



Inside Elections

with

Nathan L. Gonzales

Nonpartisan Analysis

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2026 Senate Ratings

Toss-up (3)

MI Open (Peters, D)
NC Open (Tillis, R)

Ossoff (D-Ga.)

Tilt Democratic (1)

NH Open (Shaheen, D)

Tilt Republican (1)

Collins (R-Maine)

Lean Democratic

Lean Republican (2)

Husted (R-Ohio)
Sullivan (R-Ak.)#

Likely Democratic (1)

MN Open (Smith, DFL)

Likely Republican (2)

IA Open (Ernst, R)
Coryn (R-Texas)

Solid Democratic (9)

IL Open (Durbin, D)
Booker (D-N.J.)
Coons (D-Del.)
Hickenlooper (D-Colo.)
Lujan (D-N.M.)
Markey (D-Mass.)
Merkley (D-Ore.)
Reed (D-R.I.)
Warner (D-Va.)

Solid Republican (16)

AL Open (Tuberville, R)
KY Open (McConnell, R)
WY Open (Lummis, R)
Capito (R-W.V.)
Cassidy (R-Lou.)
Cotton (R-Ark.)
Daines (R-Mont.)
Graham (R-S.C.)
Hagerty (R-Tenn.)
Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.)
Marshall (R-Kan.)
Moody (R-Fl.)
Mullin (R-Okla.)
Ricketts (R-Neb.)
Risch (R-Idaho)
Rounds (R-S.D.)

Takeovers in *italics*, # moved benefiting Democrats, * moved benefiting Republicans

CALENDAR

Jan. 31	Texas' 18th District Special Election Runoff
Feb. 6	Winter Olympics Begin
Feb. 8	Super Bowl LX
March 3	Texas, North Carolina, Arkansas Primaries

2026 Senate Overview: Democrats Making Progress

By Nathan L. Gonzales & Jacob Rubashkin

It's been 20 years since one party flipped both the House and the Senate in the same cycle, but that's exactly what Democrats are hoping to do in 2026.

While Democrats can win the House majority by winning Democratic-leaning and toss-up areas, the party must also win Republican areas in order to capture the Senate. With a combination of candidate recruitment and a national political environment focused on affordability that has resulted in Democratic overperformance in elections over the last year, Democrats have a distinct but still difficult path.

Holding their own competitive seats in Georgia, Michigan and New Hampshire is the necessary first step. Then Democrats need to win the open seat in North Carolina, find a way to finally defeat GOP Sen. Susan Collins in Maine and then win two of Alaska, Ohio, Iowa and Texas, none of which are guaranteed or easy.

Flipping Senate seats in three states that voted for the other party's presidential candidate just two years earlier looks like a daunting task on paper. But Democrats can take some comfort in 2010, when Republicans won Senate races in five states (Indiana, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Illinois and Massachusetts) that voted for Barack Obama in 2008.

Democrats are simultaneously navigating competitive primaries in Michigan, Minnesota, Maine and Texas that feel like microcosms of the broader discussion about the future message and messengers of the party. But it remains to be seen whether those contests will make it more difficult to win general elections necessary to win the majority.

This year, Republicans believe economic conditions and confidence in the economy will improve in the coming months, decreasing voter appetite for change, and are confident that the national Democratic brand and individual Democratic candidates are too liberal and unacceptable to voters, even those who are dissatisfied with the status quo. But voters are more likely to be focused on President Donald Trump, in part because he practically demands being in the spotlight. And unless his political standing improves, Republicans are at risk of losing control of Capitol Hill.

Back in 2006, Democrats captured both chambers in George W. Bush's second midterm when the president had a 38 percent job approval rating, according to Gallup. Gallup's most recent poll, in December, showed Trump with a 36 percent job approval rating.

Republicans are still favored to maintain their Senate majority, but Democrats have a much better chance compared to the beginning of the cycle and could pull it off.

Report Shorts

California's 1st District. The special election to replace the late-GOP Rep. Doug LaMalfa will be August 4, the latest possible date that could be set by Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom in accordance with state law. It's technically possible that a new member could get elected in the June 2 primary, but it's unlikely that a candidate will receive more than 50 percent of the vote amongst a crowded field in order for that to happen. That means Speaker Mike Johnson will likely be without a vote on Capitol Hill for six months and the person elected in the special election will only serve a few months through the end of the year.

The special election is taking place under the current lines, where Donald Trump finished ahead of Kamala Harris by 25 points. But the regular election, including a June 2 primary, will take place under the new map, redrawn by Democrats, and ratified by California voters through Proposition 50. Harris finished ahead of Trump by 12 points in the new district. The special election is rated Solid Republican while the regular general election is rated Solid Democratic.

California's 26th District. Democratic Rep. Julia Brownley is not running for re-election in Southern California. Her redrawn district has a 13-point Baseline Democratic advantage and Harris finished ahead of Trump by 15 points in 2024, so the seat is not at risk of a Republican takeover in this political environment. Democratic Assemblywoman Jacqui Irwin is running, among many potential candidates who will likely take a look at the race. Solid Democratic.

Florida's 2nd District. GOP Rep. Neal Dunn announced he is not running for re-election in the Panhandle district that includes Tallahassee. Trump finished ahead of Harris by 18 points in 2024 and Republicans have an 18-point Baseline advantage, so it would have to be close to a Republican midterm meltdown in order for Democrats to win the seat. Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis called a special legislative session for April to redraw the state's congressional lines, so this seat could end up with a different shape, but still intended to elect a Republican. Solid Republican.

Illinois' 5th District. Democratic Rep. Mike Quigley announced he'll run for mayor of Chicago in 2027. After considering previous mayoral bids in 2019 and 2023, we'll see if the congressman tries to make the jump. He would not have to give up his North Side congressional district in order to do it but it could take him - and his

2026 Governor Ratings

Toss-up (4D)	
KS Open (Kelly, D)	WI Open (Evers, D)
MI Open (Whitmer, D)	Hobbs (D-Ariz.)
Tilt Democratic	Tilt Republican (2R)
	GA Open (Kemp, R)
	Lombardo (R-Nev.)
Lean Democratic	Lean Republican
Likely Democratic (5D)	Likely Republican (1R)
ME Open (Mills, D)	IA Open (Reynolds, R)
NM Open (Lujan-Grisham, D)	
MN Open (Walz, DFL)	
Hochul (D-N.Y.)	
Shapiro (D-Penn.)	
Solid Democratic (9D)	Solid Republican (15R)
CA Open (Newsom, D)	AK Open (Dunleavy, R)
CO Open (Polis, D)	AL Open (Ivey, R)
Green (D-Hawaii)	FL Open (DeSantis, R)
Healey (D-Mass.)	OH Open (DeWine, R)
Kotek (D-Ore.)	OK Open (Stitt, R)
Lamont (D-Ct.)	SC Open (McMaster, R)
McKee (D-R.I.)	TN Open (Lee, R)
Moore (D-Md.)	WY Open (Gordon, R)
Pritzker (D-Ill.)	Abbott (R-Texas)
	Ayotte (R-N.H.)
	Huckabee Sanders (R-Ark.)
	Little (R-Idaho)
	Pillen (R-Neb.)
	Rhoden (R-S.D.)
	Scott (R-Vt.)

Takeovers in Italics, # moved benefiting Democrats, * moved benefiting Republicans

vote - away from Capitol Hill to campaign. Even if or when Quigley eventually leaves the seat completely, Democrats have a 38-point Baseline advantage. Solid Democratic.

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Maryland Redistricting. Democratic Gov. Wes Moore’s redistricting commission recommended a map to the state legislature that would give Democrats an opportunity to defeat Rep. Andy Harris, the only Republican member of the delegation. The effort appears to be supported by Democratic state House Speaker Joseline Pena-Melnyk but has been consistently opposed by Democratic state Senate President Bill Ferguson. The filing deadline is February 24 with a June 23 primary, but those could be moved back if necessary.

Michigan Governor. Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrest dropped his bid for governor in order to run for Michigan secretary of state. That gives current Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson a clearer path to the Democratic nomination for governor, although Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson is still running as well. Republicans have a competitive primary that includes 10th District Rep. John James. And the general election is complicated by former Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, a former Democrat running as an independent. This continues to be one of the most competitive gubernatorial races in the country. Toss-up.

Ohio’s 9th District. Republicans have had a hard time defeating Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur. They redrew her northwest Ohio seat to help the cause but it’s still very unclear who the party will nominate. State Senate President Rob McColley was thought to be gearing up for a bid, but he angered some Republicans in the redistricting process and is running for lieutenant governor as Vivek Ramaswamy’s running mate instead. Former state Rep. Derek Merrin (who lost to Kaptur by less than 1 point in 2024), Air National Guard Lt. Colonel Alea Nadeem, and state Rep. Josh Williams have been running for months. But they were recently joined by former ICE Deputy Director Madison Sheahan, who grew up in Ohio but is the former Louisiana Wildlife/Fisheries secretary and former executive director of the South Dakota Republican Party. At a minimum, Sheahan will allow Kaptur to raise more money off the polarizing ICE brand but the district that voted for Trump by 11 points in 2024 is working against the congresswoman. Tilt Republican.



Madison Sheahan

Courtesy Sheahan Campaign

Ohio’s 10th District. GOP Rep. Mike Turner announced he’s running for re-election. There was some uncertainty after Speaker Mike Johnson removed him from his powerful position as chairman of the Intelligence Committee last year. In 2024, Trump finished ahead of Harris by 8 points in the Dayton-area seat, so it’s not a top Democratic takeover target. But in a poor midterm environment, this could develop into a headache for Republicans. Solid Republican.

Texas’ 33rd District. Former Rep. Colin Allred dropped his Senate bid for a potential return to the House. He left his North Dallas district in 2024 to run statewide and lost by 8.5 points to GOP Sen. Ted Cruz. The former congressman spent much of last year running against GOP Sen.

2026 House Ratings

Toss-Up (2D, 8R)

AZ 1 (Open; Schweikert, R) IA 1 (Miller-Meeks, R) OH 1 (Landsman, D) TX 34 (Gonzalez, D)
AZ 6 (Ciscomani, R) MI 7 (Barrett, R) PA 7 (Mackenzie, R) VA 2 (Kiggans, R)
CO 8 (Evans, R) NY 17 (Lawler, R)

Tilt Democratic (6D, 2R)

CA 13 (Gray, D)
CA 45 (Tran, D)
CA 48 (Issa, R)
NE 2 (Open; Bacon, R)
NM 2 (Vasquez, D)
NY 4 (Gillen, D)
TX 28 (Cuellar, D)
WA 3 (Perez, D)

Tilt Republican (2D, 6R)

CA 22 (Valadao, R)
MI 10 (Open; James, R)
NC 1 (Davis, D)
NJ 7 (Kean Jr., R)
OH 9 (Kaptur, D)
PA 8 (Bresnahan, R)
PA 10 (Perry, R)
WI 3 (Van Orden, R)

Lean Democratic (11D)

CA 21 (Costa, D) NY 3 (Suozi, D)
FL 23 (Moskowitz, D) VA 7 (Vindman, D)
IN 1 (Mrvan, D)
MI 8 (McDonald Rivet, D)
NH 1 (Open; Pappas, D)
NJ 9 (Pou, D)
NV 1 (Titus, D)
NV 3 (Lee, D)
NY 19 (Riley, D)

Lean Republican (4R)

IA 3 (Nunn, R)
MI 4 (Huizenga, R)
PA 1 (Fitzpatrick, R)
VA 1 (Wittman, R)

Likely Democratic (8D)

CA 6 (Open; Bera, D) OH 13 (Sykes, D)
CA 25 (Ruiz, D) PA 17 (Deluzio, D)
CA 47 (Min, D)
NH 2 (Goodlander, D)
MN 2 (Open; Craig, DFL)
NV 4 (Horsford, D)

Likely Republican (2D, 9R)

AK AL (Begich, R) ME 2 (Open; Golden, D)
AZ 2 (Crane, R) TN 5 (Ogles, R)
CO 5 (Crank, R) TX 15 (De La Cruz, R)
FL 7 (Mills, R) TX 35 (Open; Casar, D)
FL 13 (Luna, R) WI 1 (Steil, R)
IA 2 (Open; Hinson, R)

	GOP	DEM
Solid	190	185
Likely/Lean/Tilt	23	27
Total	213	212
Toss-up	10	
Needed for majority	218	

Takeovers in *Italics*. # moved benefiting Democrats. * moved benefiting Republicans

John Cornyn, but that race got crowded when Rep. Jasmine Crockett joined the field. Allred’s return to the House is complicated by the fact that his successor, Rep. Julie Johnson, is running for the same seat. The Allred campaign released a poll, conducted Dec. 14-17, which showed him leading Johnson 58-30 percent in the Democratic primary. Solid Democratic.

West Virginia’s 2nd District. Former West Virginia men’s basketball head coach Bob Huggins intends to challenge Rep. Riley Moore in the GOP primary, according to college basketball reporter Scott Hughes. Moore, a former state treasurer and nephew of Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, was just elected to the seat in 2024, when he won a five-candidate primary with 45 percent, 25 points ahead of the second place finisher. Huggins is well-known from his coaching years but doesn’t appear to have much political experience aside from endorsing and appearing in a TV ad for Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin in 2018. Solid Republican.

Alabama. Open; Tommy Tuberville (R) running for governor. Primary May 19. Runoff (if necessary) June 16. Trump unexpectedly endorsed 1st District Rep. Barry Moore in the GOP primary, giving the congressman from Enterprise a big boost in the crowded race. Moore, a favorite of the Club for Growth, is running against state Attorney General Steve Marshall, former Navy SEAL Jared Hudson, and former Tuberville aide Morgan Murphy. Real estate investor Jeremy Spratling and wholesale fuel retailer Rodney Walker are also running. ESPN analyst Paul Finebaum decided against a bid. Prior to Trump's endorsement, Marshall was a slight polling frontrunner but the race looked destined for a runoff with no one reaching 50 percent. Moore, who is not well known outside of South Alabama, should pick up steam in the coming months. But if he doesn't, the president — who prefers to back winners — has made a new habit of endorsing multiple candidates for the same race when he feels like it. On the Democratic side, Mobile Construction CEO and 2024 DNC speaker Kyle Sweetser is running against pet care entrepreneur Dakari Larriett and chemist Mark Wheeler. Solid Republican.

The Alabama Poll (R) for the Alabama Forestry Association, Dec. 15 (LVs) — GOP primary ballot: Marshall 30%, Moore 12%, Hudson 8%, Walker 3%, Murphy 1%.

Alaska. Dan Sullivan (R), elected 2014 (48%) and 2020 (54%). Filing deadline June 1. Primary Aug. 18. Former Rep. Mary Peltola's entrance into the race puts Alaska on the map for Democrats, and even elevates the Last Frontier to a crucial part of their path back to the majority, along with Maine, North Carolina, and Ohio. Peltola ultimately passed on an easier path to the governorship to challenge Sullivan, two years after she lost re-election narrowly as Trump won the state by 13 points. This will be Peltola's first race as a challenger, and her allies will look to run against Sullivan as the candidate of Washington, DC while emphasizing her own Alaska bona fides.



Mary Peltola

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

Peltola remains well-liked from her time in office and has far deeper political ties than Sullivan's 2020 opponent, independent Al Gross, and the race begins essentially tied in polling. But the partisan lean of the state and an impending crush of negative advertising could take some of the shine off of the former congresswoman more than a year after she left office. Sullivan has begun promoting the pro-Alaska provisions included in the Big Beautiful Bill last year, as well as his support from some Alaska Native Corporations. Ultimately, the low price tag of the state means that both parties will be fully engaged in outside spending by the fall. Lean Republican.

PPP (D) for the DSCC, Jan. 15-17 (RVs) — General election ballot: Peltola over Sullivan, 49% - 47%.

Alaska Survey Research (D), Jan. 8-11 (LVs)(text-to-web/online panel) — General election ballot: Peltola over Sullivan, 48% - 46%.

Arkansas. Tom Cotton (R), elected 2014 (57%) and 2020 (67%). Primary March 3. Runoff (if necessary) March 31. National Republicans are taking Democrat Hallie Shoffner seriously, unleashing a torrent of

opposition research on Cotton's opponent that pokes holes in her profile as a sixth-generation seed farmer. But even though Shoffner is running a fully fledged campaign, the national environment would have to deteriorate significantly for this race to come on line for Democrats. Solid Republican.

Colorado. John Hickenlooper (D), elected 2020 (54%). Filing deadline March 17. Primary June 30. Hickenlooper has two primary challengers on his left flank: former National Park Service policy advisor/attorney Karen Breslin, who challenged Sen. Michael Bennet in 2022, and state Sen. Julie Gonzales, who won her first election in Denver with backing from the Democratic Socialists of America. Having both in the race probably helps Hickenlooper, as does Colorado's unique two-step nominating process. To get a spot on the ballot, candidates must either collect 1,500 signatures in each of the state's eight congressional districts, or receive at least 30 percent of the vote at a statewide nominating convention (Breslin received 19 percent of the convention vote against Bennet in 2022). A unified progressive challenge to Hickenlooper would have more heft. On the GOP side, state Rep. Mark Baisley joined an increasingly crowded field that also includes former state Rep. Janak Joshi, Montrose County Commissioner Sean Pond, and Marine veteran George Washington Markert. Solid Democratic.

Delaware. Chris Coons (D), elected 2010 (57%), 2014 (56%), and 2020 (59%). Filing deadline July 14. Primary Sept. 15. Coons has a primary challenger in former Housing and Urban Development analyst Christopher Beardsley. John Shulli, a colonel in the Army Reserve and an instructor at the War College, is the only announced Republican candidate. Solid Democratic.

Florida. Ashley Moody (R), appointed 2025. Filing deadline April 24. Primary Aug. 18. Similar to Texas, Democrats are tired of losing expensive statewide races in Florida to the point where the party is more excited about challenging in very Republican states such as Mississippi. Trump's 13-point win over Harris in 2024 adds to the Democratic



Ashley Moody

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

skepticism. Appointed senators don't have a sterling track record, but Moody isn't currently facing serious primary or general election threats. (She was originally appointed by Gov. Ron DeSantis when Marco Rubio left to join the

administration.) Former Brevard County School Board member Jennifer Jenkins is running on the Democratic side, while state Rep. Angie Nixon is considering a run as well. Democrats may also get a challenger that could make a bigger splash and the national political environment could make the state competitive again. But for now, the race is rated Solid Republican.

Georgia. Jon Ossoff (D), elected 2020 (51%). Filing deadline March 6. Primary May 19. Runoff (if necessary) June 16. Ossoff entered the year with \$25 million in his campaign account while Republicans

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are no closer to sorting out their three-man primary between Reps. Mike Collins and Buddy Carter and former Tennessee Volunteers football coach Derek Dooley. Collins is dealing with the fallout surrounding an ethics investigation into his former chief of staff and top campaign strategist; GOP strategists had previously said he was running the strongest campaign. Carter has self-funding capacity and has already spent nearly \$5 million on paid media advertising. Dooley, meanwhile, lags behind the other two in polling but has a powerful ally in Gov. Brian Kemp, who is all-in on his candidacy after passing on a bid himself. Unless Trump endorses ahead of May, this primary appears destined for a runoff. Toss-up.

InsiderAdvantage (R), Dec. 18-19 (LVs)— GOP primary ballot: Collins 25%, Carter 20%, Dooley 12%.

Quantus Insights (R), Oct. 22-23 (RVs)— GOP primary ballot: Collins 28%, Carter 16%, Dooley 16%.

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Oct. 15-23 (LVs)— GOP primary ballot: Collins 30%, Carter 20%, Dooley 12%.

Idaho. Jim Risch (R), elected 2008 (58%), 2014 (65%), 2020 (63%). Filing deadline March 6. Primary May 19. Risch shouldn't have any issues winning a fourth term that will keep him in the Senate until he's four months short of 90. Perennial candidate David Roth is running as a Democrat; he most recently won 28 percent of the vote against Sen. Mike Crapo in 2022. Former Democratic state Rep. Todd Achilles is running as an independent. Solid Republican.

Illinois. Open; Dick Durbin (D), not seeking re-election. Primary March 17. The Democratic primary entered a new phase this past week as a super PAC aligned with Lt. Gov. Julianna Stratton began airing TV ads attacking Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi. Until now, Krishnamoorthi had dominated the airwaves, spending more than \$20 million over the past seven months on statewide advertising introducing himself to voters. That spending advantage has given Krishnamoorthi a healthy but not overwhelming lead in primary polling, while Stratton and Rep. Robin Kelly have both struggled to increase their name IDs outside of their Chicago bases.

Stratton's path to victory rests on a well-funded outside group helping her match Krishnamoorthi's firepower in the closing weeks of the race, and her allies believe that Krishnamoorthi's inability to put the race away despite being the only spender for months is a sign that he is vulnerable to a late challenge for the lead. Gov. JB Pritzker may be funding the new pro-Stratton effort, which is being led by former Pritzker deputy campaign manager Quentin Fulks, but that won't be public information for several more weeks, when pre-primary campaign finance reports are due.

The crowded Republican primary has not attracted any top-flight names. Former state GOP chairman Don Tracy is the most notable contender, and he loaned himself \$2 million. But Republicans aren't



Raja Krishnamoorthi

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

talking seriously about contesting this race after Rep. Darin LaHood opted to seek re-election. Solid Democratic.

GBAO (D) for Krishnamoorthi, Jan. 8-12 (LVs)(live caller/text-to-web)— Democratic primary ballot: Krishnamoorthi 41%, Stratton 16%, Kelly 15%.

Emerson College for WGN-TV, Jan. 3-5 (LVs)(mixed mode)— Democratic primary ballot: Krishnamoorthi 31%, Stratton 10%, Kelly 8%.

Public Policy Polling (D) for DLGA (pro-Stratton), Dec. 8-9 (LVs)(IVR/sms)— Democratic primary ballot: Krishnamoorthi 32%, Stratton 20%, Kelly 9%.

Change Research (D) for Krishnamoorthi, Dec. 4-8 (LVs)(online/sms)— Democratic primary ballot: Krishnamoorthi 42%, Stratton 14%, Kelly 7%.

Iowa. Open; Joni Ernst (R), not seeking re-election. Filing deadline March 13. Primary June 2. State Sen. Zach Wahls and state Rep. Josh Turek are the top candidates for the Democratic nomination. Mechanic and veteran Nathan Sage is also running but



Ashley Hinson

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

his campaign has lost the momentum it had earlier last year, when he was the first Democrat to declare. National Democrats are high on Turek, a former Paralympian wheelchair basketball player from Council Bluffs, but Wahls, from Iowa City, has

been a high-profile figure in state politics for more than a decade and has developed a national following as well thanks to his advocacy for LGBTQ rights and focus on getting younger generations involved in politics.

The winner of the Democratic primary will face Rep. Ashley Hinson, the former news anchor who represents the northeast corner of the state and who Democrats acknowledge will be a tough opponent. (Former state Sen. Jim Carlin is also running but unlikely to be a factor.) Democrats believe that Trump's tariff policy gives them an opening in the agriculture-dominated state, and point to a series of overperformances in state legislative special elections over the past year. State Democrats are also excited about the gubernatorial candidacy of state Auditor Rob Sand, whose personal resources and fundraising abilities make it more likely the party runs a well-funded coordinated campaign later this year.

Iowa still sits at the periphery of the Senate battleground, behind not only Maine and North Carolina but Alaska and Ohio as well, but its smaller size and relative inexpensiveness could make it an attractive target for outside groups looking to expand the map later in the cycle. Likely Republican.

Kansas. Roger Marshall (R), elected 2020 (53%). Filing deadline June 1. Primary Aug. 4. Democratic Rep. Sharice Davids looks unlikely to run against Marshall now that Republicans have backed down from their plans to redraw her 3rd District to be more difficult for her to win. That likely keeps this race off the board. Former financial executive Sandy Spidel Neumann, former USDA official Christy Davis, and immigration attorney Ann Parelkar are running as Democrats but would be longshots in the general election. Solid Republican.

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Kentucky. Open; Mitch McConnell (R), not seeking re-election. Primary May 19. With Trump keeping his distance from the GOP primary so far, the race has not developed significantly. Former state Attorney General Daniel Cameron still polls well ahead of Rep. Andy Barr and Lexington businessman Nate Morris, but he remains at a significant financial disadvantage after Barr amassed a hefty amount in his House campaign account and Morris opened his own wallet to self-fund. While Morris' aggressive advertising campaign succeeded in boosting him from the low single digits to the high single or low double digits, his support has plateaued well behind Barr, and it's not obvious that a \$10 million check from Elon Musk to a friendly super PAC will change that. Barr, meanwhile, has weathered attack ads funded by the anti-tax Club for Growth, which has made defeating him a priority. While a Barr-aligned super PAC has spent money hitting Morris, Barr has spent only some of his own campaign funds. Cameron has spent nearly nothing on paid advertising even as he remains in the lead. A Trump endorsement could clarify the primary, but doesn't appear to be forthcoming. Morris has backing from Donald Trump, Jr. and is personal friends with Vice President JD Vance, but Trump likes backing winners and might not want to endorse a candidate polling in a distant third place.



Nate Morris

A surprisingly crowded Democratic primary is taking shape, even as the party faces exceedingly long odds now that popular Gov. Andy Beshear isn't running. The frontrunners, at least initially, are the two most immediate past nominees, former fighter pilot Amy McGrath and former state Rep. Charles Booker, who each lost by double digits in 2020 and 2022, respectively. Also running are horse trainer Dale Romans, state House Minority Leader Pam Stevenson, and attorney and former Secret Service agent Logan Forsythe. Romans may have the most general election upside as a first-time candidate (Stevenson is a former state attorney general nominee) with an apolitical background and personal resources to spend, but he has a lot of ground to make up in the primary. Solid Republican.

OnMessage Inc. (R) for Kentucky First Action (pro-Cameron), Jan. 5-8 (LVs)(text-to-web)— GOP primary ballot: Cameron 40%, Barr 25%, Morris 13%.

Public Policy Polling (D) for Charles Booker, Dec. 18-19 (RVs)— General election ballot: Barr over Booker, 49% - 38%; Cameron over Booker, 46% - 39%; Morris over Booker, 41% - 40%.

Louisiana. Bill Cassidy (R), elected 2014 (56%) and 2020 (59%). Filing deadline Feb. 13. President Trump endorsed Rep. Julia Letlow on Saturday and the congresswoman formally announced on Tuesday. GOP strategists watching the race had said there was no way the congresswoman would challenge Cassidy without the president's support — and now she has it. Former congressman/state Treasurer John Fleming, state Sen. Blake Miguez, state Rep. Julie Emerson, Public Service Commissioner Eric Skrmetta, and St. Tammany Parish

Councilwoman Kathy Seiden are also challenging the senator in the primary, but Letlow's campaign is far more serious. Cassidy reiterated that he is still running for re-election even after Letlow's entrance, even though he has been out of favor with Trump since he voted to impeach the president for "incitement of insurrection" after Jan. 6, 2021. It's hard to see Cassidy returning to Congress next year, but Trump might still need his vote on Capitol Hill this year. Solid Republican.

Maine. Susan Collins (R), elected 1996 (49%), 2002 (58%), 2008 (61%) 2014 (69%), and 2020 (51%). Filing deadline March 15. Primary June 9. A torrent of negative stories about Marine veteran and oysterman Graham Platner may have stifled some of the insurgent candidate's initial momentum, but he's still very much in the race for the Democratic nomination, and even leads Gov. Janet Mills in some polling. There's evident enthusiasm for Platner on the ground, despite lingering questions about his old offensive media posts and (now covered) tattoo of a Nazi symbol, and his campaign says it raised a hefty \$4.7 million over the last three months of the year. The burden may ultimately be on Mills to show she can run a robust campaign at 78 years old and after decades in public office, and prove to Democrats she's the better bet to take on Collins in the general election. She'll face a major test



Janet Mills

and the national spotlight as the federal government turns its sights to Maine for the next stage of its heavy-handed immigration enforcement campaign. Collins has not officially announced her re-election campaign but is actively fundraising

and national GOP strategists expect her to formally jump in before too long. The Thune-aligned Senate Leadership Fund just announced it plans to spend \$42 million to support Collins this fall. Tilt Republican.

Workbench Strategies (D) for Platner, Dec. 11-16 (LVs)— General election ballot: Collins and Platner tied at 50%; Collins over Mills, 51% - 49%.

Pan Atlantic Research, Nov. 29-Dec. 7 (LVs)(online panel)— Democratic primary ballot: Mills over Platner, 47% - 37%. General election ballot: Platner over Collins, 43% - 42%; Collins and Mills tied at 43%.

Z to A Research (D) for Progressive Change Campaign Committee (pro-Platner), Nov. 14-18 (LVs)(text-to-web)— Democratic primary ballot: Platner over Mills, 58% - 38%.

Massachusetts. Ed Markey (D) elected 2013 special (55%), 2014 (62%), and 2020 (66%). Primary Sept. 15, 2026. Rep. Seth Moulton's primary challenge to Markey has elicited plenty of eye rolls among Democrats in Washington, DC, who see it as the latest of Moulton's quixotic bids for relevance that include a 2019 challenge to Nancy Pelosi for the House speakership and a 2020 presidential run. But the congressman will be well-funded and Markey, 79, is six years older than he was when he beat back Joe Kennedy III in another generational contest. Rep. Ayanna Pressley, who would have been a stronger challenger to Markey than Moulton, will not run. Marine veteran John Deaton, who lost the 2024 Senate race to Elizabeth Warren by 20 points,

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is running for the GOP nomination, and secured an early endorsement from the state party committee. But Worcester County Sheriff Lew Evangelidis is keeping his name in the mix too. Solid Democratic.

Michigan. Open; Gary Peters (D), not seeking re-election. Filing deadline April 21. Primary Aug. 4. A late primary date means the three-way Democratic primary is still in its early stages. Rep. Haley Stevens, state Sen. Mallory McMorrow, and former Wayne County health director Abdul El-Sayed are all knotted up, and while Stevens may be a slight polling frontrunner (and the favorite of national Democratic strategists), all three are raising similar amounts of money. Stevens has continued to lean into her background in manufacturing and began to sharpen her attacks on El-Sayed and McMorrow. The more moderate congresswoman benefits from having two opponents appealing to progressive voters; El-Sayed recently rallied with Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. McMorrow has lower name ID than the other two despite having a national following thanks to her viral speeches. The race may not begin to shift toward any candidate until sustained advertising begins over the summer.

Republicans have largely coalesced behind former Rep. Mike Rogers, the 2024 nominee who came up just short in that race. While Rogers does face a nominal

primary from former Michigan GOP co-chairwoman Bernadette Smith among others, he has backing from Trump and the NRSC. While his fundraising is still less impressive than Republican strategists would like, he stands

to benefit significantly more this cycle from outside spending, now that this is the top pickup opportunity for Republicans.

Rogers was ahead of or tied with all three Democratic candidates in a recent *Detroit News* poll, a heartening sign for a candidate who led just three public polls out of 100 during the 2024 race. The silver lining for Democrats is that they are still ahead among those most likely to show up this fall — underscoring that Rogers' main challenge will be turning out low-propensity Trump voters in a midterm election year. Toss-up.

Glengariff Group, Jan. 2-6 (LVs) — General Election ballots: Stevens and Rogers tied at 44%. Rogers over McMorrow, 46% - 42%. Rogers over El-Sayed, 48% - 42%.

Mitchell Research, Nov. 18-21 (LVs) — Democratic primary ballot: Stevens 27%, McMorrow 24%, El-Sayed 16%. General Election ballots: Rogers over Stevens 42% - 40%. Rogers over McMorrow 44% - 38%. Rogers over El-Sayed 41% - 38%.

EPIC-MRA, Nov. 6-11 (LVs) — General Election ballots: Stevens over Rogers 44% - 42%. McMorrow over Rogers 43% - 42%.

Rosetta Stone (R), Oct. 23-25 (LVs) — Democratic primary ballot: Stevens 26%, McMorrow 25%, El-Sayed 20%. General Election ballots: Rogers over Stevens 47% - 40%. Rogers over McMorrow 46% - 39%. Rogers over El-Sayed 45% - 31%.

Minnesota. Open; Tina Smith (DFL), not seeking re-election. Filing deadline June 2. Primary Aug. 11. Former NFL sideline reporter Michele Tafoya entered the race on Wednesday, finally giving

Republicans a candidate to be excited about. She still has to get past retired Navy SEAL Adam Schwarze, former NBA player / conspiracy theorist Royce White, Navy veteran / 2022 3rd District nominee Tom Weiler and potentially others for the nomination. But GOP strategists



Michele Tafoya

believe Tafoya has the media skills and temperament to appeal to donors and force Democrats to spend time defending one of their own seats. Democrats have a competitive primary between 2nd District Rep. Angie Craig and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan but believe either candidate will be a strong nominee. Craig has been dominating the money race while Flanagan is sporting high-profile endorsements from prominent progressives such as state Attorney General Keith Ellison and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, and would be the first Native American woman to serve in the Senate.

Minnesota has been in the national spotlight for allegations of significant fraud in the child care industry and Minneapolis has become a tinderbox after an ICE agent shot and killed a US citizen and Trump responded with threats to send the military to the state. So there's a higher degree of volatility in Minnesota politics right now. But Republicans still have to prove that this is a serious race. Likely DFL.

Mississippi. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R), appointed 2018, elected 2018 special (54%) and 2020 (54%). Filing deadline Feb. 2. Primary March 10. Runoff (if necessary) April 7. Likely Democratic nominee Scott Colom, the District Attorney for the 16th Judicial District of Mississippi, received some national attention recently — not for his campaign, but for his announcement that he'll seek the death penalty for a man accused of a mass shooting last week in Clay County. But even as Colom leans into his tough-on-crime bona fides, he faces long odds in a state that hasn't elected a Democrat to the Senate since segregationist John Stennis in 1982. Hyde-Smith has had to run real campaigns in her two previous races and this one won't be different, but she's the heavy favorite. Solid Republican.

Montana. Steve Daines (R), elected 2014 (58%) and 2020 (55%). Filing deadline March 9. Primary June 2. University of Montana President Seth Bodnar is gearing up to run as an independent against Daines. The former Green Beret and Rhodes Scholar was first mentioned as a potential Senate candidate seven months ago in *Inside Elections*. Bodnar has backing from former Sen. Jon Tester, the last Democrat to win statewide in Montana, and is working with Tester's political team. Some Montana Democrats aren't happy with that, including former state Rep. Reilly Neil, who is the most notable candidate in the Democratic primary. Bodnar's allies plan to run a friendly candidate in the Democratic primary who will drop out after winning the nomination and give Bodnar a clean shot against Daines. Solid Republican.

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Nebraska. Pete Ricketts (R), appointed 2023, elected 2024 special (63%). Filing deadline March 1. Primary May 12. The race is intriguing because it features an independent candidate, but the Cornhusker State remains outside the Senate battleground. After losing by 8 points to GOP Sen. Deb Fischer in 2024, labor leader Dan Osborn has a steeper challenge this year. Osborn doesn't have the element of surprise and Ricketts is a better politician and candidate and will have better funding (he's a billionaire) than Fischer. Osborn could benefit from a better political environment compared to 2024 and, once again, shouldn't have to compete with a Democratic candidate, but the senator still has a significant advantage in a state where Trump finished ahead of Harris by 20 points. Solid Republican.



Dan Osborn

Courtesy Osborn Campaign

New Hampshire. Open; Jeanne Shaheen (D), not seeking re-election. Filing deadline June 12. Primary Sept. 8. National Republicans continue to line up behind former Sen. John E. Sununu in the GOP primary. He has endorsements from NRSC chairman Sen. Tim Scott and at least 27 other senators, but will still have to get through former Massachusetts Sen. Scott Brown in the GOP primary. Sununu has been out of office for two decades but doesn't want for name ID thanks to the more recent tenure of his brother, popular four-term Gov. Chris Sununu. John E. Sununu will also have to contend with his past support for Trump's political opponents. But he begins ahead in primary polling and national strategists believe that he puts the race in play, while Brown would have a more difficult path. Either way, a lengthy primary is good news for likely Democratic nominee Rep. Chris Pappas. Tilt Democratic.

Praecones Analytica (R) for NH Journal, Dec. 26-28, (RVs)(online) — General Election Ballot: Pappas over Sununu, 42% - 36%; Pappas over Brown, 46% - 28%.

Guidant Polling & Strategy (R) for One Nation, Dec. 9-11, (LVs)(mixed mode) — GOP primary ballot: Sununu over Brown, 49% - 30%. General Election Ballot: Pappas over Sununu, 47% - 44%; Pappas over Brown, 49% - 38%.

St. Anselm's College, Nov. 18-19, (RVs)(online) — GOP primary ballot: Sununu over Brown, 39-30 percent. General Election Ballot: Pappas over Sununu, 44% - 41%; Pappas over Brown, 44% - 36%.

New Jersey. Cory Booker (D), elected 2013 special (55%), 2014 (56%), and 2020 (57%). Filing deadline March 23. Primary June 2. Former Tabernacle committeeman Justin Murphy is running against Booker; he previously ran for Senate in 2024 and placed third in the GOP primary. The attorney and Navy veteran also ran for US House in 2008 and 2010. Alina Habba, who was the acting US Attorney for New Jersey before her appointment was ruled unlawful, is a potential candidate. Former state Sen. Ed Durr will not run. Even though Trump performed surprisingly well in New Jersey in 2024, Republicans don't appear likely to seriously contest this race, especially after Democrats romped to

victory in the November 2025 elections. Booker will look to put up a big win while also reserving as much campaign cash as possible for a 2028 presidential run. Solid Democratic.

New Mexico. Ben Ray Luján (D), elected 2020 (51%). Filing deadline Feb. 3. Primary June 2. No Republicans are lining up to challenge Luján; the open gubernatorial race is a larger draw for the GOP. Solid Democratic.

North Carolina. Open; Thom Tillis (R) not seeking re-election. Primary March 3. Runoff (if necessary) May 12. Former Gov. Roy Cooper may represent Democrats' best chance at flipping a Senate seat this fall. Cooper is universally known, left office relatively popular, and has demonstrated fundraising ability, pulling in \$24 million for his campaign through the end of the year. Cooper's likely opponent is Michael Whatley, the former chairman of the Republican National Committee and North Carolina GOP who was handpicked by Trump to run for the seat. National and local GOP strategists say Whatley is running a technically strong campaign, raising money well and traveling the state as he introduces himself to Republicans. But there's concern about how Whatley, a former energy lobbyist and longtime party operative who has never run for office before, will pitch himself



Michael Whatley

Courtesy Whatley Campaign

to voters, especially running against an opponent with six statewide victories to his name.

Both candidates have nominal primary opponents. Michele Morrow, the 2024 GOP nominee for state superintendent of education, is running,

as is military author and Navy veteran Don Brown. On the Democratic side, Cooper faces pastor Orrick Quick and former congressional nominees Justin Dues and Daryl Farrow.

North Carolina is one of the most inelastic states in the nation, so Democratic optimism about Cooper is tempered by the understanding that he likely has a ceiling in the low 50s. Both parties anticipate this race to develop as a barnburner, with a price tag well into the nine figures accounting for outside spending. Toss-up.

Change Research (D) for Carolina Forward, Jan. 5-7 (LVs) — GOP primary ballot: Whatley 36%, Brown 6%, Morrow 4%. General election ballot: Cooper over Whatley, 47% - 42%.

TIPP Insights (R) for League of American Voters, Jan. 12-15 (RVs) — General election ballot: Cooper over Whatley, 48% - 24%.

Ohio. Jon Husted (R), appointed 2025. Filing deadline Feb. 4. Primary May 5. While some Senate battlegrounds feature competitive primaries, the race in the Buckeye State is set between Husted and Democratic former Sen. Sherrod Brown. This has been the likely matchup since Brown entered the race in August, but the race got more clarity when venture capitalist Fred Ode, who entered the race with \$5 million of his own money, exited the Democratic primary at the beginning of November.

After losing re-election to Republican Bernie Moreno by 4 points

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in 2024, Brown is hoping that an improved political environment will help put him back over the top. Lawyers for two former FirstEnergy executives on trial for corruption said they intend to call Husted as a witness during the trial, giving Democrats a connection to a high profile scandal. But Democrats also believe the broader conversation about affordability is more potent and critical to giving them a chance in Republican-leaning states. Once again, Ohio will likely be one of the most expensive races in the country and it's a critical part of Democrats' path to the majority. Lean Republican.

Emerson College, Dec. 6-8 (RVs)(mixed mode) — General election ballot: Husted over Brown, 49% - 46%.

Oklahoma. Markwayne Mullin (R), elected 2022 special (62%). Filing deadline April 3. Primary June 16. Mullin will not struggle in his quest for a full term. Attorney and Nazarene minister Jim Priest is the latest Democrat to jump into the race. The CEO of Goodwill of Central Oklahoma faces martial arts instructor/former police officer Troy Green and nurse N'Kiyla "Jasmine" Thomas in the Democratic primary. Solid Republican.

Oregon. Jeff Merkley (D), elected 2008 (49%), 2014 (56%), and 2020 (57%). Filing deadline March 10. Primary May 19. Oregon Republicans are having a hard time getting serious candidates for the House or Senate. Merkley, 69, is well on his way to a fourth term. Whenever he leaves, there's likely to be a robust Democratic primary to replace him. Solid Democratic.

Rhode Island. Jack Reed (D), elected 1996 (63%), 2002 (78%), 2008 (73%), 2014 (71%), and 2020 (67%). Filing deadline June 24. Primary Sept. 8. Reed, 76, is a shoo-in for a sixth term. Solid Democratic.

South Carolina. Lindsey Graham (R), elected 2002 (54%), 2008 (58%), 2014 (55%), and 2020 (54%). Filing deadline March 30. Primary June 9. Runoff (if necessary) June 23. Graham has refashioned himself into one of Trump's closest allies but is still viewed skeptically by some in the GOP, winning just 68 percent against three unknown and underfunded challengers in 2020. This year he'll face Paul Dans, a former chief of staff at the Office of Personnel Management during the first Trump administration, and Greenville appliance store owner Mark Lynch. While Dans has stronger political relationships in Washington, DC and South Carolina, he has struggled to fundraise; Lynch loaned his campaign \$5 million. Graham is taking the primary seriously, especially given the state's 50 percent runoff threshold, and has already spent more than \$4 million on paid advertising so far.

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Physician Annie Andrews is running as a Democrat, four years after her unsuccessful bid for the 1st District in 2022. Former congressional candidate Brandon Brown and 2022 Senate candidate Catherine Fleming Bruce are also running. Even as Democrats look to expand the Senate map, South Carolina remains firmly outside the battleground. Solid Republican.

South Dakota. Mike Rounds (R), elected 2014 (50%) and 2020 (66%). Filing deadline March 31. Primary June 2. Runoff (if necessary) July 28. Rounds hasn't officially announced his re-election campaign and there is another Republican, Navy veteran Justin McNeal, in the race, but Rounds will likely enter soon and already has Trump's endorsement. Former state trooper Julian Beaudion is running as a Democrat, while 2022 Democratic nominee Brian Bengs, who lost to John Thune by 43 points, is running as an independent. Solid Republican.

Tennessee. Bill Hagerty (R), elected 2020 (62%). Filing deadline March 10. Primary Aug. 6. Lawyer and government affairs professional Diana Onyejiaka is the first Democrat to launch a bid against Hagerty. She previously ran for Senate in 2020 but did not appear on the ballot. Solid Republican.

Texas. John Cornyn (R), elected 2002 (55%), 2008 (65%), 2014 (62%), and 2020 (55%). Primary March 3. Runoff (if necessary) May 26. Cornyn and state Attorney General Ken Paxton remain locked in a contentious and expensive battle for the GOP nomination that looks likely to progress to a runoff. Rep. Wesley Hunt defied Senate leadership to run as well but has struggled to break into the top tier in the primary and remains less known outside of his Houston base. Cornyn's allies have spent tens of millions of dollars on pro-Cornyn advertising over the past year but that hasn't improved his position in polling; he remains mired in the high 30s, a tenuous position for any incumbent. Paxton's support has dipped over the past year as he has chosen not to advertise on TV, but remains the most popular of the three candidates despite the myriad personal and professional scandals that have dogged him for years.

Trump will reportedly refrain from endorsing in the primary, despite Senate Majority Leader John Thune pushing him to support Cornyn. That's not a great outcome for Cornyn, who needs a fundamental reset in this race, but Trump declining to endorse Paxton keeps the senator's chances alive.

If no candidate receives a majority of the vote in early March, the top two finishers will advance to a May runoff. It is already rare for incumbents to be forced into runoffs, and rarer still that they significantly increase their vote share in a second round. In 2014's Mississippi Senate race, incumbent Thad Cochran expanded his share of the vote from 49 percent to 51 percent between the primary and runoff. Since 2014, three Texas congressmen have also faced primary runoffs, with none improving their vote share by more than six points. And while Republican strategists in Washington, DC believe that Cornyn would be a much stronger general election candidate than Paxton, it is not obvious how much money outside groups will be willing to spend to back Cornyn in a runoff election.

Texas Democrats appear likely to avoid a runoff, though the race looks very different than it did three months ago. Former Rep. Colin Allred dropped out under pressure from Rep. Jasmine Crockett, who jumped in the race at the last minute. State Rep. James Talarico is also

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running. The Austin legislator’s social media savvy and background as a minister have made him a fundraising juggernaut — his campaign says he raised \$13 million in 2025 — and he’s outpacing Crockett considerably, though the Dallas congresswoman’s national profile made her the early polling frontrunner.

The Lone Star State has burned Democrats cycle after cycle, but if Paxton is the GOP nominee, polling indicates the race could be competitive. Texas isn’t an integral part of the party’s path to the Senate majority, which now runs through Maine, North Carolina, Alaska and Ohio, but putting the race in play with a strong fundraiser such as Crockett or Talarico could force Republicans to shift resources away from other states to bolster Paxton. Likely Republican.

HIT Strategies (D) for Crockett, Jan. 6-15 (LVs)— Democratic primary ballot: Crockett over Talarico 46% - 33%. IDs: Crockett 65% favorable/7% unfavorable, Talarico 45% favorable/5% unfavorable.

Emerson College, Jan. 10-12 (LVs)(mixed mode)— GOP primary ballot: Paxton 27%, Cornyn 26%, Hunt 16%. Democratic primary ballot: Talarico over Crockett, 47% - 38%. General election ballot: Cornyn over Crockett, 48% - 43%; Cornyn over Talarico, 47% - 44%; Paxton and Crockett tied at 46%; Paxton and Talarico tied at 46%; Hunt over Crockett, 48% - 43%; Hunt over Talarico, 47% - 44%.

Pulse Decision Science (R) for pro-Paxton group, Dec. 14-17 (LVs)(live caller)— GOP primary ballot: Paxton and Cornyn tied at 38%, Hunt 16%.

Texas Southern University, Dec. 9-11 (LVs)(text-to-web)— Democratic



Jasmine Crockett

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

primary ballot: Crockett over Talarico, 51% - 43%. McLaughlin & Associates (R) for pro-Hunt group, Dec. 1-4 (LVs)(live caller/sms)— GOP primary ballot: Paxton 33%, Hunt 28%, Cornyn 27%.

Virginia. Mark Warner (D), elected 2008 (65%), 2014 (49%), and 2020 (56%). Filing deadline April 2. Primary June 16. State Sen. Bryce Reeves dropped his Senate bid, depriving Republicans of a top-tier candidate to take on Warner. Veteran and former CIA officer David Williams is the most notable GOP candidate remaining in the race, but after Democrats dominated last year’s state-level elections, the Virginia GOP is in survival mode. Solid Democratic.

West Virginia. Shelley Moore Capito (R), elected 2014 (62%) and 2020 (70%). Filing deadline Jan. 31. Primary May 12. State Sen. Tom Willis officially filed to run against Capito, taking aim at her vote for the Biden-era Afghan refugee resettlement program. The attorney and special forces veteran was recently named the chairman of the state Senate judiciary committee and has developed a small following as a self-described “Christian Constitutional Conservative,” but Capito has an endorsement from Trump and an overwhelming financial advantage. Allied groups have been airing pro-Capito TV ads at a slow burn over the past year. Democrat Zach Shrewsbury is running again after placing second in the 2024 Democratic primary, but his campaign got off to a bumpy start after he was accused of groping a massage therapist. Solid Republican.

Wyoming. Open; Cynthia Lummis (R), not seeking re-election. Filing deadline May 29. Primary Aug. 18. Rep. Harriet Hageman is the odds-on favorite to succeed Lummis, and an endorsement from Trump and Senate leadership should keep out other contenders. Outgoing wealthy Gov. Mark Gordon could be a credible candidate but doesn’t appear likely to run. There was more analysis in the Jan. 8 issue. Solid Republican.

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Midterm Senate Results for the President's Party

