

Inside Elections

with

Nathan L. Gonzales

Nonpartisan Analysis

OCTOBER 27, 2023

VOLUME 7, NO. 21

This issue brought
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2024 Senate Overview: Democrats Hoping for Rerun

By Nathan L. Gonzales, Erin Covey & Jacob Rubashkin

When it comes to the fight for the Senate majority in 2024, Democrats are hoping they've seen this movie before.

In 2022, Democrats expanded the majority against long odds. With strong incumbents, flawed Republican candidates and the *Dobbs* decision motivating pro-choice voters, Democrats overcame an unpopular Democratic president, an electorate frustrated with the economy, and having to defend the core of the Senate battlefield.

With a year to go, some of the ingredients are in place for Democrats to replicate their success. But holding the majority will be more difficult than last time, and the remake is almost never as good as the original.

Last cycle, Democrats didn't lose a single incumbent, but none of the competitive races were in states Donald Trump carried in 2020. Overall, Democrats didn't win a Senate race in any Trump states in 2022, and even lost a race in one state Joe Biden carried in 2020 (Wisconsin).

This cycle, they probably need at least two incumbents to prevail in states that Trump carried handily including Joe Manchin of West Virginia (Trump +39 points), Jon Tester of Montana (+16 points), and Sherrod Brown of Ohio (Trump +8). Democrats may also need to win Senate races in a half-dozen states that Biden loses, if the president falters at the top of the ticket and fails to carry states he won narrowly in 2020, including Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

On paper, Republicans should win the Senate majority. They've got eight reasonable takeover targets, compared to just one or two longshot Democratic takeover opportunities, and they need a net gain of just two seats for a majority. They could also control the Senate by gaining a single seat and winning the White House because the new vice president could break tie votes. President Biden's job rating is consistently underwater, and concerns about his age could supersede some of Republicans' flaws.

But the GOP still has to win the races. Once again, Democratic incumbents will be prepared and well-funded. Republicans haven't been able to avoid primaries in key states and could be going to battle with flawed or untested nominees. And they appear unphased by the volatility that comes with a likely presidential nominee who has been indicted four times and could be on trial and convicted before Election Day.

2024 Senate Ratings

Toss-Up (3)

Brown (D-Ohio) Tester (D-Mont.)
Sinema (I-Ariz.)

Tilt Democratic (2) Tilt Republican (1)

Casey (D-Penn.) Manchin (D-W.V.)
Rosen (D-Nev.)

Lean Democratic (2) Lean Republican

MI Open (Stabenow, D)
Baldwin (D-Wis.)

Likely Democratic (1) Likely Republican (1)

Menendez (R-N.J.) Cruz (R-Texas)

Solid Democratic (14) Solid Republican (10)

DE Open (Carper, D) IN Open (Braun, R)
MD Open (Cardin, D) UT Open (Romney, R)
Butler (D-Calif.) Barrasso (R-Wyo.)
Cantwell (D-Wash.) Blackburn (R-Tenn.)
Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) Cramer (R-N.D.)
Heinrich (D-N.M.) Fischer (R-Neb.)
Hirono (D-Hawaii) Hawley (R-Mo.)
Kaine (D-Va.) Ricketts (R-Neb.)
King (I-Maine) Scott (R-Fla.)
Klobuchar (D-Minn.) Wicker (R-Miss.)
Murphy (D-Conn.)

Sander (I-Vt.)
Warren (D-Mass.)
Whitehouse (D-R.I.)

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

CALENDAR

Nov. 7	Kentucky and Mississippi General Election
Nov. 23	Thanksgiving
Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Jan. 8	College Football National Championship
Jan. 15	Iowa GOP Presidential Caucuses
Jan. TBD	New Hampshire GOP Primary

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North Carolina House: Republicans Draw Takeover Opportunities

By Erin Covey

North Carolina's Republican-controlled state legislature passed a new congressional map on Wednesday that, as expected, will allow the GOP to easily flip three Democratic-held districts.

Currently, the purple state's 14-member congressional delegation is evenly split between Republicans and Democrats. But this new map creates 10 safe Republican seats, three safe Democratic seats, and one evenly divided seat. Though this map is likely to face legal challenges, strategists from both parties expect the map will hold up in court.

Democratic Reps. Wiley Nickel (13th District), Jeff Jackson (14th), and Kathy Manning (6th) would almost certainly lose re-election in their redrawn districts. And Rep. Don Davis (1st) is now one of the most vulnerable House Democrats in the country.

Less than a day after the map was finalized, Jackson announced his long anticipated bid for attorney general, an open seat since Attorney General Josh Stein is running for governor. Nickel and Manning have yet

to reveal their 2024 plans, but it would be incredibly difficult for them to win re-election in their new districts. The new 13th would have voted for President Donald Trump by 17 points in 2020, and the new 6th would have voted for Trump by 16 points.

Davis' seat, which stretches across a large swath of eastern North Carolina, is now evenly divided. Joe Biden would have won the new version of the 1st District by just 1 point. His current district voted for Biden by 7 points in 2020 and Davis only won the 2022 race by 5 points against a scandal plagued Republican candidate.

Sandy Smith, Davis' opponent last cycle, is back for a rematch. An ardent Trump supporter, Smith was at the Capitol on Jan. 6 and has been accused of domestic violence. The Kevin McCarthy-affiliated Congressional Leadership Fund spent \$600,000 in an attempt to keep her from winning the nomination, but Smith won the primary with 31 percent of the vote.

If Smith wins the 2024 primary, she could jeopardize the GOP's ability to flip this seat. But several other Republicans are running, including retired Army Col. Laurie Buckhout, who announced her campaign earlier this month and has the ability to self-fund a campaign. She's already loaned her campaign \$1 million and is the favored candidate of Republicans in Washington. Navy veteran Fred Von Canon and former police officer Christine Villaverde, the 2022 nominee in North Carolina's deep blue 2nd District, are also running in the 1st.

A crowded GOP primary is shaping up in the Raleigh-based 13th District, and whoever wins the primary should be strongly favored to win the general election. State Rep. Erin Paré currently leads the primary field in fundraising, but several other credible Republican candidates are running, including emergency room physician Josh McConkey and 2022 candidate DeVan Barbour. 2022 nominee Bo Hines has also filed to run in the 13th again, but Republican sources say he's eyeing the open 8th District. Hines, a native of Charlotte, jumped around districts multiple times last cycle before settling on the 13th.

The Greensboro-based 6th will also feature a competitive GOP primary. Right after the new map was approved, former Rep. Mark Walker announced he was ending his long-shot gubernatorial bid and running for the new version of his old seat. He'll face Army veteran Christian Castelli (the 2022 GOP nominee) and High Point Mayor Jay Wagner in the primary, and whoever wins is strongly favored to win the general election.

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North Carolina's New Congressional Districts

District	Incumbent	Rating	2020 Presidential		2022 Baseline	
			Biden	Trump	DEM	GOP
1st	Davis, D	Toss-up	50.1	48.9	51.2	48.4
2nd	Ross, D	Solid D	66.6	31.4	64.4	34.9
3rd	Murphy R	Solid R	40.5	57.9	40.5	58.8
4th	Foushee, D	Solid D	72.2	26.2	70.1	29.4
5th	Foxx, R	Solid R	41.9	56.8	41.3	58.0
6th	Manning, D	Likely R	41.1	57.3	40.7	58.6
7th	Rouzer, R	Solid R	43.8	54.8	44.4	54.9
8th	Open (Bishop, R)	Solid R	40.5	58.2	41.2	58.2
9th	Hudson, R	Solid R	42.3	56.2	45.0	54.4
10th	McHenry, R	Solid R	41.3	57.3	40.4	58.9
11th	Edwards, R	Solid R	43.7	54.7	44.4	54.9
12th	Adams, D	Solid D	74.1	24.1	69.5	29.8
13th	Nickel, D	Likely R	40.6	57.8	44.0	55.3
14th	Open (Jackson, D)	Likely R	41.3	57.4	41.1	58.2

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In the Charlotte-based 14th District, retired Green Beret Pat Harrigan is the only Republican candidate. Harrigan lost to Jackson by 15 points last cycle, when this seat was safely Democratic, and he should now be well-positioned to flip this seat. But he might not have a clear path to victory — state House Speaker Tim Moore is reportedly eyeing the seat too.

Democrats only need to net five seats to take control of the House in 2024, and a new congressional map in Alabama (along with potential new maps in Georgia, Louisiana, and New York) could make that task significantly easier. But Republicans' ability to easily flip three seats in North Carolina provides valuable insurance as they attempt to keep control of the House. **IE**

Report Shorts

Georgia Redistricting. A federal judge ruled that Georgia's congressional map violates the Voting Rights Act and ordered the state to produce a new map for 2024. Republican Gov. Brian Kemp has called a special session for redistricting that will convene after Thanksgiving. But unlike in Alabama, it's unclear that redrawing the map to comply with the court's order would result in Democratic gains.

Louisiana Governor. Republican state Attorney General Jeff Landry won a majority in the Oc. 14 jungle primary, making him the next governor of the state without a runoff. Democratic Gov. John Bel Edwards was term-limited, so this is a partisan flip.

Maine's 2nd District. Following a mass shooting that left at least 18 people dead in multiple locations in Lewiston, Democratic Rep. Jared Golden announced that he now supports a federal assault weapons ban. One of the most conservative Democrats in Congress, Golden previously voted against a ban. Lean Democratic.

Maryland's 3rd District. Rep. John Sarbanes is retiring after 9 terms representing Annapolis and the surrounding area in Congress. The 6th would have voted for Biden by 25 points so the most important contest is the Democratic primary. Open seats are rare in Maryland and several ambitious politicians could seek a promotion. Keep an eye on state Sen. Sarah Elfreth, Howard County Executive Calvin Ball, and state Sen. Courtney Watson. Solid Democratic.

New Jersey's 7th District. Roselle Park Mayor Joe Signorello dropped out of the Democratic primary to take on GOP Rep. Tom Kean, Jr. That leaves former Working Families Party director Sue Altman and former State Department official Jason Blazakis as the leading Democratic contenders. Tilt Republican.

New Mexico's 2nd District. A New Mexico state judge declined to order lawmakers to redraw the 2nd District. The Democratic-controlled state legislature had altered the 2nd following the 2020 Census to make GOP Rep. Yvette Herrell more vulnerable, and she lost her re-election to Democrat Gabe Vasquez. Herrell is running again, and even under the current map the race will be highly competitive. Republicans will appeal the decision but Vasquez dodged a bullet. Toss-up. will appeal the decision but Vasquez dodged a bullet. Toss-up. **IE**

2024 House Ratings

Toss-Up (5D, 7R)

CA 13 (Duarte, R)	NY 3 (Santos, R)
CA 27 (Garcia, R)	NY 4 (D'Esposito, R)
CO 8 (Caraveo, D)	NY 17 (Lawler, R)
MI 7 (Open; Slotkin, D)	NY 22 (Williams, R)
NM 2 (Vasquez, D)	OR 5 (DeRemer, R)
NC 1 (Davis, D)	WA 3 (Perez, D)

Tilt Democratic (5D)

CA 47 (Open; Porter, D)
OH 13 (Sykes, D)
PA 7 (Wild, D)
PA 8 (Cartwright, D)
VA 7 (Spanberger, D)

Tilt Republican (9R)

AZ 1 (Schweikert, R)
AZ 6 (Ciscomani, R)
CA 22 (Valadao, R)
CO 3 (Boebert, R)
IA 3 (Nunn, R)
MI 10 (James, R)
NJ 7 (Kean Jr., R)
NY 19 (Molinaro, R)
VA 2 (Kiggans, R)

Lean Democratic (13D)

AK AL (Peltola, D)
CT 5 (Hayes, D)
IL 17 (Sorensen, D)
ME 2 (Golden, D)
MI 3 (Scholten, D)
MN 2 (Craig, DFL)
NV 3 (Lee, D)
NH 1 (Pappas, D)
NY 18 (Ryan, D)
OH 1 (Landsman, D)
OH 9 (Kaptur, D)
OR 6 (Salinas, D)
PA 17 (Deluzio, D)

Lean Republican (7R)

CA 41 (Calvert, R)
CA 45 (Steel, R)
IA 1 (Miller-Meeks, R)
MT 1 (Zinke, R)
NE 2 (Bacon, R)
NY 1 (LaLota, R)
TX 15 (De La Cruz, R)

	GOP	DEM
Solid	188	174
Likely/Lean/Tilt	29	32
Total	217	206
Toss-up	12	
Needed for majority	218	

Likely Democratic (13D, 1R)

AL 2 (<i>Moore, R</i>)
CA 49 (Levin, D)
FL 9 (Soto, D)
IN 1 (Mrvan, D)
KS 3 (Davids, D)
MD 6 (Open; Trone, D)
MI 8 (Kildee, D)
NV 1 (Titus, D)
NV 4 (Horsford, D)
NH 2 (Kuster, D)
OR 4 (Hoyle, D)
TX 34 (Gonzalez, D)
VA 10 (Open; Wexton, D)
WA 8 (Schrier, D)

Likely Republican (10R, 3D)

CA 3 (Kiley, R)
CA 40 (Kim, R)
FL 13 (Luna, R)
FL 27 (Salazar, R)
IA 2 (Hinson, R)
NC 6 (<i>Manning, D</i>)
NC 13 (<i>Nickel, D</i>)
NC 14 (<i>Open; Jackson, D</i>)
PA 1 (Fitzpatrick, R)
PA 10 (Perry, R)
SC 1 (Mace, R)
WI 1 (Steil, R)
WI 3 (Van Orden, R)

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

Arizona. Kyrsten Sinema (I) elected 2018 as a Democrat (50%).

Filing deadline April 8. Primary Aug. 6. The contours of this race are

finally beginning to take shape, though Sinema has yet to announce her 2024 plans. 2022 gubernatorial nominee Kari Lake announced her Senate campaign in August, and is strongly favored to win the GOP nomination (the only



Kari Lake

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

other significant Republican candidate, Pinal County Sheriff Mark Lamb, had just \$300,000 in his campaign account at the end of September). Though Lake's unapologetic support for baseless election fraud claims may have cost Republicans the governor's seat last year, Republicans in D.C. have resigned themselves to her candidacy — Senate Republican Conference Chair John Barrasso has endorsed her, and the National Republican Senatorial Committee hasn't ruled out supporting her in the primary. Lake's launch speech showed she's attempting to pivot away from some of her most alienating positions, but it's unclear if that will make much of a difference to her brand.

But Lake might not need the support of a majority of Arizonans next year. If Sinema runs for re-election as an independent (and she appears to be taking steps toward a 2024 campaign), she'll pull support away from both parties. The independent senator's path to victory is narrow, and her pitch to donors involves winning the support of a majority of independents, at least a quarter of Republicans, and at least 10 percent of Democrats. It's no surprise that she's banking on drawing more support from Republicans than Democrats, since her approval rating with Democrats is lower than it is with independents and Republicans following some high-profile breaks with the party. She has until April to gather the signatures needed to get on the ballot as an independent candidate, so she may not make an announcement till next year.

The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and the super PAC affiliated with Majority Leader Chuck Schumer have yet to indicate how they'll handle a potential three-way race. Rep. Ruben Gallego, the presumptive Democratic nominee, has the backing of at least one major liberal outside group (End Citizens United). Though Gallego outraised Sinema in the third quarter, he had \$5 million in his campaign account compared to Sinema's \$11 million at the end of September. Democrats allied with Gallego hope that Lake's entrance into the race will boost the Democrat's fundraising, now that he has a controversial Republican to run against. An exchange between Gallego and Lake at the Phoenix airport gave Arizonans a preview of what the contest might look like as the race heats up. Toss-up.

Public Policy Polling (D) for Gallego, Oct. 7-9 (LVs) — General election ballot: Gallego 41%, Lake 36%, Sinema 15%.

Noble Predictive Insights, July 13-17 (RVs) — General election ballot: Gallego 34%, Sinema 26%, Lake 25%.

California. Open; Laphonza Butler (D) not seeking re-election.

Filing deadline Dec. 8. Primary March 5. Butler, who was appointed this month to fill out the remainder of the late Dianne Feinstein's term, will not seek a full term herself — though she came a lot closer to launching

a bid than many realize, and only backed off at the last minute. Her decision reverts the race to its status quo, with Reps. Adam Schiff and Katie Porter pulling in millions in fundraising and establishing themselves as the polling leaders, while Rep. Barbara Lee lags in money and support as she tries to make her case as a progressive stalwart.

The three Democratic lawmakers are joined by Silicon Valley entrepreneur Lexi Reese, whose ability to self-fund a bid may be tempered by both Schiff and Porter's head starts — they had \$32 million and \$12 million in the bank on Sept. 30, respectively — and by just how expensive it is to run in California. Former KTLA anchor Christina Pascucci also just entered the fray and is running as a more moderate alternative.

But the most interesting entrant might be Steve Garvey, the former first baseman who played for 18 years in California and won a World Series with the Dodgers in 1981. Garvey instantly became the most notable Republican in the race, and if he can consolidate GOP support that should be enough to ensure himself a spot in the general election — and box out one of the Democrats. But it's not obvious just how dominant Garvey will be among Republicans, given that he's never run for office before and has been out of the spotlight for nearly 40 years. There will be several other Republicans on the ballot, including Eric Early, who won 17 percent in the 2022 state attorney general primary, and James Bradley, who won 7 percent in the 2022 Senate primary. GOP and Democratic strategists believe that Schiff will ultimately secure one of the two general election spots, while the real fight is for the second ticket to November, and whether it's another Democrat or a Republican. Either way, Democrats will retain control. Solid Democratic.

Berkeley IGS Poll, Aug. 24-29 (LVs)(online) — All-party primary ballot: Schiff (D) 20%, Porter (D) 17%, Lee (D) 7%, Garvey (R) 7%, Bradley (R) 7%, Early (R) 5%, Reese (D) 1%.

Connecticut. Chris Murphy (D) elected 2012 (55%), 2018 (60%).

Filing deadline June 11. Primary Aug. 13. The only Republican in the race, veteran Robert Hyde, had just \$141 in the bank on Sept. 30. Murphy had \$7.4 million. Solid Democratic.

Delaware. Open; Tom Carper (D) not seeking re-election. Filing

deadline July 9. Primary Sept. 3. At-large Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester has cleared the Democratic field en route to her likely nomination and general election victory. Eric Hansen of Wilmington, who has worked in management at Walmart and Procter & Gamble, is the only official Republican candidate. Solid Democratic.

Florida. Rick Scott (R) elected 2018 (50%). Filing deadline July

22. Primary Aug. 20. Former Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell has a pretty clear path to the Democratic nomination now that Navy veteran Phil Ehr has dropped out and endorsed her. Most other potential candidates, including state Sen. Shevrin Jones, have also rallied behind Mucarsel-Powell. Former Rep. Alan Grayson is also running, but he's not seen as a serious candidate (he received just 15 percent of the vote in a Democratic primary for an open U.S. House seat last year). Former Navy pilot and golf course owner Stanley Campbell (who happens to be the brother of 2 Live Crew rapper Luther Campbell) also filed for the Senate race at the end of September, and could be a factor if he decides to run.

Democrats believe Mucarsel-Powell is the ideal foil to Scott — particularly compared to former Sen. Bill Nelson, who famously failed to turn out Latino voters in his 2018 re-election campaign. The former

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congresswoman, an Ecuadorian immigrant, represented a competitive South Florida congressional district for one term and was unseated by then-Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Gimenez in 2020 as Republicans made major inroads in the region. But if Democrats want to make this Senate race competitive, they'll need the Biden campaign to invest in the state as well, and it's not clear how close Florida will be at the presidential level.

Mucarsel-Powell reported raising \$1.7 million in the first six weeks of her campaign, slightly more than what Scott raised in the full quarter (\$1.6 million). But the GOP senator is incredibly wealthy and will have the ability to spend heavily on his re-election campaign in the expensive state — he's already spent \$1.5 million on ads. Solid Republican.

Hawaii. Mazie Hirono (D) elected 2012 (63%), 2018 (71%). Filing deadline June 4. Primary Aug. 10. Hirono has no announced GOP opponents. Earlier this year an unknown entity polled a matchup between the incumbent and former Democratic Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, now an independent and a Fox News contributor. But the results weren't released, and Gabbard says she wasn't behind the survey. Solid Democratic.

Indiana. Open; Mike Braun (R) running for governor. Filing deadline Feb. 9. Primary May 7. Wealthy egg farmer John Rust has poured \$1.6 million in his Senate campaign, but he might not be able to get on the ballot. The last two primaries Rust voted in were the 2016 GOP primary and the 2012 Democratic primary, which disqualifies him from running for the GOP nomination under Indiana state law. Rust is suing the state to get on the ballot, but the case appears to be at a stalemate for now. And aside from his own campaign contribution, Rust has barely raised any money.

Rep. Jim Banks remains the clear frontrunner for the Republican nomination and had \$2.7 million in his campaign account at the end of September. Banks, who's backed by former President Donald Trump and the NRSC, picked up an endorsement from the Indiana GOP in August. And whoever wins the GOP primary will have a strong advantage in the general election. Solid Republican.

Maine. Angus King (I) elected 2012 (53%), 2018 (54%). Filing deadline March 15. Primary June 11. No Republicans or Democrats have filed against King, who isn't actively campaigning yet but has told reporters he is running. Ranked-choice voting makes toppling King a tall task for Republicans. Solid Democratic.

Maryland. Open; Ben Cardin (D) not seeking re-election. Filing deadline Jan. 19. Primary April 23. The Democratic primary — the most important contest in this deep-blue state — is down to two major contenders after Montgomery County Councilman Will Jawando dropped his bid. Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks is racking up endorsements from state political leaders and recently held a rally with Gov. Wes Moore, while wealthy Rep. David Trone is pouring his own money into television ads. He has already spent \$7 million on TV. Alsobrooks reported \$2.1 million in campaign funds on Sept. 30 and has not begun paid media. Trone, who has received some local union endorsements, is also trying to run to Alsobrooks' left on criminal justice and social rehabilitation issues. While Alsobrooks isn't an overwhelming frontrunner, she's still the candidate to beat — and rumors continue to fly that Trone may abandon his Senate bid to seek re-election to the 6th District, where the Democratic primary field is still unsettled. Solid Democratic.

Massachusetts. Elizabeth Warren (D) elected 2012 (54%), 2018 (60%). Filing deadline May 28. Primary Sept. 17. There was some scuttlebutt about a business-oriented primary challenger, perhaps state Treasurer / former Stop and Shop executive Deb Goldberg, but that has quieted down. Solid Democratic.

Michigan. Open; Debbie Stabenow (D) not seeking re-election. Filing deadline April 23. Primary Aug. 6. Former Rep. Mike Rogers announced he was running for the GOP nomination in September, giving Republicans a credible candidate for this open Senate seat. But Rogers could get pulled to the right in what's shaping up to be a competitive primary between Rogers, former Detroit Police Chief James Craig, and potentially former Rep. Peter Meijer.

Rogers represented a mid-Michigan congressional district from 2001 to 2015. Since retiring from Congress, the former chairman of the House Intelligence Committee has hosted a talk radio show and worked as a CNN commentator on national security. Though Rogers is seen as the frontrunner for the nomination, he's been out of office for nearly a decade and it's not clear how he'll navigate sharing a ballot with Trump. Craig, meanwhile, is firmly in the Trump lane of the primary. Though Craig's 2022 gubernatorial campaign was derailed by fraudulent ballot access signatures, he could have more success this cycle. Meijer would have a more difficult path to the GOP nomination due to his vote to impeach Trump in 2021, but his family's name and ability to self-fund a campaign make him a formidable candidate.

New York Stock Exchange vice chairman John Tuttle, another potential candidate, has decided not to run. But quality control businessman Perry Johnson, who just ended his longshot presidential campaign, is mulling a Senate campaign.

The Democratic primary appears to be less competitive. Rep. Elissa Slotkin (who currently represents a new version of Rogers' old district) continues to stockpile money, raising nearly \$3 million in the third

quarter, while her primary opponents have struggled to fundraise. Hill Harper, an actor from Detroit and her most serious opponent, raised \$600,000 (in addition to loaning \$250,000 and contributing \$200,000 to his campaign).



Courtesy Harper for Senate Campaign

Hill Harper

Though Michigan remains purple, President Biden has a slight advantage at the presidential level — and Slotkin has a record of outperforming Biden. Lean Democratic.

Emerson College, Aug. 1-2 (RVs)(mixed mode) — General election ballot: Slotkin over Meijer, 42% - 36%; Slotkin over Craig, 45% - 38%.

Minnesota. Amy Klobuchar (DFL) elected 2006 (58%), 2012 (65%), 2018 (60%). Filing deadline June 4. Primary Aug. 13. Minnesota's senior senator still doesn't have any credible Republican opponents. Royce White, who played three games in the NBA and believes a specialty military weapon may have caused the fires in Maui, is the only notable candidate in the race; last cycle White ran in the GOP primary

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for Rep. Ilhan Omar's deep blue seat and came in second place. Other potential Republican candidates aren't interested in taking on Klobuchar, who has a record of outperforming other Democrats. According to *Inside Elections'* Vote Above Replacement metric, Klobuchar ran 8 points ahead of the average Minnesota Democrat in 2018. Solid Democratic.

Mississippi. Roger Wicker (R) appointed 2007, elected 2008 special (55%), 2012 (57%), 2018 (59%). Filing deadline March 1. Primary March 12, runoff (if necessary) April 2. Timothy Ghannon Burton, a retired Marine colonel and former fighter pilot, filed to run in the GOP primary against Wicker. Burton, whose Twitter feed is filled with anti-vaccine content, recently founded a conservative political group called Mississippi for America First. Wicker already faced a challenge from state Rep. Dan Eubanks, a youth pastor and the co-founder of the state legislature's Freedom Caucus. Democrats are focused on winning the governor's race on Nov. 7, not on beating Wicker. Solid Republican.

Missouri. Josh Hawley (R) elected 2018 (51%). Filing deadline March 26. Primary Aug. 6. Josh Hawley's populist ideology and unabashed support for Trump has made him one of the most polarizing members of the Senate's Republican conference. But he shouldn't have a difficult time winning re-election in the Show-Me State, which now has a clear Republican lean.

Hawley had \$4.7 million in his campaign account at the end of September — \$3 million more than his Democratic opponent Lucas Kunce, who ended the month with \$1.7 million on hand after narrowly ousting the incumbent. Kunce, a Marine veteran who also ran for the Senate last cycle, has been racking up support for local labor unions, including the Missouri AFL-CIO and the SEIU Missouri/Kansas State Council. But Kunce also has several primary opponents. St. Louis County Prosecutor Wesley Bell and state Sen. Karla May are both credible candidates, and could draw support from Democrats in St. Louis.

A primary fight only further weakens Kunce, who's already the clear underdog in the general election — especially in a presidential cycle, when the GOP presidential nominee is likely to win the state by double digits. Solid Republican.

Montana. Jon Tester (D) elected 2006 (49%), 2012 (49%), 2018 (50%). Filing deadline March 11. Primary June 4. Former Navy SEAL Tim Sheehy, who is the preferred candidate for national Republican leaders, has been advertising on TV since the beginning of August, with six different biographical spots introducing himself to voters. The wealthy Sheehy, who founded an aerial firefighting company, has spent about \$1.6 million on TV so far, and is funding his campaign through a mix of fundraising and personal money — he reported \$1.1 million in his campaign account on Sept. 30 after giving his campaign \$650,000 out of his own pocket. Democrats aren't letting Sheehy have the airwaves to himself though. A new super PAC — that won't have to disclose its donors for another three months — has been airing anti-Sheehy ads since September that focus on the Republican's business record. Meanwhile, Tester is stockpiling cash and reported \$13 million on Sept. 30.

The big remaining question is if and when Rep. Matt Rosendale will enter the race. The 2018 nominee, who lost to Tester by 3 points that year, is widely expected to run again, but has held off jumping in longer than anticipated, even as local state legislators endorse him and ambitious officeholders move forward with bids to succeed him in his House seat.

Rosendale is not a strong fundraiser but is well-known and liked among Republicans in the state, and would begin a GOP primary in a strong position. Sheehy's allies believe that they can overwhelm Rosendale in paid media, especially now that the anti-tax Club for Growth has



Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

Matt Rosendale

signaled they are not as invested in the congressman as they were in 2018 when they spent millions on his behalf. Democrats are just happy to watch the Republicans fight among themselves, and believe that Tester's unique image, deep

Montana roots, and ubiquity in the small state position him well against either potential opponent. Toss-up.
Emerson College, Oct. 1-4 (LVs)(mixed mode) — General election ballot: Tester over Sheehy, 39% - 35%.

Nebraska. Deb Fischer (R) elected 2012 (58%), 2018 (58%). Filing deadline Feb. 15. Primary May 14. Dan Osborn, a Navy veteran and union leader, is challenging Fischer as an independent candidate. As president of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union Local 50G, Osborn led the strike at the Kellogg plant in Omaha in 2021, and the state Democratic party is considering supporting his campaign. But he faces a steep climb against Fischer in the red state. The senator reported having \$2.7 million in her campaign account at the end of September. Solid Republican.

Nebraska Special. Pete Ricketts (R) appointed 2023. Filing deadline Feb. 15. Primary May 14. Charles Herbster, who lost a bitter primary to now-Gov. Jim Pillen last year, still hasn't ruled out a primary challenge to Ricketts; he told KETV in August that he was "keeping all of [his] options open." And the one Democrat who had filed to run against Ricketts decided not to run. Solid Republican.

Nevada. Jacky Rosen (D) elected 2018 (50%). Filing deadline March 15. Primary June 11. Though Republicans haven't won a Senate race in Nevada since 2012, the Silver State features consistently close statewide races. And in contrast to some of her peers up for re-election next year, Rosen is less well known in her state. Nevada's transient population is an added challenge to incumbents, who have to put in extra work to introduce themselves to new residents.

But in order to take on Rosen, the GOP first needs to navigate a primary. Army veteran Sam Brown remains the frontrunner, but he's still relatively untested and has stumbled since launching his campaign in July. He's faced criticism for failing to report his Texas-based business on his personal financial disclosure, and using a super PAC to pay off debt from his 2022 campaign.

Still, Brown has a clear lead in fundraising and the backing of the NRSC. He raised \$1.2 million in the third quarter, far more than any of his primary opponents, and Nevada billionaire David Duffield cut a \$2 million check for a pro-Brown super PAC. Former Ambassador to Iceland Jeff Gunter raised \$175,000 and gave his campaign a \$225,000 loan last quarter, enough to go

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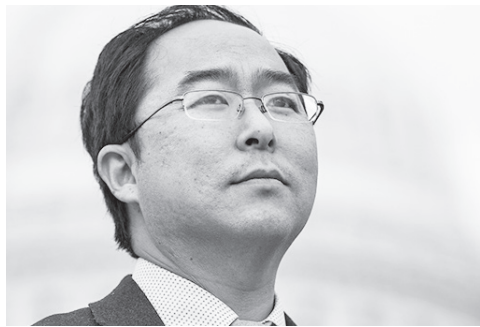
on the air with a TV ad attacking Brown as insufficiently loyal to Trump. 2022 Secretary of State nominee Jim Marchant and 2022 lieutenant governor candidate Tony Grady raised less than \$100,000 in the third quarter. An August poll from the super PAC supporting Brown showed him leading the primary field with 33 percent, followed by Marchant at 15 percent and all other candidates under 3 percent.

In the meantime, Rosen is building up her war chest and ended the third quarter with \$9 million on hand. Regardless of what happens in the GOP primary, Democrats are prepared for a competitive race, particularly with a close presidential contest at the top of the ballot. Tilt Democratic.

Public Opinion Strategies (R) for Duty First Nevada PAC (supporting Brown), Aug. 15-17 (LVs)— Republican primary ballot: Brown 33%, Marchant 15%, others 6%, undecided 44%.

New Jersey. Bob Menendez (D) appointed 2006, elected 2006 (53%), 2012 (58%), 2018 (54%). Filing deadline March 25. Primary June 4. Menendez is refusing to resign even as federal prosecutors allege he and his wife took bribes in cash, cars, and gold bars, and acted as an unregistered foreign agent in the service of the Egyptian government. The latest allegations, which are more salacious than the previous corruption charges Menendez beat in 2017, have caused the senator's image rating to drop close to Dallas Cowboys levels in the Garden State.

While he maintains his innocence and says he may run for re-election, Menendez already faces a well-funded challenge from Rep. Andy Kim, who raised \$1 million in his first week in the race and ended September with \$2.1 million in the bank. 1st District



Andy Kim

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

Rep. Donald Norcross, who represents Camden, isn't ruling out a bid either. First Lady Tammy Murphy is also fielding calls about running — like her husband, Gov. Phil Murphy, she's a former Goldman Sachs banker and is currently the chairwoman of Gotham FC, New Jersey's professional women's soccer team. Menendez would be a serious underdog in a primary, even a crowded one, especially now that the leaders of more than half of New Jersey's powerful county Democratic parties have called on him to resign.

On the Republican side, Mendham Borough Mayor Christine Serrano Glassner is the most notable candidate in a field that also includes former local school board member Daniel Cruz (Glassner's husband is a senior Trump confidant and was COO of the president's 2020 campaign). Jeff Van Drew, the 2nd District representative who switched parties in 2020 to avoid losing a Democratic primary, has also mused about a bid. Democratic strategists are confident that Menendez will not be their nominee and the party will not have to worry about defending this seat next fall. Likely Democratic.

Stockton Univ., Oct. 9-18 (RVs)(mixed mode)— Menendez image rating: 8% favorable, 72% unfavorable.

Fairleigh Dickinson Univ., Oct. 6-14 (A)(mixed mode)— "Should Menendez resign?": Yes 70%, No 16%.

Public Policy Polling (D) for End Citizens United (supporting Kim), Oct. 3-4 (LVs)— Democratic primary ballot: Kim over Menendez, 63% - 10%; Kim 42%, Murphy 19%, Menendez 5%.

New Mexico. Martin Heinrich (D) elected 2012 (51%), 2018 (54%). Filing deadline Feb. 6. Primary June 4. Benjamin Luna, an aspiring rapper, gun rights activist, and chapter leader of the Latino Republican movement "Lexit" is the highest-profile GOP challenger to Heinrich, who reported \$3.2 million in the bank on Sept. 30. Solid Democratic.

New York. Kirsten Gillibrand (D) appointed 2009, elected 2010 special (63%), 2012 (72%), 2018 (67%). Filing deadline April. Primary June 25. The Empire State has no shortage of political drama, but it's mainly contained to the House side, where Republicans are defending as many as seven competitive seats. Gillibrand, who reported \$8.2 million in the bank on Sept. 30, faces nominal primary challenges from former Andrew Cuomo staffer William Schweitzer, who reported \$3,000 in campaign funds last month, and human rights activist Khaled Salem, who tried to run in last year's Senate race but failed to qualify for the ballot. The only GOP candidate who has filed to run is Queens attorney David Bellon, who had nothing in his campaign account on Sept. 30. Solid Democratic.

North Dakota. Kevin Cramer (R) elected 2018 (55%). Filing deadline April 8. Primary June 11. Katrina Christansen, the 2022 Democratic-NPL nominee for the state's other Senate seat, is running again. The engineering professor at University of Jamestown won 25 percent in that race. Solid Republican.

Ohio. Sherrod Brown (D) elected 2006 (56%), 2012 (51%), 2018 (53%). Filing deadline Dec. 20. Primary March 19. The three-way Republican primary in Ohio is heating up, and a frontrunner for the nomination has yet to emerge. None of the three candidates reported stellar fundraising numbers at the end of the third quarter — Cleveland businessman Bernie Moreno raised \$1.2 million, former state Sen. Matt Dolan raised \$1.1 million, and Secretary of State Frank LaRose raised \$800,000. But Moreno and Dolan both injected their campaign with \$3 million loans, giving them a significant cash-on-advantage over LaRose; Dolan, whose family owns the Cleveland Guardians, had also loaned himself \$4 million in the previous quarter. A super PAC supporting LaRose could even the playing field, though candidates have access to cheaper advertising rates than outside groups. None of the candidates have gone up on TV yet.

As the only candidate in the field who's won a statewide race in the Buckeye State, LaRose continues to enjoy a clear advantage in name ID, which is reflected in early primary polling that shows LaRose in the lead. But he lost some credibility after his Issue 1 ballot initiative was rejected by double digits in August (Issue 1 would have raised the threshold to pass ballot initiatives and made it more difficult for a pro-choice ballot measure to succeed this November).

Meanwhile, Trump has yet to get involved, and his endorsement could have a significant impact on the primary. Moreno, who recently picked up an endorsement from former Speaker Newt Gingrich, has close ties to Trump world and is running to the right on issues such as abortion and foreign policy (he opposes funding for Ukraine and said that Israel shouldn't receive additional funding after the Hamas attack).

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LaRose, who endorsed Trump for president, could also have a shot at the endorsement. Dolan, the most moderate candidate in the bunch, isn't angling for the Trump endorsement at all. As the lone candidate willing to criticize Trump in the 2022 Senate race, Dolan won 23 percent of the primary, and it's not clear if he can raise his ceiling.

Republicans still believe that any of their three candidates could defeat Brown, who will need to run several points ahead of Biden in this increasingly Republican state. The senator continues to be one of the best fundraisers of the cycle and had \$11 million in his war chest at the end of September. But Brown is unlikely to enjoy the same financial advantage he had when he won re-election in 2018. Toss-up.

Emerson College, Oct. 2-4 (RVs)— General election ballot: Brown over Moreno, 35% - 33%; Brown over LaRose, 38% - 39%; Brown over Dolan, 36% - 38%.

Ohio Northern University, July 17-26 (RVs)— General election ballot: Brown over Moreno, 45% - 28%; Brown over LaRose, 45% - 32%; Brown over Dolan, 45% - 33%. GOP primary ballot: LaRose 32%, Dolan 18%, Moreno 7%.

Causeway Solutions for LaRose campaign, Sept. 7 (RVs)— GOP primary ballot: LaRose 28%, Dolan 17%, Moreno 12%.

Pennsylvania. Bob Casey, Jr. (D) elected 2006 (59%), 2012 (54%), 2018 (56%). Filing deadline February. Primary April 23. Former hedge fund CEO and Bush administration official David McCormick has launched his long-awaited Senate campaign and quickly locked up Republican support, picking up endorsements from the NRSC and the state GOP.

This is one Senate race where Republicans have successfully dodged a messy primary, and GOP operatives largely view McCormick as a stronger contender than Dr. Mehmet Oz, who narrowly beat McCormick for the GOP nomination in last year's Senate race. Democrats are using the same playbook that they used in 2022 and are attempting to paint McCormick as a wealthy, out-of-touch carpetbagger with business ties to China. Though McCormick was born and raised in Pennsylvania, and owns a home in Pittsburgh, he's spent much of the past two decades in Connecticut where he owns a home on the Gold Coast and his daughters attend high school.

Though Biden remains unpopular in the Keystone State, Democrats are confident that Casey's brand in the state will hold up — he's won six statewide races and is the son of a popular former governor. Tilt Democratic.

Franklin & Marshall, Oct. 11-22 (RVs)— General election ballot: Casey over McCormick, 46% - 39%.

Rhode Island. Sheldon Whitehouse (D) elected 2006 (54%), 2012 (65%), 2018 (61%). Filing deadline June 26. Primary Sept. 10. Former state House Minority Leader Patricia Morgan is officially running against Whitehouse, but had just \$35,000 in her campaign account on Sept. 30. Morgan is controversial in GOP circles after she endorsed an independent candidate for governor in 2018 over the GOP nominee, a move that cost her the leadership role. Solid Democratic.

Tennessee. Marsha Blackburn (R) elected 2018 (55%). Filing deadline April 4. Primary Aug 1. Runoff Aug. 31. Democratic state Rep. Gloria Johnson launched her challenge to Blackburn at the beginning of September. Her role in protesting Tennessee Republicans' inaction on gun violence after the Covenant School shooting has given her a national fundraising network, and she had a decent initial fundraising quarter, raising \$1.3 million in less than two months (The DSCC is also taking advantage of that fundraising network by doing split donations with Johnson). But that won't be enough to make this a competitive race — Blackburn raised \$2.7 million last quarter and had \$6.5 million in her campaign account at the end of September. Johnson also has a likely primary opponent in Marquita Bradshaw, the Democratic nominee for the 2020 Senate race; Bradshaw said she would run earlier this summer but has yet to file with the FEC. Solid Republican.

Texas. Ted Cruz (R) elected 2012 (56%), 2018 (51%). Filing deadline Dec. 11. Primary March 5. Runoff May 28. Though several more Democrats have announced campaigns over the summer, Rep. Colin Allred is still the favorite to win the party's nomination to take on Cruz.

State Sen. Roland Gutierrez, who represents Uvalde and has been a staunch supporter of tightening Texas' gun laws after the school shooting in 2022, is Allred's most serious opponent. But the state senator raised just \$600,000 in this past quarter, while the congressman raised \$4.7 million. Gutierrez has attempted to position himself as a more progressive alternative to Allred and most recently criticized the congressman for supporting the Biden administration's plan to continue construction on a border wall.

Dallas County state Rep. Carl Sherman and Nueces County District Attorney Mark Gonzalez both launched campaigns at the beginning of September, but aren't seen as particularly serious candidates. Allred's allies hope that Gonzalez will pull some support away from Gutierrez — candidates with a Hispanic surname tend to receive a significant amount of support in Texas' Democratic primaries. There's a strong possibility that this primary will go to a runoff; in 2018, Beto O'Rourke only won the primary with 62 percent, against lower-tier, underfunded opponents.

Allred has outraised Cruz for the past two quarters and had \$2 million more in his campaign account at the end of September. But Texas is an incredibly expensive state with multiple large media markets, and it's not clear at this point how much outside help the Democrat would get in the general election. That likely depends on Democrats' prospects in more competitive races. And Democrats' Senate nominee would almost certainly need to run several points ahead of Biden, who lost the state by 5 and a half points in 2020. Likely Republican.

University of Texas, Oct. 5-17 (RVs)— Democratic primary ballot: Allred 21%, Gutierrez 10%, Undecided 46%.

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Podcast Episode 8

Nathan, Jacob and Erin discuss the big takeaways from the third quarter Senate fundraising numbers and key House open seat races to watch, including Michigan's 7th District, and how Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure is connected to two House races.

The *Inside Elections Podcast* is sponsored by George Washington University's Graduate School of Political Management.



Available to listen on any of the regular podcast platforms or watch on YouTube.

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Utah. Open; Mitt Romney (R) not seeking re-election. Filing deadline March 21. Primary June 25. The GOP primary field is still taking shape following Romney's decision not to seek another term, but the two early leaders are state House Speaker Brad Wilson and Riverton Mayor Trent Staggs. Both candidates entered the race prior to Romney's announcement (Wilson with an exploratory committee). Several rumored candidates have taken themselves out of contention including state attorney general Sean Reyes, Rep. John Curtis, and anti-sex trafficking activist Tim Ballard (who was recently accused of sexual misconduct).

Staggs has been the mayor of the Salt Lake City suburb for six years and was the GOP nominee in the 2020 Salt Lake County mayoral election. He is

running in the mold of Utah's junior Sen. Mike Lee, and has tied himself closely to Trump; he has backing from Trump allies such as Arizona Senate candidate Kari Lake and former acting Director of National Intelligence



Brad Wilson

Courtesy Speaker Brad Wilson Office

Ric Grenell. Wilson is hewing closer to the Utah political establishment and has lined up endorsements from Gov. Spencer Cox and the vast majority of GOP lawmakers in the state legislature. Wilson also has a financial edge thanks in part to his own personal wealth; he reported \$2.8 million in the bank on Sept. 30, including \$1.8 million that he loaned to his campaign. Staggs had \$438,000. Roosevelt Mayor Rod Bird is a wild card; he seeded his campaign with \$1 million of his own money but doesn't have the same initial advantages as Wilson and Staggs. Solid Republican.

Vermont. Bernie Sanders (I) elected 2006 (65%), 2012 (71%), 2018 (67%). Filing deadline May 30. Primary Aug. 13. The expectation is that Sanders will run again, even though he'll be 83 on Election Day. The two-time presidential candidate has never faced serious opposition, and that won't start now. Solid Democratic.

Virginia. Tim Kaine (D) elected 2012 (53%), 2018 (57%). Filing deadline April 11. Primary June 18. In a race that's been on the backburner for both parties, Navy veteran Hung Cao and former Club for Growth vice president Scott Parkinson are the top GOP fundraisers, reporting \$486,000 and \$380,000 in the bank on Sept. 30, respectively. Cao is the more recent entrant and has raised money at a faster clip but Parkinson has deep connections in all corners of GOP politics and is stacking up endorsements from members of Congress. Virginia is no longer a presidential battleground, but if Republicans have a strong local election cycle this fall, the commonwealth could get another look. Solid Democratic.

Washington. Maria Cantwell (D) elected 2000 (49%), 2006 (57%), 2012 (60%), 2018 (58%). Filing deadline May 17. Primary Aug. 6. Cantwell should win re-election by a comfortable margin in this blue state — her one credible Republican opponent, Dr. Raul Garcia, raised just \$200,000 in the third quarter. Former Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, another potential

candidate, announced in October that she's running for Public Lands Commissioner in 2024. Cantwell had \$4 million in her campaign account at the end of September and is personally wealthy. Solid Democratic.

West Virginia. Joe Manchin (D) elected 2010 special (53%), 2012 (61%), 2018 (49.6%). Filing deadline Jan. 26. Primary May 14. Democrats continue to watch warily for Manchin to decide on whether to seek re-election, since he would be the only candidate with a prayer of holding the seat. And there's a real chance he could shed his toxic party label and run as an independent, though he'd likely need to find a way to do so without letting another Democratic candidate, who would siphon away votes, onto the ballot. An announcement may not come before the new year.

The Republican primary is proceeding slowly. Trump endorsed Gov. Jim Justice over Rep. Alex Mooney, a move that many GOP strategists had anticipated. The endorsement gives Justice's allies in the GOP establishment, where he is the favored candidate, even more confidence that he'll win the primary handily. Neither candidate is putting together strong fundraising numbers, and it's increasingly clear that Justice may be wealthy but is not particularly liquid; he had less campaign cash at his disposal on Sept. 30 than Mooney did. Neither candidate has engaged in paid media yet, and GOP sources are skeptical those fights will begin until after Manchin announces his intentions. Mooney is counting on significant outside support from the Club for Growth, which says it has earmarked \$13 million to spend on TV ads boosting the congressman and attacking Justice. If the Club begins to spend heavily, it may draw in Justice's allies at the Senate Leadership Fund or other Mitch McConnell-aligned outfits. Tilt Republican.

Emerson College, Sept. 24-26 (RVs)(mixed mode) — General election ballot: Justice over Manchin, 41% - 28%; Manchin over Mooney, 37% - 31%.

Tarrance Group (R) for Senate Leadership Fund (pro-Justice), Sept. 24-26 (LVs)(live caller) — General election ballot: Justice over Manchin (running as an independent), 49% - 43%.

Fabrizio Lee (R) for Justice campaign, Sept. 11-13 (LVs)(mixed mode) — GOP primary ballot: Justice over Mooney, 62% - 23%.

Wisconsin. Tammy Baldwin (D) elected 2012 (51%), 2018 (55%). Filing deadline June 1. Primary Aug. 13. The biggest recruitment hole on the map for Republicans is likely to remain unfilled for several more months. Real estate developer / 2012 Senate candidate Eric Hovde is seen as the most likely candidate to run, after Reps. Mike Gallagher and Tom Tiffany passed on bids; but nobody expects Hovde, who is personally wealthy and could self-fund part of his campaign, to get into the race until sometime next year. If Hovde doesn't run, former staffing company CEO Scott Mayer could run, but it's not likely the two run against each other. Former Milwaukee Sheriff David Clarke isn't seen as likely to run. The probable closeness of the presidential race at the top of the ticket will make this race competitive, but first Republicans need a candidate. Baldwin had \$6.8 million in the bank on Sept. 30. Lean Democratic.

Wyoming. John Barrasso (R) appointed 2007, elected 2008 special (73%), 2012 (76%), 2018 (67%). Filing deadline May 31. Primary Aug. 20. Barrasso has one Republican challenger, Casper businessman Reid Rasner, but the reliably conservative senator shouldn't have any serious issues getting through the primary (he also has a \$6.4 million cushion in his campaign account). As chair of the Senate Republican Conference, he's one of McConnell's potential successors. Solid Republican.

Alabama 2: A Blue Bright Spot in a Red State

By Erin Covey

Democrats have a rare opportunity to flip a House seat in the Heart of Dixie — and though the seat is anchored in Montgomery, it's drawn interest from Democrats all across the state.

A panel of federal judges settled on a new congressional map, redrawing Alabama's 2nd District so that nearly a majority (48.7 percent) of the voting-age population is Black. Joe Biden would have won this district 56-43 percent, meaning a Democratic candidate should be in a strong position to flip this seat in 2024. For comparison, Donald Trump would have won the current 2nd by 29 points, and only 30.1 percent of its voting-age population is Black.

The new 2nd District stretches across the state from Mobile to the Georgia state line, encompassing Montgomery and the eastern portion of Alabama's Black Belt. Several Democrats based in Montgomery and Mobile are weighing campaigns, along with several Democrats from Birmingham (about an hour outside of the district) and Huntsville (about 3 hours north of the district). Those from the district would have a clear edge in the Democratic primary, but depending on how crowded the field becomes, it could be anyone's game.

The primary is set for March 5, and if no one wins a majority of the vote, the top two candidates will face each other in a runoff election on April 2.

Though numerous Democrats, and a few Republicans, have talked publicly about a potential run, most have yet to jump in the race. But the filing deadline for candidates is Nov. 10, so candidates have just a few weeks to make a decision.

The Potential Democratic Field

Steven Reed, the mayor of Montgomery, is at the top of the list of Democrats who'd be well-positioned to run for this seat. Earlier this week, Reed acknowledged that "it's something that [he's] deliberating on very intentionally" after his name had been floated for months.

Reed, 49, was first elected in 2019. The first Black mayor of Montgomery, he easily won re-election this August with 57 percent of the vote. The former probate judge has a well-known last name — his father, Alabama Democratic Conference Chairman Joe Reed, is one of the most powerful Democrats in the state.

"I don't know that he's a dominant frontrunner, but he's a pretty clear frontrunner who keeps out a lot of other strong candidates," one Democratic strategist told *Inside Elections*. But Democrats who spoke with *Inside Elections* said that Reed was still on the fence about running for Congress.

Until Reed makes a decision, other potential candidates (particularly those in the Montgomery area) are unlikely to jump in.

State Sen. Kirk Hatcher, who represents Montgomery in the state legislature, could run for the seat if Reed decides not to. The former English teacher and Baptist minister was first elected in 2021.

Alabama State University president Quinton Ross, who previously held Hatcher's state Senate seat, could also run. Ross served in the state Senate for 15 years and could be a formidable candidate.

A few Democrats from Mobile are also weighing bids. State Sen. Vivian Figures, 66, has expressed interest in running for the new 2nd. Figures has served in the state legislature since 1997, when she was elected to succeed her late husband Sen. Michael Figures.

Democratic operatives who spoke with *Inside Elections* also mentioned Figures' son, Shomari Figures, as a potential candidate — he just resigned

from the Department of Justice, where he was a deputy chief of staff to the attorney general, and he previously worked for Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown. "There will be a Figures on the ballot," one Alabama Democrat told *Inside Elections*, noting the strength of the family's name.

State Rep. Napoleon Bracy also said he is "seriously considering" a campaign; he's represented a district in Mobile County since 2011. Bracy is also the manager of Diversity & Inclusion at Austal USA, a shipbuilder in Mobile.

State Rep. Jeremy Gray, who hails from the eastern side of the district, could also run. Gray, the minority whip, represents parts of Lee and Russell Counties and owns a sports training business.

Several other Democrats outside of the 2nd are taking a look at the seat as well. State House Minority Leader Anthony Daniels would likely be the most formidable candidate in this group. Though he's from Huntsville, several hours north of the 2nd, he grew up in the district.

State Sen. Merika Coleman, who represents Birmingham, filed to run for the 2nd District on Wednesday. Coleman served in the state House for two decades before she was elected to the state Senate in 2022.

Jefferson County Commissioner Sheila Tyson has also filed to run, and state Rep. Juandalynn Givan, who represents Birmingham, said she's considering running. Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin was also mentioned by Alabama Democratic Party executive director Tom Miro as a potential candidate.

The Potential Republican Nominee

GOP Rep. Barry Moore, who represents the current 2nd District, has yet to announce his 2024 plans. A significant portion of the current 2nd, including Moore's hometown in Coffee County, was drawn into the new 1st District, where GOP Rep. Jerry Carl is running for re-election.

Moore could either run against Carl in a member-on-member primary, or run for re-election in the new 2nd, where he'd face an uphill climb against the Democratic nominee. If Moore runs against Carl, he might have the Club for Growth on his side — the anti-tax group supported him in his 2020 campaign.

If the political environment favors the GOP in 2024, a strong Republican candidate could theoretically have a shot at winning this seat — Republican Katie Britt only lost this seat by half a point in 2022, 48.8 to 49.3 percent, as she won statewide by 36 points.

But it's difficult to imagine Moore, a conservative firebrand and a member of the Freedom Caucus, running significantly ahead of Trump on the ballot. Trump would have lost the seat by 13 points in 2020 and 11 points in 2016.

Former state Sen. Dick Brewbaker has said that'd be interested in running for the 2nd if Moore doesn't run. Brewbaker served in the state Senate from 2010 to 2018 and owned a car dealership in Montgomery until the beginning of this year. Pike Road Mayor Gordon Stone has said that he's unlikely to run for the new 2nd but isn't "closing any doors."

The Bottom Line

Democrats only need to net five seats to take control of the House, so their ability to flip this seat could be decisive. And the courts' decision in Alabama will have ripple effects on redistricting cases in Louisiana, Georgia, and North Carolina that could impact more congressional maps ahead of 2024. **IE**