

Democrats move toward McMurray as Collins opponent

By [Robert J. McCarthy](#) | Published February 13, 2018 | Updated February 14, 2018

Grand Island Supervisor Nathan McMurray is emerging as the favorite of Democratic leaders when they convene Thursday to endorse a challenger against Rep. Chris Collins, the Republican incumbent.

Several sources close to the situation who asked not to be identified said leaders of the eight counties comprising the 27th Congressional District as well as other Democratic activists are prepared to back McMurray over four other candidates, though a primary could still develop later this year.

McMurray lives outside the district but is familiar to Erie County leaders and to Democrats in nearby Niagara County. Together the two counties make up the vast majority of the weighted vote in the 27th District, from which the supervisor is expected to gain significant support.

Other candidates include attorney Sean B. Bunny of Amherst, businessman Nicholas Stankevich of Mumford, businesswoman Joan Elizabeth Seamans of Amherst, and engineer Thomas P. Casey of Orchard Park. Some of the current congressional candidates could eventually be nominated for State Legislature, two sources said.

If McMurray succeeds on Thursday, he still faces long odds against Collins in New York State's most Republican congressional district. The incumbent is also expected to enjoy a significant fundraising edge.

McMurray recently posted on Facebook that he has hired Robert Dempsey, a West Seneca native and veteran of the presidential campaign of Sen. Bernie Sanders as well as several other high profile Democratic efforts