



Democrat Nathan D. McMurray is taking on Rep. Chris Collins. (Sharon Cantillon/Buffalo News)

## Field narrows to one for Democratic challenger to Chris Collins

By [Jerry Zremski](#) | Published April 9, 2018 | Updated April 9, 2018

WASHINGTON – Democrats now have their candidate to take on Rep. Chris Collins in New York's 27th district this fall: Grand Island Town Supervisor Nate McMurray. The other remaining Democrat in the race, businessman Nick Stankevich, announced Monday he is suspending his campaign.

"It was just many factors that led me to this decision," Stankevich said after releasing a statement announcing his withdrawal from the race. He would not elaborate on what those many factors were.

In a statement announcing his withdrawal from the race, Stankevich said: "After careful consideration and with a heavy heart, I am suspending my campaign for Congress. I'm proud of the campaign I ran and proud of my team. I will take the lessons learned and the warmth from our neighbors who yearn for a better tomorrow, to continue fighting to make our community better."

Stankevich, who helps run a family bed and breakfast in Mumford, in Monroe County, was among the first candidates to announce a challenge against Collins last year. His campaign raised \$81,857 through the end of 2017 and at first attracted interest from many progressives in the eastern end of New York's 27th district.

But then McMurray won the endorsement of Democratic county leaders in the sprawling 27th district in February, meaning Stankevich would have had to take on the Democratic establishment if he decided to fight McMurray in a primary. McMurray thanked Stankevich for his effort.

"Nick fought hard," McMurray said. "He seemed to believe in many of the ideas that I believe in, that America should be more fair, and that everyone should have a shot at a better life for themselves and their loved ones. He also believed in rebuilding America's infrastructure. I have respect for any person who stands up for these goals. And I know it's a demanding and emotional test."

Stankevich's move means Democrats won't have a primary to choose who gets to face off against Collins, who is seeking a fourth term in a district that sprawls from Buffalo's southern and eastern suburbs all the way to Rochester's western suburbs.

The 27th district is New York's most Republican, but Democrats have targeted Collins, a Republican from Clarence, for defeat for several reasons.

The first House member to endorse Donald Trump for president more than two years ago, Collins remains a high-profile spokesman for the president. In addition, Collins' investment in an Australian biotech firm called Innate Immunotherapeutics has resulted in an ongoing House Ethics Committee investigation.

Collins' political adviser, Christopher Grant, said Stankevich's withdrawal was no surprise, "given how Democrat party bosses manipulated this process."

"Now Democrats are left with an anti-Second Amendment, pro-Pelosi, pro-Cuomo liberal who still can't figure out where the district begins and ends. We look forward to highlighting that choice for voters in November," Grant added.

McMurray – who has repeatedly said he supports the Second Amendment right to bear arms as well gun control measures such as stronger background checks for gun purchases – vowed to wage an aggressive campaign against Collins.

Noting that Collins is expected to have a strong financial advantage in the race, McMurray said: "You can buy a lot in this world with money. But you still can't buy anyone's vote. We can't match him dollar for dollar. But just watch what we can do."