

LONG ISLAND / POLITICS / SPIN CYCLE

By Robert Brodsky

Jack Martins gang mailer spurs protest

Activists at Mineola rally call on GOP Nassau County executive candidate to denounce a campaign literature saying Democrat Laura Curran will 'roll out the welcome mat' for MS-13.



Attorney and activist Fred Brewington holds up a mailer sent to boost GOP county executive candidate Jack Martins at a rally on Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2017. The mailer seeks to link his opponent to gang violence. Photo Credit: Newsday / J. Conrad Williams Jr.

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Dozens of civic activists, religious leaders and elected Democratic officials rallied Wednesday in Mineola to criticize GOP County Executive candidate Jack Martins for a political mailer that contends his Democratic opponent, Laura Curran, “will roll out the welcome mat” for violent street gangs.

The mailer, paid for by the New York State Republican Party, depicts three shirtless, Hispanic men covered in tattoos with the headline: “Meet your new neighbors!”

The literature warns that Curran, a second-term legislator from Baldwin, will “roll out the welcome mat for violent gangs like MS-13!” The flip side of the mailer is a traditional Martins ad touting his anti-gang plans.

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“You are complicit with this, Mr. Martin,” Brewington said. “And we know, and everyone knows . . . there is no candidate in this race that is good with MS-13.”

Westbury school board trustee Pedro Quintanilla accused Martins of using anti-immigrant tactics similar to those wielded by President Donald Trump to win votes. “It is wrong and it’s an immoral crime,” he said.

At a separate news conference in Mineola with law enforcement and civil service unions, Martins, a former state senator from Old Westbury, stood by the mailer and accused Curran of politicizing the issue.

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points to a very real concern that every family in Nassau County has,” Martins said. “The issue of gang violence is one that we must be prepared to address head-on. And the voters have a right to know where the candidates stand on that issue as we head into the final week of this election.”

Martins said the purpose of the mailer is to “point out how close my opponent is to groups that believe in sanctuary counties; that have advanced proposals and legislation that . . . prevent the deportation of violent criminals.”

Curran, who did not attend the civic rally, has said she would work with federal officials to deport immigrants who are in the country illegally and are convicted of crimes, and would not allow Nassau to become a “sanctuary” county.

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