

# Inside Elections

with

Nathan L. Gonzales

Nonpartisan Analysis

JULY 26, 2024

VOLUME 8, NO. 14

This issue brought to you by



## Biden to Harris Transition Resets Presidential Race

By Nathan L. Gonzales & Jacob Rubashkin

While the dust is still settling on President Joe Biden’s decision to bow out of the race, his party’s switch to Vice President Kamala Harris at the top of the ticket looks like the great reset Democrats needed in the presidential race with just more than three months before Election Day.

Biden’s exit comes after an agonizing three weeks for Democrats following his dismal debate performance against former President Donald Trump. Not only did Biden trail Trump in general election polling in nearly all key swing states, but his poor standing was making life more difficult for House and Senate Democratic candidates, who were relying on historic levels of ticket-splitting to outpace their GOP opponents.

While the path to a majority in the House was still clear for Democrats, it had become more difficult. And the path to maintaining a majority in the Senate had become exceedingly narrow with the prospect of Vice President J.D. Vance being able to break tie votes..

Voters need time to digest the major events of the past two weeks: the assassination attempt on Trump, the GOP convention, Biden’s exit. It’s healthy to wait another week or so for more polling data before making firm proclamations about a new state of the race. But the initial evidence points to a boost for Democrats that helps the race land back to a normal, close race with independent voters and a half-dozen or so states hanging in the balance.

### Presidential Race

National polling showing Biden trailing Trump by just a few points masked Biden’s poor numbers in state and district level polling. That is part of what caused Democrats to pull the fire alarm on his candidacy. But Biden’s mediocre standing in head-to-head matchups was fueled by his inability to consolidate Democratic voters. Democratic voters were either declining to support Biden or supporting a third party candidate such as Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Vice President Kamala Harris quickly established herself as the new presumptive nominee. Harris is not a perfect candidate, but she will likely be able to reassemble much of the Democratic coalition and energize a Democratic base that was becoming demoralized (case in point, the \$100 million she raised in her first day in the race). An excited Democratic base certainly doesn’t guarantee victory, but it can help prevent a Republican wave.

While Republicans demonstrated their energy and unity in Milwaukee, the Democratic National Convention in Chicago was on

*Continued on page 8*

### 2024 Presidential Ratings (Electoral Votes)

#### Toss-Up (77)

Arizona (11) Georgia (16) Michigan (15) Nevada (6)  
Pennsylvania (19) Wisconsin (10)

#### Tilt Democratic (0)

#### Tilt Republican (16)

North Carolina (16)

#### Lean Democratic (15)

Minnesota (10) Nebraska 2nd (1)  
New Hampshire (4)

#### Lean Republican (31)

Florida (30)  
Maine 2nd (1)

#### Likely Democratic (15)

Maine Statewide (2)  
Virginia (13)

#### Likely Republican (63)

Iowa (6) Texas (40)  
Ohio (17)

#### Solid Democratic (196)

California (54) New York (28)  
Colorado (10) Oregon (8)  
Connecticut (7) Rhode Island (4)  
Delaware (3) Vermont (3)  
District of Columbia (3) Washington (12)  
Hawaii (4)  
Illinois (19)  
Maine 1st (1)  
Maryland (10)  
Massachusetts (11)  
New Jersey (14)  
New Mexico (5)

#### Solid Republican (125)

Alabama (9) Nebraska 1st (1)  
Alaska (3) Nebraska 3rd (1)  
Arkansas (6) North Dakota (3)  
Idaho (4) Oklahoma (7)  
Indiana (11) South Carolina (9)  
Kansas (6) South Dakota (3)  
Kentucky (8) Tennessee (11)  
Louisiana (8) Utah (6)  
Mississippi (6) West Virginia (4)  
Missouri (10) Wyoming (3)  
Montana (4)  
Nebraska Statewide (2)

	GOP	DEM
2020 Results	232	306
<b>2024 Ratings</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>226</b>
Toss-up	77	
Needed to Win	270	

# Why Vance was Picked and What Could Happen to his Ohio Senate seat

By Jacob Rubashkin

MILWAUKEE— Former President Donald Trump selected Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance as his running mate, opting to double down on an ideological ally rather than include racial or political diversity on his presidential ticket.

Vance reportedly beat out North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, and South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott for the nod.

Trump picked Vance on the first day of the GOP convention in Milwaukee, at a moment when Republican spirits were as high as they have been

since Trump won in 2016. His opponent, President Joe Biden, was in a tailspin following his June 27 debate performance and fending off calls to drop out of the race. Trump had pulled into leads nationally and across the swing

states, and after he survived an assassination attempt, Republicans began viewing his campaign as predestined.

It was in that position of strength that Trump tapped Vance, and the pick projected confidence in his chances this fall. His other choices offered more electoral upside than Vance, who has a thin political record and a history of controversial comments. Burgum, for instance, is more moderate than Trump, politically and temperamentally, and could have funneled some of his vast fortune into the campaign. Scott could have helped Trump consolidate more Black voters. Rubio was a link to a previous, more Trump-skeptical wing of the GOP, and comes from the most politically competitive state of the bunch.

But Biden's departure has turned the race on its head. Democrats hope Vice President Kamala Harris can reset the contest and turn Vance into a liability for Trump. Already, her own stable of potential veep picks have trained their fire on the Ohio senator in TV appearances.



Donald Trump and J.D. Vance

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

## 2024 Senate Ratings

### Toss-Up (2)

Tester (D-Mont.)      Brown (D-Ohio)

### Tilt Democratic (4)      Tilt Republican

AZ Open (Sinema, I)  
MI Open (Stabenow, D)  
Casey (D-Penn.)  
Rosen (D-Nev.)

### Lean Democratic (1)      Lean Republican

Baldwin (D-Wis.)

### Likely Democratic (1)      Likely Republican (1)

MD Open (Cardin, D)      Cruz (R-Texas)

### Solid Democratic (14)      Solid Republican (11)

CA Open (Butler, D)      IN Open (Braun, R)  
DE Open (Carper, D)      UT Open (Romney, R)  
Cantwell (D-Wash.)      WV Open (Manchin, I)  
Gillibrand (D-N.Y.)      Barrasso (R-Wyo.)  
Heinrich (D-N.M.)      Blackburn (R-Tenn.)  
Hirono (D-Hawaii)      Cramer (R-N.D.)  
Kaine (D-Va.)      Fischer (R-Neb.)  
King (I-Maine)      Hawley (R-Mo.)  
Klobuchar (D-Minn.)      Ricketts (R-Neb.)  
Menendez (D-N.J.)      Scott (R-Fla.)  
Murphy (D-Conn.)      Wicker (R-Miss.)  
Sander (I-Vt.)  
Warren (D-Mass.)  
Whitehouse (D-R.I.)

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

Now the Ohioan faces the biggest test of his political career, and one that looks entirely different than when he accepted the role two weeks ago.

*Continued on page 3*

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Continued from page 2

## What Vance Brings to Ticket

At just 39, Vance is the fourth-youngest vice presidential nominee in major party history, and if he is elected he'll be the third-youngest ever to hold the office.

When Trump picked Vance, the 2024 election was set between the two oldest-ever presidents.

Vance's youth cut a clear contrast with 81-year-old Joe Biden and 78-year-old Trump. With so much of the Trump campaign's messaging centered on Biden's fitness to do the job, picking Vance ensured that age would



J.D. Vance

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

continue to be part of the conversation heading into the general election.

That contrast is now less stark, even though Vance is a generation younger than the 59-year-old Harris. (If anything, it may serve to draw attention to Trump's advanced age.)

Vance's youth and potential new job sets him up as a potential inheritor of the MAGA mantle. With Trump limited to one more term in office, Vance's selection and rapturous reception among the GOP base sets him up to carry Trump's legacy long past 2028 — if the ticket wins this year.

During the 2016 election, Vance was one of Trump's sharpest critics within the GOP. But he has since attached himself to Trump with the zeal of a convert, and what he offers both Trump and Trump's supporters is loyalty and excitement.

And, as Vance made explicit in his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention, he will be focused on winning back the Rust Belt. While Ohio is no longer a presidential battleground, having swung decidedly toward Republicans since 2016, Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania still make up the core of the Electoral College battlefield.

Vance mentioned those states six different times at the RNC, and will lean into his working class roots and upbringing in a midwestern steel town to appeal to voters there. *Axios* has reported Vance is set for an "extended campaign blitz" in Pennsylvania, and in his announcement of Vance, Trump also singled out Minnesota as a place where he might make a difference.

## Vance's Electoral History

Vance's electoral history is brief and less than impressive. He's won two elections — the 2022 GOP Senate primary and subsequent general election — but by underwhelming margins and only after receiving significant outside financial help.

In the GOP primary, Vance finished atop a seven-candidate field with 32 percent of the vote, 8 points ahead of former state treasurer Josh Mandel. Vance's campaign failed to catch fire early on but surged late after an endorsement from Trump pushed him ahead of his rivals. Vance benefited from \$17 million in outside spending by a super PAC funded by his mentor, former PayPal CEO Peter Thiel.

In the general election, Vance again needed significant outside

support to get past his Democratic opponent, Rep. Tim Ryan. The Senate Leadership Fund, a Super PAC affiliated with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, spent \$32 million to boost Vance, who trailed in polling until October.

(It's ironic that Vance was offered up as the vice presidential nominee just a couple hours after RNC delegates drowned out McConnell by booing him during the call of states, as Vance might not be a senator or anywhere near this profile without help from McConnell's SLF.)

Vance ultimately defeated Ryan by just 6 points, 53-47 percent — a narrower win than Trump managed in Ohio in 2016 and 2020 despite a better national political environment. Vance's margin of victory was significantly smaller than every other Republican running statewide, all of whom won by double digits. According to Inside Elections' Vote Above Replacement (VAR), Vance underperformed an average GOP candidate in Ohio by nearly 2 points.

## What happens to the seat if he wins?

If the Trump-Vance ticket wins this fall, Vance will have to vacate his Senate seat.

In that case, it will fall to GOP Gov. Mike DeWine to appoint a replacement to serve until 2026, when the state will hold a special election. The winner of the 2026 special election will have to run again, for a full term, in 2028.

DeWine has demurred on who he might pick to fill the seat, only saying that he does not intend to pick a caretaker but rather someone who "has the intent to stay."

Vivek Ramaswamy, the entrepreneur who ran for the GOP presidential nomination and has become one of Trump's staunchest allies, has made clear his interest, telling the *Wall Street Journal* he would seriously consider it if asked. But Ramaswamy has clashed with DeWine in the past.

Another potential pick is state Sen. Matt Dolan, who DeWine endorsed in the GOP Senate primary this year (Dolan lost to car dealer Bernie Moreno). Dolan obviously wants to be a senator — he also ran in 2022 — but is less tied to Trump, and conservative media is already agitating against him.

Other potential replacements include Lt. Gov. Jon Husted, who spoke at the RNC, former state party chairwoman Jane Timken, and Rep. Dave Joyce.

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## Podcast Episode 27

Nathan and Jacob, on location at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, analyze the state of the presidential race after the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump, talk about the first two days of the Republican convention, and release fresh polling data in Michigan's 7th District.

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

# The Political Calculations and Consequences of Harris's Vice Presidential Considerations

By Jacob Rubashkin

As Vice President Kamala Harris locks down support as the new Democratic presidential nominee, her next big decision will be to select a running mate to help her take on former President Donald Trump and Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance.

Harris's pick will be her first major decision as her party's standard-bearer, and it's one she has to make on a more condensed schedule than nominees typically do; Harris has at most four weeks to vet, interview and select a partner before the Democratic convention begins on August 19 in Chicago. In comparison, Trump had 18 weeks from the day he became the presumptive nominee until the day he announced Vance. Since 1980, major party contenders have enjoyed an average of 18 weeks from the day they became the presumptive nominee to the day they announced their vice presidential pick, according to a review by *Inside Elections*.

While the veep selection process is opaque and highly dependent on the top of the ticket, Harris may have to make two different calculations as she settles on a running mate. Firstly, how does her pick impact the ticket's chances of winning an uphill race against Trump? And secondly, what are the political consequences if the ticket wins?

Just a few politicians have dominated the vice presidential conversation since President Joe Biden announced he would not seek re-election. Here's an overview of what each might bring to the ticket, and what would happen if they won.

## Roy Cooper

The 67-year-old North Carolinian is in his second term as governor, and is close to the Vice President. He and Harris served together as attorneys general from 2010 to 2016 and she has campaigned with him twice in the past month.

Cooper checks some boxes. He's from a battleground state and has a proven electoral track record: four wins as attorney general and two as governor while other Democrats have struggled to get past the finish line. In 2016 and 2020, he carried the state even as Trump also won at the top of the ticket.

And Cooper is an older white man from the South, which provides some demographic and geographic balance to the barrier-breaking Californian.

He's also in the final months of his term, so if he's elected vice president there's no consequence for his current position. The race to replace him is a toss-up between Democrat Josh Stein, the state attorney general, and Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson. If Harris picks Cooper and the ticket performs better as a result, that could be a boost to Stein, but any advantage would probably be minimal in such an evenly divided and inelastic state.



Roy Cooper

Courtesy Cooper Campaign

One complicating factor is a state law that says that the lieutenant governor takes over as acting governor whenever the sitting governor is traveling out of the state. With Cooper out on the campaign trail, that would leave Robinson in charge — a prospect Democrats might find frightening. Two years ago in Idaho, Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin took advantage of a similar law to undo actions taken by Gov. Brad Little — and those two were in the same party. But at least one senior North Carolina Democrat threw cold water on the notion, pointing out that Cooper had left the state and country multiple times and the most Robinson has done is hold press conferences and make declarations.

## Mark Kelly



Mark Kelly

Courtesy Kelly Campaign

Kelly is coming off of back-to-back Senate campaigns in Arizona. He would bring a compelling backstory and a top-tier fundraising network to the Harris ticket, as well as some strength in the swing state he calls home.

The 60-year-old former  
*Continued on page 5*

## 2024 Gubernatorial Ratings

### Toss-up (2)

NC Open (Cooper, D)

NH Open (Sununu, R)

**Tilt Democratic**

**Tilt Republican**

**Lean Democratic**

**Lean Republican**

**Likely Democratic (1)**

WA Open (Inslie, D)

**Likely Republican**

**Solid Democratic (1)**

DE Open (Carney, D)

**Solid Republican (7)**

IN Open (Holcomb, R)

MO Open (Parson, R)

ND Open (Burgum, R)

WV Open (Justice, R)

Cox, R (Utah)

Gianforte, R (Mont.)

Scott, R (Vt.)

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

Continued from page 4

astronaut, former Navy pilot, and husband of former Rep. Gabby Giffords has an inspirational biography and is one of his party's best fundraisers — he pulled in \$190 million for his Senate bids in 2020 and 2022.

A strong Harris-Kelly performance in Arizona could help Rep. Ruben Gallego in his Senate race against Republican Kari Lake, for the seat being left behind by Democrat-turned-Independent Sen. Kyrsten Sinema. But some labor groups are already raising concerns about his lack of support for the pro-union PRO Act; he was one of three Democrats not to back the bill but now says he supports it.

If elected vice president, Kelly's replacement would be named by Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs. That would, however, trigger a Senate special election in 2026, meaning Arizona will have hosted (and be hosting) a Senate race every cycle from 2016 through 2030. But Democrats have no chance of holding control of the Senate this year if they lose the presidential race.

## Josh Shapiro

Like several other contenders on this list, Shapiro is a former state attorney general now serving as governor. He won a landslide win over an underfunded opponent in 2022 and could boost Harris in Pennsylvania, a must-win state for the Democratic ticket. Shapiro outperformed the Democratic



Courtesy Shapiro Campaign

Josh Shapiro

nominee for president in both of his attorney general elections, in 2016 and 2020.

He might ruffle feathers on the left wing of the party, though, when it comes to his past support for charter schools and his support for Israel. But a few more moderate positions could make him more attractive in a general election.

If Shapiro is elected vice president, his lieutenant governor, Democrat Austin Davis, would assume the top spot until 2026. But Davis's job would be filled by a Republican, state Sen. Kim Ward, under the state constitution. Ward would preside over the state Senate and have the power to break ties (Republicans currently have a 28-22 seat majority).

## Andy Beshear

Beshear, 46, just won a second and final term as Kentucky governor in 2023. He's the last Democrat to hold statewide office in Bluegrass State, and has a demonstrated record of appealing to Republican voters while still promoting progressive policies. While gubernatorial races are entirely different beasts from federal contests, that political acumen doesn't hurt. Neither does his



Andy Beshear

Courtesy Beshear Campaign

Appalachian twang, penchant for quoting Bible verses, and his eagerness to take on Vance over his depiction of Kentucky in his *Hillbilly Elegy* memoir.

If Beshear is elected, Democratic Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman would ascend to the governorship until the 2027 election. That might be a net positive for Kentucky Democrats, who face an uphill battle regardless and might as well get to run with an incumbent.

## Tim Walz

The affable two-term Minnesota governor is a dark horse veep pick.



Courtesy Office of the Governor

Tim Walz

On paper, he makes a lot of sense. He's a 60-year-old former schoolteacher and Army National Guard veteran who held down a swingy House district for six terms before winning two terms as governor in the light blue Midwestern

state. Most recently, he's pushed through a raft of progressive policies following Democrats' state legislative victories in the 2022 midterm elections, and he's shown a willingness to go after Vance on TV.

And if he were selected and won, his lieutenant governor, Peggy Flanagan, would make history as the first Native American woman to lead a state.

## Gretchen Whitmer

While Whitmer, 52, told local news outlets she was "staying in Michigan," she's also

a possibility for the number-two spot. She's popular in the Wolverine State, which is an integral state in Harris's path to victory. And a strong Harris-Whitmer performance could also boost Democratic Rep.



Courtesy Office of the Governor

Gretchen Whitmer

Elissa Slotkin in a must-win Senate race down ballot.

If Whitmer were selected and won, Democrats would retain control of the state: Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist would fill out the remainder of her term.

## CALENDAR

<b>July 30</b>	Arizona Primaries
<b>Aug. 6</b>	Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Washington Primaries
<b>Aug. 13</b>	Connecticut, Minnesota, South Dakota, Vermont, Wisconsin Primaries
<b>Aug. 19-22</b>	Democratic National Convention (Chicago)
<b>Aug. 20</b>	Alaska, Florida, Wyoming Primaries
<b>Sept. 10</b>	ABC News Presidential Debate Scheduled
<b>Nov. 5</b>	Election Day

# Michigan 7: Exclusive Poll Underscores Challenges for Democrats

By Jacob Rubashkin

Republicans lead up and down the ticket in a crucial midwestern swing district, according to exclusive polling conducted by Noble Predictive Insights for *Inside Elections*.

In Michigan's 7th District, one of 10 seats nationwide rated a toss-up, Republican Tom Barrett held a substantial advantage over Democrat Curtis Hertel, while former President Donald Trump had similar leads over President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin, who currently represents the district, was in a virtual tie in the Wolverine State's senate race against former GOP Rep. Mike Rogers.

This poll was conducted July 8-11, after the June 27 debate but before the assassination attempt on Trump, the Republican National Convention, or Biden's exit from the race. The survey was completed via text and live calls by NPI with a sample size of 532 likely general elections voters and a margin of error of +/- 4.4%.

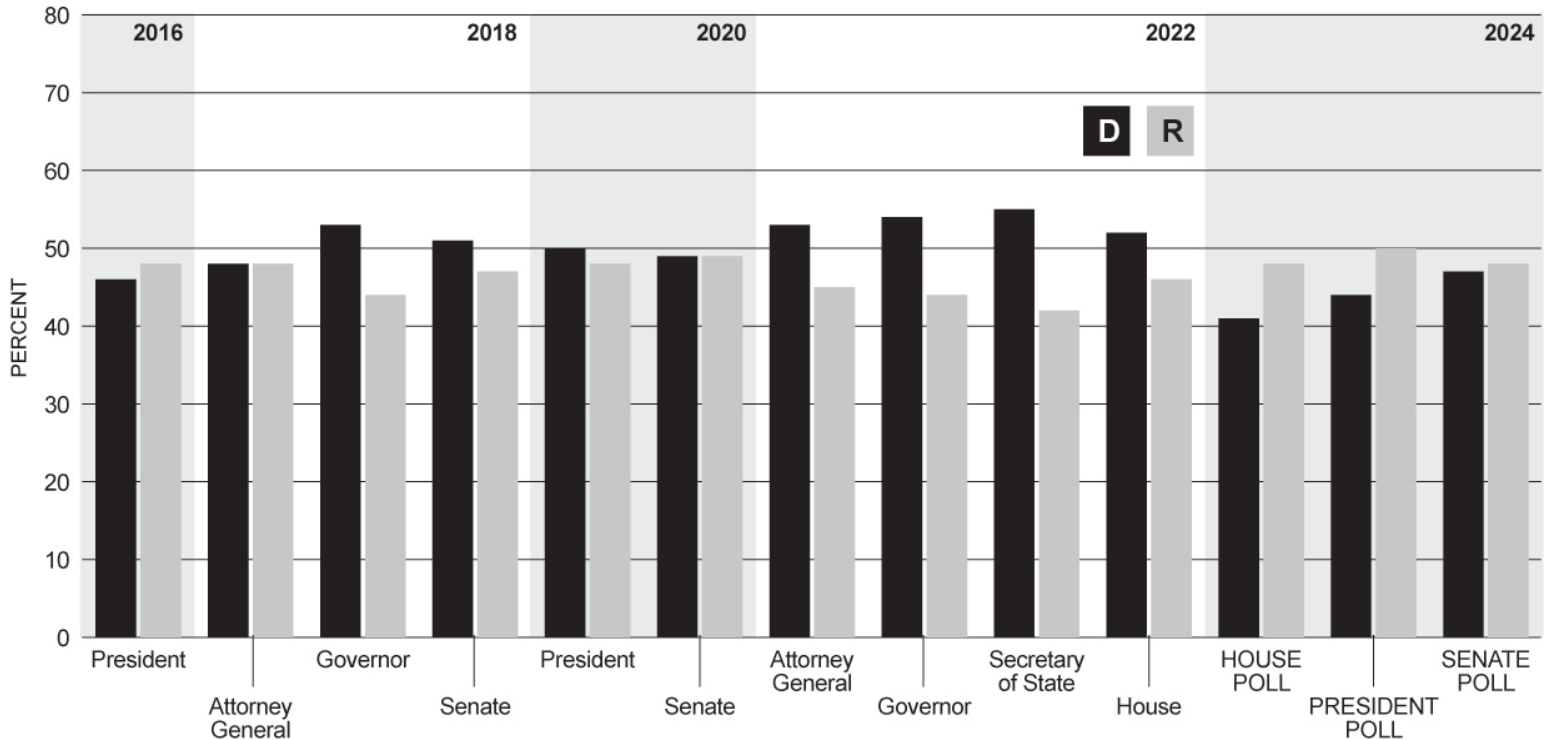
Inside Elections is partnering with NPI for a series of House battleground polls from now until Election Day. NPI is a nonpartisan public opinion polling, market research, and data analytics firm based in Arizona. The next NPI/*Inside Elections* House poll is scheduled for next week.

## The Lay of the Land

The 7th District sits in Central Michigan; anchored by state capital Lansing, the 7th also includes some suburbs northwest of Detroit.

## Statewide Election Results & New Poll in Michigan's 7th District

Poll conducted July 8-11 by Noble Predictive Insights for *Inside Elections*



In 2020, Biden would have carried the 7th by 0.5 points, 49.4 percent to 48.9 percent, making it one of the most evenly divided districts in the nation in that election. In 2016, Trump would have carried it by 3 points.

The district is often a bellwether for the state. In all three state-level elections in 2022, for governor, attorney general, and secretary of state, the statewide margin was within one point of the 7th District margin. That was also the case in the 2018 and 2020 Senate contests, which Democrats narrowly won.

## The House Race

Slotkin's Senate bid leaves the 7th open and vulnerable for Democrats, who have consolidated behind Hertel, a member of a local political family and a former top staffer to Gov.

Gretchen Whitmer. Republicans are set to re-nominate Barrett, who lost to Slotkin by 5 points in 2022.

The NPI/*Inside Elections* poll found Barrett leading Hertel, 48-41 percent.

Barrett, perhaps because of his 2022 bid, had higher name identification than Hertel. Two-thirds of voters had an opinion about the Republican, with 32 percent viewing him favorably while 34 percent viewed him unfavorably. Hertel was viewed favorably by 18 percent of voters and unfavorably by 20 percent of voters.

*Continued on page 7*

Continued from page 6

Hertel did have an extensive financial advantage over Barrett on July 17. The Democrat reported \$3.3 million in campaign funds compared to \$1.2 million for Barrett. And both parties' outside groups have reserved \$4.5 million each in TV time for the fall.

### The Presidential Race

Biden's performance in the poll in this district is a great example of the concern Democrats had about the president leading the Democratic ticket in competitive seats around the country.

Trump led Biden, 50-42 percent, in a head-to-head matchup in the 7th in the poll. Trump's margin was cut in half when voters were given the option to select minor party candidates. In a five-person ballot test, Trump received 44 percent to Biden's 40 percent, Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s 8 percent, and Jill Stein's 1 percent. Cornel West was included in the survey but received no support. That means Trump's lead was partially a reflection of Biden's weakness rather than Trump's appeal.

Against Harris, Trump led by a smaller margin, 50-44 percent, in a then-hypothetical matchup. Harris's minor overperformance, within the margin of error, is attributable to a more consolidated level of support among Democratic voters. She received support from 96 percent of Democrats while Biden captured 90 percent.

Energizing and reassembling the Democratic coalition is a key way Harris can put her party back into contention in the presidential race. An excited base doesn't guarantee victory, but it's necessary. Then the fight shifts to independent voters.



Tom Barrett

Courtesy Michigan State Legislature

In the poll, Biden's job approval rating in the 7th clocked in at 42 percent, while his disapproval was 57 percent, similar to his standing nationwide. The district is evenly split on Trump, with 49 percent of respondents viewing him favorably while 50 percent view him unfavorably. Just 40 percent of respondents had a favorable view of Biden while 59 percent had an unfavorable view of the president. Kennedy was also unpopular, with just 33 percent of respondents holding a favorable view while 55 percent view him unfavorably.

While 77 percent of the district said they watched the debate, just 5 percent of those who did said they changed their minds after the contest.

### The Senate Race

Slotkin, who is in her third term representing the district, was the strongest Democrat tested in the poll, although she trailed former Rep. Mike Rogers, the likely GOP nominee, by 1 point, 48-47 percent. In comparison, Sen. Gary Peters carried the district by a slim, 0.4 percent margin in his 1-point re-election win in 2020, and Sen. Debbie Stabenow carried the 7th by 5 points while she won statewide by 6.5 points.

Slotkin's strength relative to the other Democrats in the district comes from her stronger support among independents and men. Slotkin won independents 48-43 percent while Biden was losing them 49-38 percent; she trailed among men by 24 points, 59-35 percent, while Biden trailed among men by 34 points, 62-38 percent.

## 2024 House Ratings

### Toss-Up (5D, 5R)

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

### Tilt Democratic (8D, 1R)

AK AL (Peltola, D)
CA 47 (Open; Porter, D)
MI 8 (Open; Kildee, D)
NY 22 (Williams, R)
OH 13 (Sykes, D)
OH 9 (Kaptur, D)
PA 7 (Wild, D)
PA 8 (Cartwright, D)
VA 7 (Open; Spanberger, D)

### Tilt Republican (9R)

AZ 1 (Schweikert, R)
AZ 6 (Ciscomani, R)
CA 22 (Valadao, R)
CA 41 (Calvert, R)
IA 3 (Nunn, R)
NE 2 (Bacon, R)
NJ 7 (Kean Jr., R)
NY 19 (Molinaro, R)
VA 2 (Kiggans, R)

### Lean Democratic (7D)

CT 5 (Hayes, D)	NH 1 (Pappas, D)
IL 17 (Sorensen, D)	NY 18 (Ryan, D)
ME 2 (Golden, D)	PA 17 (Deluzio, D)
MN 2 (Craig, DFL)	

### Lean Republican (8R)

CO 3 (Open; Boebert, R)	MT 1 (Zinke, R)
CA 45 (Steel, R)	NY 1 (LaLota, R)
IA 1 (Miller-Meeks, R)	PA 10 (Perry, R)
MI 10 (James, R)	TX 15 (De La Cruz, R)

### Likely Democratic (16D, 2R)

AL 2 (Open; Moore, R)	OH 1 (Landsman, D)
CA 9 (Harder, D)	OR 4 (Hoyle, D)
CA 49 (Levin, D)	OR 6 (Salinas, D)
IN 1 (Mrvan, D)	TX 34 (Gonzalez, D)
KS 3 (Davids, D)	TX 28 (Cuellar, D)
LA 6 (Open; Graves, R)	WA 8 (Schrier, D)
MI 3 (Scholten, D)	
NH 2 (Open; Kuster, D)	
NV 1 (Titus, D)	
NV 3 (Lee, D)	
NV 4 (Horsford, D)	
NY 3 (Suozi, D)	

### Likely Republican (7R, 3D)

CA 3 (Kiley, R)	NC 14 (Open; Jackson, D)
CA 40 (Kim, R)	PA 1 (Fitzpatrick, R)
FL 13 (Luna, R)	WI 1 (Steil, R)
FL 27 (Salazar, R)	WI 3 (Van Orden, R)
NC 6 (Open; Manning, D)	
NC 13 (Open; Nickel, D)	

	GOP	DEM
Solid	189	175
Likely/Lean/Tilt	27	34
Total	216	209
Toss-up		10
Needed for majority		218

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

### The Bottom Line

While Democratic incumbents across the House battlefield are outperforming the president in polling, open seats can be trickier to defend. That's why it's important to Democrats for Harris to do well at the top of the ticket. If Democrats want to reclaim control of the House, they likely need to hold virtually all of the seats they currently hold, including Michigan's 7th.

While Republicans were in the drivers' seat in the 7th a couple weeks ago, Democrats have a few opportunities to change the trajectory of the race. In addition to the switch from Biden to Harris and Hertel's financial advantage, Democrats have a powerful issue in abortion rights, which is popular in the district. Fifty-seven percent of likely voters believed enshrining abortion rights in the constitution, as Michigan did in 2022, was the right decision. That includes nearly two-thirds of voters undecided between Hertel and Barrett, who does not support abortion access even in cases of rape or incest.



*Continued from page 1*

track to be a political funeral. That clearly won't be the case anymore as Harris' candidacy has breathed new life into the party.

Republicans will try to hold Harris accountable for the sins of the current administration and highlight liberal policy positions she took during the 2020 presidential primary, but she shifts the generational matchup and conversation. Now Trump, 78, will be the oldest candidate in the race (and in American history) against the 59-year-old vice president. For voters who said they were concerned about the age of the candidates or apathetic about the 2020 rematch between two familiar and unpopular foes, Democrats now have an alternative that checks those boxes, which could be key in persuading independent voters.

Biden's job rating will likely improve as the vast majority of Democrats (and Americans) approve of his decision to step aside. That should help morale but has less of an impact since he won't be on the ballot. His numbers had reached such a low point that it's hard to see Harris doing worse than the sitting president, particularly with a unified base. That being said, Harris will have to demonstrate her candidate skills on a larger stage and demonstrate that her improvement with younger voters and voters of color isn't canceled out by losses among older white voters who connected with Biden.

Democrats have work to do, and Trump has the advantage until proven otherwise, but this is a new race and Republicans are clearly trying to regain their footing. We didn't change our ratings toward Trump in the wake of the debate and will hold our ratings in place for now until surveys over the next couple weeks show how voter sentiment may have changed.

## Senate and House Races


In general, Biden's decision gives Democrats a glimmer of hope at a time when optimism is fleeting.

Senate Democrats, including Jon Tester in Montana, Sherrod Brown in Ohio, Tammy Baldwin in Wisconsin, Bob Casey in Pennsylvania, and Jacky Rosen in Nevada were already running well ahead of Biden in the most crucial battlegrounds, so they might be the least affected by a change at the top of the ticket. But they were still at risk of political gravity dragging them down based on the deep hole Biden was digging. It looks like Harris will decrease the number of split ticket voters they need in order to win re-election.

The bigger beneficiaries in the Senate could be the open-seat Democrats in swing states such as Elissa Slotkin in Michigan and Ruben Gallego of Arizona, who don't have statewide brands to help overperform the top of the ticket. If Harris can keep those states competitive, Democrats have a better chance to hold them.

The Senate math is still good for Republicans because they're already set to gain the seat in West Virginia. But if the newly formed presidential race is more competitive, then Democrats have an outside shot to hold their remaining seats and maintain control with a White House victory. The most likely outcome is still a GOP gain of 1-3 seats.

In the House, where races are often closely tied to the presidential outcome, Biden's decision likely has a greater impact. If Harris can get close to Biden's 2020 performance, then Democrats are in the conversation for a House majority. If not, then Republicans are likely to maintain or even grow their majority.

While it's good to start laying out the potential fallout of Biden's decision, there's no historical analogue to the current situation, and it will be at least another couple weeks before the new normal can be identified. 

## Report Shorts

**Michigan Senate.** Businessman Sandy Pensler dropped out of the Republican race and endorsed former Rep. Mike Rogers at a Trump rally in Grand Rapids on Saturday. It was clear that the GOP establishment preferred Rogers considering he received an evening speaking slot at the Republican National Convention last week in Milwaukee. Former Rep. Justin Amash is still in the GOP race, but Rogers is the clear favorite ahead of the Aug. 6 primary. He'll face Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin in the general election in one of the most competitive Senate races in the country. Tilt Democratic.

**Minnesota's 2nd District.** Grassroots favorite Taylor Rahm dropped his bid for the GOP nomination, clearing the way for leadership favorite Joe Teirab to win the Aug. 13 primary and take on DFL Rep. Angie Craig. The district has trended leftward and Craig will be tough to beat in the suburban Twin Cities district. Lean Democratic.

**Missouri's 3rd District.** A July 14-15 Remington Research Group poll sponsored by former state Sen. Bob Onder finds Onder leading former state Sen. Kurt Schaefer by 20 points, 34-14 percent. Onder is endorsed by Trump while Schaefer is backed by the outgoing congressman, Blaine Leutkemeyer. Solid Republican.

**Nebraska Senate.** Dueling polls from the campaigns of GOP Sen. Deb Fischer and independent challenger Dan Osborn paint disparate pictures of the race. Fischer's poll, conducted July 8-11 by Torchlight Strategies, found her ahead by 26 points, 50-24 percent. Osborn commissioned a poll by Democratic firm Impact Research and GOP firm Red Wave Strategy (fielded July 8-11) that found the race tied at 42 percent. Democrats are not fielding a candidate of their own in the race. Solid Republican.

**New Jersey Senate.** Democratic Sen. Bob Menendez was found guilty on all 16 counts of corruption charges in federal court. The senator had said he would run as an independent if he were acquitted, but his conviction foreclosed on that path. And Menendez said he would resign on Aug. 20. Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy will get to appoint a replacement senator to fill out the remainder of his term. Despite all the drama, the Senate seat is Solid Democratic.

**New Jersey's 10th District.** Newark City Council President LaMonica McIver won the July 16 Democratic primary for the special election to replace the late Rep. Donald Payne, Jr. McIver will be a shoo-in in the September 18 special election and will almost certainly be selected by party leaders as the nominee for the general election in November. She is the 38th likely new member of Congress. Solid Democratic.

**Texas' 18th District.** Democratic Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee passed away on July 19 after battling pancreatic cancer. She was among the first women to graduate from Yale and served as a judge and on the Houston city council before getting elected to Congress in 1994. Jackson Lee was 74 years old. Her Houston-area district is Solidly Democratic. 