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Embattled New Jersey Senator Bob Menendez has shifted his political alignment to run as an Independent while facing federal bribery charges. Menendez filed for the Independent candidacy just one day ahead of the deadline. This move allows him to continue using campaign funds for legal expenses related to his ongoing trial.

Representative Andy Kim, competing for the Senate seat on the Democratic ticket, expressed concern that Menendez's Independent run could jeopardize the traditionally Democratic seat in New Jersey. Menendez had initially announced in March that he would not seek reelection as a Democrat but left open the possibility of an Independent campaign contingent on his exoneration.

Menendez, along with his wife Nadine, is accused of accepting bribes in the form of gold bars, cash, and a luxury car, details of which were highlighted by prosecutors in a recent court session. Both Menendez and his wife have pleaded not guilty, attributing their actions to personal financial fears stemming from past familial losses.

If convicted, Menendez faces a decision from the Senate regarding his potential expulsion. The trial has implicated several individuals, including Egyptian American businessman Wael Hana, who allegedly financially aided Nadine Menendez in exchange for Menendez's political influence.

The trial continues to draw significant attention, with Menendez's decision to run as an Independent adding unpredictability to the upcoming Senate race in New Jersey.