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Analysis: Scott Walker surfaces in Buffalo

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A few things to know about politics around here:

- Former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker visited Canisius College Tuesday to kick off its new series of conservative lectures sponsored by Trustee Jerry Canada and the student chapter of Young Americans for Freedom. His talk was titled “Our Rights Come from God, Not the Government.”

Canisius has long attracted top political figures to its campus, including former presidents. This one featured a one-time presidential candidate who is now visiting colleges, and maybe even laying the groundwork for another White House bid in some future post-Donald Trump era (whenever that may be).

The former governor made the most of his time in Buffalo, lunching at Chef’s Restaurant with about 40 elected officials, town chairmen and GOP candidates assembled by state Republican Chairman Nick Langworthy.

Langworthy, you may recall, at one time enthusiastically backed Walker’s presidential bid. That was before he became a major Trump supporter, eventually hand-picked by the president to lead New York Republicans. Langworthy and Walker are young guys looking to the future, and it’s obvious the chairman still admires Walker (but shhh – don’t anybody tell Trump).

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- A former governor found his way to Buffalo last week, but it seems difficult for aspiring governors. On the Democratic side, Gov. Kathy Hochul is a regular, but – well – she lives here.

Challenger Tom Suozzi has been around, while another Dem opponent – Jumaane Williams – has logged so many visits he could practically apply for residency.

Western New York, for the most part, remains unexplored territory for Republican gubernatorial aspirants, with Lee Zeldin proving the exception. He worked the Hamburg Gun Show last weekend before meeting with West Seneca Repubs. It's been a while for Rob Astorino, and Andrew Giuliani operates under the radar.

Harry Wilson, meanwhile, hits Buffalo only via the airwaves. It seems a long way from the days when candidates shook hands and kissed babies.

- Rep. Antonio Delgado appears to have survived and prospered as Hochul introduced him as her choice for lieutenant governor during a Capitol news conference last week. The bet here is the Hochul team super-vetted the Hudson Valley congressman after the arrest, indictment and resignation of her last appointee – Brian Benjamin.

Delgado's move to Albany remains a concern to state Democrats worried that a new reapportionment plan will stem the congressional gains they envisioned under the proposal now stamped "gerrymandered" by the Court of Appeals.

The congressman was facing a tough challenge from Marc Molinaro, the Dutchess

County executive and 2018 Republican candidate for governor. Now Democratic concerns are heightened in the district, even as some think Delgado eyes higher statewide office in the future.

- Hochul, as we noted, lives in Buffalo; Delgado in the Dutchess County Village of Rhinebeck and grew up in Schenectady. When was the last time two upstaters headed a Democratic ticket?

- State Sen. Ed Rath last week personified the consequences of the recent court decision nixing the Democratic reapportionment plan. It looked like Rath's short Albany career was over when Dems pitted him against incumbent Tim Kennedy, a 3 to 1 Dem advantage, and Kennedy's campaign treasury of at least \$1.5 million.

But Rath lives to fight another day after realizing the plan will change. He could still face a tough assignment in increasingly Democratic Amherst, but he nevertheless breathes easier this week.

- Quote of the Week comes from the eulogy delivered at St. Thomas Aquinas Church last week by South Councilmember Chris Scanlon for his dad, John "Scanoots" Scanlon, the behind-the-scenes power broker for the late Mayor Jim Griffin who died April 28: "He helped as many as he could, and never asked for anything in return for himself. He would simply tell people to work hard and they now have to help Jimmy Griffin."

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