in Nassau because I believed strongly in the power of youth activism in government and politics. I was raised during a time when being a Republican meant being in favor of fiscal responsibility, that brought with it lower taxes while at the same time, providing

for an open government accountable to its citizens. Now, unfortunately, the Republicans have rebranded themselves as obstructionists – the party of no solutions – just criticisms.

While enrolled at Saint John's Law School, I began to realize that myself, my friends, and really my entire generation faced a monumental problem. As many embarked into the workforce to find a job to try to make ends meet, while at the same time paying off our massive student loan payments, I found that the Nassau County I was fortunate enough to grow up in wasn't within our financial means to be able to raise our own family here. It was a cause of immense frustration – I did everything I was “supposed to do” – graduate high school, get a good quality college education, pursue a higher degree if necessary, and it still wasn't enough. As I witnessed lifelong friends relocate elsewhere across the country, I, too, could have just as easily done the same. But that's not how I chose to address this problem. As Harry Chapin, a fellow Long Islander, once quipped, “when in doubt, do something.” So, I decided to take action. About four years ago, I founded an organization to address the critical problem of our youth disappearing and have become an active spokesperson for the creation of Next Generation Housing for Long Island's young professional population, to ensure that they stay on Long Island and be a part of our future.

I find myself, however, four years later, in that same position, unsure of what lies ahead. While the Island's youth population continued to dwindle, I found the response from the Republican Party's elected officials to be insufficient. I was disheartened by their inaction and their lack of fresh ideas to tackle the problems our county faces today. The Nassau County Democrats, led by County Executive Tom Suozzi, are addressing the needs and concerns of all generations and the district I hope to represent. They are tirelessly working to establish Next Generation housing, along with Smart Growth and the Revitalization of “Cool Downtowns.” Tom Suozzi and the Democratic Majority in Mineola are committed to these projects and others, such as

the redevelopment of Nassau Coliseum – which is the foundation for the county’s economic sustainability for generations to come.

You see, there is no Democratic or Republican way to pave a road or run a local government, nor should there be. There is however, a right way and a wrong way. There is an efficient and responsible way, and then there is the complacent way to run things. It was not easy to accept after being raised a Republican, but I have found that there is only one party that is making the tough choices for our future and who is on the side of the residents – and that is the Nassau County Democratic Party. That is why today, I’m announcing my candidacy for the Nassau County’s Third Legislative District.

The Republicans would have you believe that they have accomplished much in the past few years, especially in the Third Legislative District. But the reality is far different. For every proposal submitted by the Democrats in Mineola, Republicans have stood in the way. In the business of politics, it’s very easy to point fingers and criticize proposals and hold cheap political stunts, but the Republicans have failed to offer any alternative solutions. They have chosen to put their party before their constituents. I did not leave that party, but rather, that party left me. Nassau deserves better.

We were once the model for other tri-state communities. Nassau County stood as a beacon for those in search of a suburban way of life, but no more thanks to the cronyism of the GOP. People are tired of the good ol’ boys club that operated one of the largest patronage mills since the days of Tammany Hall. Worse still, this same machine mentality continues to reign this very day. I have witnessed first hand their dirty tricks, and could’ve easily participated, but rather than being a part of the systemic problem, I want to be a part of the solution, which is why I vow today that I will fight to end those practices as soon as I take office.

It is the role of government and our elected leaders to be on the side of those they represent, not to be on the side of the party bosses. People should be given jobs, not by who they know, but rather by what they know. I know personally what it is like to have to worry about losing your job, or your spouse losing their job, which leads to worrying about how to pay the bills. I know what its like to have loved ones become sick beyond our control and to lose close family members too young. My husband and I have faced our fair share of hardships already in our young lives, both financially and personally. The way I see it, the future can be filled with those hardships or it can be filled with solutions to the biggest problems facing us. In these tough times, it takes leadership, not just rhetoric and rallies, to see a problem solved.

I stand here, along with the coalition that has already been built, ready, willing and able to fight for the residents of the Third Legislative District and I vow to be a true representative to the community, accountable to them and doing what they want me to do without having to check with my party's chairman first. I pledge to fight for consolidation of special districts to save taxpayer dollars and to use my skills as a zoning and land use attorney and my background in housing to work for the redevelopment of Elmont, Franklin Square, South Floral Park and Valley Stream. I want to be a part of the progress of Nassau County, so that I, along with my friends, can raise a family here. I want to see a thriving job market that is sustainable, not just for us, but for our children and their children. We won't stand idly by as more "For Sale" signs appear on our streets, with no one able to move in. County Executive Tom Suozzi and the Nassau Democrats have paved the way for a prosperous future in Nassau and together, with them, we all can make Nassau great again.

Thank you.