

Brooklyn District Leader Race Still Undetermined

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In a heated district leader race in northern Brooklyn, [reform candidate Lincoln Restler](#) trails behind longtime Greenpoint activist Chris Olechowski, the candidate backed by disgraced party boss Vito Lopez.

The race in Lopez's 50th Assembly District may come down to a counting of affidavit and absentee ballots. Restler is behind Olechowski by a margin of 136 votes, with Olechowski receiving 5,820 votes to Restler's 5,684.

Valerie Vazquez, a spokeswoman for the city Board of Elections, said in an email today that affidavit and absentee ballots will be counted starting on Friday, Sept. 21, and may continue through Sunday.

More than 11,000 people voted in the high-profile district leader race, with a large flow of members of the Satmar-Hasidic community filling into poll sites ready to cast their vote for Olechowski. The New York Times reported that "it made it seem as if the election would determine the nation's president rather than the low-profile position of the district leader of a few Brooklyn neighborhoods." The Times said the turnout reflected the group's loyalty to the Brooklyn party boss.

Restler, 28, whose win as district leader in 2010 represented a major success for anti-machine Brooklynites, is depending on the count of absentee ballots and voting procedure challenges to close in on the margin of votes needed for his re-election.

While Chris Olechowski, 65, chairman of Greenpoint and Williamsburgh's community board, is an ally of state Assemblyman Lopez, he and other politicians have been working to distance themselves from Lopez. The assemblyman has been [accused of sexually harassing two young women who worked for his office](#)

Olechowski's campaign website [features a clarification](#) to the statement he made to the [Daily News](#) last Tuesday that Lopez should resign from his Assembly position because of the sexual harassment scandal.

“Let me make it clear that I am not by any means condemning Assemblyman Vito Lopez for any wrongdoing ... But, at the same time, I cannot delve into a man's heart and state for a fact whether he is guilty or not,” he said in the statement.

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