

*From the Office of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz*

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For Immediate Release

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**20% OF MAYOR RACES UNCONTESTED**  
**But local competition on the increase**

Voters in 27 of the 131 towns holding mayoral or first selectman elections this year will find no choice on the ballot for their hometown's top office. Though disappointed in the lack of competition in these municipalities, Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz notes that one third of the races went uncontested 2001.

"We must continue to encourage people to get involved with their community and consider running for office, but it is great to see an increase in political competition at the local level," Bysiewicz said. "A healthy democracy is based on an exchange of ideas and choice inspires voters."

There are 25 towns that Republicans or Democrats failed to nominate a candidate, and nine additional municipalities where the two major parties endorsed the same person. Minor party or petitioning candidates appear on ballots in seven of these towns, leaving 27 localities with predetermined mayoral or first selectman winners.

"Unfortunately, we see the lowest voter turnout for local elections and lack of competition is a significant factor," Bysiewicz said. "In many ways, local elections affect our daily lives more directly than state or national elections, but the cost of running a campaign and concern for a loss of personal privacy have contributed to a dwindling pool of candidates."

An average of 41% of the state's registered voters turned out for the past two municipal election cycles compared to 56.5% in last year's state elections and 78% in the 2000 presidential election.