

Inside Elections

with

Nathan L. Gonzales

Nonpartisan Analysis

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Searching for the Next, New Normal in the 2024 Elections

By Nathan L. Gonzales & Jacob Rubashkin

With the party conventions in the rearview mirror, Republicans and Democrats are searching for the new normal in the 2024 elections. Both parties will be polling the most competitive states, Senate seats and House districts in order to make critical spending decisions for the final two months of the races.

Republicans are hoping Vice President Kamala Harris' momentum crests or recedes, but there isn't any evidence of that so far. However, Democratic excitement this fall could be muted if a historic presidential victory and House takeover are offset by control of the Senate shifting to Republicans.

Presidential

The Harris advantage is evidenced by the shift in the battlefield. Taken as a whole, the vice president has a narrow edge across Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. And North Carolina looks promising now too, moving from Tilt Republican to pure Toss-up.

Harris is rated with an advantage in states combining for 226 electoral college voters compared to 219 for former President Donald Trump, which means the winning candidate likely needs to win four swing states to get to 270. While it's possible that polls underestimate Trump's support again, it's also possible that Harris isn't done growing her support.

Senate

Montana remains central to the fight for the Senate. Unlike his vulnerable colleagues, Democrat Jon Tester hasn't put distance between himself and his challenger, and he has to run in a state Trump could win by at least 15 points. Republicans believe post-Labor Day spending will tighten the other races, but that's not a guarantee and they can get a majority with just West Virginia and Montana. Republicans are likely to gain 1-3 seats, and are slight favorites to win control. But Democrats have a path to 50-50 control as long as Harris wins.

House

After a handful of rating changes, Republicans look like they are still slight favorites to hold the House. They need to win just two of the dozen toss-up races while Democrats need to win 11 of 12. But that understates Democrats' opportunity. If Harris continues to perform well at the top of the ticket, that will improve her party's chances in the House because of the lack of ticket splitting. Democrats need a net gain of four seats for control and our likely range is still a Democratic gain of 5 seats to a Republican gain of 5 seats. But Democratic chances could improve in the coming weeks as more data become available.

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)

NJ Open (Helmy, D)

WV Open (Manchin, I)

Cantwell (D-Wash.)

Barrasso (R-Wyo.)

Gillibrand (D-N.Y.)

Blackburn (R-Tenn.)

Heinrich (D-N.M.)

Cramer (R-N.D.)

Hirono (D-Hawaii)

Fischer (R-Neb.)

Kaine (D-Va.)

Hawley (R-Mo.)

King (I-Maine)

Ricketts (R-Neb.)

Klobuchar (D-Minn.)

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*

CALENDAR

Sept. 5	NFL Season Begins
Sept. 10	ABC News Presidential Debate
Sept. 10	New Hampshire, Delaware, Rhode Island Primaries
Oct. 1	CBS News Vice Presidential Debate
Oct. 15	Third Quarter FEC Filings Due
Nov. 5	Election Day

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Presidential Update: RFK Jr. Exits the Race

By Nathan L. Gonzales

Vice President Kamala Harris has the momentum, and even a narrow advantage in a close race against former President Donald Trump.

Trump extended his narrow advantage throughout the spring to a more significant edge after the June 27 debate as President Joe Biden went into an electoral tailspin. Trump led in all of the swing states and threatened to expand the presidential battleground into long-shot states including Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico and Virginia as Biden struggled with independent voters and the Democratic base, including young voters and minority voters.

But the race has been turned on its head with Harris at the top of the Democratic ticket. She's unified and energized the Democratic base and clawed back to more normal Democratic margins among voters of color and young voters.

Harris is now running even or ahead in most of the core swing states including Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. And she's pulled North Carolina back into the swing state category. We're changing our rating from Tilt Republican to Toss-up. There's also some evidence that Florida is back in play, but it would be helpful to get more survey data.

With North Carolina moving to Toss-up, that means Harris is rated with an advantage in states combining for 226 electoral college voters compared to 219 for Trump. Seven toss-up states combine for 93 electoral college voters, which means the winning candidate likely needs to win four of those states to get to 270.

The race is still close and of course Trump could win, but there's no evidence Harris has peaked, much to Republicans' chagrin, and the vice president has the momentum in a shortened race.

In a close race, anything and everything could matter, but Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was well down the path of irrelevance before he dropped out and endorsed Trump. If RFK Jr. had a groundswell of support that could sway the race, he wouldn't have dropped out.

Harris quickly peeled soft Democrats away from Kennedy back into her column as she took the top spot and before Kennedy dropped out. That means the remaining Kennedy supporters could lean Trump, according to Republican Voters Against Trump founder Sarah Longworth at a convention event hosted by the University of Chicago's Institute of Politics and the Cook Political Report with Amy Walter.

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2024 Presidential Ratings (Electoral Votes)

Toss-Up (93)

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

Tilt Democratic (0)

Tilt Republican (0)

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

2024 Ratings 219 226

Toss-up 93

Needed to Win 270

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House Report Shorts

Alaska.

At-Large District. Mary Peltola, D, re-elected 55%. Trump 53%. Lt. Gov. Nancy Dahlstrom dropped out of the general election following her third-place finish in the all-party primary behind Peltola and 2022 candidate Nick Begich. That sets up what is essentially a two-person contest between Peltola and Begich, who will be joined on the ballot by the primary's fourth-place finisher, either a minor Republican or an Alaska Independence Party candidate. That's good news for Republicans, who couldn't afford another situation like in 2022, when Begich and Sarah Palin spent too much time attacking each other ahead of the general election, and not enough on Peltola. But the Democrat will still be tough to beat, as seen by her clearing the 50 percent mark in the primary. Tilt Democratic.



Nick Begich

Courtesy Begich Campaign

1st District (Northeastern Phoenix and Scottsdale) David Schweikert, R, re-elected 50%. Biden 50%. Democrats are bullish on former state Rep. Amish Shah. An Impact Research poll conducted for the DCCC found Shah leading Schweikert by 1 point, 48-47 percent, on Aug. 1-5. Tilt Republican, but looks headed for Toss-up before too long.

3rd District (Downtown and western Phoenix) Open; Ruben Gallego, D, running for Senate. Biden 75%. Former Phoenix Vice Mayor Yassamin Ansari was certified as the winner of the Democratic primary over former state Sen. Raquel Terán. A recount confirmed Ansari prevailed by just 36 votes out of more than 42,000 cast. The 32-year-old Iranian American is now a Likely Member of Congress. Solid Democratic.

California.

16th District (Silicon Valley) Open; Anna Eshoo, D, not seeking re-election. Biden 75%. A Tulchin Research poll commissioned by the Evan Low campaign finds the state assemblyman neck-and-neck with former San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo. Liccardo leads, 30-29 percent. Both are Democrats. (July 23-29, 500 LVs). Solid Democratic.

45th District (Western Orange County) Michelle Steel, R, re-elected 52%. Biden 52%. Polling shows this race even or with a slight advantage to Steel over attorney Derek Tran. Tran, whose parents fled Vietnam, may be benefiting from higher-than-normal support from Vietnamese-American voters, who make up a significant minority of the district and typically favor Republicans. GOP strategists are less concerned. Shift from Lean Republican to Tilt Republican, in favor of Democrats.

Florida.

13th District (Part of St. Petersburg and suburbs) Anna Paulina Luna, R, elected 53%. Trump 53%. Democrats may take a closer look at this race following the primary because the Tampa media market is less expensive than Miami and Luna has some political baggage. Former transit authority official Whitney Fox is the Democratic nominee but has little money left

over after the primary. A poll from St. Pete Polls found Fox leading Luna by 4 points but that appears to be an outlier so far. Likely Republican.

15th District (Tampa and northeastern suburbs) Laurel Lee, R, elected 59%. Trump 51%. Hillsborough County Commissioner Pat Kemp, a Democrat, released a month-old internal poll from Change Research showing her trailing Lee by 4 points, 44-41 percent. The July 17-19 survey was taken before Biden dropped out of the race but is the first publicly released poll of this district, which is not currently on the battlefield. Solid Republican.

Continued on page 4

2024 House Ratings

Toss-Up (7D, 5R)

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

Tilt Democratic (6D, 1R)

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

Tilt Republican (10R)

AZ 1 (Schweikert, R)
AZ 6 (Ciscomani, R)
CA 22 (Valadao, R)
CA 41 (Calvert, R)
CA 45 (Steel, R)#
IA 3 (Nunn, R)
NJ 7 (Kean Jr., R)
NY 17 (Lawler, R)*
NY 19 (Molinaro, R)
VA 2 (Kiggans, R)

Lean Democratic (6D)

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

Lean Republican (7R)

CO3 (Open; Boebert, R)	NY 1 (LaLota, R)
IA 1 (Miller-Meeks, R)	PA 10 (Perry, R)
MI 10 (James, R)	TX 15 (De La Cruz, R)
MT 1 (Zinke, 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)	PA 17 (Deluzio, D)#
KS 3 (Davids, D)	TX 34 (Gonzalez, D)
LA 6 (Open; Graves, R)	TX 28 (Cuellar, D)
MI 3 (Scholten, D)	
NH 2 (Open; Kuster, D)	
NV 1 (Titus, D)	
NV 3 (Lee, D)	
NV 4 (Horsford, D)	
NY 3 (Suozzi, 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	176
Likely/Lean/Tilt	27	31
Total	216	207
Toss-up		12
Needed for majority		218

Continued from page 3

Maine.

2nd District (Northern Maine) Jared Golden, D, re-elected 53%. Trump 52%. A Univ. of New Hampshire poll from Aug. 15-19 found Harris leading Trump by 5 points, 52-47 percent. That would be a significant swing from the 2020 result, and great news for Golden, whose race was not polled. But polling in Maine's 2nd District in 2020 also showed Biden with a clear lead and he ultimately lost it handily. Golden can overperform a Harris loss and is still favored. Lean Democratic.

Maryland.

6th District (Western Maryland and northwestern D.C. exurbs) Open; David Trone, D, ran for Senate. The NRCC and former state Del. Neil Parrott released a Public Opinion Strategies survey from Aug. 6-11 showing Parrott, a three-time nominee for this seat, within 2 points of April McClain Delaney, the Democratic nominee. McClain Delaney led 42-40 percent, but Parrott is an unimpressive fundraiser and is unlikely to get national support in the expensive DC media market. McClain Delaney has the capacity to self-fund — she and husband John Delaney, who held this seat for six years, have a net worth in excess of \$200 million. Likely Democratic.

Michigan.

8th District (Flint and Tri-Cities areas) Open; Dan Kildee, D, not seeking re-election. Biden 50%. Democrats felt they had the upper hand coming out of the primary after nominating state Sen. Kristen McDonald Rivet, who comes from a political family and was Kildee's chosen successor — while Republicans were saddled with Paul Junge, who lost back-to-back House races in 2020 and 2022. A poll released by the McDonald Rivet campaign has her trailing by 1 point. Even if Harris puts in a good performance statewide, this district is trending away from Democrats. Move from Tilt Democratic to Toss-up.



Kristen McDonald Rivet

Courtesy Michigan State Senate

Montana.

1st District (western Montana) Ryan Zinke, R, elected 49%. Democrat Monica Tranel is airing a sharp commercial hitting Zinke on housing issues — filmed in the Republican's own Airbnb, which he rents for \$16,000 a month. Tranel and Zinke both have roughly \$1 million in fall TV advertising reservations, but Tranel's allies at House Majority PAC are planning to chip in another \$4.1 million on the airwaves. Lean Republican.

Nebraska.

2nd District (Greater Omaha area) Don Bacon, R, re-elected 52%. Biden 52%. Democratic and Republican polls agree that Harris is ahead in this district (which is a crucial Electoral College vote in the path to 270) but diverge on Bacon's race against state Sen. Tony Vargas. An Aug. 14-17 Remington Research Group (R) poll found Harris ahead by 8 points, 50-42 percent, but Bacon up 2 points, 46-44 percent, while a Change Research (D) poll for Democratic 501(c)4 group Future Majority found

Harris up 5 points, 47-42 percent, and Vargas also up 5 points, 48-43 percent. Bacon came from behind to win in 2022, and it looks like he'll need to do the same in 2024. Shift from Tilt Republican to Toss-up.

Nevada.

2nd District (Reno area and northern Nevada) Mark Amodei, re-elected 60%. Trump 54%. What should be an easy hold for Amodei in this rural district looks a little more complex after Democrats declined to field a candidate and instead have coalesced behind independent Greg Kidd, a former Federal Reserve analyst who has poured \$1.5 million of his own money into his campaign. The presence of Nevada Independent and Libertarian candidates on the ballot probably splits the anti-Amodei vote and makes things more difficult for Kidd. Solid Republican.

New Hampshire.

1st District (Eastern New Hampshire) Chris Pappas, D, re-elected 54%. Biden 52%. Two mid-August polls, from the Univ. of New Hampshire and St. Anselm College, showed 60 percent of GOP voters undecided between former executive councilor Russell Prescott, steelworks fabricator Hollie Noveletsky, Manchester alderman Joseph Levasseur, businessman Walter McFarlane, and veteran Chris Bright. No candidate received more than 20 percent in either survey. Lean Democratic.

2nd District (Western and northern New Hampshire) Open; Ann Kuster, D, not seeking re-election. Kuster cut an ad supporting former executive councilor Colin Van Ostern and slamming his opponent Maggie Goodlander on her time spent away from the state. VoteVets, which supports candidates with military backgrounds, is spending six figures to back Goodlander, who is in the Navy Reserve, and happens to be married to Biden National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan. Three polls from mid-August found Goodlander leading Van Ostern by 6 to 10 points but with plenty of undecided voters. On the GOP side, a massive field lacks any frontrunners. Two recent polls show business consultant Vikram Mansharamani and perennial candidate Lily Tang Williams in the mid-tens. This race is not a priority for Republicans. Likely Democratic.

New Jersey.

9th District (Urban North Jersey and western New York City suburbs) Vacant following the death of Bill Pascrell (D). Democrats are scrambling to fill this seat after the death of the longtime congressman on Aug. 21. State Sen. Nellie Pou quickly consolidated support from potential rivals and local officials. Solid Democratic.

New York.

17th District (Lower Hudson Valley) Mike Lawler, R, elected 50%. Biden 54%. Lawler is well-liked in the district and enters the fall ahead of former Rep. Mondaire Jones despite the district's Democratic bent. Jones' allies hope that the former congressman's ample resources and strong fundraising will allow him to close the gap quickly once he begins hitting Lawler on TV. But if he wins, it will be a come-from-behind victory, especially with New York not looking quite as favorable to Democrats as it did in 2020 when Biden carried this seat by double-digits. And Jones can't afford to lose too many votes to Anthony Frascone on the Working Families Party line. Move from Toss-up to Tilt Republican.

Oregon.

6th District (Salem area, Dallas and southwestern Portland suburbs) Andrea Salinas, D, elected 50%. Biden 55%. There's some

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renewed interest in the mid-Willamette Valley race against Salinas. Up to this point, the 6th has been overshadowed by the neighboring 5th District (which is one of dozen toss-up races around the country) and GOP excitement has been muted by uncertainty about Republican Mike Erickson's financial commitment to the race. Salinas defeated Erickson by just 2 points, 50-48 percent, in 2022 and there's some evidence this race could be closer than it might appear. But until Erickson or Republicans make a financial commitment to the race, it's hard to move it from its Likely Democratic rating.

Pennsylvania.

7th District (Lehigh Valley) Susan Wild, D, re-elected 51%. Biden 49.7%. Republicans believe state Rep. Ryan Mackenzie is well within striking distance of the congresswoman while Democrats don't see cause for alarm. Wild just went on television defending herself from previous attacks, which GOP strategists take as a sign their message was working. Wild had a significant \$3.9 million to \$373,000 cash advantage at the end of June, but Republicans



Ryan Mackenzie

Courtesy Mackenzie Campaign

haven't given up on the race. Tilt Democratic.

17th District (Western and northern Pittsburgh suburbs) Chris Deluzio, D, elected 53%. Biden 52%. There's not much excitement from Republicans about this race. State Rep. Rob Mercuri trails Deluzio in polling and in fundraising (he had \$1 million less in the bank at the end of June) and no outside GOP groups are poised to put money into the district to help him. Move from Lean Democratic to Likely Democratic.

Virginia.

7th District (Southern D.C. exurbs) Open, Abigail Spanberger, D, running for governor. Biden 52%. An Aug. 4-6 Ragnar Research Partners (R) poll commissioned by GOP nominee Derrick Anderson found retired Army Lt. Col. Eugene Vindman leading Anderson, also an attorney and veteran, by 1 point, 43-42 percent. Other private polling has the race similarly tight. Move from Tilt Democratic to Toss-up.

Washington.

8th District (Eastern Seattle suburbs and part of Central Washington) Kim Schrier, D, re-elected 53%. Biden 52%. In a scenario where Biden collapsed at the top of the ticket, this race might have come further into play. But that's not happening. With Harris likely to meet or exceed Biden's 2020 performance, this race is not on the House battlefield. Schrier outpaced GOP commercial banker Carmen Goers 50-45 percent in the all-party primary, but two other Democratic candidates combined for 5 percent and the congresswoman has a huge financial advantage. Goers had just \$5,000 in the bank on July 17 compared to \$3.3 million for Schrier. This race moves from Likely Democratic to Solid Democratic. **IE**

Governor Report Shorts

North Carolina. Roy Cooper (D) term-limited. A state as evenly divided as North Carolina is always going to hold close, competitive elections. But state Attorney General Josh Stein, a Democrat, has built up a steady polling lead over Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, whose history of controversial and offensive comments continue to dog his campaign. While national Republicans have signaled they believe in Robinson's ability to win and will invest in his candidacy — unlike Pennsylvania's Doug Mastriano in 2022 — they'll have to spend considerably to make up the distance. Stein reported \$16 million in cash on hand at the end of June compared to \$7 million for Robinson. It doesn't hurt Stein that Harris is knocking at the door of North Carolina's 16 electoral votes. And even if she doesn't win, Democrats have a long history of outperforming the top of the ticket in gubernatorial races. Shift from Toss-up to Tilt Democratic, in favor of Democrats.

Fox News, Aug 23-26 (LVs)(mixed mode) — General election ballot: Stein over Robinson, 54% - 43%.

Siena College/New York Times, Aug. 9-24 (LVs)(live caller) — General election ballot: Stein over Robinson, 49% - 39%.

SurveyUSA for High Point University, Aug. 19-21 (LVs)(online) — General election ballot: Stein over Robinson, 50% - 36%.

Utah. Spencer Cox (R) elected 2020 (63%). State Rep. Phil Lyman, who lost to Cox in the GOP primary last month by 8 points, is launching a write-in campaign in the general election. Lyman even appeared in an ad alongside Democratic nominee Brian King, also a state representative, urging voters to reject Cox at the ballot box. Solid Republican. **IE**

2024 Gubernatorial Ratings

Toss-up (1)	
NH Open (Sununu, R)	
Tilt Democratic (1)	Tilt Republican
NC Open (Cooper, D)#	
Lean Democratic	Lean Republican
Likely Democratic (1)	Likely Republican
WA Open (Inslie, D)	
Solid Democratic (1)	Solid Republican (7)
DE Open (Carney, D)	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

Senate Report Shorts

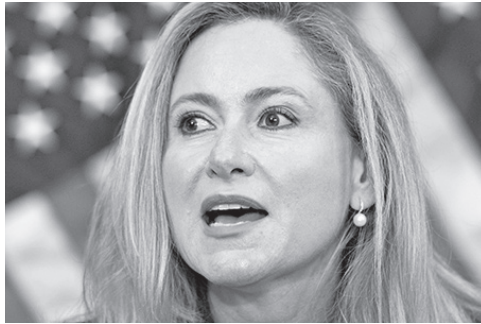
Arizona. Kyrsten Sinema (I) not seeking re-election. Democratic Rep. Ruben Gallego scored an endorsement from the Arizona Police Association just days after the group's president spoke at a Trump rally. The APA had previously endorsed Gallego's GOP opponent, Kari Lake, in her 2022 gubernatorial bid. While endorsements don't win or lose races for candidates, a high-profile law enforcement validator may help insulate Gallego from the attacks Lake and her allies are lobbing at him on his criminal justice record. Lake needs to change the trajectory of this race where she's already an underdog. Tilt Democratic.

Fox News, Aug. 23-26 (LVs)(mixed mode)— General election ballot: Gallego over Lake, 56% - 41%.

Siena College/New York Times, Aug. 8-15 (LVs)(live caller)— General election ballot: Gallego over Lake, 51% - 42%.

Florida. Rick Scott (R) elected 2018 (50%). A spate of recent polling suggests the Sunshine State is still competitive, despite the 2022 results. A Suffolk

Univ. survey for USA Today fielded Aug. 7-11 found Trump leading Harris by 5 points, 47-42 percent, with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. taking another 5 percent. That poll didn't test the Senate race, but a Florida Atlantic



Debbie Mucarsel-Powell

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

University/Mainstreet Research poll from Aug. 10-11 did and found Scott leading former Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell by 4 points, 47-43 percent, and Trump up by 3, 50-47 percent. An Aug. 21-22 Public Policy Polling (D) survey from Clean and Prosperous PAC, an environmental advocacy group, put Trump up 4 points, 51-47 percent, and Scott up 3 points, 48-45 percent. Mucarsel-Powell's biggest hurdle continues to be fundraising. Though she technically had more cash on hand than Scott on July 31 (\$4.4 million to his \$3.9 million) he has virtually limitless personal money he can pump into the race. Solid Republican but could get more competitive before too long.

Maryland. Open; Ben Cardin (D) not seeking re-election.

A poll from the bipartisan duo of FabrizioWard (R) and Impact (D) commissioned by the AARP found a tied race between Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks and former Gov. Larry Hogan. Democrat Alsobrooks and Republican Hogan each received 46 percent in the Aug. 14-20 poll of likely voters, while Harris led Trump by 30 points. Hogan was winning more than a quarter of Democrats, but Alsobrooks and her allies are going to work hard to nationalize the race and convince more Democratic voters that control of the Senate is more important than their past support for Hogan. Likely Democratic.

FabrizioWard (R)/Impact Research (D) for AARP, Aug. 14-20 (LVs)(mixed mode)— General election ballot: Alsobrooks and Hogan tied at 46%.

Michigan. Open; Debbie Stabenow (D) not seeking re-election. Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin narrowly led former GOP Rep. Mike

Rogers by a narrow margin in a bipartisan poll commissioned by the AARP. Democrats are set to outspend Republicans heavily on the airwaves over the final two months of the race, \$32 million to \$12 million. This race is the least developed of any of the major Senate contests but will likely be close and hard-fought by the end. Tilt Democrat.

FabrizioWard (R) for Pinpoint Policy Institute, Aug. 19-21 (LVs)(online/text)— General election ballot: Slotkin and Rogers tied at 43%.

FabrizioWard (R)/Impact Research (D) for AARP, Aug. 7-11 (LVs)(mixed mode)— General election ballot: Slotkin over Rogers, 47% - 44%.

Montana. Jon Tester (D) elected 2006 (49%), 2012 (49%), 2018 (50%). A Public Opinion Strategies (R) poll commissioned by the state GOP found Tester trailing Republican Navy SEAL veteran Tim Sheehy by 7 points, 51-44 percent. The Aug. 18-20 survey is the best result for Sheehy this cycle. Limited other public polling has shown the race tighter, but rarely with a Tester lead. This is Democrats' most vulnerable seat outside of West Virginia, and if they lose it, the party will have to hope for an upset in Texas or Florida to keep the upper chamber, even if Harris wins the presidential race. Toss-up.

Public Opinion Strategies (R) for Montana GOP, Aug. 18-20 (LVs)— General election ballot: Sheehy over Tester, 51% - 44%. Sid Daoud (L) 2%, Michael Downey (G) 1%

New Jersey. George Helmy (D) appointed Aug. 2024.

Democratic Sen. Bob Menendez is officially out of the Senate after he was convicted on several corruption charges and finally resigned. Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy has appointed his former chief of staff, George Helmy, as Menendez's replacement; Helmy will take office in September. Democratic Rep. Andy Kim will defeat Republican Curtis Bashaw in the November general election for a full term. Solid Democratic.

Texas. Ted Cruz (R) elected 2012 (56%), 2018 (51%). The NRSC and the Cruz campaign have begun a \$2.7 million coordinated ad buy, signaling that Republicans are taking this race seriously. Cruz still had a cash-on-hand advantage over Rep. Colin Allred on June 30 (\$12 million to \$10 million) but the Dallas congressman has been outraising Cruz and two recent polls show the race with just a narrow Cruz lead. If Democrats can make this seat a real pickup opportunity, it significantly expands their pathways to maintaining control. But national Democrats are yet to invest in Allred, and the state still wants to vote for a Republican under normal circumstances. Cruz has an additional \$9.7 million in television advertisements booked from now until Election Day.

Public Policy Polling (D) for Clean and Prosperous PAC, Aug. 21-22 (LVs) (IVR)— General election ballot: Cruz over Allred, 47% - 45%.

Virginia. Tim Kaine (D) elected 2012 (53%), 2018 (57%). Even as polls remain stubbornly close in Virginia between Harris and Trump (who campaigned in deep-blue Falls Church recently), Kaine appears to be cruising in his re-election campaign against Navy veteran Hung Cao. Kaine hasn't led by less than 10 points in any public survey of the race. Solid Democratic.

Roanoke College, Aug. 12-16 (LVs)(live caller)— General election: Kaine over Cao, 49% - 38%.



2024 Presidential Battlegrounds: Arizona

By Bradley Wascher

Ever since Arizona cast its first electoral college votes in 1912, a Republican has never won the presidency without it. In 2020, former President Donald Trump narrowly lost the state to Joe Biden, making him the first Republican to fall short since Bob Dole.

Large communities of young Hispanics in growing cities have turned the Grand Canyon State into a key battleground up and down the ballot. This November, Arizona will host one of the nation's most competitive Senate races on top of the presidential excitement.

Arizona in Recent Elections

Arizona has long been a Republican stronghold, voting for the GOP in every presidential election between 1952 and 2016, save for Bill Clinton's slim win in 1996. Barack Obama twice lost the Grand Canyon State by 9 points, but in 2016 Hillary Clinton kept Trump within 4 points. Arizona's shifting demographics eventually gave way to a Democratic win in 2020, when Biden eked out a 10,457-vote victory (out of nearly 3.4 million cast).

Democrats' success in Arizona started two years earlier in the 2018 midterms, when the party flipped two statewide row offices and Democrat Kyrsten Sinema triumphed by 2 points over Republican Martha McSally in a matchup between House members. McSally, who was later appointed to fill a vacancy in Arizona's other Senate seat, also lost a 2020 special election against Democratic astronaut Mark Kelly — marking the first time in almost seven decades that Democrats held both of the state's Senate seats.

The 2022 midterms were also good for Democrats. They won three statewide offices, including the governorship when Democrat Katie Hobbs defeated Republican Kari Lake by less than a point. Sen. Kelly also earned a full term by besting Republican Blake Masters by 5 points. Republicans had bright spots too, picking up the 2nd and 6th congressional districts, maintaining majorities in both legislative chambers, and flipping the superintendent of public instruction seat — not to mention Kimberly Yee's 11-point walkover in her re-election as state treasurer. But general trends aren't great for the GOP: the average margin in Arizona statewide races was Republican+6 in 2014, Republican+4 in 2018, and Republican+1 in 2022.

According to Baseline, the typical Democrat in Arizona is expected to earn 48.6 percent of the vote, while a typical Republican is expected to earn 50.4 percent. The GOP's 9-point advantage in 2016 has been shaved to just 2 points.

Demographics

According to the Census Bureau, Arizona's population is 52 percent white, 32 percent Hispanic or Latino, 4 percent Black, and 3 percent Asian. Many Native Americans also live in the state: there are 22 federally recognized tribes across the state, and 13 percent of the population identifies as Native American alone, second only to Oklahoma. Thirty-three percent of adults in Arizona have a bachelor's degree or higher, slightly lower than the national average of 36 percent. Median household income in the state is \$74,568, roughly the same as nationwide.

Arizona's population grew by nearly 12 percent between 2010 and 2020 — among the fastest rates in the country — and it went from

Presidential Battleground Series

Michigan	April 11 issue
Georgia	April 26 issue
Nevada	May 9 issue
Pennsylvania	May 23 issue
North Carolina	August 16 issue

casting 2.3 million votes in 2012 to 3.4 million in 2020. Some of this boom is fueled by an influx of out-of-state retirees, but the more electorally consequential increase has been among Hispanics.

Arizona's Hispanic population is the fourth largest of any state by share, and grew from 25 percent in 2000 to 30 percent in 2010, where it has roughly remained since. But the group still tends to vote at lower rates, with exit polls identifying 19 percent of voters as Hispanic in 2020 and 17 percent in 2022. This is because the Hispanic population skews younger and many Hispanics in Arizona are recent immigrants. This growth has helped Democrats win statewide races, but not always by consistent margins. According to exit polls, Sinema carried Hispanic voters by 40 points in 2018, while Biden won them by 24 points in 2020 and Kelly took them by 18 points in 2022. (In the most recent governor race, Hobbs only carried Hispanics by 4 points over Lake, 51-47 percent.)

Key Maricopa County

Practically any discussion of elections in Arizona begins and ends in Maricopa County. Home to 62 percent of the state's population, it includes the capital of Phoenix as well as Mesa (home to Jimmy Eat World), Tempe (home to Arizona State University), and many other fast-growing suburbs.

Maricopa County has a long history as a Republican stronghold, but it has become highly competitive in recent years. It voted for Mitt Romney by 11 points in 2012 before backing Trump in 2016 by just 3 points, or 45,000 votes. In 2020, Biden became the first Democrat to carry the county since Harry Truman, defeating Trump by 2 points, or 45,000 votes. An analysis from the Arizona Republic found that Biden flipped 60 precincts across Maricopa County, while Trump won only one precinct previously carried by Clinton. Sinema and Kelly each won the county by between 4 and 6 points in their various Senate bids, while Hobbs defeated Lake by 2 points. But Maricopa County is by no means the GOP's forgotten dream: although it voted for the Democrat by 7 points in the 2022 secretary of state race, it also supported the Republican in that year's state treasurer election by 11 points. Overall, the GOP has a razor-thin edge according to Baseline: 50 percent Republican vs. 48.9 percent Democrat.

One reason Maricopa County has shifted toward Democrats is their gains among suburban white voters with relatively high levels of college education. While only 36 percent of the county overall has a college degree, the share climbs much higher in suburbs such as Chandler (47 percent), Gilbert (48 percent), Scottsdale (64 percent), and Paradise Valley (74 percent). Biden's gains in 2020 were across a broad

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swath of demographics in Arizona, but voters in the East Valley seem to have been turned off by Trump in particular — because downballot Republicans still carried approximately half of the precincts that Biden flipped.

The Rest of the State

Located directly south of Maricopa is the second largest county in Arizona, Pima County. Containing Tucson, it casts around 16 percent of the state’s votes and is strongly Democratic. Clinton won by 14 points and Biden carried the county by 19 points. Kelly pulled off a 26-point victory in 2020, 10 points better than the typical Democrat according to Baseline. Democrats also perform well in Coconino County (Democratic+24 Baseline; home to Flagstaff), Apache County (Democratic+33 Baseline; contains largely tribal reservations), and Santa Cruz County (Democratic+37 Baseline; 83 percent Hispanic).

Arizona’s remaining 10 counties, bookending the east and west ends of the state, are heavily Republican. On average, around 20 percent of adults in these counties have a bachelor’s degree, and the typical Republican has an advantage of 26 points. In two counties — Navajo (Republican+9 Baseline; 66 percent Hispanic; 17 percent college-educated) and Yuma (Republican+9 Baseline; 40 percent Native; 20 percent college-educated) — the GOP is slightly less dominant, but they have not lost either at the presidential level in decades.

Recent Polls

Trump and Harris are tied in most Arizona polls, although high-quality surveys of the state have been scant since Harris became the nominee. Since early August, Noble Predictive Insights found Trump+3,

Fox News had Harris+1, and The New York Times / Siena College saw Harris+4. The 538 average shows Harris+0.8.

The Bottom Line

Biden was the first Democratic presidential candidate to carry Arizona this century, but his win in 2020 was not surprising given the state’s demographic trends. The Grand Canyon State’s population has nearly doubled in the last 30 years, bringing in out-of-staters and immigrants alike. At the same time, highly educated voters in fast-growing suburbs have been turned off by Trump despite still entertaining other Republican candidates.

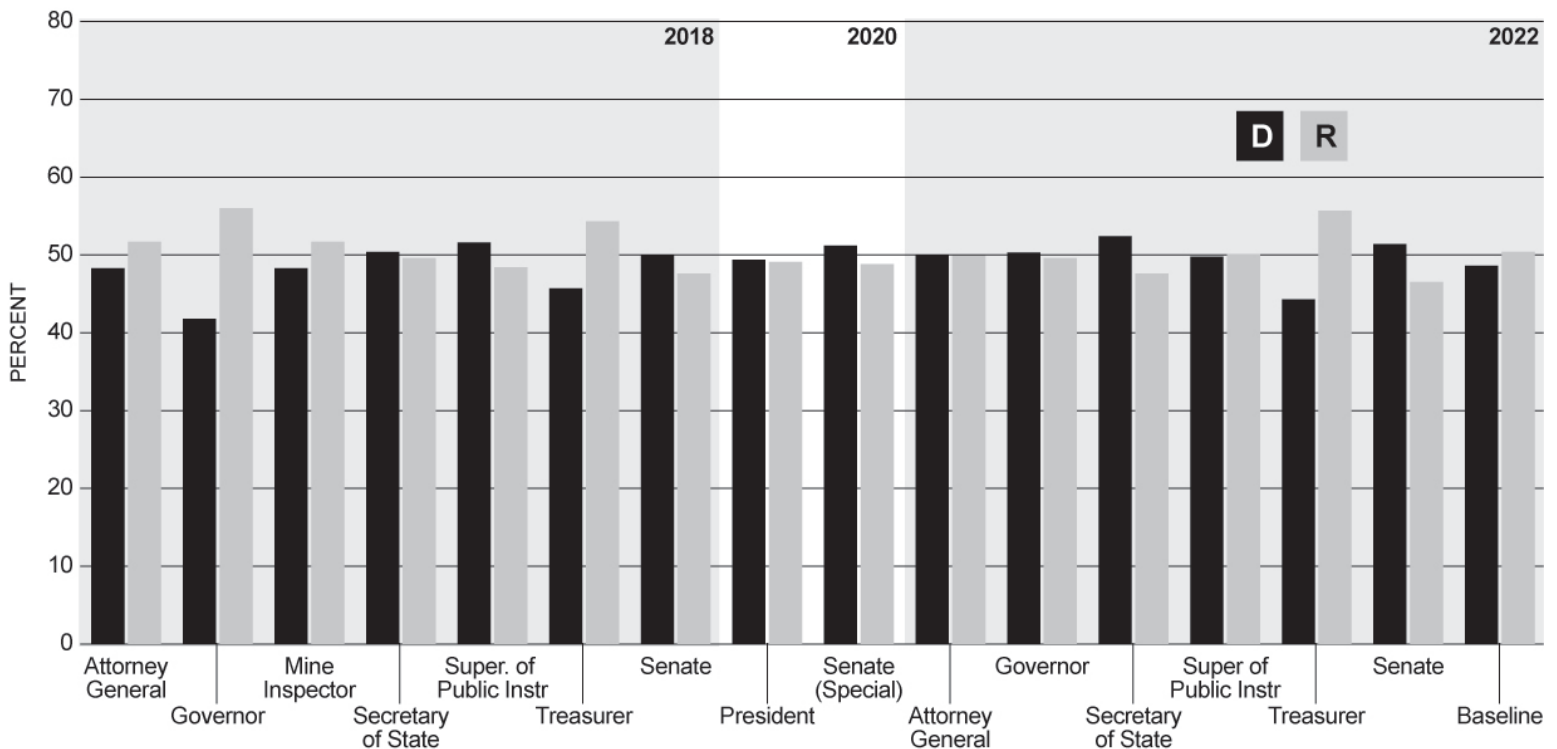
Maricopa County, which casts three-fifths of the state’s votes, is always important. According to an analysis by Arizona data expert Garrett Archer, the precincts around the Loop 101 Freeway were enough to decide the election: Biden carried them by 11,248 votes and won statewide by 10,457 votes.

Overall, Biden flipped 98 precincts across the state, almost all in Maricopa and Pima counties. This has been the strategy for successful statewide Democrats — make Maricopa County competitive and juice turnout in Pima County — and the same playbook will probably decide this November’s contests for Senate and president.

Speaking of the presidency, Arizona is more vital for Trump’s electoral college math than Harris’s. The GOP has relied on the Grand Canyon State’s electoral votes for every one of its victories in the past century. If he loses Arizona, Trump’s path to 270 would depend even more on flipping multiple states in the Rust Belt; winning Pennsylvania alone wouldn’t be enough, all else equal from 2020. Harris, on the other hand, could become the tenth Democrat to win a statewide race in Arizona since 2018.



Statewide Election Results for Arizona



Republican and Democratic Conventions Were the Same, But Different

By Nathan L. Gonzales

CHICAGO- While packed arenas and elated crowds were standard across the Republican and Democratic National Conventions, there were some stark differences in messaging, merchandise, and even the trash.

Energy. Of course conventions are full of the party faithful, but rarely is each party euphoric in the same cycle. Typically, one party is confident while the other is going through the motions.

This year, Republicans who gathered in Milwaukee in the middle of July were excited and optimistic about the election. Former President Donald Trump was ascendent, leading Biden in virtually all of the key battleground states, and on his way to a second term. There was a sense of inevitability at the Republican National Convention.

But President Joe Biden dropped out a couple days later and Vice President Kamala Harris took his place at the top of the ticket before Democrats convened in Chicago. While it had looked like Democrats were headed for a political funeral, it was a four-day party. They certainly aren't over-confident, particularly after 2016, but Democrats were excited, ready to turn the page from Biden, and eager to get to work for Harris.

Both conventions could be considered "full," but Chicago was on another level. In Milwaukee, the Fiserv Forum wasn't completely full until Thursday night, when Trump gave his acceptance speech. In Chicago, the United Center was full from the beginning on Monday night. And Thursday night was beyond capacity with every seat full and people sitting and standing in the aisles at multiple levels of the arena.

Legacy. Democrats paid tribute to their leaders from the past throughout the week. Biden and Hillary Clinton spoke on Monday night, former President Barack and former First Lady Michelle Obama on Tuesday night, and former President Bill Clinton on Wednesday night. Jimmy Carter's grandson Jason spoke because the 99-year-old former president couldn't make the trip.

In contrast, former two-term President George W. Bush was an afterthought at the RNC. The only time he was mentioned was when Trump attacked him on the final night of the convention for a foreign policy decision. Other members of past tickets including former Vice President Mike Pence, Sen. Mitt Romney, former Speaker Paul Ryan, and former Gov. Sarah Palin were nowhere to be found.

Trump requires loyalty and focus on himself, while also repelling some previous factions and leaders of the party.

Diversity. It's ironic that former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards was spotted in Chicago because his famous "Two Americas" speech could apply to the DNC and RNC. While the GOP convention was full of predominantly white folks, the Democratic convention was far more diverse in terms of race, LGBTQ and delegates with visible disabilities. Republicans like to talk about diversity and making inroads with voters of color, but there's no comparison to the diversity of the crowd at each convention.

Signs. Each party's approach to the signage on the floor of the convention could be a window into the party's philosophy. Republicans would often set out signs on chairs in the afternoon before the

programming began and leave it up to the delegates to raise and waive them as they saw fit throughout the evening.

Democrats take the sign game as seriously as anything. They have a different set of signs for each of the evenings' final speakers. Non-vested volunteers press through the crowd just a few minutes before those specific signs are supposed to be raised. The signs are already separated into just the right amount for each row to speed up the distribution. Then delegates are instructed to raise them at just the right time in the speaker's speech. And when it's time for the tall vertical signs, Democrats make sure the middle section between the cameras and the podium get the regular, smaller signs to ensure there's no blockage. No matter what side of the aisle you're sitting on, the Democratic organization of the signs is a sight to behold.

Merchandise. Another striking difference between the two conventions was the merchandise. In Milwaukee, of course there was plenty of Trump paraphernalia available. But there was also plenty of anti-Biden and anti-Harris merch, some of which was vulgar and profane. Whether it was being worn by delegates or available to purchase, there was no shortage of crass content in Milwaukee.

That was a striking difference with Chicago, where there was barely any anti-Trump merchandise. Democrats attacked the former president from the stage, but he was an afterthought in the merchandise that focused on Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz. Official tables inside the United Center only had Harris t-shirts, buttons, stickers, etc. I only saw one guy with a stack of t-shirts outside the security perimeter with shirts that said "F--- Donald Trump" and don't remember seeing any delegate wearing anything like that around the convention. Yes, Democrats want to defeat Trump, but they're ready to move on.

Slogans. Unsurprisingly, there was a contrast in convention slogans. Republicans continued on Trump's Make America Great Again path with Make America Safe Again, Make America Strong Again and Make America Great Once Again. Republicans want to maintain consistency with the brand but also present a contrast to voters who don't like their current situation and remember Trump's time in office more fondly.

With Harris at the top, Democrats are anxious to move forward, both from Trump and from Biden. "We're not going back," was consistently one of the loudest chants in Chicago's United Center last week. Harris has already consolidated and excited the Democratic base, but a forward-looking campaign message could appeal to voters in the middle who are just ready to move on from the status-quo, including an aging former president who has been running for nearly a decade.

Abortion. This is the first set of political conventions since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* with the *Dobbs* decision. It was the signature achievement for the pro-life movement, a moment the pro-life movement has been anticipating for decades, and yet there was hardly any mention about it in Milwaukee. There was more talk about

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Trump’s golf game than there was about the pro-life cause. And that’s a sign of the current politics surrounding abortion. Abortion access was a consistent theme throughout the Democratic convention in Chicago. It’s an issue that mobilizes the Democratic base and could sway independent voters who are concerned about how far Republicans go to restrict access when they gain power.

Dark Moments. Both parties had heavy moments at their convention, but focused on very different issues. Republicans highlighted the 13 service members who died in Afghanistan during the country’s exit three years ago and told stories about crimes committed by undocumented immigrants against U.S. citizens. Democrats highlighted women and families affected by restrictions to abortion and families impacted by gun violence. It’s not about ranking the severity or importance of each of those issues, but it’s remarkable that one party highlighted those issues while the other barely mentioned them, or sometimes ignored them altogether.

Celebrities. There’s really no comparison between the two conventions when it comes to celebrities. In Milwaukee, the biggest names were Hulk Hogan, Kid Rock, Dennis Quaid, Lee Greenwood, and the Trump family. In Chicago, it was Oprah, Stevie Wonder, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Spike Lee, Bryan Cranston, Lil John, J.J. Abrams, Patti LaBelle, Pink, “Young Sheldon” (Iain Armitage), Mindy Kayling, Eva Longoria, Kerry Washington, Sean Astin, Jason Isbell and The Chicks (formerly the Dixie Chicks). But they failed to attract Beyonce or Taylor Swift. Former USMNT soccer star / FOX commentator Alexi Lalas was at both.

Protests. Both conventions were marked by unremarkable protests. In Milwaukee, the most violent incident involved police and a couple local individuals experiencing homelessness outside of the security perimeter. In Chicago, most of the protests also occurred outside the security perimeter, but at far lower levels than expected. The biggest incident was on Monday evening when protests caused the Secret Service to close a couple entrances to the perimeter, creating a massive line at the south entrance. But predictions of a replay of the violent 1968 convention in Chicago were offbase.

Trash. At Republican conventions, there are trash cans all over the place, with a recycling container here or there. At Democratic conventions there are clusters of a handful of containers for trash, compost, multiple types of recycling, and someone standing over the containers telling you where to deposit your refuse. It’s actually a pretty good window into the parties’ approach to life. **IE**

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With that in mind, Kennedy could be poised to hurt Trump in Michigan, North Carolina and Wisconsin, where he’ll still be on the ballot. But it would be a mistake to assume all Kennedy voters would otherwise support Trump or Harris. There are third party voters who fundamentally believe that the two-party bias of the system is wrong, and they’ll never vote for a Republican or Democrat out of principle.

While Republicans are highlighting a lifelong Democrat (Kennedy) endorsing a Republican, it’s not likely to make the splash they’d like. Kennedy is extremely flawed as a candidate and a 70-year-old white guy getting behind a 78-year-old white guy to reboot the GOP campaign isn’t likely to stop the bleeding from the new Harris-Walz ticket. **IE**

Likely New Members of the Next Congress

Candidates Who Won Primaries in Solid or Likely Takeover Races

STATE	DISTRICT	NAME	PARTY
AZ	3rd	Yassamin Ansari	D
AZ	8th	Abe Hamadeh	R
CA	29th	Luz Rivas	D
CA	30th	Laura Friedman	D
CA	31st	Gil Cisneros	D
CO	5th	Jeff Crank	R
DE	AL	Sarah McBride	D
GA	3rd	Brian Jack	R
IN	3rd	Marlin Stutzman	R
IN	6th	Jefferson Shreve	R
IN	8th	Mark Messmer	R
MD	2nd	Johnny Olszewski	D
MD	3rd	Sarah Elfreth	D
MD	6th	April McClain-Delaney	D
MN	3rd	Kelly Morrison	DFL
MO	1st	Wesley Bell	D
MO	3rd	Bob Onder	R
MT	2nd	Troy Downing	R
NC	6th	Addison McDowell	R
NC	8th	Mark Harris	R
NC	10th	Pat Harrigan	R
NC	13th	Brad Knott	R
NC	14th	Tim Moore	R
ND	At-Large	Julie Fedorchak	R
NJ	3rd	Herb Conaway	D
NJ	9th	Nellie Pou	D
NY	16th	George Latimer	D
OH	2nd	David Taylor	R
OR	3rd	Maxine Dexter	D
SC	3rd	Sheri Biggs	R
TX	12th	Craig Goldman	R
TX	18th	Sylvester Turner	D
TX	26th	Brandon Gill	R
TX	32nd	Julie Johnson	D
UT	3rd	Mike Kennedy	R
VA	5th	John McGuire	R
VA	10th	Suhas Subramanyam	D
WA	5th	Michael Baumgartner	R
WA	6th	Emily Randall	D
WI	8th	Tony Wied	R
WV	2nd	Riley Moore	R
CA	Senate	Adam Schiff	D
DE	Senate	Lisa Blunt Rochester	D
IN	Senate	Jim Banks	R
NJ	Senate	Andy Kim	D
UT	Senate	John Curtis	R
WV	Senate	Jim Justice	R