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SC Blues Federal
PAC
Political Action Committee

2024 Senate Ratings

BATTLEGROUND

Democratic-Held (8)	Republican-Held (1)
MI Open (Stabenow, D)	Cruz (R-Texas)
Baldwin (D-Wis.)	
Brown (D-Ohio)	
Casey (D-Penn.)	**Independent-Held (1)**
Kaine (D-Va.)	Sinema (I-Ariz.)
Manchin (D-W.V.)	
Rosen (D-Nev.)	
Tester (D-Mont.)	

Solid Democratic (14)	Solid Republican (10)
CA Open (Feinstein, D)	IN Open (Braun, R)
DE Open (Carper, D)	Barrasso (R-Wy.)
MD Open (Cardin, D)	Blackburn (R-Tenn.)
Cantwell (D-Wa.)	Cramer (R-N.D.)
Gillibrand (D-N.Y.)	Fischer (R-Neb.)
Heinrich (D-N.M.)	Hawley (R-Mo.)
Hirono (D-Hawaii)	Ricketts (R-Neb.)
King (I-Maine)	Romney (R-Utah)
Klobuchar (DFL-Minn.)	Scott (R-Fla.)
Menendez (D-N.J.)	Wicker (R-Miss.)
Murphy (D-Ct.)	
Sanders (I-Vt.)	
Warren (D-Mass.)	
Whitehouse (D-R.I.)	

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

CALENDAR

July 20	FIFA Women's World Cup starts
Aug. 8	Mississippi Governor Primary
Aug. 10	Louisiana Governor Filing Deadline
Aug. 29	Mississippi Governor Primary Runoff (if necessary)

Montana Senate: The Ultimate Test(er)

By Jacob Rubashkin

As Montana has become increasingly Republican, the GOP has failed to dislodge Democratic Sen. Jon Tester from his perch in Washington.

Tester is one of three Democratic senators up for re-election in a state Donald Trump carried in 2020, along with Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown (who is running for re-election) and West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin (who has not announced his intentions).

The success of the organic farmer from Big Sandy, Montana, in a state that Trump carried by 16 points in 2020, 57-41 percent, is crucial to Democrats' hopes of maintaining their slim Senate majority.

With just a 50-49 seat majority, Democrats have little margin for error. Republicans need a net gain of just one seat to secure control if they also win back the presidency, or two seats to secure a majority regardless of the presidential outcome.

The Republicans

Republican leadership in Montana and Washington, D.C. is quickly coalescing behind Navy SEAL veteran Tim Sheehy. But the prized recruit could still face a spirited primary contest with 2nd District Rep. Matt Rosendale.

Sheehy, 38, is currently the CEO of Bridger Aerospace, an aerial firefighting company he founded in 2014 and which went public in January 2023.

A Minnesota native, Sheehy graduated from the Naval Academy in 2008, and served as a Navy SEAL with deployments in Iraq, Afghanistan, and South America over the course of five years. In 2014, he left active duty (remaining a reserve officer until 2019) and moved to Montana, where he founded Bridger and drone imaging company Ascent Vision Technologies.

This is Sheehy's first run for office, and he was heavily recruited by national Republicans to jump into the race. His personal wealth, lack of a voting record, and decorated military service made him attractive to NRSC chairman Steve Daines, Montana's junior senator, as well as Gov. Greg Gianforte, and 1st District Rep. Ryan Zinke, a fellow Navy SEAL who has long desired this Senate seat but stepped aside for Sheehy this year.

The Sheehy campaign team includes general consultant Katie Martin of Big Dog Strategies, admaker Jon Downs of FP1 Strategies, and pollster Erik Iverson of Moore Information.

Sheehy owns roughly 11 million shares of Bridger, and while the stock is trading at just one-fifth of its January 2023 IPO price ($5.78 vs. $22.08), Sheehy is still personally wealthy. In 2020, he sold AVT for $350 million to CACI International, and in 2022 he took home a $5 million salary. Republican strategists anticipate that he will at least partially self-fund
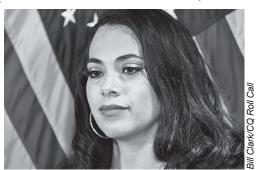
House Rematches: Second Time's the Charm?

By Erin Covey

A bevy of congressional candidates who lost competitive races in 2022 are waging comebacks, hopeful that they've learned from their mistakes last cycle and can close the gap next November.

Several repeat challengers announced their 2024 plans over the past week, though they've been gearing up for campaigns behind the scenes for months (the timing isn't a coincidence; the beginning of a fundraising quarter is a prime time for candidates to announce).

Candidates who've come close to winning have certain advantages on their second try — now they're better known by voters, and they aren't starting from scratch building their campaign infrastructure and fundraising networks.

Mayra Flores

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

Repeat candidates may also be helped by a stronger top of the ticket compared to their previous run. But if they fall short again, they could run the risk of becoming perennial candidates, known for a track record of losses.

Since the beginning of July, five U.S. House candidates who were their party's nominee in 2022 have announced 2024 campaigns: Republicans Tom Barrett in Michigan's 7th District and Mayra Flores in Texas' 34th, as well as Democrats Monica Tranel in Montana's 1st, Tony Vargas in Nebraska's 2nd, and Jamie McLeod-Skinner in Oregon's 5th.

At least a dozen nominees from 2022's competitive House races were already running. The Democrats include Kirsten Engel in Arizona's 6th, Will Rollins in California's 41st, Adam Frisch in Colorado's 3rd, Laura Gillen in New York's 4th, Josh Riley in New York's 19th, Ashley Ehasz in Pennsylvania's 1st, Shamaine Daniels in Pennsylvania's 10th, and Michelle Vallejo in Texas' 15th. The Republicans include Kelly Cooper in Arizona's 4th, Scott Baugh in California's 47th, Mark Robertson in Nevada's 1st, and Joe Kent in Washington's 3rd.

And former Rep. Yvette Herrell, who won the 2020 election for New Mexico's 2nd after losing in 2018, is running for a third time. She'll face Democratic Rep. Gabe Vasquez, who defeated Herrell by just 1,350 votes last November.

Other candidates who lost their party's primary in 2022 are also running again, including Republicans Kevin Dellicker in Pennsylvania's 7th and Craig Riedel in Ohio's 9th, and New York Democrats Josh Lafazan (3rd), Mondaire Jones (17th), Sarah Klee Hood (22nd), and Rebecca Cooke in Wisconsin's 3rd. Two Democrats who nearly ousted incumbents of their own party are also running again: David Kim in California's 34th District, and Kina Collins in Illinois' 7th. Cooke, Collins and Dellicker all announced campaigns this week. So did Nick Begich, the Alaska Republican who placed third behind Democratic Rep. Mary Peltola and former GOP Gov. Sarah Palin in the Last Frontier's quirky four-way race last fall.

Mixed Prospects

Among the candidates who announced this month, some may have easier paths to the nominations than others.

In Oregon's 5th District, McLeod-Skinner is facing two other

Kirsten Engel

Courtesy Engel Campaign

serious Democratic candidates, Janelle Bynum and Lynn Peterson, each of whom has racked up impressive endorsements. Some Democrats have questioned McLeod-Skinner's viability in a general election, after her successful ouster of Blue Dog Democrat Kurt Schrader cemented her progressive brand. But she'll still have the edge in a three-way race. Her campaign commissioned a poll (conducted before any of the three candidates had announced) that showed McLeod-Skinner far ahead of her competition — though polls at this stage in the cycle are just a measure of how well-known the candidates are, and her lead is likely to shrink.

If McLeod-Skinner wins the primary, she'll have a competitive race

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on her hands against GOP Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer, who won by 2 points in 2022.

Jones, who represented New York's 17th for one term, also has a primary on his hands. He'll face Liz Gereghty, a Board of Education trustee who also happens to be Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's sister. But despite her family ties, Gereghty is the underdog against the former congressman, who is better known and has strong local Democratic support.

Jones was elected to Congress in 2020 after winning a crowded primary for the open 17th, based in the Hudson Valley. But in 2022, Democratic Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney decided to run in the newly-drawn 17th (which overlapped with his current district). Instead of running against Maloney, Jones decided to run in the open Manhattan and Brooklyn-based 10th and came in third place in the Democratic primary. Maloney lost the 17th to Mike Lawler, who's now one of the most vulnerable Republican members in the country.

Vargas, seen as a top recruit last cycle, should have no trouble winning the Democratic nomination for Nebraska's 2nd District next year. But GOP Rep. Don Bacon will be a difficult opponent — since he ousted a Democratic congressman in 2016, Bacon has survived three election cycles despite Democrats investing millions in defeating him. Last November, Vargas lost to Bacon by 3 points.

Tony Vargas

Courtesy Vargas Campaign

Tranel is the underdog in her race, though Montana's competitive Senate race could give her a boost. She lost to GOP Rep. Ryan Zinke by 3 points in 2022, and Donald Trump would have won her district by 7 points in 2020.

Barrett probably has the easiest path to victory — he isn't expected to face serious competition in the GOP primary for Michigan's 7th, and his opponent in 2022, Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin, is running for the state's open U.S. Senate seat. In the general election, Barrett's likely opponent is former state Sen. Curtis Hertel, who announced his campaign this week. Joe Biden barely won this district in 2020, and Republicans believe this is one of their best pick-up opportunities in the country.

Recent history shows a mixed record for repeat challengers. Of the congressional candidates who lost to incumbents in 2020 and ran again in 2022, only Tom Kean Jr. was successful. Of those who lost to incumbents in 2018 and ran again in 2020, Maria Elvira Salazar, Young Kim, and Herrell were successful.

On the Horizon

A host of other 2022 nominees are still weighing 2024 bids. The list of potential Republican candidates includes Neil Parrott in Maryland's 6th, Paul Junge in Michigan's 8th District, Mike Erickson in Oregon's 6th, Jim Bognet in Pennsylvania's 8th, and Jeremy Shaffer in Pennsylvania's 17th. State Sen. Barbara Kirkmeyer just announced she'll seek re-election rather than make another bid in Colorado's 8th.

On the Democratic side, Adam Gray (California's 13th) and Rudy Salas (California's 22nd) are expected to be their party's nominees again in 2024,

though they've yet to announce campaigns. Christina Bohannan in Iowa's 2nd, Carl Marlinga in Michigan's 10th, Rob Zimmerman in New York's 3rd, and Brad Pfaff in Wisconsin's 3rd are also considering running again.

While re-run candidates will get dismissed and diminished by their opponents for failing to win a race. Congress is filled with members who lost a race before winning. And losing a House primary didn't stop Barack Obama from getting elected to the Senate and eventually president. **IE**

2024 House Ratings

Toss-Up (4D, 8R)

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)
NJ 7 (Kean Jr., R)	OR 5 (DeRemer, R)
NM 2 (Vasquez, D)	WA 3 (Perez, D)

Tilt Democratic (3D) — Tilt Republican (7R)

Tilt Democratic (3D)	Tilt Republican (7R)
CA 47 (Open; Porter, D)	AZ 1 (Schweikert, R)
PA 7 (Wild, D)	AZ 6 (Ciscomani, R)
PA 8 (Cartwright, D)	CA 22 (Valadao, R)
	IA 3 (Nunn, R)
	MI 10 (James, R)
	NY 19 (Molinaro, R)
	VA 2 (Kiggans, R)

Lean Democratic (14D) — Lean Republican (6R)

Lean Democratic (14D)	Lean Republican (6R)
AK AL (Peltola, D)	CA 41 (Calvert, R)
CT 5 (Hayes, D)	CA 45 (Steel, R)
IL 17 (Sorensen, D)	CO 3 (Boebert, R)
ME 2 (Golden, D)	NE 2 (Bacon, R)
MI 3 (Scholten, D)	NY 1 (LaLota, R)
MN 2 (Craig, DFL)	TX 15 (De La Cruz, R)
NV 1 (Titus, D)	
NV 3 (Lee, D)	
NH 1 (Pappas, D)	
NY 18 (Ryan, D)	
OR 6 (Salinas, D)	
PA 17 (Deluzio, D)	
VA 7 (Spanberger, D)	
WA 8 (Schrier, D)	

	GOP	DEM
Solid	172	168
Likely/Lean/Tilt	25	29
Total	197	197
Toss-up		12
Ohio/North Carolina		29
Needed for majority		218

Likely Democratic (12D) — Likely Republican (12R)

Likely Democratic (12D)	Likely Republican (12R)
CA 49 (Levin, D)	CA 3 (Kiley, R)
FL 9 (Soto, D)	CA 40 (Kim, R)
FL 23 (Moskowitz, D)	FL 13 (Luna, R)
IN 1 (Mrvan, D)	FL 27 (Salazar, R)
KS 3 (Davids, D)	IA 1 (Miller-Meeks, R)
MD 6 (Open; Trone, D)	IA 2 (Hinson, R)
MI 8 (Kildee, D)	MT 1 (Zinke, R)
NV 4 (Horsford, D)	PA 1 (Fitzpatrick, R)
NH 2 (Kuster, D)	PA 10 (Perry, R)
TX 28 (Cuellar, D)	SC 1 (Mace, R)
TX 34 (Gonzalez, D)	WI 1 (Steil, R)
VA 10 (Wexton, D)	WI 3 (Van Orden, R)

Ohio and North Carolina ratings are being withheld pending new maps.

New York 17: Hudson Valley Hullabaloo

By Jacob Rubashkin

New York's picturesque 17th District was home to one of the most notable upsets of 2022. As House Democrats exceeded expectations across the country, their campaign chief, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, could not hold on to his Hudson Valley seat, losing a nailbiter to state Assemblyman Mike Lawler.

Democrats were caught by surprise at the depths of their New York troubles last year. But heading into 2024, the party is clear-eyed about one thing: the path back to the House majority runs through the Empire State.

That means winning back the six districts that voted for Joe Biden in 2020 but for a Republican in 2022. Second on that list is the 17th — where Biden easily notched a double-digit win in 2020 and is on track to win again.

But first, Democrats will have to sort out a primary that features two very different candidates.

The Lay of the Land

The 17th District sits in the lower Hudson Valley, and includes the northern half of Westchester County and all of Putnam and Rockland counties, as well as two towns in Dutchess County. The district is entirely within the New York City media market, and a significant number of its residents work in New York City — prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, 20 percent of workers in Rockland and Putnam, and 30 percent in Westchester, commuted to the city.

The district's population is 64 percent non-Hispanic white, 20 percent Hispanic, 9 percent Black and 6 percent Asian. The district has a median household income of $115,000, and 50 percent of adults have a bachelor's degree, making it the fifth-wealthiest and eighth-most educated district in the country represented by a Republican.

The bulk of the district's votes come from Westchester (42 percent) and Rockland (38 percent) counties, with Putnam (14 percent) and Dutchess (6 percent) carrying the balance. Westchester is the most Democratic area: in 2022, Maloney won Westchester, 59-41 percent, but lost the other three counties.

Overall, the district leans Democratic, and Democrats have a 42-28 percent voter registration advantage. Joe Biden would have won it by 10 points in 2020, 54-44 percent, and Hillary Clinton would have won it by 8 points in 2016, 52-44 percent. While most of the district trended toward Democrats between 2016 and 2020, Rockland County shifted toward Republicans, powered by large swings toward Donald Trump in the Orthodox Jewish community.

The Democratic candidates for Senate carried the seat by more than 20 points in 2016 and 2018. But in the 2022 elections, statewide Democrats significantly underperformed. GOP gubernatorial nominee Lee Zeldin carried the seat, 52-48 percent, and Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer only narrowly carried it, 52-48 percent.

The Democrats

Two Democrats are seeking the nomination: former Rep. Mondaire Jones, and Katonah-Lewisboro school board member Liz Gereghty.

Jones, 36, represented the 17th District for one term after winning election in 2020. About 73 percent of the new 17th District overlaps with the old district that Jones once held. He was one of the two first openly gay Black members of Congress, along with fellow New Yorker Ritchie Torres.

The Rockland County native has a strong educational pedigree, graduating Stanford in 2009 and Harvard Law School in 2013. He worked at corporate firm Davis Polk before moving to the Westchester County Law Department.

In 2019, he launched a primary challenge to Rep. Nita Lowey. When Lowey opted to retire, the primary field grew large. Boosted by

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

Mondaire Jones

endorsements from progressives such as Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, as well as backing from the *New York Times*, Jones won the primary with 42 percent over several local officials and a self-funder. He won the general election, 59-35 percent, in the then-Solid Democratic seat.

In 2022, a court-implemented congressional map led 18th District Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney to run instead in the 17th District (which was still mostly Jones's constituents but also included Maloney's home). Rather than run in a primary against Maloney, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee chairman, or against Rep. Jamaal Bowman in the 16th District (where Jones' home sat on the new map), Jones instead decamped to Brooklyn, where there was an open congressional seat — the 10th District — and ran in the Democratic primary there. He placed third, with 18 percent, and moved back to the Hudson Valley in December.

Jones's campaign team includes media consultant J.J. Balaban of Technicolor Political, pollsters Mike Bocian and Nisha Jain of GBAO, Fiona Conroy, Justin Myers, and Adnaan Muslim of Deliver Strategies for direct mail, and Tim Persico of GPS Impact (formerly executive director of the DCCC and Maloney's chief of staff) for digital strategy.

Gereghty, 49, is a former member of the Lewisboro-Katonah school board, and is also the younger sister of Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. Gereghty, who graduated from Michigan State in 1995 and has an MBA from Duke (1999), moved to Westchester County in 2003. She worked as a business consultant before opening a knick knack store, PopKatonah, in 2016.

In 2019, she won an uncontested seat on the school board, and won a contested re-election in 2022. She resigned after launching her congressional bid this year.

Gereghty's team includes media consultant Anson Kaye of GMMB, pollster Jef Pollock of Global Strategy Group, and direct mail by BerlinRosen.

The Democratic Primary

Jones begins the primary as the favorite, according to Democratic strategists watching the race.

"Mondaire is at an advantage starting on day one, since he used to represent the area and has a lot of local ties," one strategist said. "Mondaire very much has the edge," said another Democratic operative, "but it's not inevitable that he wins the primary, because Gereghty is doing the right things."

Jones' strategy in the primary is to run as a quasi-incumbent, highlighting his work as the district's congressman during his one term. Even out of office, he has continued to attend local party functions and groundbreakings across the district — appearances he highlighted in the run-up to his campaign launch.

He also rolled out a long list of endorsements from local elected officials, including the county party leaders in Westchester, Putnam, and Rockland counties, which cast the vast majority of the district's votes.

Jones' allies hope this will help insulate him from attacks that he is a carpetbagger after leaving to run in the 10th District. One Jones ally told *Inside Elections*, "He's a known and liked figure. They can go after him as much as they want saying, 'Hey, you moved to Brooklyn' but you have all these local figures saying 'We like this guy' and he's being invited to all these events."

Because she is starting from a significant name ID disadvantage, Gereghty has to raise good money so she can introduce herself to voters. "The first order of business is to help people to know Liz," said one pro-Gereghty strategist.

Her campaign says it raised $400,000 through June 30, a decent haul for a first time candidate. But Jones raised $300,000 in his first 24 hours, showing he still has the fundraising chops that helped him raise $6.7 million over the past two cycles. Campaign finance reports are due July 15.

Gereghty's best card to play may be an electability argument: that she's a safer bet for a general election because she hasn't previously supported defunding the police, or the Green New Deal, or expanding the Supreme Court.

Liz Gereghty

Courtesy Gereghty Campaign

(In that regard, her association with her sister, who just won a landslide victory in a swing state, can't hurt.)

"Democratic primary voters, this is the sort of calculation they make all the time," said a pro-Gereghty strategist. '"I like him, but I don't know if he's going to win… I like him, but it's most important that Democrats hold this seat.' Liz being able to come in and run without the track record Jones has accumulated is going to be a real asset for her."

"Crime, bail reform, remain really important issues," said another pro-Gereghty Democrat. "Liz isn't a 'defund the police' person, Mondaire may be."

Gereghty's allies believe that by presenting her as a longtime Hudson Valley resident with a relatable story of founding a small business and getting involved in the school system (but without a congressional voting record), they will make her a more attractive option for electability-minded primary voters.

And while Jones's allies believe they are insulated from attacks over his 2022 bid, Gereghty may still use it as a contrast point. Her allies don't

believe it will be difficult to argue that Jones was more interested in being a member of Congress however and wherever he could than in representing the Hudson Valley specifically.

The Republican Incumbent

Lawler, 36, is in his first term in Congress, and previously served one term in the state assembly.

The Rockland County native and Manhattan College graduate (2009) is a political consultant who was most recently a partner at Checkmate Strategies, a political consulting shop that mostly works on campaigns in New York and New Jersey.

In 2020, Lawler ran for a state Assembly seat in Rockland County that included all of Orangetown and eastern Ramapo. Trump's gains in Ramapo at the top of the ticket pushed the district rightward, and Lawler ousted seven-term incumbent Ellen Jaffee, 52-48 percent. Trump lost the assembly district narrowly, 50-47 percent, but that was a significant improvement from his 15-point loss there in 2016.

In 2022, following New York's prolonged redistricting process, Lawler announced he would run for the 17th District against Maloney.

Most of the district was new to Maloney, who faced a spirited primary challenge from progressive state Sen. Alessandra Biaggi. Republicans — who saw strong polling from Lawler — made ousting the DCCC chairman a priority.

Aided by nearly $9 million in outside spending from the McCarthy-aligned Congressional Leadership Fund and NRCC, Lawler pulled off an upset, defeating Maloney 50.3-49.7 percent.

In Congress, Lawler sits on the Foreign Affairs and Financial Services committees. He is a member of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus and Republican Main Street Partnership, which is a less ideological counterweight to the House Freedom Caucus.

Lawler's campaign team includes general consultant Chris Russell of Checkmate Strategies (Lawler's former business partner), who is also handling direct mail. The media consultant is Tom Dunham of BrabenderCox, and the pollster is Jim McLaughlin of McLaughlin & Associates.

How It Plays Out

Democrats acknowledge Lawler won't be easy to dislodge. One national strategist called him "a tough out," and another said "he's a good politician." Both Democrats and Republicans pointed to an early May poll commissioned by Democratic group End Citizens United showing Lawler outpacing Jones, 50-48 percent, as evidence that the incumbent begins in a decent position.

Republicans are already signaling they will target Jones as too far-left for the district, especially on the same public safety issues that dominated the conversation in 2022. The NRCC and Lawler have already targeted Jones over his support for defunding the police in 2020 — Jones is on camera saying as much.

Jones has since said that "defund the police… was not the best phrase to articulate a vision for how to move toward humane, more effective policing." And his launch video indicates he is leaning into support from law enforcement; it features a retired Pound Ridge police chief vouching for Jones, saying Jones "funded the police."

One national Democratic strategist said, "when Democrats address this head on in ads with cops, it neutralizes the argument… it was very smart of Mondaire to launch with a police validator on video."

Democrats also believe they can run interference on the issue by accusing Republicans — including Lawler — of not supporting law enforcement because they aren't pushing back on Trump's calls to defund the FBI.

Republicans are less set on how to run against Gereghty, who is more of a political unknown. And several strategists who spoke to *Inside Elections* were skeptical that she would win the primary.

Lawler continues to style himself as a bipartisan dealmaker, and his allies point to his efforts to reinstate the SALT deduction and an anti-congestion pricing act he co-sponsored with New Jersey Democrat Josh Gottheimer, as evidence. "He's unafraid to put his face on camera," said one Lawler ally, who argued his willingness to do traditional media in addition to conservative outlets, helps him burnish his reputation as a reasonable Republican.

Democrats will look to pierce Lawler's image as a moderate by highlighting his voting record in Congress and how often he votes with high-profile Republicans such as House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (97 and 87 percent, respectively, per ProPublica).

In particular, Democratic strategists believe that Lawler's vote on the initial Republican debt ceiling bill, which would have deeply slashed government spending, will be a liability — even though Lawler later voted for the bipartisan debt ceiling deal. A forthcoming vote on HR 7, an anti-abortion bill, may also provide Democrats fodder against Lawler, who is opposed to abortion but supports exceptions "in cases of rape, incest or if the mother's life is in jeopardy." And Democrats believe the prospect of unified GOP control of the federal government, as well as steady news of efforts in the court system to ban access to abortion pills will drive home the issue in pro-choice New York, where state law protects abortion access.

Last cycle, Maloney tried painting Lawler as "MAGA Mike," an epithet that did not stick to the polished, young assemblyman. "He doesn't come off as frothing at the mouth, and I just think it was a very questionable campaign choice," said one Democrat of that strategy. But Democrats believe that his voting record provides a new opportunity to paint the congressman as a party loyalist who doesn't buck leadership on anything important.

Biden himself gave Lawler a gift when he visited the Hudson Valley in May and said of the Republican "he's not one of these MAGA Republicans," and called him "the kind of Republican I was used to dealing with." Republicans are elated with that clip and will likely use it in paid media. Democratic operatives admit it was an unforced error but don't see it as catastrophic. Given that Lawler has to win over quite a few Biden voters to win re-election, having that validation is an early boost for him.

New York Democrats are hopeful that an increase in turnout — especially if Trump is on the ballot — will boost their chances relative to last year, when Republicans outpaced Democrats at the polls all over the state. Across the four counties in the 17th District, Republican voters turned out at a rate 8 points higher than Democrats in 2022.

This district attracted significant outside Republican spending last cycle, with little Democratic response. Overall, Republican outside groups outspent their Democratic counterparts, $8.8 million to $270,000.

With DCCC chairman Maloney out of the picture, the district may be less attractive to GOP donors looking to make a statement. Last year, Maloney received very little outside Democratic support, potentially because Democratic leaders were worried about the optics of diverting funds to the chairman in a Biden-friendly district when other incumbents were asking for support in less Democratic seats. And Democrats are focusing on New York, with their main super PAC, House Majority PAC, saying it will spend $45 million on New York races alone. The upshot is that outside spending will be closer to parity than it was last cycle.

But unlike last cycle, Lawler will be very well financed. In 2022, he raised and spent just $1.5 million. This cycle, he had already amassed $1.5 million cash on hand on June 30, and one GOP source said he could be on track to raise $7 million over the course of the election. His dollars will go further on broadcast TV than super PAC spending, due to the favorable rates candidates get.

One thing Democrats are uniformly optimistic about is not sharing the ballot with Hochul, who was seen as dragging down congressional Democrats across the state. In particular, many Democratic strategists say Hochul was flat-footed in responding to attacks on public safety. Last year, Zeldin and his allies spent $13 million in the New York media market assailing Hochul, largely on crime issues.

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

Mike Lawler

"The thing Hochul did not do is address those arguments head on," said one national Democratic strategist. "Her campaign just hurt every down ballot candidate, and Republicans were very skillful in weaponizing that against Democrats," said another Democratic operative.

Republicans acknowledge that Hochul's absence on the ballot could make things more difficult, because it means Lawler will have to overperform the top of the ticket, winning over voters who are also casting their ballots for Biden. "Does it hurt us not having her on the ballot? Maybe," said one national GOP strategist, "But she's still a great boogeyman." Statewide polling shows the governor's image is still middling at best, and Republicans plan on augmenting last cycle's crime-focused attacks with messaging on the increase in migrants and asylum seekers in New York.

The Bottom Line

Redistricting has shaped so much of the 17th's story over the past year, and it may not be over yet. Democrats are litigating to redraw New York's congressional maps, and on Thursday, the state's intermediate court ordered the Independent Redistricting Commission to submit a new congressional map to the legislature.

Republicans will appeal. If the state's top court, which has a more liberal bent than it did last year, tosses out the current maps, it could ultimately give Democrats in the state legislature an opportunity to redraw the map to be more favorable to the party.

That would place additional pressure on Lawler, as the seat could potentially go from one that voted for Biden by 10 points to one that supported Biden by 14 points. It could also complicate things for Gereghty, if her home town of Lewisboro is placed in a different district. In the first round of redistricting last year, the redistricting commission's Democratic and Republican plans both placed Lewisboro in the 16th District, as did the map that passed the legislature.

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Report Shorts

Alaska's At-Large District. Nick Begich, the Republican candidate who came in third place in the top-four primary for Alaska's open House seat last cycle, announced his campaign on Thursday. Considering President Donald Trump won Alaska by 10 points in 2020, Democratic Rep. Mary Peltola is vulnerable for re-election. But Alaska's top-four, ranked-choice system makes defeating the congresswoman difficult if Republicans don't rally behind a single candidate. Lean Democratic.

California Senate. Silicon Valley entrepreneur Lexi Reese officially entered the race to succeed Democrat Dianne Feinstein. Reese, most recently the COO of payroll processor Gusto, will have to spend significant money to break into the top tier of candidates that already includes Reps. Adam Schiff, Katie Porter, and Barbara Lee. Solid Democratic.

California's 31st District. Democratic Rep. Grace Napolitano announced she will not seek re-election in her Los Angeles-area seat. Democratic state Sens. Bob Archuleta and Susan Rubio and others are running, while former 39th District Rep. Gil Cisneros could join the Democratic field. Napolitano endorsed Archuleta. Biden won the district with 65 percent in 2020, so it should stay in Democratic hands. Solid Democratic.

Courtesy California Senate

Bob Archuleta

Colorado's 8th District. Republican state Sen. Barbara Kirkmeyer is running for re-election rather than making a second run for Congress. She lost a close race to Democrat Yadira Caraveo, 48.4-47.4 percent in 2022. Weld County Commissioner Scott James announced he would run for the GOP

nomination, and former Weld County Commissioner Steve Moreno, and state Rep. Gabe Evans are potential contenders as well in one of the most competitive districts in the country. Toss-up.

Illinois' 17th District. Former state Sen. Dan Brady declined to run against Democratic Rep. Eric Sorenson. Ray Estrada, a philanthropist from Galesburg, is running but Republicans are still searching for a top challenger in a district Biden would have carried with 53 percent. Lean Democratic.

Kansas' 3rd District. Physician and Air Force Reserve officer Prasanth Reddy is the second candidate to launch a bid against Democratic Rep. Sharice Davids, joining plumbing company owner Karen Crnkovich. Reddy has a compelling biography but Davids has proven to be a tough target for Republicans. Police officer Jonathon Westbrook may run as well. Likely Democratic.

Maryland Senate. Democratic Rep. Jamie Raskin announced he will not run for the U.S. Senate, leaving Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks and Democratic Rep. David Trone to battle for the Democratic nomination to succeed retiring Democratic Sen. Ben Cardin. Republicans haven't won a Senate race in Maryland since 1980, the year before Cal Ripken Jr. debuted at shortstop for the Baltimore Orioles. Likely Democratic.

Maryland's 6th District. Military veteran/trans rights activist Mia Mason joined what will be a competitive Democratic primary for the open seat left by Democratic Rep. Dave Trone's Senate bid. Mason lost to GOP Rep. Andy Harris in the 1st District in 2020 and ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate in 2018. And she'll be an initial underdog in this Democratic race. Likely Democratic.

Michigan Senate. Actor Hill Harper announced his campaign, joining Rep. Elissa Slotkin and state Board of Education President Pamela Pugh and other less well-known candidates in the Democratic race to replace retiring Democratic Sen. Debbie Stabenow. Harper, who has starred in TV shows *CSI: NY* and *The Good Doctor* and the movie *The Skulls*, owns a coffee shop and home in Detroit. Republicans don't have a top-tier candidate in the race yet. Battleground.

Michigan's 7th District. Republican Tom Barrett and Democrat Curtis Hertel are running for the open seat left by Slotkin's Senate bid. Barrett is a former state senator and Army veteran who lost to Slotkin 5 points in 2022. Hertel is a former state senator with close ties to Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, and has worked to consolidate Democratic support behind the scenes before he announced for one of the most competitive House seats in the country. Toss-up.

Montana's 1st District. Former Olympic rower Monica Tranel lost a 3-point race to Republican Ryan Zinke in 2022 and is running again. Earlier in the cycle, Zinke was mentioned as a potential Senate candidate, but it looks like both candidates are headed for the House finish line once again, this time in a presidential year. Likely Republican.

Nevada Senate. Sam Brown finished second in the 2022 Senate primary as the anti-establishment candidate, but received good reviews for that campaign. Now he's the establishment choice to take on Democratic Sen. Jacky Rosen. But Brown, a disabled Afghanistan War veteran, will need to get past former state Assemblyman/2022 Secretary of State nominee Jim Marchant in the GOP primary. Battleground.

New York Redistricting. Democrats notched a victory at an intermediate court in their lawsuit to redo New York's redistricting process, but Republicans will appeal to the state's top tribunal. If the Court of Appeals rules for Democrats, New York will have to draw new congressional maps in a lengthy process that may ultimately result in more favorable districts for Democrats.

New York's 22nd District. State Sen. John Mannion joined DeWitt Town Councilwoman Sarah Klee Hood in the Democratic race to take on GOP Rep. Brandon Williams. Biden would have won the Syracuse-area seat with 53 percent in 2020. But the district lines could change after a recent court decision. Toss-up.

Ohio's 1st District. Republican attorney Orlando Sonza is challenging Democratic Rep. Greg Landsman in the Cincinnati-area district. It should be competitive, but the specifics of the race are unclear pending new Republican-drawn congressional lines.

Oregon's 5th District. Democrat Jamie McLeod-Skinner lost to Republican Lori Chavez-DeRemer in 2022 by 2 points and is back for a rematch. But McLeod-Skinner will first have to navigate a competitive primary with Metro Council President Lynn Peterson and state Rep. Janelle Bynum, who defeated Chavez-DeRemer in two state House races. Full analysis of the race in the June 30 issue. Toss-up.

Pennsylvania's 7th District. Republican Kevin Dellicker is running again against Democratic. Rep. Susan Wild. The Pennsylvania Air National Guard intelligence officer came within 500 votes of knocking off 2020 GOP nominee Lisa Scheller in the 2022 GOP primary.

2024 Gubernatorial Ratings

BATTLEGROUND

Democratic-Held (2)	Republican-Held (1)
NC Open (Cooper, D)	Sununu (R-N.H.)
WA Open (Inslee, D)*	

Solid Democratic (1)	Solid Republican (7)
DE Open (Carney, D)	IN Open (Holcomb, R)
	MO Open (Parson, R)
	WV Open (Justice, R)
	Burgum (R-N.D.)
	Cox (R-Utah)
	Gianforte (R-Mont.)
	Scott (R-Vt.)

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

State Rep. Ryan Mackenzie and other Republicans could still run, in what should be a competitive race to the end. Tilt Democratic.

Texas Senate. State Sen. Roland Gutierrez joined Rep. Colin Allred in the Democratic race to take on GOP Sen. Ted Cruz. It's a long-shot takeover opportunity for Democrats, and some Democrats believe Allred has the temperament, profile, and infrastructure to win. But the congressman can't take the primary for granted. Battleground.

Texas' 32nd District. Attorney Callie Butcher joined the Democratic race to replace Allred in the north Dallas suburbs. Butcher, Mia Mason (Maryland's 6th), and state Sen. Sarah McBride (Delaware At-Large) are vying to become the first openly transgender member of Congress. State

Courtesy Callie Butcher

Callie Butcher

Rep. Julie Johnson and trauma surgeon Brian Williams are two of the top contenders for the Democratic nomination in the 32nd. Solid Democratic.

Texas' 34th District. Former GOP Rep. Mayra Flores announced her run against Democratic Rep. Vicente Gonzalez. Flores won a high-profile 2022 special election but then lost to Gonzalez, 53-44 percent, in the regular general election in a redrawn district. Biden would have won the eastern Rio Grande Valley seat with 57 percent, so the Flores comeback will be tough unless the GOP presidential nominee does considerably better. Likely Democratic.

Washington Governor. Former GOP Rep. Dave Reichert launched his campaign in the open-seat race to replace Democratic Gov. Jay Inslee, who is not seeking a fourth term. Reichert, who might still be best known as the King County sheriff who helped catch the Green River Killer, represented a competitive Seattle-area district until he did not seek re-election in 2018. Reichert has a moderate reputation, is used to difficult races, and gives Republicans their best candidate for an office they haven't won since 1980. The Democratic side is still taking shape. We're changing the rating from Solid Democratic to Battleground.

Washington Senate. GOP physician Raul Garcia switched from the gubernatorial race to the Senate race after Reichert's announcement. Garcia finished fifth with 5.4 percent in the 2020 all-party gubernatorial primary. Any Republican will have a difficult time against Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell. Republicans haven't won a U.S. Senate race in Washington since 1994, when Rick Mirer was the starting quarterback for the Seattle Seahawks and Alex Rodriguez made his debut for the Seattle Mariners. Solid Democratic.

Wisconsin's 3rd District. Home goods boutique owner Rebecca Cooke is back for another run after finishing second in the 2022 Democratic primary. 2022 nominee/state Sen. Brad Pfaff is still considering running again, so Cooke may have competition for the nomination before taking on GOP Rep. Derrick Van Orden. Likely Republican.

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his campaign, but the extent of his wealth won't be known until he files a personal financial disclosure.

Rosendale, a two-term congressman from the eastern part of the state, has not officially announced his campaign yet but is expected to do so later this summer.

In 2020, he won Montana's at-large congressional seat, 56-44 percent, and in 2022, when Montana gained a second congressional seat, he ran in the Solid Republican eastern district, winning a three-way race with 56 percent of the vote.

Rosendale, who moved to Montana from Maryland in 2002, got his start in the state House in a 2010 election. After a stint in the state Senate, he ran for Congress in 2014 but lost a close GOP primary, and in 2016 was elected state auditor, 53-46 percent. In 2018, Rosendale won a chippy GOP primary for U.S. Senate with 34 percent but went on to lose to Tester in the general election, 50-47 percent.

Editor's Note: The Feb. 17 issue included a deeper look into Rosendale's profile and past races.

Rosendale's campaign team includes general consultant Guy Harrison of OnMessage Inc.

The GOP Primary

Sheehy is the preferred candidate of Republican leaders in Washington, DC. Daines, and nine of his Senate colleagues including GOP Conference Chairman John Barrasso, have all endorsed him.

Rosendale, meanwhile, can likely expect support from some of the upper chamber's more outspoken members, such as Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and Utah Sen. Mike Lee. In 2018, he also received backing in the GOP primary from Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul and his super PAC.

Sheehy is relatively unknown within the state, while Republican voters have seen Rosendale's name on the ballot seven or eight times since 2014.

The one public poll of the race so far reflects that disparity in name recognition. Public Policy Polling, a Democratic firm, released a June 19-20 survey of GOP primary voters that found Rosendale leading Sheehy, 64-10 percent. Rosendale had a 67 percent favorable/17 percent unfavorable image rating, compared to a 10 percent favorable/14 percent unfavorable rating for Sheehy.

Sheehy-aligned GOP strategists say the poll's release is evidence that Democrats are trying to coax Rosendale into the race because they see him as a weaker opponent for Tester, but also don't dispute that it's a reasonable depiction of where the contest starts out. They argue that once Sheehy begins spending money on paid media, he will catch up to Rosendale.

Sheehy's financial muscle is currently his greatest advantage over Rosendale, who raised just $127,000 in the first three months of the year and had $1.2 million in the bank on March 31. If Rosendale runs, he may need significant outside support from his close allies at the Club for Growth, which spent $3.3 million backing his 2018 bid.

Club president David McIntosh has said Rosendale "would be well positioned to challenge Tester if all the party gets behind him — and we'll be playing a big part in making that happen." But national GOP strategists are unconvinced that the Club will ultimately make a big investment in the race. The anti-tax group has already committed $20 million in support of two West Virginia candidates, and is in the midst of a seven-figure anti-Trump ad campaign.

Without the Club's support, Rosendale runs the risk of being swamped by Sheehy's personal resources ahead of the June 4 primary. That doesn't mean Rosendale can't win — plenty of self-funding

candidates lose their races — but it makes life more difficult for him.

One major dynamic of the primary will be both candidates looking to seize the mantle of the outsider: Sheehy leaning into his swashbuckling military biography and lack of political history while painting Rosendale, a two-term congressman, as a political ladder-climber and creature of Washington; and Rosendale running on his libertarian-leaning record and portraying Sheehy as a puppet of Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Rosendale reacted to Sheehy's entrance by tweeting "Congratulations to Mitch McConnell and the party bosses on getting their chosen candidate. Now Washington has two candidates — Tim Sheehy and Jon Tester — who will protect the DC cartel. Unfortunately for them, Montanans don't take orders from Washington. I believe that Montanans are tired of business as usual and will reject the McConnell-Biden Establishment."

As a member of the House Freedom Caucus, Rosendale has shown a propensity for bucking party leadership, most notably as part of the group that refused to vote for Kevin McCarthy in the 2023 speakership election. He also took the seventh-most votes against the party line of any Republican from 2020 to 2022, per ProPublica.

The speakership standoff could help Rosendale burnish his anti-establishment credentials but it also earned him the ire of Trump, whose phone call he memorably declined on the House floor. Rosendale is working to repair his relationship with the former president, recently traveling down to Mar-a-lago for Trump's post-arraignment speech in April. But Rosendale hasn't committed to supporting Trump in 2024, while Sheehy has, making Sheehy's allies hopeful Trump will back their candidate.

Courtesy Sheehy Campaign

Tim Sheehy

Sheehy's allies will work to paint Rosendale as unelectable in a general election. GOP strategists point to his loss to Tester in 2018, as well as his lackluster fundraising as a Senate candidate and congressman, as evidence he would be unable to win a statewide contest against the well-funded Tester.

"When you have a path to the majority that basically runs through three states," said a national GOP strategist, referring to Montana, West Virginia, and Ohio, "you need the best possible scenario to pan out in all of these. And Matt Rosendale is not the best possible scenario."

The General Election

If Republicans ultimately nominate Rosendale, the campaign could look a lot like the 2018 election. "The nuts and bolts of the attacks against Rosendale, I don't think he's cleaned up [his weaknesses] in any way shape or form," says one Democratic strategist.

That means a campaign with positive messaging focused on public lands, veterans, and "Montana values," and negatives focused on Rosendale's background as an out-of-state real estate developer.

National Republicans are concerned that strategy would be highly effective. One national GOP strategist told *Inside Elections*, "Senate Republicans have a great map right now, but the worst thing we can do is fall in love with it. It would be significantly harder to win with Rosendale as the nominee."

Democrats are already telegraphing their strategy against Sheehy, and it looks pretty similar to the strategy they employed against Rosendale: paint him as an out-of-state rich guy trying to buy himself a Senate seat.

Like Rosendale, Sheehy is not originally from Montana, and has been in the state for less time than Rosendale had back in 2018. Senate Democrats, who deemed Rosendale "Maryland Matt" five years ago, have already taken to calling Sheehy "Transplant Tim." The DSCC launched a website highlighting his wealth, and promoted stories about Sheehy's campaign using stock photos from outside the state (and country) on his website, as well as the veteran's sophomoric old social media pictures.

Several Democratic strategists said that Sheehy's purchase of some of Montana's priciest real estate in Flathead Lake and Big Sky will allow them to attack him as insensitive to the state's housing crisis.

But Republican strategists say that Sheehy's military service (and his lack of Rosendale's Baltimore accent) will prove an effective shield against allegations of carpetbagging. "Tim Sheehy moved to Montana the first chance he got. He was literally discharged and moved there," said a pro-Sheehy strategist. "I think that's going to be a hard pitch [for Democrats] to make, that you don't want people coming to Montana and creating jobs."

Even Republicans acknowledge that the flat-topped, seven-fingered Tester is popular and has a strong Montana-based image. "The question is not 'Is Jon Tester a force in Montana politics?' because that's a given," one GOP consultant who worked against Tester told *Inside Elections*. Another added, "Everyone is like, 'I know Jon, Jon's a nice guy.'" And Democrats are hopeful that his deep roots in the state will match up well against either potential GOP opponent.

Editor's Note: The Feb. 17 issue included a deeper look into Tester's profile and previous races.

Tester is already fundraising at a rapid clip: he pulled in $5 million from April through June and had more than $10 million in the bank at the end of the second quarter. Democratic strategists say that he'll need to raise significantly more than the $20 million he spent on his 2018 race — likely more in line with the $48 million that Democratic Gov. Steve Bullock raised on his unsuccessful 2020 Senate run against Daines (he lost 54-44 percent).

Tester's campaign team includes returning ad maker Dan Kully of KMM Media, as well as pollsters Mollie Murphy and Brian Stryker of Impact Research, who are new to the Tester campaign, and direct mail consultant Joe Hansen of AMHC.

Republicans, for their part, are already looking for ways to tarnish Tester's image and make the case to voters that he's "gone Washington."

"It's making that argument that yeah, Jon's a nice guy, but look at what he's doing in Washington, it's the opposite of Montana values," said one pro-Sheehy strategist, who pointed to Tester voting 95 percent in line with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer since Biden became president. And the Republicans' Senate campaign arm is already contrasting the promises Tester made in his 2006 Senate race to avoid ties to lobbyists, with the senator's acceptance of campaign contributions from defense contractors, and relationship with industrial hemp growers.

In effect, Republicans are hoping to do to Tester what Tester did to Republican Sen. Conrad Burns in 2006, when the Democrat won by saying, "He's a different man than the one who was elected 18 years ago."

Republicans attempted a similar strategy in 2018, when the NRSC aired ads calling Tester "No. 1 in Cash from Lobbyists," Democratic strategists believe that Tester's authenticity, especially the fact that he still tills his family farm, will insulate him from those kinds of attacks. And the party is prepared to respond by making an issue of Sheehy's

potential conflicts of interest, given that Bridger Aerospace derives 96 percent of its revenue from federal government contracts. (Sheehy says if he wins he will step down as CEO and board member.)

The Bottom Line

The GOP's struggles to recruit strong candidates into its lower tier pickup opportunities in Wisconsin, Nevada, Michigan, and Virginia make success in the three Trump-won states on the map even more crucial.

While luring Sheehy into the race was a positive development, party leadership still has to contend with the potential for a Rosendale campaign. And even if Sheehy defeats Rosendale, he may enter the general election more battered than his allies would have hoped.

That's not to say Tester can rest easily. Over the last two presidential election cycles, just one state out of 69 has voted for one party's presidential nominee but the other party's Senate nominee.

Democrats' hopes of keeping the Senate may hinge on Montana becoming the second.   IE

2024 Presidential Ratings
(Electoral Votes)

Toss-Up (56)

Arizona (11)	Georgia (16)	Pennsylvania (19)	Wisconsin (10)

Tilt Democratic (21)	Tilt Republican (16)
Michigan (15)	North Carolina (16)
Nevada (6)	

Lean Democratic (15)		Lean Republican (31)
Minnesota (10)	Nebraska 2nd (1)	Florida (30)
New Hampshire (4)		Maine 2nd (1)

Likely Democratic (15)		Likely Republican (63)	
Maine Statewide (2)		Iowa (6)	Texas (40)
Virginia (13)		Ohio (17)	

Solid Democratic (196)		Solid Republican (125)	
California (54)	New York (28)	Alabama (9)	Nebraska 1st (1)
Colorado (10)	Oregon (8)	Alaska (3)	Nebraska 3rd (1)
Connecticut (7)	Rhode Island (4)	Arkansas (6)	North Dakota (3)
Delaware (3)	Vermont (3)	Idaho (4)	Oklahoma (7)
District of Columbia (3)	Washington (12)	Indiana (11)	South Carolina (9)
Hawaii (4)		Kansas (6)	South Dakota (3)
Illinois (19)		Kentucky (8)	Tennessee (11)
Maine 1st (1)		Louisiana (8)	Utah (6)
Maryland (10)		Mississippi (6)	West Virginia (4)
Massachusetts (11)		Missouri (10)	Wyoming (3)
New Jersey (14)		Montana (4)	
New Mexico (5)		Nebraska Statewide (2)	

	GOP	DEM
2020 Results	232	306
2024 Ratings	235	247
Toss-up		56
Needed to Win		270