

Invariant



# Election Update

February 24, 2026



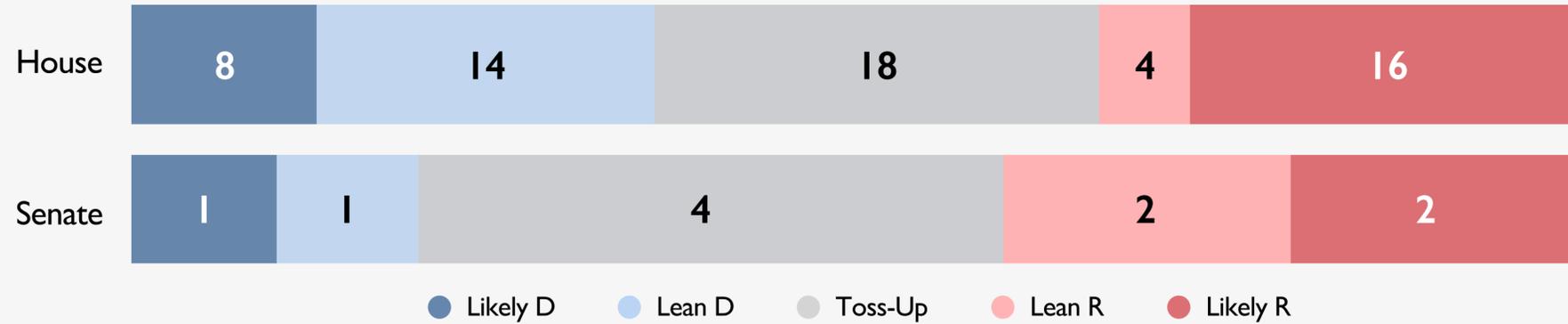
# Election Dashboard

**60+**

**Open Seats in Congress**  
(Highest this century)



## House and Senate Competitive Race Ratings



## Upcoming Primaries

- Arkansas**  
March 3
- N. Carolina**  
March 3
- Texas**  
March 3
- Mississippi**  
March 10
- Georgia**  
March 10\*
- Illinois**  
March 17

## Trump Approval Rating

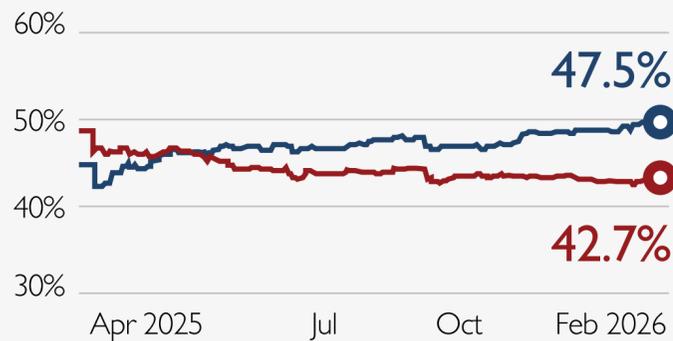


**42%**

Source: RCP

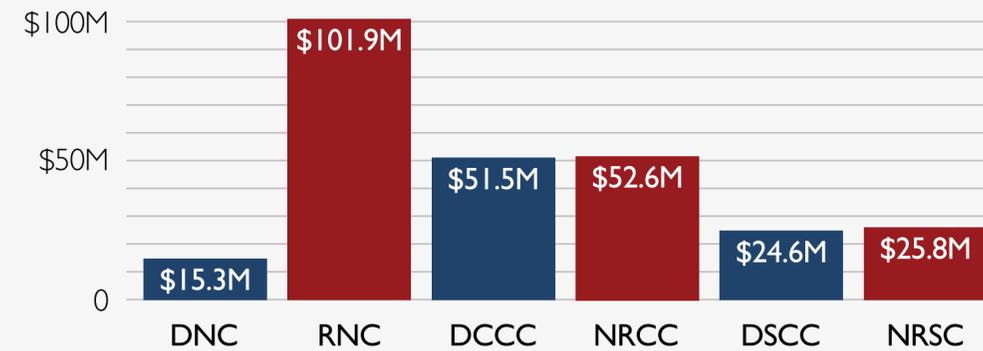
## Generic Ballot

Source: RCP



## Party Committees

As of 1/31/26  
Source: FEC



**Is the country headed in the right or wrong track?**

✘ Wrong Track  
**57.4%**

✔ Right Track  
**36.5%**

Source: RCP  
as of Feb 2026

\*Special election  
GA-14 (Open)

# Elections At a Glance

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## House

**435** House seats up for grabs

With all 435 seats on the ballot, Republicans begin the cycle with only a one-seat majority as a wave of unprecedented mid-decade redistricting around the country upends the map. Redistricting in Texas, North Carolina, Ohio, and Missouri could yield Republican gains, while several other Democrat-leaning states are pushing for favorable map changes. While Democrats are favored to take the majority based on historical midterm trends and the current political environment, the competition is concentrated in several dozen Lean and Toss-Up districts rather than across the map.

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## Senate

**35** Senate seats up for grabs

Democrats enter 2026 with an improved, though still narrow, path to reclaiming the Senate majority, as retirements and recruitment developments modestly expand the competitive map. Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, and Georgia are likely to anchor the battlefield, while primary dynamics, particularly in Texas, could influence the competitiveness of other key races.

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## Governors

**36** Governor seats up for grabs

Thirty-six states will elect governors in 2026, including 15 open seats. Open contests in Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio remove incumbency advantages in closely divided states. Incumbent governors face competitive environments in Arizona and Nevada, while most other races lean toward the incumbent party. Recent Democratic wins in Virginia and New Jersey underscore the importance of candidate quality and state-level economic messaging in gubernatorial elections, which have historically been less affected by national partisan swings. Additionally, control of state legislatures will significantly impact policy and future redistricting.

# 2026 Landscape

Several key forces and national trends are shaping the voting environment in states across America this year.

## 01

### Nationalized Voting Patterns

Polarization has increased straight-party voting and decreased ticket-splitting. At the same time, more Americans than ever identify as Independent, with nearly half of the country rejecting traditional party labels due to growing dissatisfaction with the political system.

## 02

### Candidate Quality and Primaries

In competitive contests, nominee selection, particularly in states such as Texas (Senate) and Arizona (Governor), may be more impactful than the national political environment. More polarizing candidates with less experience who win primaries may weaken their party's chances of securing the seat when facing a more moderate general electorate.

## 03

### Money and Outside Spending

Campaign committees, party networks, and super PACs are investing heavily in what will likely be the most expensive midterm election cycle in history. And a pending Supreme Court decision on coordinated spending limits could reshape how party committees allocate resources in close contests. Ending coordination limits would strengthen party committees' hand in advertising and message control, potentially shifting influence away from independent super PACs and back toward party leadership.

## 04

### Redistricting and Courts

Mid-decade map changes in Texas, California, North Carolina, Utah, Ohio, Missouri, and potentially more states, along with ongoing litigation, are reshaping House races and could alter state legislative battlegrounds. The most likely outcome of all enacted and pending redraws combined is roughly a wash nationally, though best-case scenarios for either party could swing several seats.

## 05

### Trump Effect

Without President Trump on the ballot, 2026 reintroduces the traditional midterm dynamic in which turnout composition shifts significantly compared to presidential years. Trump's absence may alter coalition composition and voter enthusiasm, particularly in swing states where narrow margins decide outcomes. Although not on the ballot, Trump will remain center stage in this election. If his approval ratings continue to decline on issues traditionally seen as Republican strengths like immigration and the economy, it could endanger Republican candidates in competitive races.

# 2026 Primary Calendar

Primary season is about to begin, with voters set to decide all 435 U.S. House seats, 35 Senate seats, 36 governorships, and control of 88 state legislative chambers in November.

**March 3**  Arkansas Primary  
 North Carolina Primary  
 Texas Primary

**March 10**  Mississippi Primary

**March 17**  Illinois Primary

**March 31**  Arkansas Runoff

**April 7**  Mississippi Runoff

**May 5**  Indiana Primary  
 Ohio Primary

**May 12**  Nebraska Primary  
 North Carolina Runoff  
 West Virginia Primary

**May 16**  Louisiana Primary

**May 19**  Alabama Primary  
 Georgia Primary  
 Idaho Primary  
 Kentucky Primary  
 Oregon Primary  
 Pennsylvania Primary

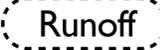
**May 26**  Texas Runoff

**June 2**  California Top 2 Primary  
 Iowa Primary  
 Montana Primary  
 New Jersey Primary  
 New Mexico Primary  
 South Dakota Primary

**June 9**  Maine Primary  
 Nevada Primary  
 North Dakota Primary  
 South Carolina Primary

# 2026 Primary Calendar

Primary season is about to begin, with voters set to decide all 435 U.S. House seats, 35 Senate seats, 36 governorships, and control of 88 state legislative chambers in November.

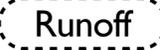
**June 16**  Alabama   
 Georgia   
 Oklahoma   
 Virginia 

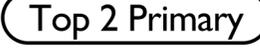
**June 23**  Maryland   
 New York   
 South Carolina   
 Utah 

**June 27**  Louisiana 

**June 30**  Colorado 

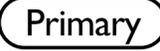
**July 21**  Arizona 

**July 28**  South Dakota 

**August 4**  Kansas   
 Michigan   
 Missouri   
 Washington 

**August 6**  Tennessee 

**August 8**  Hawaii 

**August 11**  Connecticut   
 Minnesota   
 Vermont   
 Wisconsin 

**August 18**  Alaska   
 Florida   
 Wyoming 

**August 25**  Oklahoma 

**September 1**  Massachusetts 

**September 8**  New Hampshire   
 Rhode Island 

**September 15**  Delaware 

**November 3**  National 

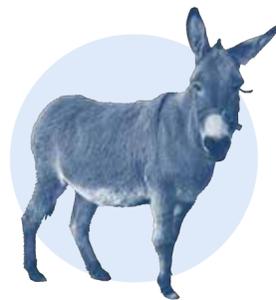
**December 1**  Georgia 

252

days until the 2026 election

# House

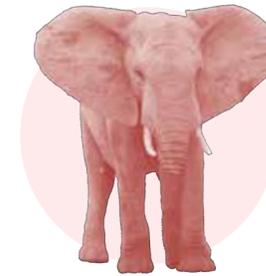
The current House makeup reflects a razor-thin margin in which control could hinge on just a handful of competitive districts in 2026.



Dem.  
**214**

**3**  
Vacancies

**218**  
GOP

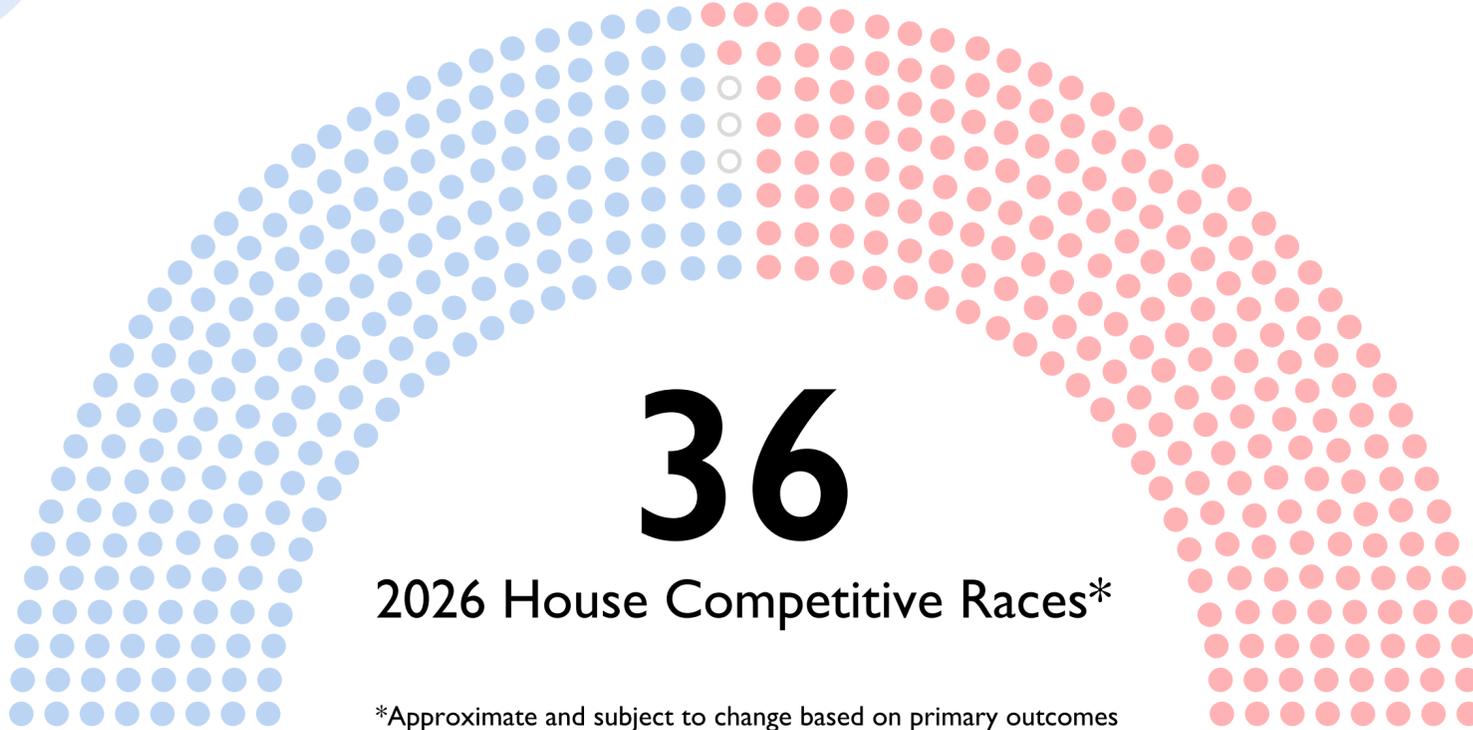


Fundraising

DCCC  
**\$51.5M**

Fundraising

NRCC  
**\$52.6M**



\*Approximate and subject to change based on primary outcomes

# Overview

**Republicans' narrow House majority makes the chamber the likeliest to change hands in 2026, with competition concentrated in just several dozen swing districts.**

## History

The president's party loses an average of 26 House seats in midterm elections. Turnout drops significantly from presidential years, and the resulting electorate tends to punish the party in power. Today's polarized environment limits the number of truly competitive districts. This all means swings tend to be concentrated rather than sweeping. Recent cycles have partially defied tradition, though. In both 2018 and 2022, the president's party lost House seats while gaining ground in the Senate, but the broader pattern of midterm backlash in the House has held remarkably firm.

## Retirements

So far, 54 members (31 Republicans and 23 Democrats) will retire this year, with a majority (27 Members) leaving to run for another office. More Members announced retirements this year than at this point in 2024, 2022, and 2020. When combined with Senate retirements, it's the most congressional retirements this century. More Republicans leaving the House creates an early structural headwind for the GOP, particularly because open seats are historically more competitive and more expensive to defend. Many Republican departures are in districts already trending competitive or altered by mid-decade redistricting.

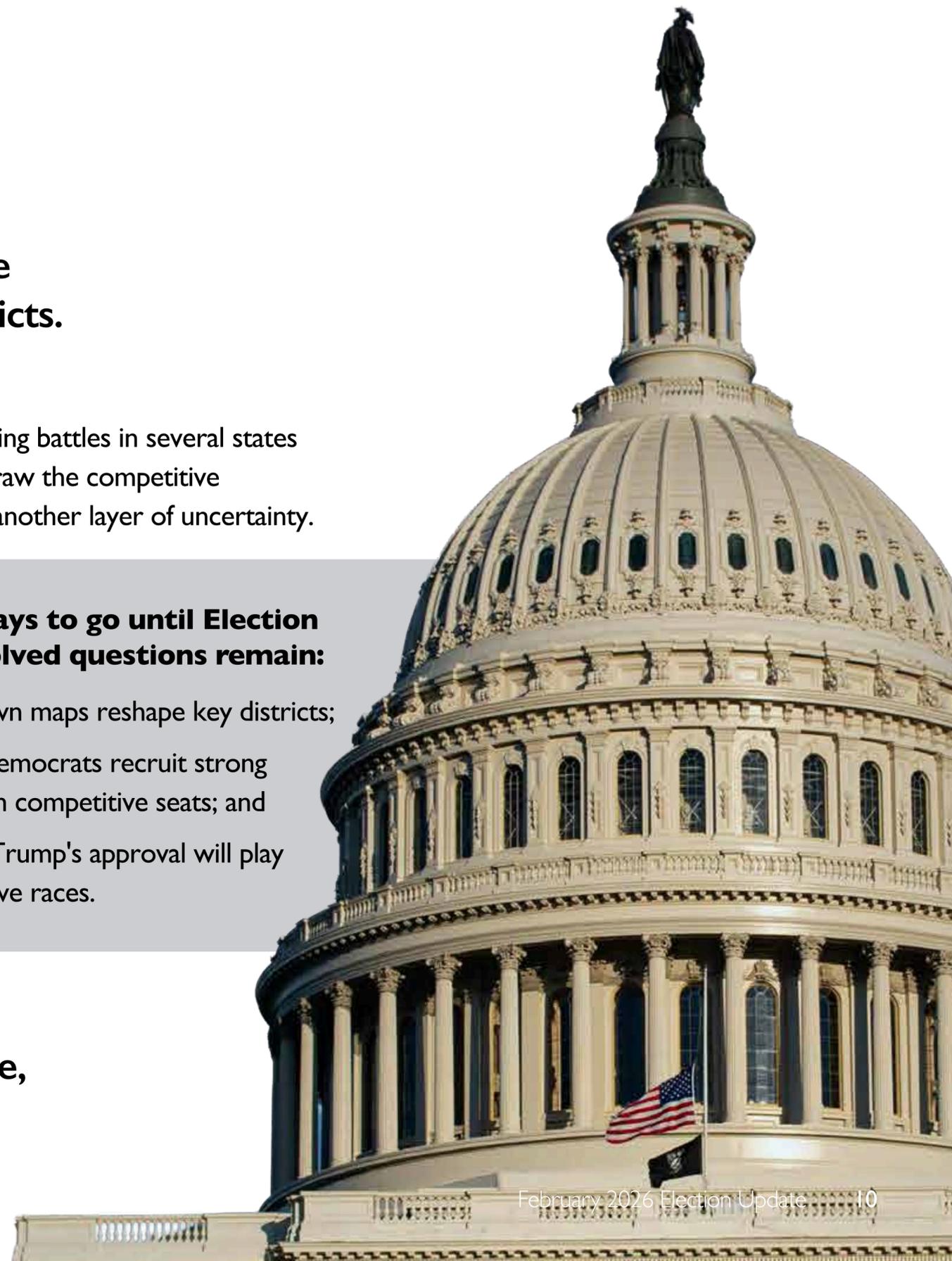
## Redistricting

Ongoing redistricting battles in several states could entirely redraw the competitive landscape, adding another layer of uncertainty.

### **With 252 days to go until Election Day, unresolved questions remain:**

- How redrawn maps reshape key districts;
- Whether Democrats recruit strong candidates in competitive seats; and
- What role Trump's approval will play in competitive races.

**Taken together, the fundamentals points toward a Democratic flip in the House, but the margin for error is slim. The outcome is anything but guaranteed.**



# Historic Trends

## The Approval Effect: How Presidential Popularity Shapes Midterm House Races

Year	President	Approval Rating	Midterm House Results
1946	Truman <span>D</span>	33%	-45 Seats
1950	Truman <span>D</span>	39%	-29 Seats
1954	Eisenhower <span>R</span>	61%	-18 Seats
1958	Eisenhower <span>R</span>	57%	-48 Seats
1962	JFK <span>D</span>	61%	-4 Seats
1966	LBJ <span>D</span>	44%	-47 Seats
1970	Nixon <span>R</span>	58%	-12 Seats
1974	Ford <span>R</span>	54%	-48 Seats
1978	Carter <span>D</span>	49%	-15 Seats
1982	Reagan <span>R</span>	42%	-26 Seats

Year	President	Approval Rating	Midterm House Results
1986	Reagan <span>R</span>	63%	-5 Seats
1990	Bush <span>R</span>	58%	-8 Seats
1994	Clinton <span>D</span>	46%	-52 Seats
1998	Clinton <span>D</span>	66%	+5 Seats
2002	Bush <span>R</span>	63%	+8 Seats
2006	Bush <span>R</span>	38%	-30 Seats
2010	Obama <span>D</span>	45%	-63 Seats
2014	Obama <span>D</span>	40%	-13 Seats
2018	Trump <span>R</span>	38%	-40 Seats
2022	Biden <span>D</span>	40%	-9 Seats

# Competitive House Races

## Lean D (14)

- D CA-13 - Gray
- D CA-45 - Tran
- D FL-23 - Moskowitz
- D MI-08 - McDonald Rivet
- R NE-02 - OPEN (Bacon)
- D NJ-09 - Pou
- D NM-02 - Vasquez
- D NV-03 - Lee
- D NY-03 - Suozzi
- D NY-04 - Gillen
- D NY-19 - Riley
- D OH-13 - Sykes
- D TX-28 - Cuellar
- D VA-07 - Vindman

## Toss Up (18)

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <span>R</span> AZ-01 - OPEN (Schweikert) | <span>R</span> NY-17 - Lawler    |
| <span>R</span> AZ-06 - Ciscomani         | <span>D</span> OH-01 - Landsman  |
| <span>R</span> CA-22 - Valadao           | <span>D</span> OH-09 - Kaptur    |
| <span>R</span> CA-48 - Issa              | <span>R</span> PA-07 - Mackenzie |
| <span>R</span> CO-08 - Evans             | <span>R</span> PA-10 - Perry     |
| <span>R</span> IA-01 - Miller-Meeks      | <span>D</span> TX-34 - Gonzalez  |
| <span>R</span> IA-03 - Nunn              | <span>R</span> VA-02 - Kiggans   |
| <span>R</span> MI-07 - Barrett           | <span>D</span> WA-03 - Perez     |
| <span>R</span> NJ-07 - Kean Jr.          | <span>R</span> WI-03 - Van Orden |

## Lean R (4)

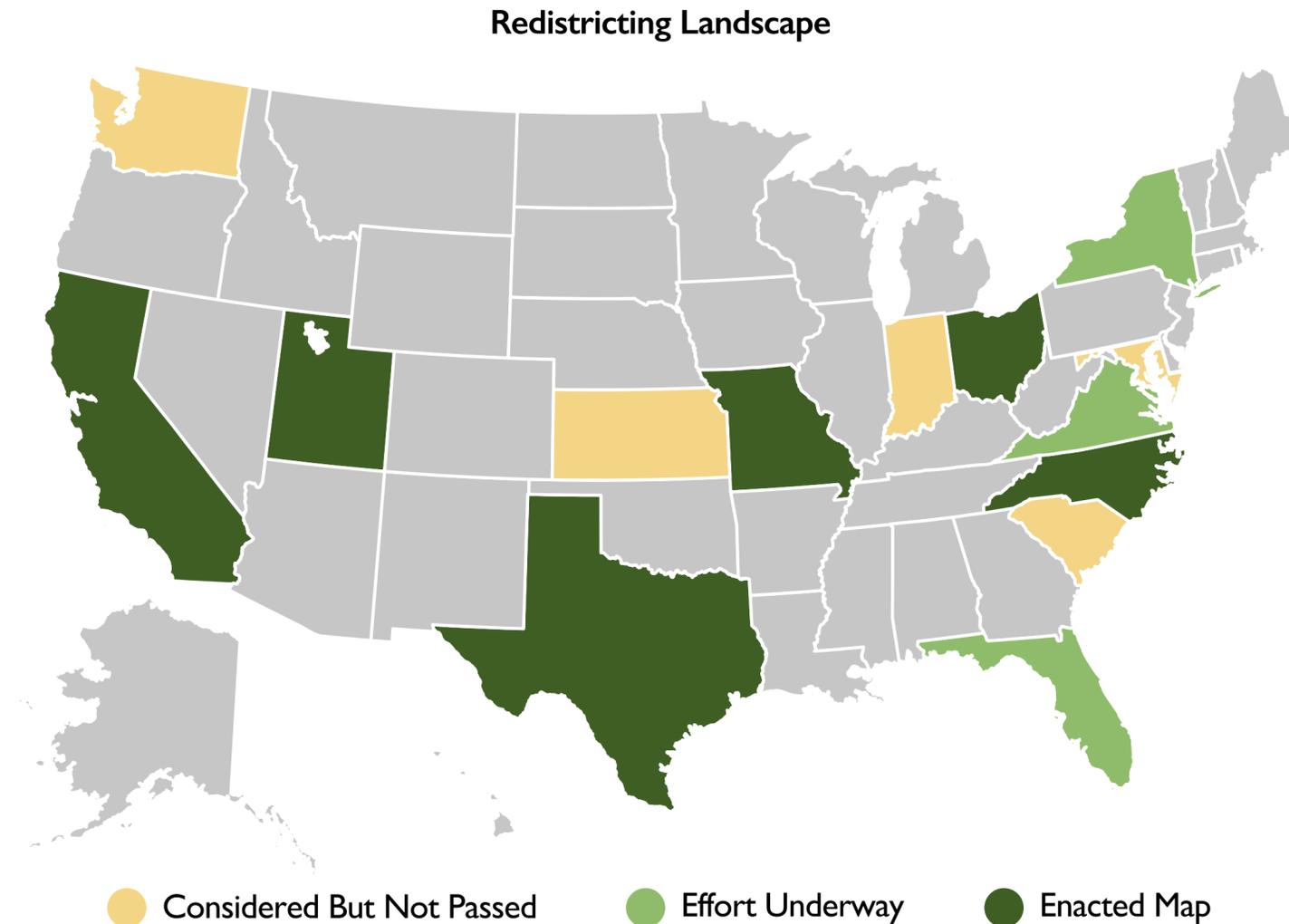
- R MI-10 - OPEN (James)
- D NC-01 - Davis
- R PA-08 - Bresnahan
- R VA-01 - Wittman

# Redistricting

The most consequential structural variable in the House is mid-decade redistricting. Multiple states have enacted or are considering new maps.

The most likely outcome of all enacted and pending redraws combined is roughly a wash nationally, though best-case scenarios for either party could swing several seats.

Redistricting created fresh battlegrounds and altered the composition of crossover districts (voting one party for president and the other party for Congress). Under the new maps, there are 24 crossover districts, up from just 16 in 2024. Sixteen Democrats represent territory Trump won, and eight Republicans represent areas that voted for Harris.



## SCOTUS Impact

- If the Court finds Louisiana's 2024 redistricting plan to be unconstitutional, it will shake up the House map further.
- If the map is struck down, states could redraw majority-minority districts in ways that favor Republicans, potentially reshaping a dozen seats nationally.
- Timing is critical. Many southern states hold primaries in March or April, meaning the Court would need to rule by late February for significant redraws to affect 2026.

# Redistricting

## Enacted Maps

State	Who controls the process?	Legal guardrails	Potential pickup	Current delegation	Status of new map
 Texas	Republican-controlled state legislature		<b>GOP +3-5</b>	GOP 25 - Dem 13	Signed into law
 North Carolina	Republican-controlled state legislature		<b>GOP +1</b>	GOP 10 - Dem 4	State legislature enacted new map
 Ohio	Republican-controlled state legislature and bipartisan commission		<b>GOP +0-3</b>	GOP 10 - Dem 5	Bipartisan redistricting commission enacted new map
 California	Independent commission		<b>Dem +3-5</b>	Dem 43 - GOP 9	Enacted through statewide ballot measure
 Utah	Republican-controlled state legislature	Partisan gerrymandering ban	<b>Dem +1</b>	GOP 4 - Dem 0	Enacted through court order
 Missouri	Republican-controlled state legislature	Opponents could block map through statewide referendum	<b>GOP +1</b>	GOP 6 - Dem 2	Signed into law and facing federal lawsuits and potential referendum

## Efforts Underway

State	Who controls the process?	Legal guardrails	Potential pickup	Current delegation	Status of new map
 Virginia	Bipartisan commission	Requires constitutional amendment	<b>Dem +2-4</b>	Dem 6 - GOP 5	Referendum to amend constitution set for April 21
 New York	Independent commission		<b>Dem +1</b>	Dem 19 - GOP 7	State judge ordered redrawn map
 Florida	Republican-controlled state legislature	Partisan gerrymandering ban (but conservatives control state Supreme Court)	<b>GOP +2-3</b>	GOP 20 - Dem 8	Special session set for late April

# Redistricting

## Considered But Not Passed

State	Who controls the process?	Legal guardrails	Potential pickup	Current delegation	Status of new map
 Maryland	Democratic-controlled state legislature		Dem +1	Dem 7 - GOP 1	House of Delegates passed new map; Senate declined to take up the bill
 Indiana	Republican-controlled state legislature		GOP +2	GOP 7 - Dem 2	Efforts to redistrict stalled due to some Republican opposition
 Kansas	Republican-controlled state legislature		GOP +1	GOP 3 - Dem 1	Efforts to redistrict stalled due to some Republican opposition
 South Carolina	Republican-controlled state legislature		GOP +1	GOP 6 - Dem 1	Legislation proposed but faces some hurdles and unlikely to alter maps in 2026
 Washington	Democratic-controlled state legislature	Requires constitutional amendment	Dem +1-2	Dem 8 - GOP 2	Legislation proposed but faces significant hurdles and unlikely to alter maps in 2026
 Louisiana	Republican-controlled state legislature		GOP +1	GOP 4 - Dem 2	Pending U.S. Supreme Court decision
 Alabama	Republican-controlled state legislature		GOP +1	GOP 5 - Dem 2	Pending U.S. Supreme Court decision
 Wisconsin	Republican-controlled state legislature		Dem +1-2	GOP 6 - Dem 2	Pending state Supreme Court decision

# TX Primary Spotlight

**The most consequential mid-decade redraw in the country.**

New GOP map creates member-on-member primaries, accelerates retirements, and reshapes South Texas battlegrounds. Republicans are positioned for gains, but Democratic primaries will determine whether several districts become competitive in November. High delegation churn and Texas's runoff system could extend key contests into May.

## Member-on-Member Democratic Primaries

### TX-18 (Green vs. Menefee)

Generational contest between 78-year-old Rep. Al Green and newly sworn-in Rep. Christian Menefee. Public polling shows Menefee leading; outside spending and local endorsements favor him. This is a safe Democratic seat in November.

### TX-33 (Johnson vs. Allred)

Rep. Julie Johnson faces former Rep. Colin Allred after redistricting dismantled prior seats. Allred entered with stronger name ID; Johnson has consolidated leadership endorsements. Third candidates could force runoff. This is a safe Democratic seat in November.

## Competitive General Election Districts

### TX-28 (Cuellar – D)

Redrawn district voted more Republican in 2024, but Rep. Henry Cuellar's crossover appeal and recent pardon could blunt GOP. GOP primary winner will determine November competitiveness.

### TX-34 (Gonzalez – D)

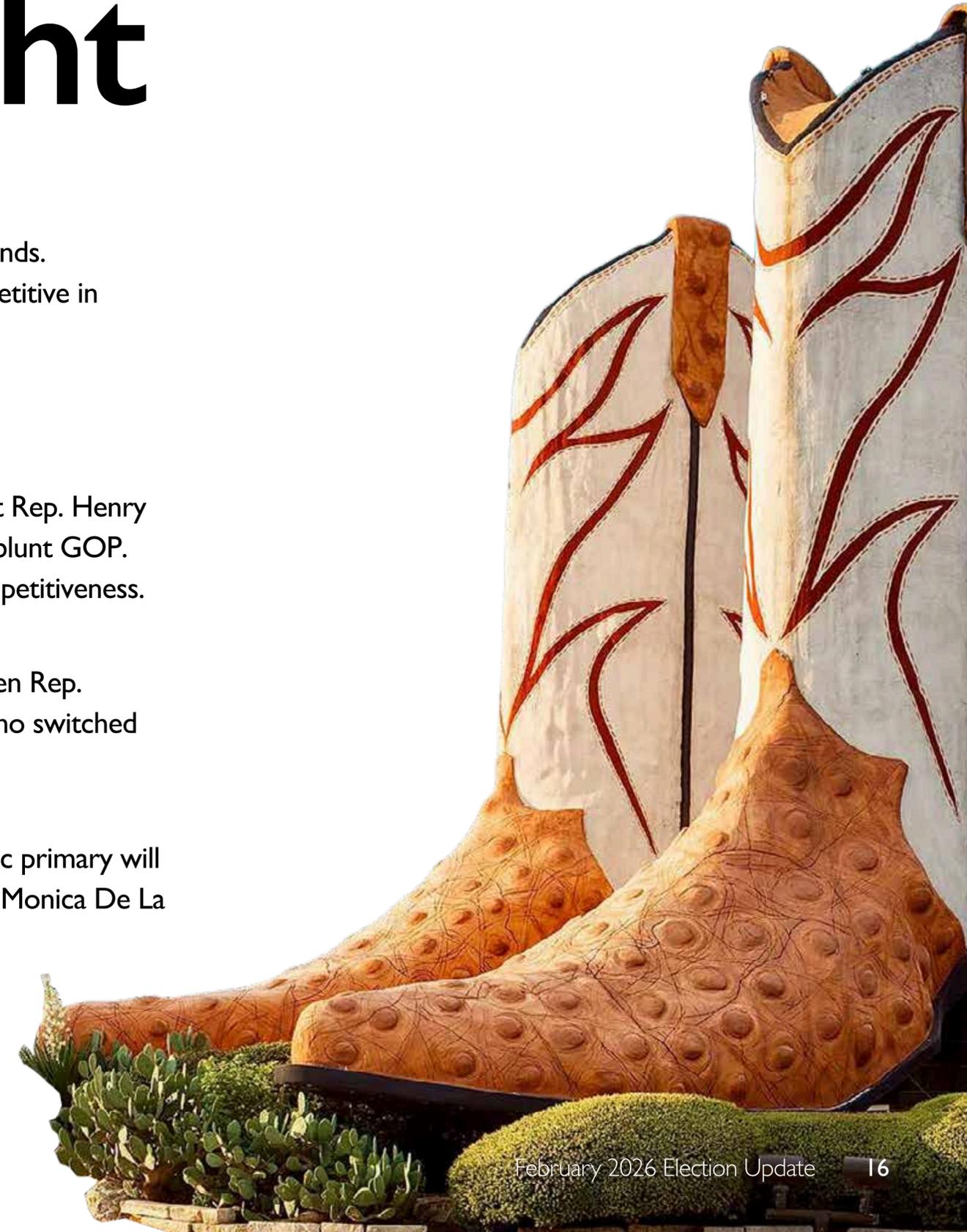
Under new lines, this race features a rematch between Rep. Vincente Gonzalez and former Rep. Mayra Flores, who switched districts. One of GOP's clearest pickup targets.

### TX-15 (De La Cruz – R)

In this structurally Republican district, the Democratic primary will determine if this becomes a serious contest for Rep. Monica De La Cruz in the Rio Grande Valley.

### TX-23 (Gonzales – R)

A GOP primary challenge to Rep. Tony Gonzales from YouTube personality Brandon Herrera and others, plus recent controversy, injects volatility in this race.



# IL Primary Spotlight

## Competitive Primaries to Define Next Era of Chicago Democrats

A wave of longtime Illinois Members retiring or running for higher office created four open and safe Democratic seats in the Chicago area, setting up some of the most competitive House primaries of the cycle.

### IL-02 (Open – Rep. Robin Kelly running for Senate)

This Chicago South Side and south suburban district features a crowded field that includes former Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., state Sen. Robert Peters, Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller, and several local officials. Jackson brings universal name recognition but also past legal baggage. Peters has consolidated progressive endorsements and labor support, while Miller is competing for suburban Black voter support that will likely decide the race.

### IL-04 (Open – Rep. Chuy García retiring)

After García's last-minute retirement before the filing deadline, his former chief of staff Patty Garcia became the lone Democrat on the primary ballot. The filing maneuver prompted independent bids from Chicago Alderman Byron Sigcho-Lopez and former Latino Victory Fund executive Mayra Macías, but the heavily Democratic district remains strongly favored to stay in Democratic hands.

### IL-07 (Open – Rep. Danny Davis retiring)

Held by Davis for nearly 30 years, there is no clear frontrunner in this crowded race to represent this West Side Chicago seat. The field includes Chicago City Treasurer Melissa Conyears-Ervin, state Rep. La Shawn Ford, and community organizer Jason Friedman, among others, and the contest will likely be shaped by ward-level political organization and backing from Chicago's Democratic infrastructure.

### IL-08 (Open – Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi running for Senate)

Former Rep. Melissa Bean, who previously represented much of this suburban territory, brings fundraising strength and a moderate profile. She faces a crowded field of local government and business leaders in the primary, including tech entrepreneur Junaid Ahmed, Cook County Commissioner Kevin Morrison, and Hanover Park Trustee Yasmeen Bankole. Given the district's suburban composition, fundraising capacity and coalition-building among northwest suburban voters will be decisive.

### IL-09 (Open – Rep. Jan Schakowsky retiring)

In this North Shore and lakefront district, state Sen. Laura Fine, Evanston Mayor Daniel Biss, and several progressive activists are competing for the nomination. The race is a contest between Fine's legislative base and Biss's municipal leadership profile, with ideological positioning and suburban turnout likely to determine the outcome.



# Safe Seats, Competitive Primaries

Even in districts that are not competitive in November, intraparty primaries are testing incumbents and signaling broader ideological and generational tensions within the Democratic coalition.

## North Carolina (March 3)

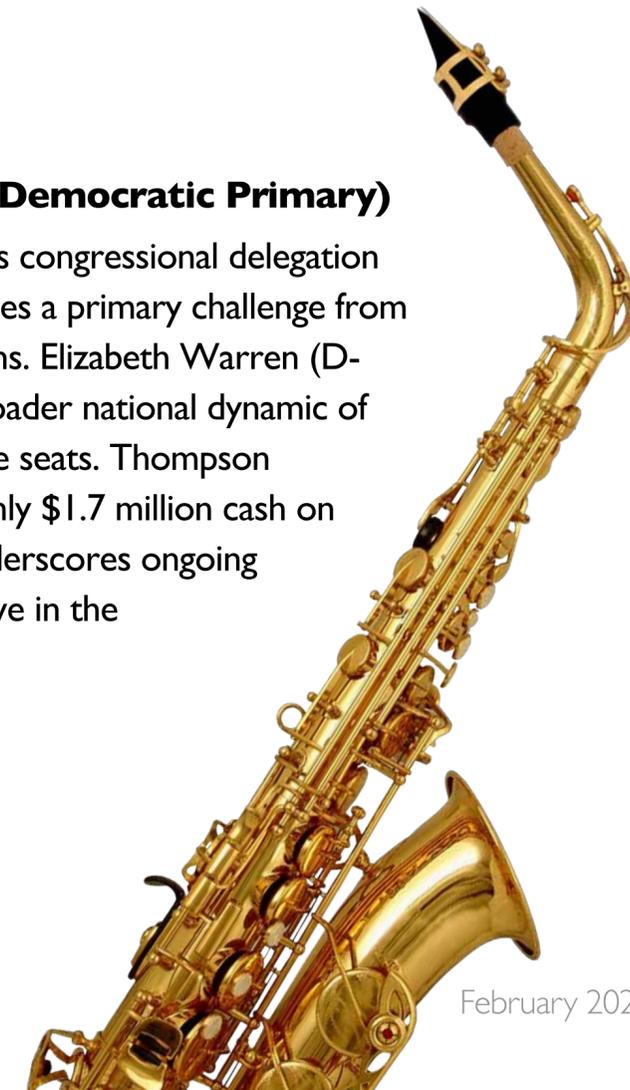
### NC-04 (Valerie Foushee vs. Nida Allam – Democratic Primary)

In safely Democratic NC-04, Rep. Valerie Foushee faces a competitive rematch against Durham County Commissioner Nida Allam, who challenged her in 2022, for this safe seat. Allam significantly outraised Foushee in the most recent reporting period and benefits from substantial outside spending, tightening what might otherwise be a typical incumbent primary. While Foushee retains institutional support and incumbency advantages, the contest reflects broader ideological and generational tensions within the Democratic Party. The winner is virtually assured victory in November.

## Mississippi (March 10)

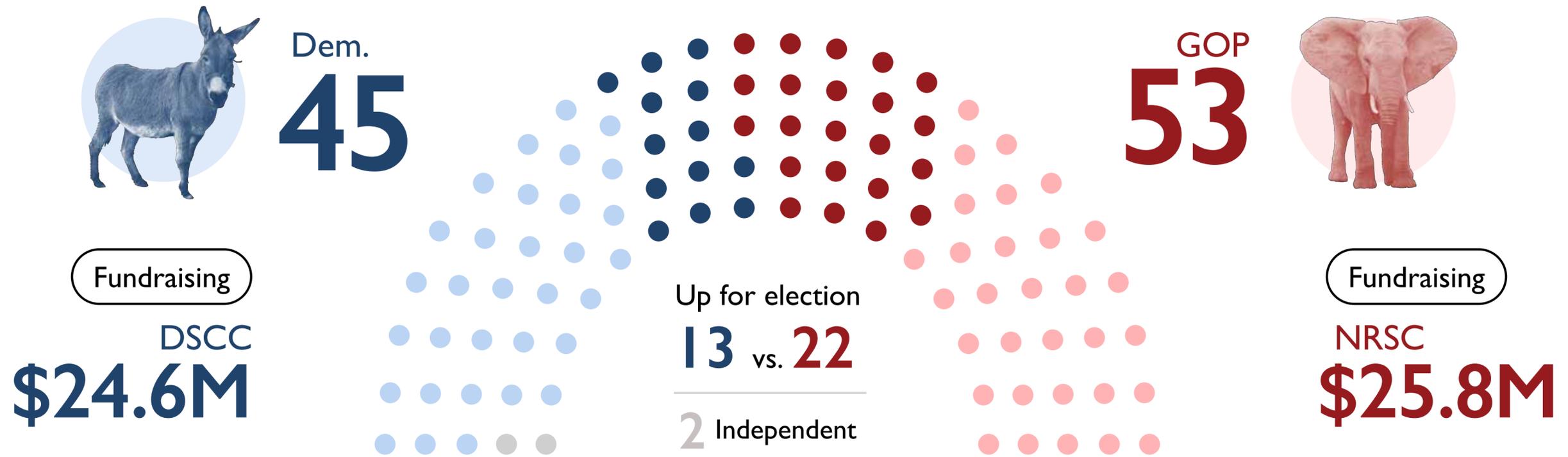
### MS-02 (Bennie Thompson vs. Evan Turnage – Democratic Primary)

Rep. Bennie Thompson, the sole Democrat in Mississippi's congressional delegation and one of the longest-serving members in the House, faces a primary challenge from attorney Evan Turnage, attorney and former staffer to Sens. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY). The race mirrors a broader national dynamic of younger Democrats testing entrenched incumbents in safe seats. Thompson maintains a substantial financial advantage, reporting roughly \$1.7 million cash on hand, and begins as the clear favorite, but the primary underscores ongoing intraparty debates even in districts that are not competitive in the general election.

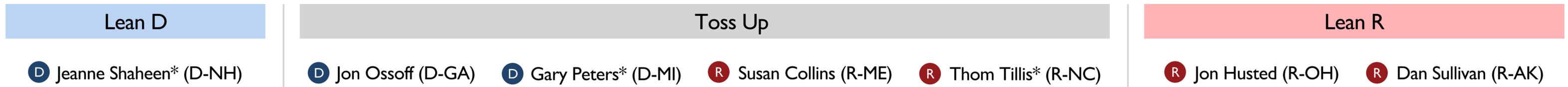


# Senate

The Senate begins the 2026 cycle with a 53 – 47 Republican majority, leaving Democrats with a narrow path to flip four seats on a map offering few clear pickup opportunities.



### Competitive Races



# Overview

**Republicans enter the 2026 cycle holding a narrow Senate majority, but the structure of the map places limits on how much either party can realistically gain.**

While midterm elections have historically posed challenges for the party in the White House, the modern Senate is a less elastic chamber than the House, with fewer competitive seats and strong partisan alignment at the state level. As a result, control is likely to hinge on a small number of races rather than a broad national swing.

With so few seats truly in play, many of the decisive battles of the 2026 Senate cycle may occur before November. Primaries in states such as Texas, North Carolina, Michigan, and Maine will determine nominee viability, fundraising strength, and coalition breadth. These factors could narrow or expand the map long before voters face a general election choice.

Compared with 2018, when Republicans expanded their Senate majority on a highly favorable map, the current landscape is more mixed. Democrats enter the cycle in a stronger position than they did a year ago. Favorable recruitments plus optimism from gubernatorial wins in Virginia and New Jersey and special election wins in multiple states point to a strong shift in favor of Democrats since 2024. To flip the chamber, Democrats need to net four seats, and they have virtually no room for error.

## **D Democratic Underdogs**

If Democrats defend Michigan, Georgia, and New Hampshire while flipping Maine, North Carolina, Ohio, and Alaska, they could reach the four seats they need, but doing so requires nearly everything to break in Democrats' favor.

## **R Republican Headaches**

On the Republican side, NRSC Chair Tim Scott must navigate intraparty tensions as much as general-election strategy. In Louisiana, Sen. Bill Cassidy faces a Trump-backed challenge from Rep. Julia Letlow. In Texas, the unresolved primary between Cornyn, Hunt, and Paxton underscores the broader tension between establishment Republicans and Trump-aligned candidates.

**To flip the chamber, Democrats need to net four seats with virtually no room for error.**

# Historic Trends

The Approval Effect: How Presidential Popularity Shapes Midterm Senate Races.

Year	President	Approval Rating	Midterm Senate Results
1946	Truman <span>D</span>	33%	-12 Seats
1950	Truman <span>D</span>	39%	-6 Seats
1954	Eisenhower <span>R</span>	61%	-1 Seat
1958	Eisenhower <span>R</span>	57%	-13 Seats
1962	JFK <span>D</span>	61%	+3 Seats
1966	LBJ <span>D</span>	44%	-4 Seats
1970	Nixon <span>R</span>	58%	+2 Seats
1974	Ford <span>R</span>	54%	-5 Seats
1978	Carter <span>D</span>	49%	-3 Seats
1982	Reagan <span>R</span>	42%	+1 Seat

Year	President	Approval Rating	Midterm Senate Results
1986	Reagan <span>R</span>	63%	-8 Seats
1990	Bush <span>R</span>	58%	-1 Seat
1994	Clinton <span>D</span>	46%	-8 Seats
1998	Clinton <span>D</span>	66%	0
2002	Bush <span>R</span>	63%	+2 Seats
2006	Bush <span>R</span>	38%	-6 Seats
2010	Obama <span>D</span>	45%	-6 Seats
2014	Obama <span>D</span>	40%	-9 Seats
2018	Trump <span>R</span>	38%	+2 Seats
2022	Biden <span>D</span>	40%	+1 Seat

# 2026 Senate Races

**Open Races: If Democrats defend Michigan, Georgia, and New Hampshire while flipping Maine, North Carolina, Ohio, and Alaska, they could reach the four seats required for majority control. However, that scenario requires near-perfect execution.**

## Likely D (1)

**D** MN - OPEN

## Lean D (1)

**D** NH - OPEN

## Toss Up (4)

**D** GA - Ossoff

**R** ME - Collins

**D** MI - OPEN

**R** NC - OPEN

## Lean R (2)

**R** AK - Sullivan

**R** OH - Husted

## Likely R (2)

**R** IA - OPEN

**R** TX - Cornyn

# Competitive Races

Small margins in these battlegrounds will decide the balance of power.

## Republicans Defending

 **Maine** GOP Incumbent Toss-Up

Sen. Susan Collins holds the only GOP seat in a state won by the Democratic presidential nominee in 2024. [Democrats view](#) defeating Collins as essential to any majority path.

 **North Carolina** GOP Open Toss-Up

The retirement of Sen. Thom Tillis creates a marquee open-seat contest that both parties view as a top-tier opportunity.

## Democrats Defending

 **Georgia** Dem Incumbent Toss-Up

Sen. Jon Ossoff faces a competitive environment in a closely divided state. Republicans, the dominant party in Georgia not even a decade ago, have been locked out of the state's Senate delegation since 2021, losing three consecutive races there, and need to get through a potentially messy Republican primary to determine who will face the vulnerable incumbent.

 **Michigan** Dem Open Toss-Up

The retirement of Sen. Gary Peters has triggered a three-way Democratic primary between Rep. Haley Stevens, state Sen. Mallory McMorrow, and Abdul El-Sayed to face 2024 Republican nominee, former Rep. Mike Rogers.

 **New Hampshire** Dem Open Lean D

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen's retirement sets up a general election between Democrat Chris Pappas and either former Sen. John Sununu, who held this Senate seat from 2003 to 2009, or former Sen. Scott Brown, who served as a U.S. Senator from Massachusetts and ran for this New Hampshire seat in 2014.

## Democratic Stretch Opportunities

 **Ohio** GOP Incumbent Lean R

Former three-term Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown, who lost re-election in [2024's most expensive Senate race](#), is attempting a comeback against Republican Sen. Jon Husted, who was appointed to fill the seat vacated by Vice President JD Vance. While the state has trended Republican, Brown has historically demonstrated crossover appeal.

 **Texas** GOP Incumbent Likely R

Republican Sen. John Cornyn faces a serious primary challenge from Attorney General Ken Paxton and Rep. Wesley Hunt. A polarizing nominee could expand Democratic opportunity, though Texas remains structurally challenging at the statewide level. No Democrat has won a statewide race in Texas since 1994. President Trump recently [declined](#) to endorse, citing his support for all three candidates.

 **Alaska** GOP Incumbent Lean R

Former Rep. Mary Peltola's entrance into the race against Sen. Dan Sullivan is the most significant development in this closely-watched contest. Sullivan begins with structural advantages in a state President Trump carried by double digits, but Peltola's candidacy shifts the race from Solid R to Lean R, due to her proven crossover appeal, her [record of winning statewide](#), and Alaska's ranked-choice voting system.

# TX Primary Spotlight

## A High-Stakes Test for Both Parties in the Lone Star State

### R Republicans

Sen. John Cornyn faces the most serious challenge of his political career as he seeks a fifth term. On March 3, he will compete against Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and Congressman Wesley Hunt (R-Houston), with a runoff election on May 26, if no candidate reached 50 percent.

The contest reflects broader tensions within the GOP between institutional conservatives and Trump-aligned candidates. Paxton attacks Cornyn as insufficiently conservative, while Cornyn and allied groups have highlighted Paxton's legal controversies, accusations of adultery, and past impeachment by the Texas House.

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz has not endorsed, and President Trump recently indicated his support for all three. Their decisions could influence the runoff dynamic.

### D Democrats

While Texas remains a stretch goal for Democrats, they nonetheless have a fierce primary on their hands between Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-Dallas) and State Rep. James Talarico (D-Austin). Crockett has leaned into confrontation with Trump, while Talarico has emphasized crossover appeal and electability in a state Democrats have not carried statewide since 1994.

**The primary outcome, particularly on the Republican side, will likely determine whether Texas remains a long-shot Democratic target or becomes a late-cycle battleground race.**



# NC Primary Spotlight

## An Open Seat Draws Heavy Spending as Both Parties Rally Behind Familiar Figures

The retirement of Sen. Thom Tillis makes North Carolina one of the most consequential open-seat races of the cycle. In the final stretch of his term, Tillis has at times positioned himself independently of President Trump and has not emerged as a central force in shaping the primary field, a dynamic that underscores the fluidity of GOP coalition politics in a state often decided by razor-thin margins. With a closely divided electorate and a history of narrow statewide outcomes, both parties view this as a must-win contest. Republicans currently control both chambers of the state legislature, while Democrats hold the governor's seat.

Trump carried the state in both 2020 and 2024. North Carolina's primary election is on March 3, with a runoff election on May 12 if no candidate receives at least 30 percent of the vote.

Democrats have unified behind former two-term Governor Roy Cooper, who won the governorship while Trump carried the state in the 2016 and 2020 elections. His statewide name recognition and fundraising strength give the party a strong starting position.

Republicans are backing Michael Whatley, former chair of the Republican National Committee, who has secured support from President Trump and Senate Majority Leader John Thune.

Early polling shows a competitive race, with Cooper benefiting from higher name recognition, while Whatley works to consolidate Republican voters.

Additionally, this contest is projected to be among the most expensive Senate races in the country, with heavy spending from both campaigns and outside political groups.

**In a Senate map with few true conversion opportunities, North Carolina may ultimately serve as the central tipping-point state.**



# IL Primary Spotlight

## Democrats Face a Defining Choice in a Post-Durbin Landscape

With longtime Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin retiring from his safe seat, Illinois' March 17 Democratic primary will effectively determine the state's next senator.

Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi enters the final stretch leading in the polls with a significant fundraising advantage. However, with many Illinois voters still undecided, Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton and Rep. Robin Kelly remain competitive.

Candidate messaging and outside spending, including from Illinois billionaire Gov. JB Pritzker in support of Stratton, may swing this race in the final weeks.

Krishnamoorthi is seeking to translate his financial advantage and suburban base into a broad statewide coalition, while Stratton, who was also endorsed by Illinois Sen. Tammy Duckworth, is leaning heavily on support from the governor's political base and organized labor allies. Kelly, with deeper roots in Chicago-area Democratic politics, is positioning herself as a pragmatic alternative with longstanding relationships in the state's political infrastructure.

The race is increasingly being defined by how each candidate positions themselves in response to the Trump Administration's recent crackdown on immigration. The topic was at the center of the first primary debate, with candidates sparring over how far Democrats should go in dismantling ICE. Voters are increasingly concerned about how the candidates distinguish themselves on an issue that has polarized the Midwest.

**Voters are watching how the candidates distinguish themselves in response to the Trump Administration's recent crackdown on immigration.**



# Governors



# Overview

**While most gubernatorial contests lean toward the incumbent party, a handful of states could see a party flip.**

Although the number of open contests is high, the overall partisan balance of governorships is not expected to shift dramatically.

Gubernatorial elections tend to be less affected by national political swings than federal races, with incumbency, local issues, and state political culture playing an outsized role. As a result, most races are rated safely or likely for the incumbent party, and competition is concentrated in a relatively small number of states.

Democratic wins in Virginia and New Jersey in 2025 offered the first glimpse of key issues and trends in statewide races this cycle. In both states, Democratic candidates significantly outperformed recent presidential margins, posting gains in suburban and previously Republican-leaning counties. Those campaigns focused heavily on affordability rather than more polarizing issues. Whether that model can translate to more competitive terrain for Democrats will be a central question in 2026.

## Potential Party Flips

	<b>Georgia</b>	Open	GOP Held
	<b>Michigan</b>	Open	Dem Held
	<b>Wisconsin</b>	Open	Dem Held
	<b>Arizona</b>	Dem Incumbent	Katie Hobbs
	<b>Nevada</b>	GOP Incumbent	Joe Lombardo

President Trump carried each of these states in 2024 by narrow margins, reflecting the competitive statewide environments that will shape these races.

Candidate selection, turnout, and economic conditions may be decisive in the fall. Open seats in Georgia, Michigan, and Wisconsin remove established incumbents and create genuine pickup opportunities in closely divided states.



# 2026 Governors Races

## Likely D (3)

- D ME - OPEN
- D NM - OPEN
- D PA - Shapiro

## Lean D (0)

## Toss Up (5)

- D AZ - Hobbs
- R GA - OPEN
- D MI - OPEN
- R NV - Lombardo
- D WI - OPEN

## Lean R (2)

- R IA - OPEN
- D KS - OPEN

## Likely R (2)

- R NH - Ayotte
- R OH - OPEN

# Competitive Races

Only a handful of governor races around the country could be competitive enough to see a party flip.

## **Georgia** GOP Open Toss-Up ●

Gov. Brian Kemp's term limit sets the stage for a competitive open-seat race in which coalition shifts in suburban Atlanta and turnout dynamics will be central.

## **Michigan** Dem Open Toss-Up ●

In an open contest to succeed term-limited Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, both parties see a viable path, with the potential for an Independent candidacy adding another layer of uncertainty.

## **Wisconsin** Dem Open Toss-Up ●

An open Democratic primary, featuring Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez and former Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes among a crowded field of state and local elected and business leaders, highlights intra-party debates about electability in a state frequently decided by razor-thin margins.

## **Arizona** Dem Incumbent Katie Hobbs Toss-Up ●

Republicans are again challenging incumbent Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs after losing the governorship by less than one point in 2022. In the wake of Trump-endorsed business executive Karrin Taylor Robson's exit from the race, the GOP primary tilts in favor of Rep. Andy Biggs, whose conservative legislative record and support for Trump could become liabilities in the purple state.

## **Nevada** GOP Incumbent Joe Lombardo Toss-Up ●

Gov. Joe Lombardo's bid for reelection will hinge on suburban and Clark County turnout, with Democrats aiming to exploit concerns about affordability in a state where margins are historically tight.

# State Spotlights

## Uphill but Competitive

Outside the core battleground cluster, Iowa and Ohio present competitive open-seat dynamics in states that lean Republican at the federal level. While both races remain structurally challenging for Democrats, open-seat conditions and candidate quality keep them on the broader competitive radar.

**Iowa** (Iowa icon) **GOP Open** **Leans R** (Red dot)

The retirement of Gov. Kim Reynolds elevated Democratic State Auditor Rob Sand, the state's lone statewide Democratic officeholder, into a high-profile contest where fundraising strength and cross-partisan appeal are central to his path in an uphill environment.

**Ohio** (Ohio icon) **GOP Open** **Likely R** (Red dot)

Term limits created an open race, with polling suggesting a closer-than-expected margin, raising the possibility that economic conditions and affordability messaging could narrow the outcomes relative to the state's recent partisan baseline.

## Playing Defense

Democrats are also defending governorships in Pennsylvania (Gov. Josh Shapiro) and Kansas (open), states that Trump carried in 2024, underscoring the limited margin for error.

**Pennsylvania** (Pennsylvania icon) **Dem Incumbent** **Likely D** (Blue dot)

**Kansas** (Kansas icon) **Dem Open** **Lean R** (Red dot)

## Crossover States

Vermont and New Hampshire remain unusual cases of Democratic-leaning presidential states with Republican governors.

**Vermont** (Vermont icon) **GOP Incumbent** **Solid R** (Red dot)

**New Hampshire** (New Hampshire icon) **GOP Incumbent** **Likely R** (Red dot)

## First Look: State Legislative Races

State legislative elections will play a consequential role in shaping the post-2026 governing landscape. With control of state legislatures in play in multiple states, both parties are targeting opportunities to flip or defend trifecta control in Arizona, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Minnesota. Even modest shifts in legislative control could affect tax and regulatory policy, abortion, and education debates, and positioning ahead of the next redistricting cycle.



# Appendix

# Departing Congress

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## Retiring

Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.)  
Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.)  
Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.)  
Sen. Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.)  
Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.)  
Sen. Tina Smith (D-Minn.)  
Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.)  
Rep. Dwight Evans (D-Pa.)  
Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.)  
Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-Ill.)  
Rep. Jesús “Chuy” García (D-Ill.)  
Rep. Jared Golden (D-Maine)  
Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.)  
Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas)  
Rep. Marc Veasey (D-Texas)  
Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)  
Rep. Neal Dunn (R-Fla.)

Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-Fla.)  
Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.)  
Rep. Morgan Luttrell (R-Texas)  
Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-Md.)  
Rep. Julia Brownley (D-Calif.)  
Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.)  
Rep. Mark Amodei (R-Nev.)  
Rep. Troy Nehls (R-Texas)  
Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.)  
Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas)  
Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez (D-N.Y.)  
Sen. Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.)  
Rep. Jodey C. Arrington (R-Texas)  
Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-N.J.)  
Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa)  
Rep. Barry Loudermilk (R-Ga.)

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## Running for Other Office

Rep. Chris Pappas (D-N.H.) (Senate)  
Rep. Haley Stevens (D-Mich.) (Senate)  
Rep. Angie Craig (D-Minn.) (Senate)  
Rep. Robin Kelly (D-Ill.) (Senate)  
Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.) (Senate)  
Rep. Earl L. “Buddy” Carter (R-Ga.) (Senate)  
Rep. Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.) (Governor)  
Rep. Byron Donalds (R-Fla.) (Governor)  
Rep. John W. Rose (R-Tenn.) (Governor)  
Rep. John James (R-Mich.) (Governor)  
Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-Ala.) (Governor)  
Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.) (Governor)  
Rep. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.) (Governor)  
Rep. Mike Collins (R-Ga.) (Senate)  
Rep. Nancy Mace (R-S.C.) (Governor)

Rep. Barry Moore (R-Ala.) (Senate)  
Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas) (TX AG)  
Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-Iowa) (Senate)  
Rep. Tom Tiffany (R-Wis.) (Governor)  
Rep. David Schweikert (R-Ariz.) (Governor)  
Rep. Wesley Hunt (R-Texas) (Senate)  
Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass.) (Senate)  
Rep. Randy Feenstra (R-Iowa) (Governor)  
Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.) (Governor)  
Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-Texas) (Senate)  
Rep. Harriet M. Hageman (R-Wyo.) (Senate)  
Rep. Julia Letlow (R-La.) (Senate)  
Rep. Andy Barr (R-Ky.) (Senate)

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## Resigned

Rep. Mark E. Green (R-Tenn.)  
Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.)

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## Deceased

Rep. Sylvester Turner (D-Texas)  
Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.)  
Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-Va.)  
Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-Calif.)

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## Left for Another Position

Sen. JD Vance (R-Ohio)  
Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.)  
Rep. Mike Waltz (R-Fla.)

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## Elected to Other Office

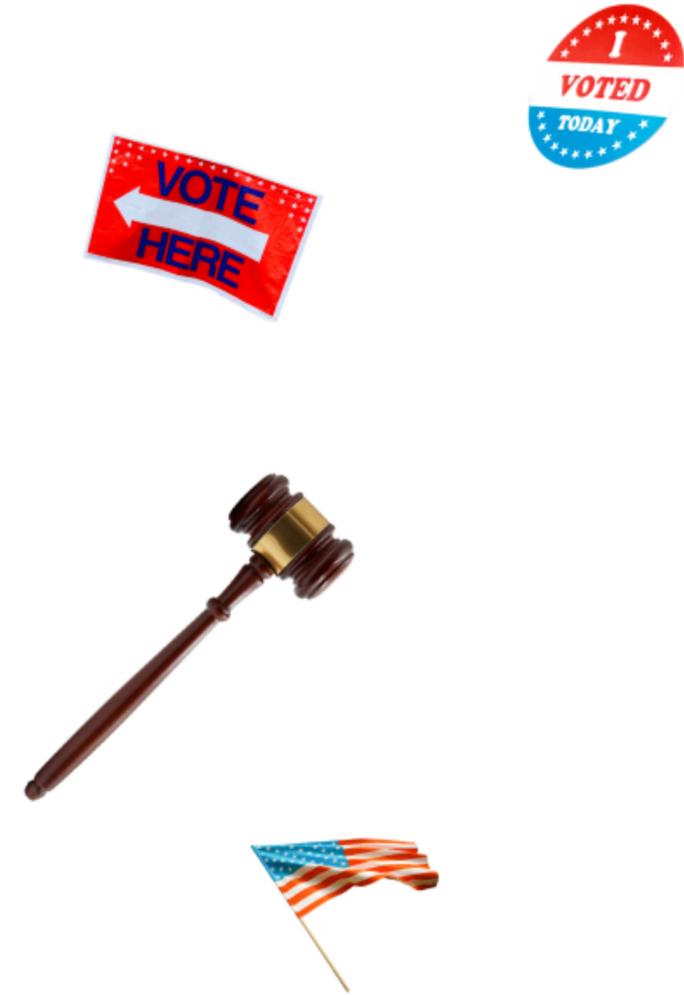
Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-N.J.)

**54** Departing House

**9** Departing Senate

Invariant

# 2026 Election Update Team



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Ryan Dilworth  
Shira Golub  
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