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**The NiLP Primary Primer**

**New York's  
13th Congressional  
Democratic Primary**

By Angelo Falcón (April 28, 2014)

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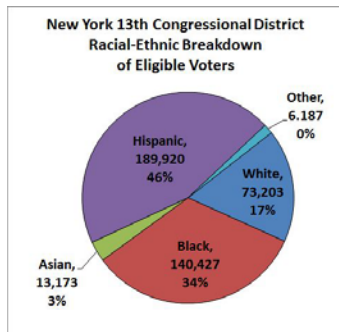
The June 24, 2014 Democratic Primary for incumbent Charles Rangel's 13th Congressional District is of particular interest to the Latino community as his rematch with State Senator Adriano Espaillat, raising the possibility of its resulting in the election of the first Dominican-American to be elected to the Congress of the United States. In their last rematch, Rangel won reelection with a small margin of a little over a thousand votes, so this year's rematch is expected to be very competitive. Judging from news reports, the conventional wisdom that seems to be emerging is that Espaillat will defeat Rangel this time around, but this is not seen as being inevitable. Rangel has represented this district since 1971.

The candidates in this year's Democratic Primary in the 13th Congressional District are Charles Rangel (the Incumbent), Adriano Espaillat (State Senator), Michael A. Walrond Jr., and Yolanda Garcia.



## Population Profile of New York's 13th Congressional District

Here is a profile of the 13th Congressional District's population based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates: The district had a population of 757,166 in 2010, the majority (53.1 percent) being female. Its voting age population is 78.4 percent and its seniors (65 years and older) is 11.5 percent of the district's population.



The eligible voters in the district (those 18 years and older who are citizens) breaks down as follows: Latino 46 percent, Black 34 percent, White 17 percent, and Asian 3 percent.

Its Latino population of 413,236 makes up 54.6 percent of the total population. Close to two-thirds of its Latino population is Dominican; 24 percent is Puerto Rican; and 8 percent is Mexican. Those who are foreign born and born in Puerto Rico make up 42 percent of the district's population.

Of the district's Black population, 24.5 percent are West Indian and African. Of its White population, 14.5 percent are Irish, 11.4 percent German, 10.4 percent Italian, and 8.5 percent non-Basque French.

Most of the district's workers are in the private sector (79.9 percent), followed by government (13.6 percent) and the self-employed (6.4 percent). Close to three-quarters of the population 16 years and older has a high school diploma or more, and 27.9 percent have a BA or higher. The unemployment rate for the district was 14.1 percent.

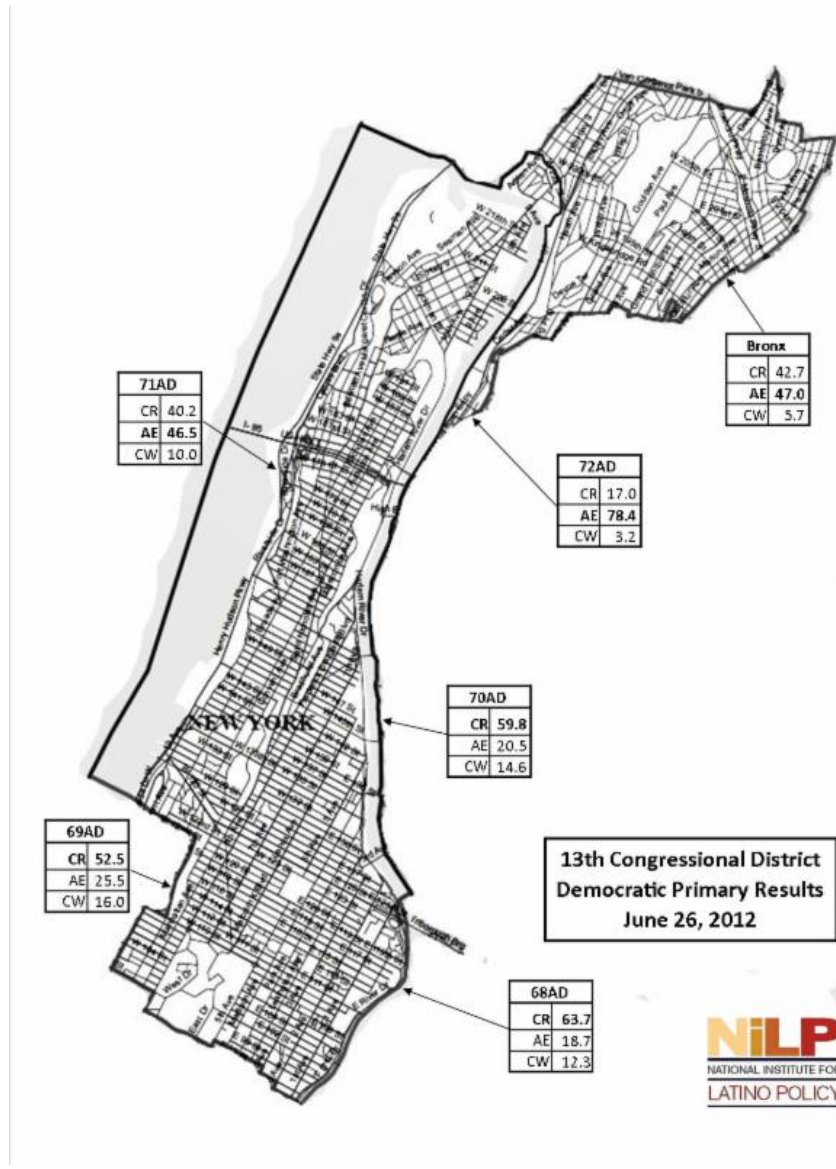
### A Recap of the 2012 Primary

In the June 26, 2012 Democratic Primary in New York's newly-drawn 13th Congressional District, incumbent Charles Rangel beat challenger Adriano Espaillat by a margin of 44.3 to 41.8 percent (a difference of 1,086 votes or 2.4 percent of the total votes cast), with the three Black challengers to Rangel together attracting 13.7 percent of the primary vote. As one observer pointed out at the time, if you included the votes of his Black challengers, Rangel could have won with as much as 58.0 percent, which would have been a landslide victory for him. Others countered that these Black challengers, particularly Clyde Williams, had attracted many anti-Rangel voters who would have gone to Espaillat.

It was also interesting that Espaillat won the vote in The Bronx section of the

district by a margin of 47.0 to Rangel's 42.7 percent (a difference of only 233 votes). The Bronx section only represented 12.3 percent of the total district vote, but pointed to, in part, Espaillat supporter State Senator Gustavo Rivera and others' ability deliver in an area where most of the Puerto Rican power brokers were supporting Rangel.

In the map of the 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional District below, the primary vote results for the top three candidates are presented for the Assembly Districts that make up the Manhattan part of the district ("CR" for Charlie Rangel; "AE" for Adriano Espaillat; and "CW" for Clyde Williams). The Bronx section is a combination of small pieces of a number of Assembly Districts in that county (their breakdowns are provided in the table following the map).



New York 13th Congressional District							
June 26, 2012 Democratic Party Primary Results							
AD	Represented by:	Rangel	Espailat	Williams	Johnson	Schley	Other
68	Roberto Rodriguez	63.7%	18.7%	12.3%	3.3%	1.8%	0.2%
69	Daniel O'Donnell	52.5%	25.5%	16.0%	4.0%	1.7%	0.3%
70	Keith L.T. Wright	59.8%	20.5%	14.6%	2.7%	2.3%	0.1%
71	Herman D. Farrell	40.2%	46.5%	10.0%	2.0%	1.0%	0.2%
72	Guillermo Linares	17.0%	78.4%	3.2%	0.7%	0.4%	0.2%
Manhattan Total		44.6%	41.1%	10.5%	2.2%	1.4%	0.2%
77	Vanessa Gibson	63.3%	27.3%	4.7%	4.5%	0.2%	0.0%
78	Jose Rivera	34.9%	55.6%	4.5%	3.5%	1.1%	0.3%
80	Naomi Rivera	61.2%	28.4%	4.9%	2.6%	2.5%	0.4%
81	Jeffrey Dinowitz	39.9%	47.5%	8.9%	2.1%	1.2%	0.3%
86	Nelson Castro	24.5%	66.8%	4.4%	4.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Bronx Total		42.7%	47.0%	5.7%	3.1%	1.2%	0.3%
13th CD Total		44.3%	41.8%	9.9%	2.4%	1.4%	0.2%

**Where Rangel Won.** As was expected, Rangel won 59.5 percent in the mostly Black 70<sup>th</sup> Assembly district, represented by Keith Wright, who then recently became co-chair of the New York State Democratic Party. Rangel, however, also won, and with a larger percentage (63.8 percent), in the largely Puerto Rican/Latino 68<sup>th</sup> AD represented by Assemblyman Robert J. Rodriguez (who today endorses Espailat). In the mostly White 69<sup>th</sup> AD, represented by Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell (who remains a Rangel supporter), Rangel won with 52.6 percent of the vote (this is the district where Clyde Williams received his largest share of the vote, 16.1 percent of the total, followed by 14.8 percent of the 70 AD and 12.3 percent of the 68 AD).

**Where Espailat Won.** Espailat won the mostly Dominican 72 AD with 78.6 percent of the vote, the district once represented by who was in that year his rival for his State Senate seat, Guillermo Linares (an Assembly District now represented by Espailat supporter, Gabriela Rosa). He also won with 46.6 percent of the vote in the 71 AD, which has a large Dominican and Black population, and which is represented by Herman D. Farrell (a longtime Rangel ally), who has held this seat for 26 years at the time. This result in the 71st AD points to the growing possibility that this district could be represented by a Dominican in the near future.

In the Bronx, as already mentioned, Espailat won with 47.0 percent of the vote to Rangel's 42.7 percent. This section of the 13th Congressional District is made up of sections of 5 Bronx Assembly Districts. The largest is the 78 AD, which is represented by José Rivera. It also includes pieces of the 77 AD (then Vanessa Gibson, currently vacant), 80 AD (then Naomi Rivera, now Mark Gjonaj), 81 AD (Jeffrey Dinowitz) and the 86 AD (then Nelson Castro, now Victor M. Pichardo). This section is mainly Latino, mostly Dominican with a large Puerto Rican population, as well as a significant Guyanese community.

**Developments in the Dominican Community.** There were a number of developments in the Dominican community that were supportive of Espailat's

candidacy. These included the recent elections at the time in the Dominican Republic, Espaillat's support for Congress by Lionel Fernandez, the then President of the Dominican Republic, and the long and highly publicized campaign for a Dominican Congressional district during the redistricting process in the state that preceded the primary.

**Turnout.** The overall turnout in the district of Democratic Party voters was only 14.0 percent. Based on information available on turnout in those Assembly Districts that were fully in the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress District, the 70<sup>th</sup>, 71<sup>st</sup> and 72<sup>nd</sup> ADs, Dominican voter turnout was only slightly higher than the other groups. In the mostly Dominican 72<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District, the turnout among Democratic voters was 16.4 percent, compared to 14.9 and 15.6 percent, respectively, for the 70<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> Assembly Districts, which are predominantly Black.

**The Role of a Conservative Super PAC.** There was some discussion on the question of what influence the conservative super PAC, Campaign for Primary Accountability, had on the outcome. They announced that they would be spending \$300,000 in ads in support for Espaillat, causing some to criticize the Espaillat campaign for accepting this support without understanding the potential negative political significance of this Tea Party-influenced group putting so many resources to unseat Rangel. It turned out that, in the end, the Campaign for Primary Accountability Super PAC had, in fact, only would up spending \$10,000 on the Espaillat campaign instead of the \$300,000 they claimed. In the end, with incumbent Rangel winning the primary, this super PAC apparently did not play a significant role.

## **Conclusion: What's Different in 2014?**

There are a number of factors this year that are different from the 2012 race:

To Espaillat's benefit:

- This will no longer be Espaillat's first run for the seat, meaning that his name recognition will be greater throughout the district.
- Espaillat has greatly widened his base of endorsements. Within the Latino community, he now has the support of the Bronx Democratic machine and of elected officials in Manhattan's East Harlem who supported Rangel in 2012. Among these is the support of the new NYC Council Speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito, who is Puerto Rican. In two Assembly Districts that he lost in the Bronx, in one, Rangel's supporter Naomi Rivera has been replaced Espaillat supporter, Mark Gjonaj, and in the other, Rangel supporter Vanessa Gibson no longer represents that district, which is vacant.
- A new Dominican-focused nonpartisan voter registration campaign, Dominicanos USA, has been established by a group of wealthy Dominican donors.
- Espaillat is not anticipated to have a high-profile opponent for State Senate as he did in 2012 with the candidacy of former Assemblyman Guillermo Linares, who was the first Dominican elected to major elected office in New York as a Councilmember in 1991.

To Rangel's benefit:

- Rangel has attracted major high profile and largely White, endorsements, including that of former President Bill Clinton.
- Rangel's health appears to have rebounded, projecting him as a more vigorous candidate.
- Espaillat now has a Dominican challenger, Yolanda Garcia, from the Bronx. Although she is seen as a marginal candidate who doesn't speak English, has no campaign funds and is not known at all in Manhattan, her ethnicity and focus on women's issues could resonate with some Dominican voters. If her charges one of Espaillat's supporters has been harassing her sticks, this could be a negative for him (in his 2012 Democratic primary reelection for State Senate; he admitted to circulating a controversial negative flyer against his opponent Guillermo Linares).
- This time he only has one Black challenger, compared to three that he had in 2012.
- Rangel's campaign has sought to highlight his Puerto Rican ancestry by more readily acknowledging that his father is Puerto Rican.
- Rangel's ethnic problems with the Congress are behind him and do not seem to have any traction as a campaign issue.

Because there will only be two primaries on June 24th in New York City (the other for the Congressional seat in Staten Island-Brooklyn), this is expected to be a very low turnout election (most primaries will be held in September for Governor and the state legislature). In 2012, the turnout in this district for the Democratic Primary was only 14.0 percent of registered party voters.

The result of this primary, which is tantamount to being the general election in New York, will be significant in supporting one of two possibility narratives for the future politics of the city. If Rangel wins, it will be a testament to continuing viability of a long and strong legacy of national importance of Black politics in historic Harlem. If Espaillat wins, it will represent a new milestone for the Dominican community and a sign of the growing political power of the Latino community both locally and nationally. Either way, the outcome will represent what has been the essence of politics in New York City since its beginnings.

*Note: The tables and map presented in this report were created by the National Institute for Latino Policy (NiLP), who would like to thank Valerie Vazquez of the NYC Board of Elections and Miguel Maldonado for their invaluable assistance.*

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