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## N.J. lieutenant governor debate is tonight

By *MICHAEL SYMONS*  
Gannett State Bureau

TRENTON -- Three candidates for the new post of lieutenant governor will debate tonight at Monmouth University.

State Sen. Loretta Weinberg, D-Bergen, Monmouth County Sheriff Kim Guadagno, a Republican, and independent Frank Esposito, a Kean University professor and former university president, will square off in the first-of-its-kind forum in the Garden State.

The debate, which runs from 8 to 9:30 p.m., is sponsored by Leadership New Jersey, Gannett New Jersey newspapers, News 12 New Jersey, New Jersey 101.5 FM, NJBIZ and New Jersey Business Magazine. A video feed and live chat will be hosted on the Daily Journal Web site.

New Jersey is currently one of eight states without a lieutenant governor. The position was approved by voters in 2005, after two consecutive elected governors didn't finish their terms, leaving Senate presidents in charge of two branches of government.

Candidates for governor choose a lieutenant governor running mate, much like presidential nominees, and the public elects them as a ticket, unable to split their vote between multiple parties. The addition of a lieutenant governor post was seen by advocates as a way to open statewide political opportunities for women and minorities, in a state where there are few statewide offices.

And both the Democrats and Republicans have nominated women.

The Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University says that of the 31 women who have served as governors nationwide, eight gained that office by succeeding a governor who died or left office mid-term. Fourteen of the 31 served as lieutenant governors or the other position in their state that's next in line to become governor.

Rutgers University political scientist Ingrid Reed said the running mates seem to have, at a minimum, helped the campaigns cover more ground and attract more publicity from the press.

"I don't know if there's any way to gauge if who they selected as lieutenant governor or what they're doing has had an impact of voters and helping them decide who to vote for," Reed said.

The responsibilities of New Jersey's lieutenant governors will vary from term to term. They can be appointed to run most Cabinet departments, but don't have to.

Corzine said Weinberg would head his office's "family agenda." Christie says Guadagno is to lead a review of state regulations with an eye toward cutting them. Esposito would help with education and higher education policies.

## Additional Facts

ON THE WEB

Watch the debate live -- [thedailyjournal.com/ltgovdebate](http://thedailyjournal.com/ltgovdebate)

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