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# 2022 Election Preview: Waiting for the World to Change

**By Nathan L. Gonzales, Jacob Rubashkin, and Erin Covey**

Labor Day is the unofficial kickoff to campaign season, yet it feels like the 2022 elections are already in a holding pattern.

For much of the cycle, this felt like a typical midterm election. President Joe Biden's mediocre job rating looked like an anvil tied to Democratic prospects. Republican control of the House was as close to a guarantee as there is in politics, and the GOP was in the driver's seat to get the Senate as well.

But the cycle has shifted. It's just not yet clear how far.

The U.S. Supreme Court's reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, subsequent GOP efforts to eliminate access to legal abortion at the state level, revelations from the Jan. 6 House committee, continuing investigations into former President Donald Trump, and even some improvement in gas prices have given Democrats a boost.

Looking for evidence of the shift? Democrats' regained advantage on the national generic ballot, modest improvement in Biden's job rating and Democratic overperformance in five House special elections across four states point to a more competitive cycle.

But there hasn't been a sweeping shift toward Democrats in polls of House races. While a swath of districts Biden carried easily may no longer be within reach for the GOP, a Democratic surge hasn't appeared in the four dozen most competitive races. District-level polling could be a lagging indicator, and the shift might surface in the next couple weeks. But it's not there yet.

Republicans are still the favorites to win the five seats they need to reclaim the House majority. We're maintaining our projection of a Republican gain of 12-30 seats for now. But that could shift in the coming weeks.

In the Senate, Republicans only need a net gain of one seat, but their prospects have diminished. Even a slight shift in the environment has exposed candidate weakness in key states. Our Senate projection is GOP +1 to Democrats +1, including no net change.

The best thing to do is remain open-minded about possible outcomes.

## 2022 Senate Ratings

### Toss-up

| | |
|---|---|
| PA Open (Toomey, R) | Kelly (D-Ariz.) |
| Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) | Warnock (D-Ga.) |

| **Tilt Democratic** | **Tilt Republican** |
|---|---|
| Hassan (D-N.H.) | Johnson (R-Wisc.) |

| **Lean Democratic** | **Lean Republican** |
|---|---|
| | NC Open (Burr, R) |

| **Likely Democratic** | **Likely Republican** |
|---|---|
| Bennet (D-Colo.) | OH Open (Portman, R) |
| Murray (D-Wash.) | Rubio (R-Fl.) |
| | Lee (R-Utah)# |

| **Solid Democratic** | **Solid Republican** |
|---|---|
| VT Open (Leahy, D) | AL Open (Shelby, R) |
| Blumenthal (D-Conn.) | MO Open (Blunt, R) |
| Duckworth (D-Ill.) | OK Open (Inhofe, R) |
| Padilla (D-Calif.) | Boozman (R-Ark.) |
| Schatz (D-Hawaii) | Crapo (R-Idaho) |
| Schumer (D-N.Y.) | Grassley (R-Iowa) |
| Van Hollen (D-Md.) | Hoeven (R-N.D.) |
| Wyden (D-Ore.) | Kennedy (R-La.) |
| | Lankford (R-Okla.) |
| | Moran (R-Kan.) |
| | Murkowski (R-Alaska) |
| | Paul (R-Ky.) |
| | Scott (R-S.C.) |
| | Thune (R-S.D.) |
| | Young (R-Ind.) |

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

**Editor's Note: We are pleased to be adding Reporter & Analyst Erin Covey to Inside Elections. Erin was most recently at National Journal's Hotline and NPR before that. We're excited to have an expanded team for the sprint to November and beyond. - Nathan.**

## More Analysis Online

• Alaska At-Large Special: Making History

*By Jacob Rubashkin*

**InsideElections.com**

# Gubernatorial Updates

**MASSACHUSETTS. Open; Charlie Baker (R), not seeking re-election.** Former state Rep. Geoff Diehl defeated businessman Chris Doughty, 56-44 percent, in the GOP primary. Diehl was the GOP nominee for Senate in 2018, losing 60-36 percent to Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren. Diehl was endorsed for governor by former President Donald Trump before Baker announced he wouldn't seek re-election, and he is much more conservative than the moderate Republicans who regularly win Massachusetts gubernatorial contests. In a pre-primary rally for Diehl, Trump crowed that the GOP contender would rule the state "with an iron fist." Democrats nominated Maura Healey, the incumbent state attorney general, who ran virtually uncontested in the primary. Along with Maryland, the Bay State is Democrats' best opportunity to pick up a governorship. Move from Lean Democratic to Likely Democratic.

**OREGON. Open; Kate Brown (D), term-limited.** Democrats have held the Oregon governorship for nearly four decades but are struggling to keep their streak alive. Betsy Johnson, a well-funded former Democratic state senator waging a campaign as an independent, is drawing support from both Democratic and Republican voters. But at the moment, her primary effect on the race seems to be blocking Democratic nominee Tina Kotek from benefiting from the state's partisan lean. Public and private polling at the state and congressional district level shows Kotek and GOP nominee Christine Drazan tied in the low 30s, with Johnson pulling around 20 percent. Democratic strategists are confident their hits on Johnson, including her opposition to red flag gun laws, will bring Democratic voters back into the fold. Kotek began paid messaging on guns in early September.

Both parties' national operations are stepping up their investment in the state as well, with the Republican Governors Association and Democratic Governors Association transferring $1 million each to their respective standard-bearers in August. That's on top of $800,000 the DGA transferred, and $250,000 the RGA transferred, in July.

Both candidates entered September trailing Johnson in cash-on-hand, but the independent's heavy spending on TV hasn't moved her support out of the low 20s, likely foreclosing on any path to victory. That doesn't mean she isn't having a major effect on the race. Move from Lean Democratic to Tilt Democratic.

## 2022 Governor Ratings

### Toss-up (2D, 1R)

| | |
|---|---|
| AZ Open (Ducey, R) | Evers (D-Wisc.) |
| Kelly (D-Kan.) | |

| Tilt Democratic (4D) | Tilt Republican (1R) |
|---|---|
| PA Open (Wolf, D) | Kemp (R-Ga.) |
| Whitmer (D-Mich.) | |
| Sisolak (D-Nev.) | |
| OR Open (Brown, D)* | |

| Lean Democratic (2D) | Lean Republican |
|---|---|
| Mills (D-Maine) | |
| Lujan Grisham (D-N.M.) | |

| Likely Democratic (1D, 2R) | Likely Republican (3R) |
|---|---|
| *MA Open (Baker, R)#* | Dunleavy (R-Alaska) |
| *MD Open (Hogan, R)* | DeSantis (R-Fl.) |
| Walz (DFL-Minn.) | Sununu (R-N.H.) |

| Solid Democratic (7D) | Solid Republican (12R) |
|---|---|
| HI Open (Ige, D) | NE Open (Ricketts, R) |
| Newsom (D-Calif.) | Ivey (R-Ala.) |
| Polis (D-Colo.) | Little (R-Idaho) |
| Lamont (D-Conn.) | Reynolds (R-Iowa) |
| Pritzker (D-Ill.) | Noem (R-S.D.) |
| Hochul (D-N.Y.) | DeWine (R-Ohio) |
| McKee (D-R.I.) | Stitt (R-Okla.) |
| | McMaster (R-S.C.) |
| | Lee (R-Tenn.) |
| | Abbott (R-Texas) |
| | Scott (R-Vt.) |
| | Gordon (R-Wyo.) |

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

# House Updates

## Alaska.

**At-Large (Mary Peltola, D). Trump 53%.** Peltola pulled off an upset in the special election to replace the late Rep. Don Young. In a three-way race, Peltola defeated former Gov. Sarah Palin and entrepreneur Nick Begich III, both Republicans. The election was conducted using ranked choice/instant runoff voting, and Peltola won because roughly half of Begich's supporters chose not to back Palin as a second option, opting for Peltola or nobody at all. All three major contenders will be back for the fall, plus a fourth, little-known Libertarian candidate.

Alaska is still Republican territory, and Peltola only received about 40 percent of the contest's first-place votes. If GOP voters get spooked by Palin's faceplant and consolidate behind Begich instead, he could have a more straightforward path to victory. But the former governor isn't backing down. With the two Republicans focused on each other, Peltola has a path to a full term, especially if outside GOP groups don't come in to soften her image. Tilt Republican.

## Arizona.

**2nd District (Tom O'Halleran, D). Trump 53%.** Running in a district Trump won by 8 points, O'Halleran is probably the most vulnerable House Democrat running for re-election in a competitive district. He faces retired Navy SEAL Eli Crane, who won a contentious GOP primary with Trump's support. Despite his precarious position, the congressman has yet to place any TV ad reservations. Lean Republican.

**6th District (Open; Ann Kirkpatrick, D). Biden 49.3%.** Juan Ciscomani, a former adviser to Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey, was able to consolidate national Republican support early on as Democrats dealt with a competitive primary. After winning the August primary, former Democratic state Sen. Kirsten Engel released a poll that showed her leading Ciscomani, 49-47 percent, but in a district that Biden barely won, Republicans still have the edge. Tilt Republican.

## California.

**22nd District (David Valadao, R). Biden 55%.** Valadao is one of the most vulnerable House Republicans in the country. After getting through the all-party primary with just 25.6 percent, he faces a serious challenge from state Assemblyman Rudy Salas, one of Democrats' top recruits this cycle. A poll from Salas' campaign in mid July showed him leading Valadao, 43-

**Rudy Salas**

*Courtesy Salas Campaign*

35 percent. If the congressman survives, he would be one of only two Republicans who voted to impeach Trump who are still in Congress next year. Toss-up.

**27th District (Mike Garcia, R). Biden 55%.** State Assemblywoman Christy Smith is hoping that third time's the charm for her as she wages a rematch against Garcia. This year, the newly-drawn district should benefit Smith — this is one of the most Democratic districts in the country held by a Republican. But Garcia has proven his ability to win tough races, and he'll still be difficult to topple this November. Toss-up.

**40th District (Young Kim, R). Biden 50%.** Now that Kim has survived the primary, where she faced a challenge to her right from Greg Raths, she looks well-positioned to hold this Orange County district. She'll face Asif Mahmood, who got 41% of the vote in the all-party primary as the only Democrat on the ballot. Likely Republican.

**45th District (Michelle Steel, R). Biden 52%.** Despite running in a largely new district, Steel is in a strong position ahead of November against Jay Chen. The Korean American congresswoman has been agressively targeting Asian American voters in this portion of Orange County, airing ads focused on her own immigration story. The key question is whether upscale voters are repelled by the GOP's stance on abortion in the wake of the *Dobbs* decision. Lean Republican.

## Colorado.

**7th District (Open; Ed Perlmutter, D, not seeking re-election). Biden 56%.** Democratic state Sen. Brittany Pettersen got a head start, consolidating Democratic support and building up her war chest. Republicans nominated Erik Aadland, an energy executive, to face Pettersen. Likely Democratic.

**8th District (Open; new). Biden 51%.** This brand-new congressional district is home to one of the most competitive races in the country. Democratic state Rep. Yadira Caraveo is banking on mobilizing Democratic voters in the Denver suburbs. She'll face state Sen. Barbara Kirkmeyer, whose base is in the more rural part of the district. Toss-up.

## Illinois.

**17th District (Open; Cheri Bustos, D, not seeking re-election). Biden 53%.** Bustos' retirement made this Republicans' best pick-up opportunity in Illinois. Esther Joy King, who came close to unseating Bustos in 2020, is running again. She recently aired an ad spotlighting her role helping an Afghan refugee escape the country last August. King faces Eric Sorensen, until recently a local meteorologist. Toss-up.

## Iowa.

**3rd District (Cindy Axne, D). Trump 49%.** Axne, the lone Democrat in the Hawkeye State's Congressional delegation, is in serious danger of losing this cycle. The congresswoman was quick to go on offense against Republican state Sen. Zach Nunn after he won the GOP primary. Nunn has released TV ads highlighting his military background. It's unclear how much the congresswoman will benefit from increased focused on abortion, but she's criticized Nunn for supporting a ban on abortion without exceptions. This race might be slipping away from Democrats. Toss-up.

## Kansas.

**3rd District (Sharice Davids, D). Biden 51%.** Davids' Kansas City-based district is more competitive after redistricting, and she faces a rematch against Republicans' 2020 nominee, Amanda Adkins. While Kansas voters' rejection of an anti-abortion ballot amendment shows momentum around that issue in the state, this race is still expected to be close. Toss-up.

## Maine.

**2nd District (Jared Golden, D). Trump 52%.** Golden is one Democrat who's been able to successfully distance himself from the national party, and he overperformed Biden by double digits in 2020. He faces a rematch against former Republican Rep. Bruce Poliquin, who lost to Golden in 2018. Poliquin must have confidence in the top of the ticket considering he cozies up to former GOP Gov. Paul LePage, who is in a competitive race to get his old job back, in a recent TV ad. Toss-up.

## Michigan.

**3rd District (Open; Peter Meijer, R, lost in primary). Biden 53%.** Meijer's loss to former Trump administration official John Gibbs has boosted Democrats' chances of flipping this purple district. Biden won the newly-drawn district by 8 points in 2020, and Democrats believe their 2020 nominee, Hillary Scholten, has a strong shot at winning this cycle. Gibbs, who was an official

*Courtesy Gibbs Campaign*

**John Gibbs**

at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, has a history of sharing conspiracy theories and has embraced Trump's 2020 election fraud claims. Tilt Democratic.

**7th District (Elissa Slotkin, D). Biden 50%.** After a close 2020 race, Slotkin faces another competitive battle this November against Republican state Sen. Tom Barrett. The congresswoman had a $5 million fundraising lead in mid-July, and her ads are focused on bolstering her independent brand. Tilt Democratic.

**8th District (Dan Kildee, D). Biden 50%.** Kildee, whose Flint-based district became more competitive after redistricting, went on the air early with ads touting his bipartisan credentials and attacking his Republican opponent Paul Junge. Junge, a former news anchor who ran against Slotkin in 2020, has responded to carpetbagging attacks by airing a TV ad defending his family's Michigan roots. Tilt Democratic.

## Minnesota.

**2nd District (Angie Craig, DFL). Biden 52%.** This competitive district features a rematch between Craig and Marine veteran Tyler Kistner. The congresswoman has a strong fundraising advantage on her side, along with a more favorable environment than anticipated. Typically, outside groups specialize in negative ads, but Congressional Leadership Fund is on TV with a positive ad boosting Kistner. That's usually a sign that the candidate doesn't have enough money to boost their own image. Toss-up.

## Nebraska.

**2nd District (Don Bacon, R). Biden 52%.** After successfully fending off Democratic attempts to unseat him for the past two cycles, Bacon faces a stronger opponent in Democratic state Sen. Tony Vargas. Polls show a tightening race, and Democrats' overperformance in the neighboring 1st District's special election could bode well for Vargas. Toss-up.

## Nevada.

**3rd District (Susie Lee, D). Biden 52%.** Lee remains the most vulnerable House Democrat in the Silver State. Republican attorney April Becker has spent the past several months tying her to the state's economic woes — Nevada has been particularly hard hit by inflation. But the congresswoman's focus on abortion since the reversal of *Roe* could bolster her chances in a largely pro-choice state. Tilt Democratic.

## New Hampshire. Sept 13 primary.

**1st District (Chris Pappas, D). Biden 52%.** New Hampshire's late primary has created a contentious, drawn-out battle between several Republicans vying to take on Pappas. Former State Department official Matt Mowers, Republicans' nominee in 2020, entered the race as the frontrunner. But in the past few weeks, polls have shown former White House aide Karoline Leavitt gaining steam. A late August survey from the University of New Hampshire showed Mowers leading Leavitt by only 2 points. Gail Huff Brown, the wife of former Massachusetts Sen. Scott Brown, is also running in the crowded GOP primary. Pappas, meanwhile, has been able to amass a serious war chest. Tilt Democratic.

**2nd District (Ann McLane Kuster, D). Biden 54%.** Republicans' odds of flipping this seat could hinge on the GOP primary results. Keene Mayor George Hansel is backed by Gov. Chris Sununu and has positioned himself as a moderate. While Hansel has the fundraising lead, a Democratic outside group has aired TV ads boosting Bob Burns, a pro-Trump political activist. Likely Democratic.

## New Jersey.

**7th District (Tom Malinowski, D). Biden 51%.** One of the most vulnerable Democrats in the country, Malinowski faces a rematch against state Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean Jr., who lost to Malinowski by 1 point in 2020. This year, Kean should be well-positioned to flip this district. But in a state as pro-choice as New Jersey, Malinowski could benefit from increased attention on abortion access, and the congressman has aired ads focused on the issue. Toss-up.

## New York.

**4th District (Open; Kathleen Rice, D, not seeking re-election). Biden 57%.** Former Hempstead town supervisor Laura Gillen has the advantage in the race to succeed Rice in November. Though this district could still be competitive, Hempstead Town Board member Anthony D'Esposito's path to victory is even more narrow after the reversal of *Roe*. Likely Democratic.

**11th District (Nicole Malliotakis, R). Trump 53%.** Former Democratic Rep. Max Rose has an uphill battle against Republican Rep. Nicole Malliotakis, who defeated him in 2020. Even in an environment that could favor Democrats more, Malliotakis has an advantage. Likely Republican.

**17th District (Sean Patrick Maloney, D). Biden 54%.** After handily defeating his progessive opponent in the primary, Rep. Sean Maloney will face Republican state Assemblyman Mike Lawler. Though Republicans were thrilled about the prospect of unseating the DCCC chairman, their odds of winning this seat have diminished as the environment has improved for Democrats. Likely Democratic.

**18th District (Pat Ryan, D). Biden 53%.** Coming off a victory in the special election for the 19th, Rep. Pat Ryan will run in the new version of this district, which includes a significant portion of the old 19th. Now

running with the advantage of incumbency, Ryan has the edge against Republican state Assemblyman Colin Schmitt. Lean Democratic.

**19th District (Open; Pat Ryan, D, running in the 18th District). Biden 51%.** Pat Ryan's upset win in the August special election seat for this seat bodes well for Democrats in November. Since Ryan is running in the regular election for the new 18th District, Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro will face Josh Riley, an attorney running on a populist message. The new version of the district is slightly bluer — and does not include Molinaro's home base in Dutchess County. Tilt Democratic.

**22nd District (Open; John Katko, R, not seeking re-election). Biden 53%.** Katko's retirement has made this seat a top pick-up opportunity for Democrats this cycle. Navy veteran Brandon Williams won the GOP primary, despite the McCarthy-aligned Congressional Leadership Fund spending nearly $1 million to boost his opponent Steve Wells. Williams will face Francis Conole, a fellow Navy veteran who ran for this seat in 2020. Tilt Democratic.

## North Carolina.

**1st District (Open; G.K. Butterfield, D, not seeking re-election). Biden 53%.** Sandy Smith's victory in the GOP primary, despite national GOP efforts, has made this district less competitive than it should have been. Smith, the 2020 GOP nominee, faces allegations of financial impropriety and domestic violence. Democratic state Sen. Don Davis has the advantage in this district. Lean Democratic.

**13th District (New, R). Biden 50%.** Bo Hines, who played football for Yale and NC State, could become one of the youngest members of Congress. But he faces a competitive race in November against Democratic state Sen. Wiley Nickel. The two candidates were evenly matched in fundraising as of June 30, and polls from both parties show a tight race. Toss-up.

**14th District (Open; New). Biden 57%.** Democratic state Sen. Jeff Jackson is poised to win this Charlotte-based seat in November. Biden would have carried the district by nearly 17 points in 2020, and Jackson has a strong fundraising lead over his Republican opponent, Army veteran Pat Harrigan. Solid Democratic.

## Ohio.

**1st District (Steve Chabot, R). Biden 54%.** Chabot's Cincinnati-based district became significantly bluer after redistricting, and his Democratic opponent, Cincinnati Councilman Greg Landsman, has a cash-on-hand advantage. The congressman's first TV ad highlights Landsman's ties to Speaker Nancy Pelosi and his votes to raise taxes as a city councilman. Toss-up.

**9th District (Marcy Kaptur, D). Trump 51%.** After J.R. Majewski's surprising win in the Republican primary, Kaptur's odds of surviving this election improved. Majewski, known for painting a massive pro-Trump sign on his lawn, was at the Capitol on Jan. 6 and shared QAnon conspiracies in the past (he's since denied supporting QAnon). Maybe more importantly, he hasn't been a good fundraiser. This will be a competitive race for Kaptur, a veteran congresswoman who's used to running in much safer Democratic territory. But she's in a strong position heading into the final two months. Toss-up.

**13th District (Open; Tim Ryan, D, running for U.S. Senate). Biden 51%.** Former state House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes is running against conservative commentator Madison Gesiotto Gilbert in this open

seat. This race appears to have become more competitive since earlier this year, when Republicans appeared to have an advantage. Sykes recently released a TV ad where she talks about economic issues and positions herself as someone who would be an independent voice in Congress. Toss-up.

## 2022 House Ratings

### Toss-Up (13D, 6R)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| CA 22 (Valadao, R) | KS 3 (Davids, D) | NJ 7 (Malinowski, D) | PA 7 (Wild, D) |
| CA 27 (Garcia, R) | ME 2 (Golden, D) | NM 2 (Herrell, R) | PA 8 (Cartwright, D) |
| CO 8 (Open, New) | MN 2 (Craig, DFL) | OH 1 (Chabot, R) | PA 17 (Open; Lamb, D) |
| IA 3 (Axne, D) | NC 13 (Open, R) | OH 9 (Kaptur, D) | VA 2 (Luria, D) |
| IL 17 (Open; Bustos, D) | NE 2 (Bacon, R) | OH 13 (Open; Ryan, D) | WA 8 (Schrier, D) |

### Tilt Democratic (8D, 2R)

| | |
|---|---|
| *MI 3 (Open; Meijer, R)* | NY 19 (Open; Ryan, D) |
| MI 7 (Slotkin, D) | *NY 22 (Open; Katko, R)* |
| MI 8 (Kildee, D) | OR 5 (Open; Schrader, D) |
| NV 1 (Titus, D) | VA 7 (Spanberger, D) |
| NV 3 (S. Lee, D) | |
| NH 1 (Pappas, D) | |

### Tilt Republican (2D, 1R)

| |
|---|
| *AK AL (Peltola, D)* |
| *AZ 6 (Open; Kirkpatrick, D)* |
| NY 1 (Open; Zeldin, R) |

### Lean Democratic (10D, 2R)

| |
|---|
| CA 13 (Open; Harder, D) |
| CA 47 (Porter, D) |
| *IL13 (Open; Davis, R)* |
| IN 1 (Mrvan, D) |
| NC 1 (Open; Butterfield, D) |
| NV 4 (Horsford, D) |
| NY 3 (Open; Suozzi, D) |
| NY 18 (Open; Ryan, D) |
| OR 6 (Open, New) |
| RI 2 (Open; Langevin, D) |
| TX 28 (Cuellar, D) |
| *TX 34 (Flores, R /Gonzalez, D)* |

### Lean Republican (4D, 5R)

| |
|---|
| AZ 1 (Schweikert, R) |
| *AZ 2 (O'Halleran, D)* |
| CA 45 (Steel, R) |
| IA 1 (Miller-Meeks, R) |
| IA 2 (Hinson, R) |
| *MI 10 (Open; Levin, D)* |
| NY 2 (Garbarino, R) |
| *TX 15 (Open; V. Gonzalez, D)* |
| *WI 3 (Open; Kind, D)* |

### Likely Democratic (13D)

| |
|---|
| AZ 4 (Stanton, D) |
| CA 9 (Harder, D) |
| CA 49 (Levin, D) |
| CO 7 (Open; Perlmutter, D) |
| CT 5 (Hayes, D) |
| GA 2 (Bishop, D) |
| IL6 (Casten, D) |
| IL14 (Underwood, D) |
| MD 6 (Trone, D) |
| NH 2 (Kuster, D) |
| NY 4 (Open; Rice, D) |
| NY 17 (S. Maloney, D) |
| OR 4 (Open; DeFazio, D) |

### Likely Republican (4D, 6R)

| |
|---|
| CA 3 (Open; McClintock, R) |
| CA 40 (Kim, R) |
| *FL 5 (Rutherford, R)* |
| *FL 7 (Open; Murphy, D)* |
| *FL 13 (Open; Crist, D)* |
| FL 15 (Open; Franklin, R) |
| FL 27 (Salazar, R) |
| *GA6 (Open; McBath, D)* |
| MT 1 (Open, New) |
| NY 11 (Malliotakis, R) |
| *TN 5 (Open; Cooper, D)* |

| | GOP | DEM |
|---|---|---|
| Solid | 188 | 169 |
| Likely/Lean/Tilt | 23 | 35 |
| Total | 211 | 204 |
| Toss-up | | 20 |
| Needed for majority | | 218 |

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

## Oregon.

**5th District (Open; Kurt Schrader, D, lost in primary). Biden 53%.** With three competitive House races and a hot race for governor, Oregon is looking like a key place to watch in November. Schrader predicted that this newly-drawn seat would be vulnerable if he lost the nomination to attorney Jamie McLeod-Skinner, and that's what has happened. Schrader would have been vulnerable as well, but it's clear former Happy Valley Mayor Lori Chavez-DeRemer has a legitimate shot of winning this seat, even though Biden would have won it in 2020. Tilt Democratic.

**6th District (Open; New). Biden 55%.** Biden would have won this district handily in 2020, and the political environment has improved a bit for Democrats, but Democratic state Rep. Andrea Salinas is in a real fight in this new seat. Businessman Mike Erickson lost two races for Congress in this area more than a decade ago and has some significant baggage in his past, but he's well within striking distance heading into the final two months. Multiple polls show Erickson leading while Democrats just released a poll with Salinas up by 3 points, which does not point to her having a significant advantage. Lean Democratic.

## Pennsylvania.

**1st District (Brian Fitzpatrick, R). Biden 52%.** Even though Democrats are making in-roads in some suburban areas in the wake of the Dobbs decision, Fitzpatrick is well-positioned to defeat Army veteran Ashley Ehasz in November. The moderate Republican congressman has a massive lead in fundraising, and polls from both parties show him leading by several points. Solid Republican.

**7th District (Susan Wild, D). Biden 49.7%.** The congresswoman faces a rematch against former Lehigh County Commissioner Lisa Scheller, who came within 4 points of beating Wild last cycle. One of the most vulnerable Democrats in the country, Wild may be in a better position than expected thanks to shifts in the national environment that favor Democrats. Toss-up.

**8th District (Matt Cartwright, D). Trump 51%.** While this is one of the most Republican-leaning seats held by a Democrat, Cartwright still has an opportunity to win despite the difficult district. The congressman has been able to run ahead of the top of the ticket, though in this national environment, this could be his most difficult race yet. He faces a rematch against the 2020 GOP nominee Jim Bognet, one of Republicans' weaker candidates last cycle according to GOP strategists. Toss-up.

**17th District (Open; Conor Lamb, D, lost U.S. Senate primary). Biden 52%.** Without Lamb on the ballot, Republicans have a better shot at flipping this swing seat in the Pittsburgh suburbs. The GOP nominee, former Ross Township Commissioner Jeremy Shaffer, will face Chris Deluzio, an attorney and Iraq War veteran. Deluzio released TV ads this week introducing himself to voters and highlighting his military background. Toss-up.

## Rhode Island. Sept. 13 primary.

**2nd District (Open; Jim Langevin, D, not seeking re-election). Biden 56%.** Next Tuesday Democratic voters will choose their nominee to take on former Cranston Mayor Allan Fung, one of Republicans' strongest challengers this cycle. Polling shows that state General Treasurer Seth Magaziner is best-positioned to take on Fung, and he's expected to win the primary. Joy Fox, a former aide to Langevin and Gov. Gina Raimondo, former U.S. Commerce Department official Sarah
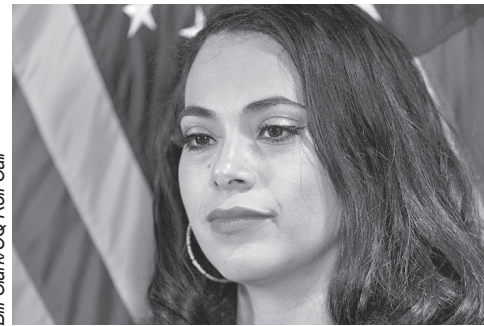
Morganthau, and former state Rep. David Segal (endorsed by Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders) are also running. Lean Democratic.

## Texas.

**15th District (Open; Vicente Gonzalez, D, running in the 34th District). Trump 51%.** 2020 GOP nominee Monica De La Cruz has the clear advantage in the Lone Star State's most competitive district. She faces businesswoman Michelle Vallejo, who campaigned as a progressive during the Democratic primary but has since attempted to moderate her message. Running in a district that Trump narrowly won in 2020, De La Cruz has embraced the former president and has taken a conservative stance on immigration and abortion issues. Lean Republican.

**28th District (Henry Cuellar, D). Biden 53%.** After barely surviving a contentious primary against Jessica Cisneros, Cuellar faces a competitive general election against Republican nominee Cassy Garcia, who formerly worked for Sen. Ted Cruz. Cuellar has gone on the air with ads — paid for by his congressional office in an unorthodox use of franking — touting his support for law enforcement and border security. Meanwhile, the congressman's pending FBI investigation looms over the race. Likely Democratic.

**34th District (Mayra Flores, R, Vicente Gonzalez, D). Biden 57%.** Flores won the special election for the old version of this district, which Biden won by only 4 points. But the new district is bluer, and Gonzalez, who currently represents the neighboring 15th District, has the advantage against Flores. Republicans are banking on South Texans' disillusion with the Democratic Party to win this seat. Lean Democratic.

*Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call*

**Mayra Flores**

## Virginia.

**2nd District (Elaine Luria, D). Biden 50%.** This is the most competitive district in Virginia, and Republican state Sen. Jen Kiggans has been touted as a top GOP recruit this cycle. As both Democratic and Republican polls show an extremely tight race, the latest ads from the congresswoman and outside Democratic groups are focused on abortion. Luria had a $4.3 million to $414,000 cash advantage over Kiggans as of June 30. Toss-up.

**7th District (Abigail Spanberger, D). Biden 52%.** While Spanberger's newly-drawn district is slightly more Democratic, the veteran Frontliner still faces a competitive battle in November. The Republican nominee, Prince William County Supervisor Yesli Vega, has drawn on her background in law enforcement in campaign ads. Meanwhile, the congresswoman has focused on her efforts to fund local police and alleviate high costs. Democrats have also attacked Vega for her recent comments on abortion and rape as Republicans maintain that voters will be more concerned about economic issues in November. Tilt Democratic.

## Washington.

**3rd District (Open; Jaime Herrera Beutler, R, lost in primary). Trump 51%.** Herrera Beutler, who voted to impeach Trump, is one of several

House Republicans who lost their primary after facing opposition from a challenger backed by the former president. Army veteran Joe Kent is the Republican nominee, and despite his ties to far-right groups such as the Proud Boys, he's favored to win in November. Kent faces Democratic auto repair shop owner Marie Gluesenkamp Perez. Her campaign released polling that shows a competitive race, but national groups aren't convinced enough to spend money on the race. Solid Republican.

**8th District (Kim Schrier, D). Biden 52%.** Republicans' pick in this swing district, attorney Matt Larkin, came in second place in the all-party primary with 17%. Schrier, a pediatrician, has made her stance on abortion access central to her campaign — the congresswoman's latest TV ad criticizes for Larkin for supporting an abortion ban without exceptions.

Polls show this will be a very competitive race, and it could be a good test of Democratic momentum following the reversal of *Roe*. Toss-up.

### Wisconsin.

**3rd District (Open; Ron Kind, D, not seeking re-election). Trump 51%.** Republicans view this rural district as one of their top pick-up opportunities this cycle. In 2020, retired Navy SEAL officer Derrick Van Orden came within three points of beating Democratic Rep. Ron Kind, who is retiring. Kind's chosen successor, state Sen. Brad Pfaff, won the Democratic primary and now faces an uphill battle against Van Orden, despite the Republican being on the Capitol grounds on Jan. 6. Pfaff's own internal poll from August showed Van Orden leading him, 45-40 percent. Lean Republican.

# Senate Updates

**Alaska.** **Lisa Murkowski (R) appointed 2002, elected 2004 (49%), 2010 (39% as a write-in), 2016 (44%).** Of all the Republicans running for Senate this cycle, Murkowski may have had the best August of the bunch. In Alaska's new all-party primary, Murkowski secured 45 percent of the vote, outpacing polling and placing ahead of her main GOP challenger, Trump-endorsed Kelly Tshibaka (39 percent). The one major Democrat in the race, teacher Pat Chesbro, won just 7 percent. That suggests most Alaska Democrats have already consolidated behind Murkowski, even



*Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call*

**Lisa Murkowski**

before the election progresses to its ranked-choice round in November when only Murkowski, Tshibaka, Chesbro, and little-known Republican Buzz Kelley will appear on the ballot.

The results of the primary provide a decent starting point of analysis for November. Assuming the vast majority of Chesbro supporters will pick the more moderate Murkowski as a second choice over Tshibaka, the incumbent has a clear path to securing the majority she'll need for a fourth term, once again powered by Democrats and Democratic-leaning unaffiliated voters and not by the base of her own party. As a bonus, Murkowski's longtime bête noire Sarah Palin lost a high-profile special election for Alaska's at-large House seat and won't be joining the state's delegation after all — at least, not yet. Solid Republican.

**Arizona.** **Mark Kelly (D) elected 2020 special election (51%).** GOP nominee Blake Masters hasn't been raising anywhere near as much money as Kelly, and it looks like Masters' patron Peter Thiel, the wealthy venture capitalist, isn't going to help make up the difference. Kelly has $12 million in fall reservations on TV, while Masters has none. To make matters worse, the McConnell-aligned Senate Leadership Fund cut its buy in Arizona by $8 million, so Masters will only have limited air cover until October, even as SLF has started advertising in most other top-tier

contests. Public and private GOP polling shows him down a couple of points, and he's taken fire recently for scrubbing his website of his position on abortion. Democrats are wary after Kelly posted substantial polling leads in 2020 only to win by a slight margin. Toss-up.

*Trafalgar Group (R), Aug. 24-27 (LVs)— General election ballot: Kelly over Masters, 48% - 44%.*

*RMG Research (R), Aug. 16-22 (LVs)— General election ballot: Kelly over Masters, 50% - 43%.*

*Beacon (D)/Shaw (R) for Fox News, Aug. 12-16 (RVs)(live caller)— General election ballot: Kelly over Masters, 50% - 42%.*

**Colorado.** **Michael Bennet (D) appointed 2009, elected 2010 (48%), 2016 (50%).** As Republican nominees in more competitive states struggle to gain traction, GOP leaders in Washington, DC have begun talking up Joe O'Dea as a sleeper candidate worthy of attention.

The construction company CEO acknowledges Biden is the legitimate president, favors legal abortion up to 20 weeks, and looks more moderate after Democrats spent millions boosting his primary opponent as the true conservative in the race. But money speaks louder than words, and thus far outside GOP groups aren't indicating any plans to spend here. O'Dea's only air cover so far is $1 million in ads from a super PAC funded by in-state construction company CEOs. By contrast, national groups will spend $8.4 million on a single congressional district north of Denver over the next two months.

O'Dea has finally staked out a position on abortion, but that won't stop Bennet from hammering him on the issue. The presence of a Libertarian candidate on the ballot complicates the path for O'Dea. Likely Democratic.

*Public Policy Polling (D), Aug. 30-31 (RVs)— General election ballot: Bennet over O'Dea, 46% - 35%. Brian Peotter (L) 7%.*

*Tarrance Group (R) for Republican Attorney Generals' Association, Aug. 22-25 (LVs)— General election ballot: Bennet over O'Dea, 48% - 47%.*

**Connecticut.** **Richard Blumenthal (D) elected 2010 (55%), 2016 (63%).** Republicans convinced former state House Minority Leader Themis Klarides to drop her campaign for governor to give Bob Stefanowski a clear field, and run for Senate instead. But Klarides,

a pro-choice moderate endorsed by the state party, couldn't even make it out of the GOP Senate primary. Leora Levy, a wealthy former commodities trader and GOP donor whose nomination to be U.S. Ambassador to Chile under Trump stalled out in the Senate, defeated Klarides, 51-40 percent, after she received a coveted endorsement from the former president. Levy has already donated $1 million to her campaign but had just $300,000 in campaign funds left on July 20, while Blumenthal reported $8.3 million a few weeks earlier. The senator has been on TV since June, including with a new ad on prescription drug prices. Republicans tend to strike out in the Nutmeg State. Solid Democratic.

**Florida.** **Marco Rubio (R) elected 2010 (49%), 2016 (52%).** This is a closer race than the Florida GOP's winning streak would have you believe. Democratic Rep. Val Demings is a fundraising juggernaut, having raised nearly $48 million through July. She's also spending a lot on both digital and TV ads; she's been on air since June to the tune of $16 million, leaning heavily into her background as a former police chief. Rubio and his allies have been on air since July, with smaller buys. Demings is running close to even with Rubio in polling — a recent poll by the bipartisan team of FabrizioWard and Impact Research found Rubio leading Demings 49-47 percent — but those last few points have bedeviled Florida Democrats for a decade. Likely Republican.

*Susquehanna Polling & Research (R), Aug. 29 - Sept. 3 (LVs)(live caller)— General election ballot: Rubio over Demings, 47% - 44%.*

*FabrizioWard (R)/Impact Research (D) for AARP, Aug. 24-31 (LVs)(mixed mode)— General election ballot: Rubio over Demings, 49% - 47%.*

*Impact Research (D) for Democratic Governors Assoc., Aug. 12-18 (LVs)— General election ballot: Rubio over Demings, 49% - 46%.*

**Georgia.** **Raphael Warnock (D) elected 2020/Jan. 5, 2021 runoff (51%).** Democrats believe Warnock has recovered from an earlier slump to regain a slight polling advantage. But Georgia football legend Herschel Walker is still hot on his heels, despite stumbles and an onslaught of negative advertising. While some outside Democratic groups have begun to put Walker's past accusations of domestic violence in paid media, national Democratic strategists largely believe that the most effective attack against Walker is questioning his honesty and competency. Republicans are heartened that the race is still a toss-up despite Warnock and his allies already spending $43 million on ads.

The latest dustup is over debates. Walker, who did not participate in any primary debates, refused to accept three debates across the state, instead offering a different venue in which the candidates would learn the topics beforehand. After back-and-forth, Warnock said he'd debate there, but only if topics aren't known beforehand *and* Walker does one of the three other debates. It's unclear if the two will face off at all.

Two recent polls, from Emerson College and Trafalgar, show Walker up inside the margin of error. But both of those outfits previously had Walker up by greater margins.

With a Libertarian candidate on the ballot, there's a real possibility neither Warnock or Walker hit 50 percent in November and have to compete in a December 6 runoff — potentially with control of the Senate on the line. Toss-up.

*InsiderAdvantage (R) for Fox5 Atlanta, Sept. 6-7 (LVs)— General election ballot: Walker over Warnock, 47% - 44%.*

*Trafalgar Group (R), Aug. 24-27 (LVs)— General election ballot: Walker over Warnock , 48% - 47%. Chase Oliver (L) 3%.*

*Research Affiliates (D) for Charlie Bailey for LG, July 26 - Aug. 1 (LVs)— General election ballot: Warnock over Walker, 49% - 46%.*

**Indiana.** **Todd Young (R) elected 2016 (52%).** Thomas McDermott, the longtime mayor of Hammond (pop. 76,000) is trying to make his case with a poll showing him down just 3 points to Young, 45-42 percent. Even if that rosy result is reflective of reality, with just $165,000 in the bank on June 30 compared to $6.9 million for Young, Hammond will struggle to grow his support beyond the low 40s. Biden won 41 percent here in 2020, and much-heralded state Attorney General nominee Jonathan Weinzapfel won just 42 percent. National strategists aren't talking about this race at all. Solid Republican.

*Change Research (D) for McDermott, Aug. 20-24 (LVs)(online)— General election ballot: Young over McDermott, 45% - 42%.*

**Iowa.** **Chuck Grassley (R) elected 1980 (54%), 1986 (66%), 1992 (70%), 1998 (68%), 2004 (70%), 2010 (64%), 2016 (60%).** Grassley is in


*Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call*

**Mike Franken**

his most competitive general election in 42 years against retired three-star Admiral Mike Franken. But that doesn't mean he's going to lose, just that it looks like he'll win by a lot less than he used to.

Franken has a compelling story but trails Grassley in cash-on-hand and won't be able to count on outside support from Democratic groups scared away by previous misfires in the state. One Democratic group dipped a toe in the water with an anti-Grassley ad in Des Moines focused on insulin prices but hasn't followed up. Franken recently went up on TV, shortly after Grassley, and also made a bid for some national attention with a five-figure buy on MSNBC. But the numbers are small; by comparison, there is more spending booked in each of the state's three competitive congressional districts than in the Senate contest. The admiral has also seen his momentum tempered by some significant staff shake ups along the way. Solid Republican.

*Cygnal (R) for Iowans for Tax Reform, Jul. 13-14 (LVs)(IVR/sms)— General election ballot: Grassley over Franken, 52% - 43%.*

*J. Ann Selzer for Des Moines Register, Jul. 10-13 (LVs)(live caller)— General election ballot: Grassley over Franken, 47% - 39%.*

**Missouri.** **Open; Roy Blunt (R) not seeking re-election.** A late onslaught of outside spending, organized by Missouri Republican operatives but funded in part by GOP Senate leadership, was enough to sink disgraced former Gov. Eric Greitens' Senate bid — and likely ensure this seat stays in GOP hands. Greitens, who polled in first for most of the cycle, ultimately placed third, behind state Attorney General Eric Schmitt (46 percent) and Rep. Vicky Hartzler (22 percent). Democrats nominated philanthropist/Anheuser Busch heiress Trudy Busch Valentine over Marine veteran Lucas Kunce. Without Greitens as a foil, it's hard to

see how Busch Valentine makes this race competitive, even with her significant personal financial resources. Solid Republican.

*Remington Research Group (R) for Missouri Scout, Aug. 24-25 (LVs) (IVR)— General election ballot: Schmitt over Busch Valentine, 51% - 40%.*

### Nevada. Catherine Cortez Masto (D) elected 2016 (47%).
GOP nominee Adam Laxalt has so far escaped the missteps and withering coverage that have plagued his party's standard-bearers in other top-tier races. Despite the liability of being characterized as a politician, there are advantages to running for and holding office before running in a top-tier Senate race.

**Catherine Cortez Masto**

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

Cortez Masto has regained her footing after trailing in polls during the first half of the year, but still seems mired in the mid-40s. That could be enough to get her over the finish line, especially with several minor party candidates — and Nevada's unique "none of these candidates" option — on the ballot. She beat Rep. Joe Heck just 47-45 percent in 2016, with nearly 8 percent of the vote scattering to other options. But it's still a precarious place for an incumbent to be. Toss-up.

*FabrizioWard (R)/Impact Research (D) for AARP, Aug. 16-24 (LVs)(mixed mode)— General election ballot: Cortez Masto over Laxalt, 44% - 40%. "None of these" 3%, Barry Rubinson (IAP) 2%, Neil Scott (L) 1%, Barry Lindemann (I) 1%.*

*Trafalgar Group (R), Aug. 15-18 (LVs)— General election ballot: Laxalt over Cortez Masto, 47% - 44%.*

*Suffolk Univ. for the Reno Gazette Journal, Aug. 14-17 (LVs)(live caller)— General election ballot: Cortez Masto over Laxalt, 45% - 38%. "None of these" 3%, Scott (L) 2%, Rubinson (IAP) 1%.*

### New Hampshire. Maggie Hassan (D) elected 2016 (48%). Sept. 13 primary.
The last Senate primary in the country is finally heating up. Retired Army Brigadier General Don Bolduc is the polling frontrunner heading into Election Day, even though he's raised little money and has criticized popular GOP Gov. Chris Sununu as a terrorist sympathizer.

Outside money is flowing into the race. A new pro-Chuck Morse super PAC is spending $3.5 million to boost the state Senate president's bid, while Democratic super PAC Senate Majority PAC is spending $3 million on anti-Morse ads ahead of the primary. Businessman Vikram Mansharamani and former Londonderry Town Manager Kevin Smith also have super PACs that have placed low-six-figure ad buys in support of their candidacies. At the moment, Republican strategists are projecting confidence in the race even if Bolduc, who promotes false theories of a stolen 2020 election, is the nominee. Senate Leadership Fund has nearly $19 million in ad time reserved for the fall, and the NRSC has an additional $7.5 million planned. But with both organizations facing a cash crunch and vulnerabilities elsewhere, those buys could still be shifted around in the event of a Bolduc primary win. If outside groups pull out, it's hard to see how Bolduc will be able to

keep pace. He had just $83,000 in the bank on August 24. Meanwhile, Hassan has $12 million in ad time reserved from now until Election Day. Tilt Democratic.

### North Carolina. Open; Richard Burr (R) not seeking re-election.
If the election were held today, this race would be a toss-up. GOP nominee Rep. Ted Budd and Democratic nominee Cheri Beasley, a former state Supreme Court chief justice, are deadlocked in the polls.

Republican strategists aren't enamored with Budd's fundraising; Beasley has been outspending him by several factors over the summer on TV, which has helped boost her image statewide according to private polling. But the Senate Leadership Fund is about to drop $28 million on Beasley's head, and as of now the only air cover the Democrat can count on is $2.5 million from Women Vote!, the EMILY's List affiliate. Beasley has a financial edge over Budd; she reported $4.8 million on June 30 (after raising $7.3 million in the second quarter) compared to his $1.8 million. So she'll be able to take advantage of the lowest unit rate offered to candidates, but not PACs, and keep the advertising gap closer than the dollar amounts would suggest. But the hesitance of national Democratic groups to engage here suggests the party's gatekeepers still see it as a lower tier opportunity compared to Pennsylvania or Wisconsin. Lean Republican.

*Trafalgar Group (R), Sept. 1-4 (LVs)— General election ballot: Budd over Beasley, 47% - 44%. Shannon Bray (L) 2%.*

*Public Policy Polling (D), Aug. 29-30 (RVs)— General election ballot: Beasley over Budd, 42% - 41%. Bray (L) 5%.*

*Cygnal (R) for John Locke Foundation, Aug. 13-15 (LVs)— General election ballot: Budd and Beasley tied at 42%. Bray (L) 2%.*

### Ohio. Open; Rob Portman (R) not seeking re-election.
Republicans began to sweat over the summer, as author J.D. Vance struggled to get his campaign off the ground following a bruising primary, and Democratic nominee, Rep. Tim Ryan, blanketed the state with millions of dollars in TV ads appealing to moderate and blue-collar workers. If the election were held today, Ryan might well eke out a win, despite the Buckeye State's Republican bent.

But the cavalry arrived this week for Vance (who has raised barely any money and has one-tenth of the fall reservations Ryan has) in the form of a $28 million ad campaign from the Senate Leadership Fund. Ryan's allies believe the campaign's latest hit on Vance's opioid crisis nonprofit work is highly effective. Democratic outside groups are still staying on the sidelines, leaving Ryan to face the onslaught by himself (though that could change). If October arrives and Vance's position still hasn't improved, this one could get even more interesting. Likely Republican.

*Impact Research (D) for Ryan, Aug. 17-23 (LVs)— General election ballot: Ryan over Vance, 50% - 48%.*

*Trafalgar Group (R), Aug. 16-19 (LVs)— General election ballot: Vance over Ryan, 50% - 45%.*

*Emerson College, Aug. 15-16 (LVs)— General election ballot: Vance over Ryan, 45% - 42%.*

*Impact Research (D) for Ryan, Jul. 21-28 (LVs)— General election ballot: Ryan over Vance, 48% - 45%.*

### Oklahoma. James Lankford (R) elected 2014 special (68%), 2016 (68%).
Lankford will win a second full term against self-described

"conservative Democrat" Madison Horn, a cybersecurity professional and Cherokee Nation member. Solid Republican.

**Oklahoma Special. Open; Jim Inhofe (R), resigning.** Rep. Markwayne Mullin breezed through the GOP primary runoff against former state House Speaker T.W. Shannon, winning 65-35 percent. In the general election, Mullin will face former Rep. Kendra Horn, who served one term from the Oklahoma City-based 5th District before losing re-election in 2020. Horn is a credible candidate, but Oklahoma is so heavily Republican she simply doesn't have a path to victory in the fall. Of note: even in such a red state, Horn chose abortion rights as the topic of her first TV ad. Solid Republican.

**Oregon. Ron Wyden (D) elected 1996 special (48%), 1998 (61%), 2004 (63%), 2010 (57%), 2016 (56%).** In the Beaver State's gubernatorial contest, Democrats are struggling to retain a seat they've held for 36 years. But in the concurrent Senate race, there are no such worries. GOP nominee Jo Rae Perkins is a Q-Anon promoter who lost to Sen. Jeff Merkley, 57-39 percent, in 2020. Solid Democratic.

**Pennsylvania. Open; Pat Toomey (R) not seeking re-election.** GOP nominee Mehmet Oz has begun to attack Lt. Gov. John Fetterman more forcefully on the Democratic nominee's health (Fetterman suffered a stroke in May), as well as on crime issues. Republicans believe the race has improved from earlier in the summer when Oz looked dead in the water, and they credit the Oz campaign with starting to spend on TV after being off-air for much of the summer. Democrats have said from the beginning they didn't believe the large leads Fetterman was showing in public polls. Toss-up.

*RABA Research, Aug. 31 - Sept. 3 (LVs)(online)— General election ballot: Fetterman over Oz, 49% - 40%.*

*Susquehanna Polling & Research (R), Aug. 22-29 (LVs)(live caller)— General election ballot: Fetterman over Oz, 49% - 44%.*

*Emerson College, Aug. 22-23 (LVs)(IVR/sms) — General election ballot: Fetterman over Oz, 48% - 44%.*

**Utah. Mike Lee (R) elected 2010 (62%), 2016 (68%).** Former CIA officer/House GOP staffer/2016 independent presidential candidate Evan McMullin is giving Lee his first real general election fight. McMullin , running with no party label, successfully convinced the state's Democratic Party to forgo nominating a candidate and endorse him instead, and he's keeping pace with Lee in fundraising. In a sign of the race's increasing competitiveness, the anti-tax Club for Growth has begun airing $2.5 million in attack ads against McMullin. Unlike Democratic candidates in other states, McMullin won't be able to count on millions of dollars in outside backing from groups such as Senate Majority PAC, which could leave him outgunned if Lee begins to receive more outside help himself. At the moment, McMullin has support from one super PAC, Put Utah First, which is funded in part by major Democratic donors such as LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman and Walmart heir Sam Rawlings Walton, as well as Park City resort operators the Cumming family.

Utah is a deeply Republican state but also has an anti-Trump bent, and Lee has gone out of his way to tie himself to the former president while McMullin made his name as an anti-Trump figure. Republicans are still in the drivers' seat, but this is one they may have to start paying more attention to. Move from Solid Republican to Likely Republican.

*Impact Research (D) for McMullin, Aug. 29 - Sept. 1 (LVs)(mixed mode)— General election ballot: McMullin over Lee, 47% - 46%.*

*Dan Jones & Assoc. for Deseret News, Jul. 13-18 (RVs)— General election ballot: Lee over McMullin, 41% - 36%.*

*WPAi (R) for Lee, Jul. 12-14 (LVs)— General election ballot: Lee over McMullin, 49% - 35%.*

**Vermont. Open; Pat Leahy (D) not seeking re-election.** Similarly to Connecticut, GOP primary voters likely tossed away any chance at making this New England race interesting when they nominated conservative Army veteran Gerald Malloy. Former U.S. Attorney Christina Nolan, a moderate who would have been the first openly gay GOP senator, also ran, with support from Gov. Phil Scott and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. She lost to Malloy, 42-38 percent. Democratic Rep. Peter Welch will become only the second Democrat to win a Senate race in Vermont in the state's history. Solid Democratic.

**Washington. Patty Murray (D) elected 1992 (54%), 1998 (58%), 2004 (55%), 2010 (52%), 2016 (59%).** Murray put up a strong performance in the all-party primary, winning 52 percent. Democrats tend to increase their performance between the primary and November, so that augurs in Murray's favor. National GOP strategists like Tiffany Smiley as a candidate but haven't opened their pocketbook yet. Murray had almost three times as much cash on hand as Smiley did on July 13. An improved national environment for Democrats may be putting this race out of reach for the GOP. Likely Democratic.

*Public Policy Polling (D), Sept. 6-7 (RVs)— General election ballot: Murray over Smiley, 48% - 39%.*

*Trafalgar Group (R), Aug. 30 - Sept. 1 (LVs)— General election ballot: Murray over Smiley, 49% - 46%.*

*McLaughlin & Associations (R), Aug. 15-17 (LVs)— General election ballot: Murray over Smiley, 49% - 43%.*

**Wisconsin. Ron Johnson (R) elected 2010 (52%), 2016 (50%).** Democratic strategists believe Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes has a small but real lead over Johnson, while GOP strategists think the race is more or less tied. Both sides agree that for Barnes to win, he will have to weather millions of dollars in negative ads painting him as a radical, anti-police firebrand and associating him with the "Squad." Democrats just think that Barnes' personal likability — and Johnson's own image problems — will carry the day. This race is close and will remain so through Election Day. If Barnes' position holds up despite taking serious fire for the first time (Democrats' primary was relatively tame), this race could move in Democrats' favor. Tilt Republican.

*Trafalgar Group (R), Aug. 22-25 (LVs)— General election ballot: Barnes over Johnson, 49% - 47%.*

*Beacon (D)/Shaw (R) for Fox News, Aug. 12-16 (RVs)(live caller)— General election ballot: Barnes over Johnson, 50% - 46%.*

*Marquette Univ., Aug. 10-15 (LVs)(live caller)— General election ballot: Barnes over Johnson, 52% - 45%.* IE

## CALENDAR

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|---|---|
| **Sept. 9** | Cobra Kai Season 5 Premiere |
| **Sept. 13** | New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Delaware Primaries |
| **Nov. 8** | Election Day |
| **Dec. 6** | Georgia Senate Runoff |