

# The 'outcasts' debate for N.J. governor was certainly entertaining



GOP candidates for governor Joseph Rullo (left) and Steve Rogers (center left) debated Democratic Councilman Mark Zinna (D-Tenafly) and Democratic candidate Bill Brennan on Tuesday outside Stockton University's campus center. May 9, 2017. (Claude Brodesser-Akner | NJ Advance Media)



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**GALLOWAY** -- Four Democratic and Republican candidates who fell short of the legal requirements for the first New Jersey governor primary debate held their own "outcasts" debate Tuesday evening, united in their disdain for Democratic front-runner **Phil Murphy**.

One even traded barbs with Murphy's supporters.

"The goal is to make a point, not to get arrested," said **Bill Brennan**, one of the two Democrats debating outside the Stockton University campus center, where three police cars and even bomb sniffing dogs milled about. "Though it would have been nice to get the free publicity."

The only confrontation was between Democratic activist Brennan and the two dozen Murphy supporters, who began chanting their candidate's name as Brennan tried to answer a question about gun control.

"For \$430,000, you can participate in our debate," Brennan teased the assembled crowd. He was referring to the minimum amount of money candidates needed to raise to qualify for the state-sponsored debates being held on campus.

Brennan, who favors expanding access to gun permits for citizens who are being stalked or harassed, was shouted down by chants of "Murphy!"

Ever the showman, Brennan leaped off the concrete wall where he had been standing next to GOP gubernatorial candidates **Joseph Rullo** and **Steven Rogers** and Tenafly Council President **Mark Zinna**, another Democratic contender, to confront his hecklers, brandishing a microphone.

"Would you like to come over and speak?" asked Brennan. "How much were you paid to be here?"

After a few minutes, Brennan returned to the wall with his fellow candidates.

Here's some of the surprising plans put forward by the "outcasts" in their two-hour tussle Tuesday night.

### **1. Use military force to stop pipelines in New Jersey**

Zinna said he would treat any attempt to build a pipeline through New Jersey as an attack on its citizens.



### **Excluded governor candidates to hold their own debate**

The Democrat promised he would "declare a state of emergency" and "call out the national guard" if construction were to begin on any new interstate crude oil pipeline that could "poison our water."

### **2. Prosecuting New Jersey mayors of so-called "sanctuary cities"**

Rogers, a Nutley Township commissioner, said he so strongly supports President Donald Trump's call for expanded immigration enforcement that he would take extraordinary steps against New Jersey mayors who flouted it.

Rogers vowed to take action against "any politician" who declared their municipality a sanctuary city.

"I will direct my attorney general to begin prosecuting them for obstruction of justice," Rogers said.

### **3. 'Disbanding' the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey**

Blasting the bi-state agency as "one of the most corrupt institutions in America," Zinna promised he would "disband" it and refocus its mission on solely tending to the bridges that connect New York and New Jersey.

Zinna also vowed to extend the MTA's 7 train into New Jersey and to reroute the A train over the George Washington Bridge, running it all the way to Paterson.

### **4. Bid adieu to Madison Square Garden -- and hello to a new bus terminal**

Deriding plans for a new Port Authority bus depot at Galvin Plaza located on 39th to 40th Streets between 10th and 11th Avenues in Manhattan as "ridiculous," Brennan took transit reform a step further. He said he would move to evict James L. Dolan's Madison Square Garden Company from the Garden when his lease expired in 2022.

"We're going to build a bus terminal above the train station below," cried Brennan. "(James) Dolan is getting the boot."

## 5. Guns for everybody, everywhere!

"You go to Florida," said Rullo, a strong supporter of unrestricted Second Amendment rights. "Rape is lower. Murder is lower."

Rullo, an Ocean County businessman, vowed that as governor he would ensure anyone seeking to carry a handgun in New Jersey would be permitted to do so.

"I embrace Donald Trump and his carry concealed initiative," Rullo said.

As a candidate, Trump called for a "national right to carry," and as president he has been supportive of congressional Republican efforts to pass new legislation requiring states to recognize concealed carry permits from other states.

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