



Rep. Tom Reed. (Robert Kirkham/News file photo)

Tom Reed elected to fifth term in 23rd Congressional District

By [Sandra Tan](#) | Published November 6, 2018 | Updated 6 hours ago

U.S. Rep. Tom Reed won re-election to a fifth term in his Southern Tier district, defeating well-funded Democratic challenger Tracy Mitrano.

Reed, a Republican, held onto the 23rd District seat despite late indications the race was tightening, with some giving Mitrano, a cybersecurity expert from Yates County, a fighting chance to pull off an upset in the Republican-leaning district.

In the end, however, Reed's district continued its loyal support, handing him a decisive victory.

The race between Reed and Mitrano attracted little public attention until late in the campaign, as more signs pointed to a tightening race. The Cook Political Report added the Reed-Mitrano race to its list of competitive races, changing its position from "solid" Republican to "likely" Republican, though Reed was always favored to win.

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Reed went on the offensive early in his bid to keep the 23rd District seat. The eight-year incumbent ran a sustained series of attack ads to brand Mitrano as a "liberal extremist."

Mitrano pushed back by calling Reed a Trump guy who has ignored the Southern Tier district and been satisfied with the status quo.

Mitrano's successful fundraising effort led many to consider the race a competitive one in a district that crosses 11 counties, from Jamestown to Ithaca. While the district has a Republican edge, Democrats have been elected to the seat before. That includes Reed's predecessor, Eric Massa, who resigned in 2010.

In 2012, Reed kept his seat with a 3.6-point edge against Democrat Nate Shinagawa.

Reed has sought to brand himself as a moderate who supports President Trump but also supports bipartisan collaboration and more open debate on the House floor. He has held hundreds of town hall meetings throughout his district and made it a point in this year's campaign to talk about how he reached out to those who agree with him, as well as those who disagree.

Mitrano built her own brand as an energetic reformer. Mitrano courted not only Democrats but also unaffiliated voters, who comprise 21 percent of district voters. With both candidates running strong, well-funded campaigns, voter turnout was expected to be a key driver of the outcome.

Reed, a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, promoted his desire to reform the House of Representatives into a more democratic body that encourages problem solving and compromise. He said he supports Trump's tax reforms and business deregulation but opposed Trump's budget proposal for its "unsustainable" levels of federal spending.

He had focused on immigration and health care reform, infrastructure improvements and addressing the national debt crisis. He pointed to his support of advanced manufacturing centers, investment in the cleanup of the West Valley nuclear fuel reprocessing site, and support of wind and solar energy tax credits.

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Mitrano focused her campaign on district-specific issues such as expanding broadband access to rural areas. She also pledged to champion issues of single-payer health care and lowering student debt – issues she said Reed has voted against or ignored.

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