CLASS #6
THE MOTHER OF ALL MIDTERMS:
THE GAME-CHANGING AMERICAN ELECTIONS OF 2026

OLLI + POLS 484, Fall 2026
Sonoma State

OUR LAST CLASS!!
10 November 2026

OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE

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Our Sessions & Schedule

• ~~Week #1, 06 OCT 2026:~~

~~Overview of class, topics, & how Midterms "work;"~~

~~Key ideas & measures in Midterms – the case of polling & assessment of what We "know;"~~

• ~~Week #2, 13 OCT 2026:~~

~~The case of down ballot races and non-candidate campaigns;~~

~~How ballot measure campaigns work – and the curious case of CA as "The Great Exception"~~

• ~~Week #3, 20 OCT 2026:~~

~~The Battlefield of Elections: The VRA, VBM, & CF, CFR (Voting Rights Act; Vote-by-Mail; & Campaign Finance / Campaign Finance Reform~~

• ~~Week #4, 27 OCT 2026:~~

~~Presidential Ads,; How information works in Elections?~~

~~Mis-, Dis-, and Mal-Information in Today's Environment~~

• ~~Week #5, 03 NOV 2026:~~

~~How information works in Elections? Mis-, Dis-, and Mal-Information in Today's Environment - HANDOUT~~
~~Election Day – What to expect?~~
~~What to watch for?~~
~~Where to get information & have your *own* analysis?~~

- **Week #6, 10 NOV 2026**

Post-Midterm Elections analysis;
What did We expect? What did We learn?
What comes next – dates, the "Lame Duck" & DEC 11th

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Next Steps…Connecting With Your Student "Interviewer"

The Mother of All Election Experiments: An Intergenerational Learning Opportunity



- Recall our "partnering" this OLLI class with an undergrad POLS class (POLS 484);
- For the two dozen or so undergrad POLS majors and minors joining this class…
- Their Final Exam…is YOU!!
- The 484 Students complete a "VIDEO-LOG" (VLOG) about how YOU came to learn and understand politics and how elections *matter*.
- You can opt-in for this "Political Biography;" **or You can opt-out.**
- KTVU2 **+ *USA Today* story (update)**









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Part I:

What to make of the *AFTERMATH* of the **2026 "Mother of All Midterm Elections?**



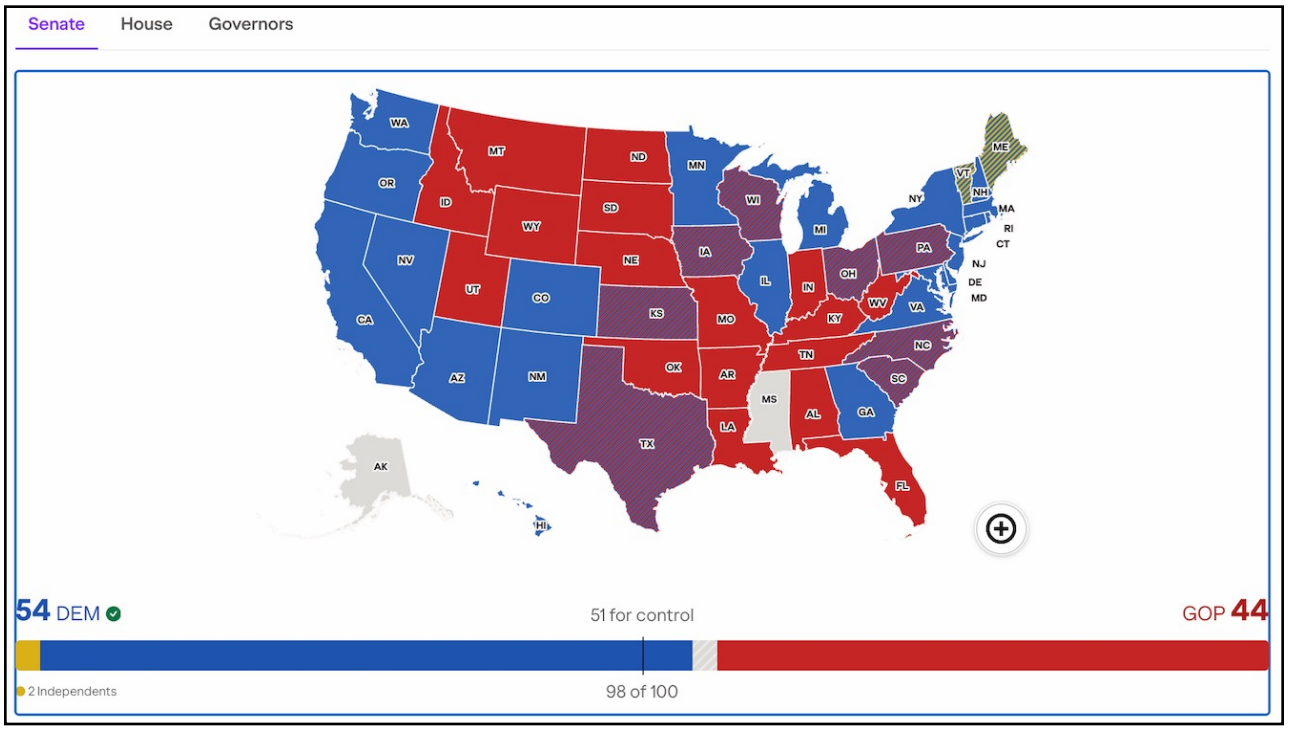


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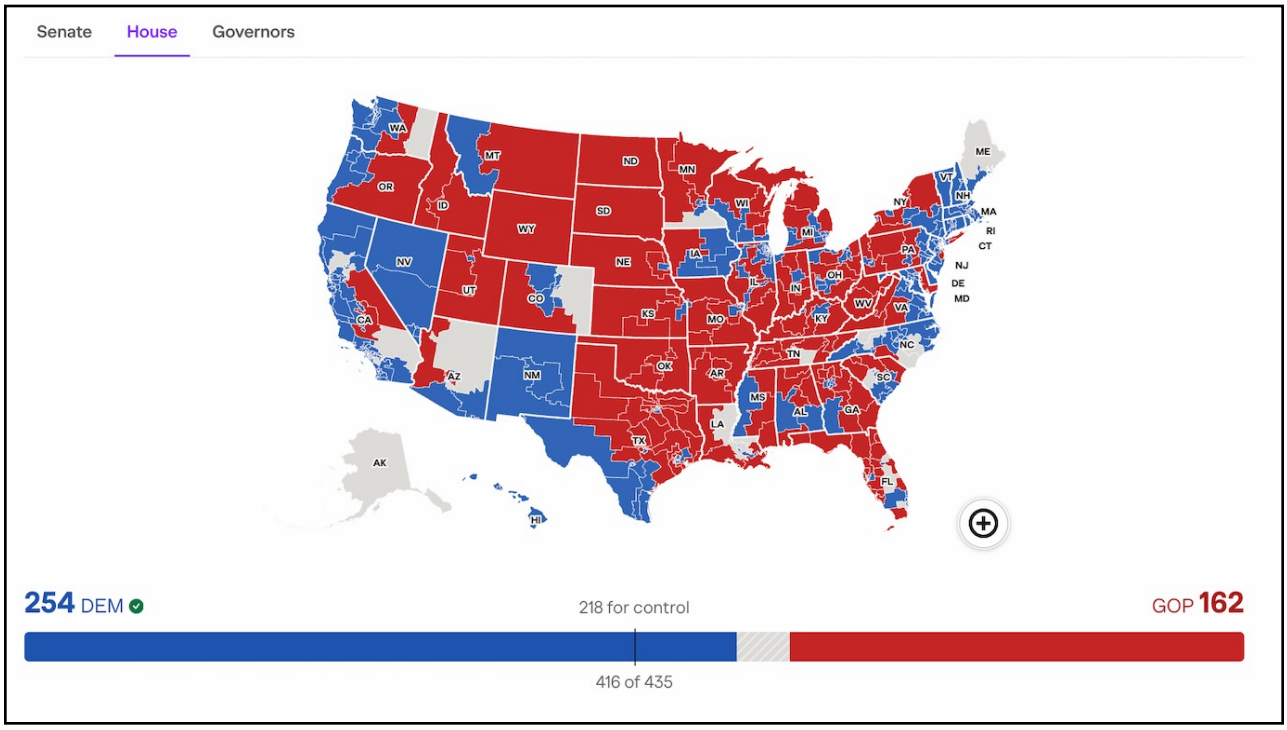
Referendum on the President vs.
"Backlash" on the President & the GOP?

Let's see this in action, before and after Tuesday, 03 NOV 2026

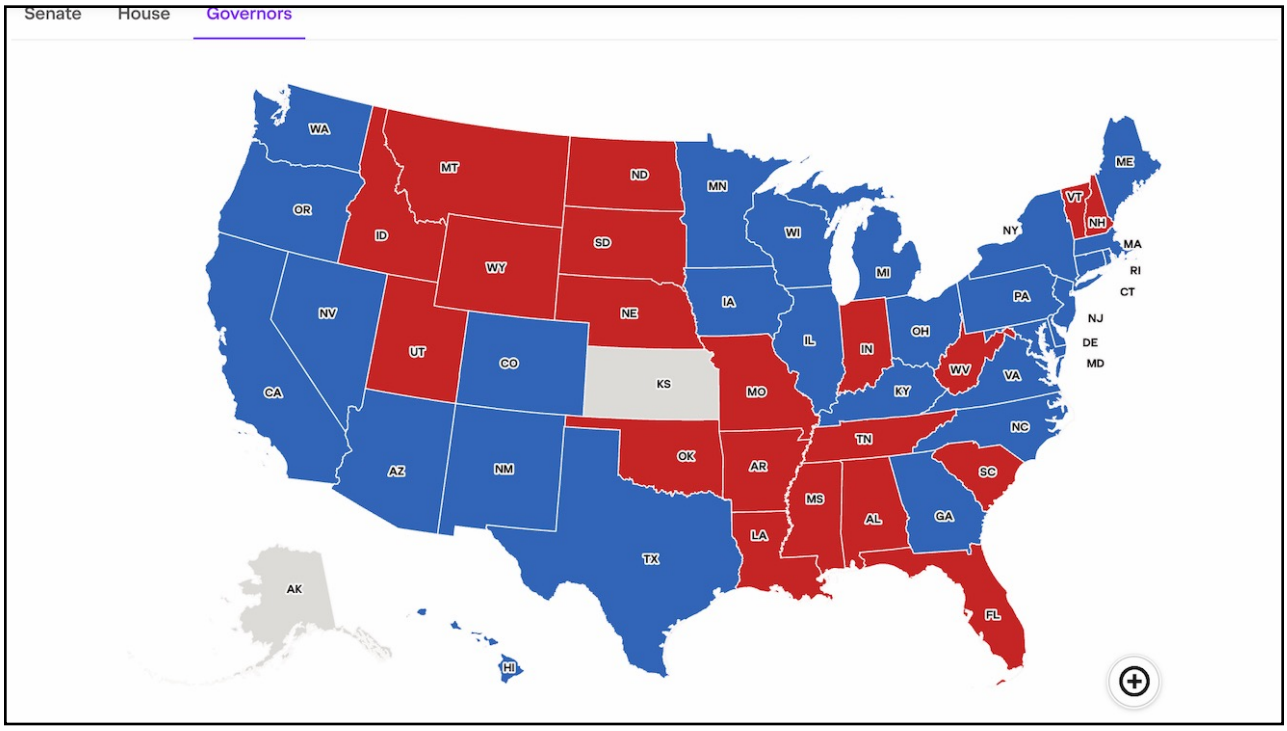
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6


Senate
House
Governors
WA
OR
CA
ID
NV
MT
WY
UT
AZ
CO
NM
ND
SD
NE
KS
OK
TX
MN
IA
MO
AR
LA
WI
IL
MS
MI
IN
KY
TN
AL
OH
WV
GA
FL
SC
NC
VA
PA
NY
ME
VT
NH
MA
RI
CT
NJ
DE
MD
AK
HI
254 DEM
218 for control
GOP 162
416 of 435

7


Senate
House
Governors
WA
OR
CA
ID
NV
MT
WY
UT
AZ
CO
NM
ND
SD
NE
KS
OK
TX
MN
IA
MO
AR
LA
WI
IL
MS
MI
IN
KY
TN
AL
OH
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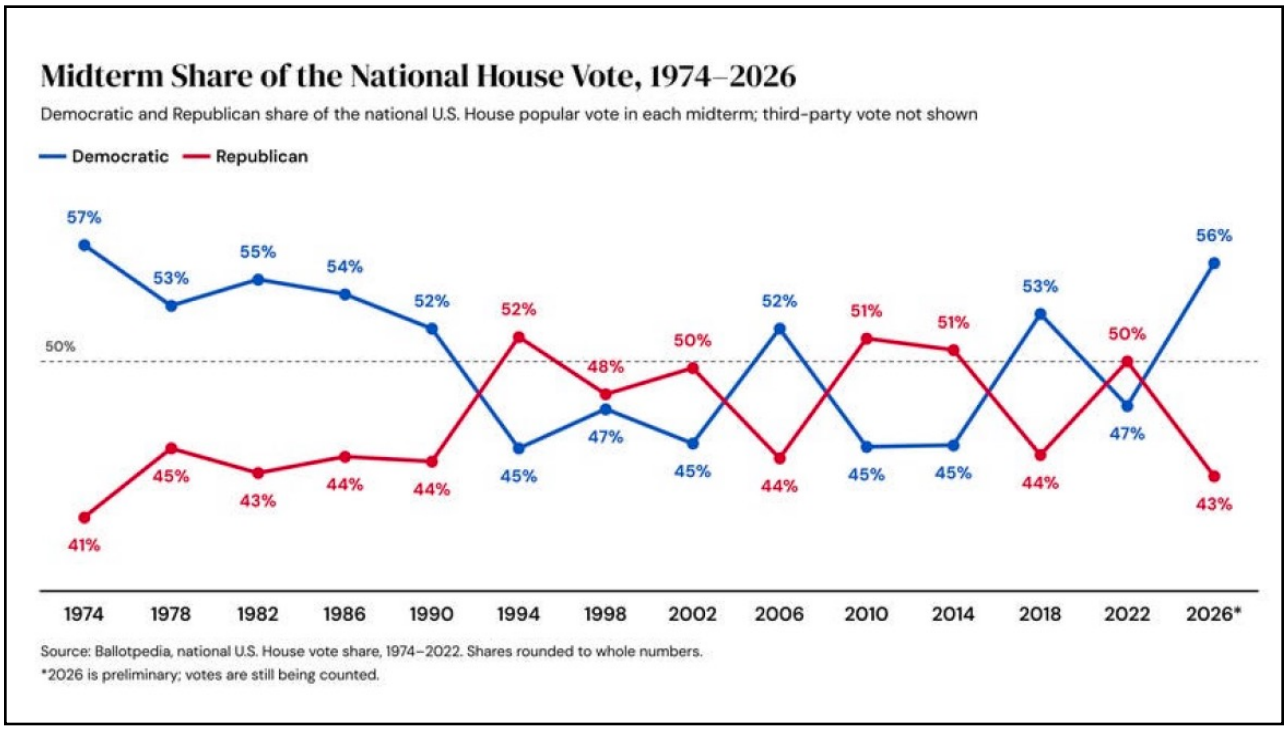
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Table 1. Comparing Recent and Other Notable Midterm Election Results

Midterm Election	House			Senate			Political Notes
	Winning Party	Flipped	Majority	Winning Party	Flipped	Majority	
2026^	Democrats	D+36^	252-147^	Democrats	D+7^	54-44^	*Preliminary results with 2 Senate and 36 House races yet to be called*
2022	Republicans	R+11	222-213	Democrats	D+1	51-49	*Split Congress; Democrats retained Senate majority with 2 independents*
2018	Democrats	D+41	235-199	Republicans	R+2	53-47	*Split Congress; Republicans increased Senate majority; 2 independents w/ Dems*
2014	Republicans	R+13	247-188	Republicans	R+9	54-44	*Republicans increased majority in the House, flipped Senate*
2010	Republicans	R+63	242-193	Democrats	R+6	51-47	*Split Congress; Republicans picked up Senate seats but did not win a majority*
2006	Democrats	D+31	233-202	Democrats	D+5	51-49	*Senate majority included 2 independents; Second term George W. Bush Presidency*
Other Notable Midterm Elections							
1994	Republicans	R+54	230-204	Republicans	R+10	52-48	*First Republican House majority since 1954 and first control of Congress since 1946*
1974	Democrats	D+49	291-144	Democrats	D+4	60-38	*Democrats increased majorities in Congress after Watergate scandal and Nixon resignation*
1954	Democrats	D+18	232-203	Democrats	D+2	49-47	*Eisenhower's first term; Democrats held the House until 1994*
1946	Republicans	R+55	246-188	Republicans	R+11	50-46	*Republicans first control of Congress since before the Great Depression; Truman first midterm*

Notes: Historic results from "Electing the House of Representatives, 1840-2024: https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/congress. ^The 2026 results are preliminary as of November 5, 2026. farmdocDAILY

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Democratic Gains in the 2026 Midterms - Before and After November 3

Results as of November 6, 2026; several races are still uncalled and counts differ by source

Office	Before Nov. 3	After	Net change	Flipped / notes
U.S. House Democratic seats	214	**259**	**+45**	NBC estimate (at least 259); 252 called and about 20 uncalled. NBC counts 35+ Democratic flips so far.
U.S. Senate Democratic seats	47	**54**	**+7**	Flipped: KS, IA, TX, OH, ME, NC, SC. Uncalled: AK (Peltola +637) and MS (Colom +2,493, 97% in).
Governors Democratic governors	24	**28**	**+4**	Flipped: TX, GA, OH, IA, NV. AK (D +20 pts, 74% in) and KS (D +7,000) uncalled; 30 if both go D.
State legislative chambers Democratic-controlled	39	**52**	**+13**	NCSL: AZ (both), GA H, AK H (expected), MI H, MN H, NC H, NH (both), PA S, TX H, WI (both).
State government trifectas Democratic	16	**22**	**+6**	New: AZ, MI, MN, NV, PA, WI. GOP trifectas broken: GA, IA, NH, OH, TX (AK expected).
Attorneys general Democratic AGs (50 states)	23	**28**	**+5**	Flipped: GA, IA, KS (projected, Mann +11K), OH (0.6 pt), TX. DAGA counts 29 including DC.
Secretaries of state Democratic (of 47 offices)	21	**24**	**+3**	Flipped: GA, OH, IN. Held AZ, MI, NV. KS: Proctor (R) narrowly ahead, uncalled. TX office not counted.
State supreme courts Courts with Democratic majority	20	**20**	**0**	Won 5 seats (TX 4, OH 1) but no majority flipped: TX 5–4 GOP, OH 5–2 GOP. 2028 fights: MT, NC, OH, TX.
State legislators Democratic seats (of 7,386)	3,249 44.0% of seats	**~3,700** ~50% of seats	**~+450**	ESTIMATE; no national tally yet. Verified: NC +25, PA +11, TX +14, WI +12, MI +10 (about +70). Range +400 to +550.

Before = pre-election holdings (courts, AGs and secretaries of state as of early 2026; AG count includes Hawaii's appointee). After = projected or called results.

Governor total is 28 called; 30 if Alaska and Kansas go Democratic. Legislator row is my estimate; no official post-election tally exists yet.

Sources: NBC News, ABC News, CNBC, NCSL, Stateline, Ballotpedia, MultiState, O'Melveny, Democratic AGs Association, Texas Tribune, State Court Report.

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How This All Matters For 2028

Americans Represented by Democrats - Before and After November 3

Number and share of the 341M residents of the 50 states; results as of November 6, 2026

Represented by	Before Nov. 3	After	Net change	Notes
U.S. House By a Democratic member	168M 49%	**203M** **60%**	**+35M**	Seats x average district size (about 784,000), using NBC's estimate of 259 seats. Approximation; districts vary.
U.S. Senate By at least one Democratic senator	192M 56%	**259M** **76%**	**+67M**	Both senators Democratic: 50% before, 51% after. Independents who caucus with Democrats counted.
Governor By a Democratic governor	194M 57%	**253M** **74%**	**+58M**	28 governors called. If Kansas and Alaska go Democratic: 75%.
Governor or senator By a Democratic governor or at least one Democratic senator	211M 62%	**264M** **77%**	**+52M**	Adds TX, OH, SC and IA. If Alaska and Mississippi go Democratic: 78%.
Governor, senator or House member By a Democratic governor, senator or House member	241M 71%	**279M** **82%**	**+38M**	Also counts residents of Democratic-held House districts in states with no Democratic governor or senator.

A person counts as represented if their state has a Democratic governor or at least one Democratic senator, as noted. Senators include independents who caucus with Democrats.

All figures rounded to whole numbers; changes are computed from unrounded figures, so they can differ by 1M from the difference of the rounded figures.

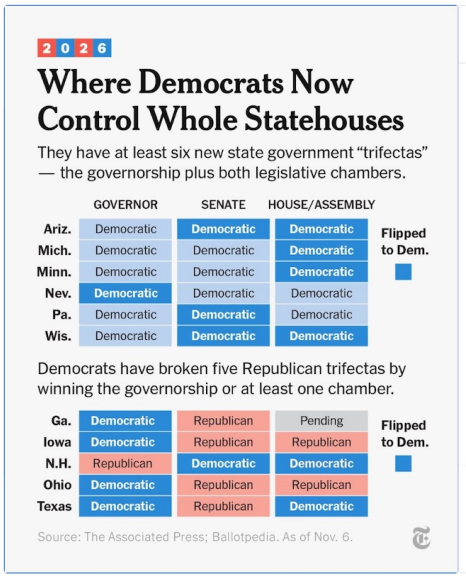
After = called results only; Alaska and Mississippi Senate races and the Alaska and Kansas governor races were uncalled as of November 6, 2026. DC excluded.

Population: Census Bureau Vintage 2025 estimates. Sources: NBC News, Fox News, NCSL, MultiState, Ballotpedia.

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Key Element – Flipping GOP Areas to Blue Areas

- Unofficial results show Democrats will control the Arizona legislature for the first time in 60 years.
- Building off a historic sweep of statewide races, Democrats are poised to take control of the Texas House for the first time in over 20 years.
- In North Carolina, Democrats flipped several House seats held by influential, veteran Republicans to give the party control of the lower chamber for the first time since 2010.



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Key Element – Flipping GOP Seats to Blue Seats

10 Most Competitive U.S. Senate Races:

- Alaska (Sullivan, R) → *Still Undecided*
- Florida (Moody, R) → Hold for Red
- Kansas (Marshall, R) → Flipped to Blue
- Iowa (OPEN R) → Flipped to Blue
- Maine (Collins, R) → Flipped to Blue
- Michigan (OPEN D) → Hold for Blue
- Nebraska (Ricketts, R) → Hold for Red
- Ohio (Husted, R) → Flipped to Blue
- South Carolina (Graham, R) → Flipped to Blue
- Texas (OPEN R) → Flipped to Blue
- Mississppi (Hyde-Smith, R) → Flipped to Blue / Will go to Court

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Key Element – Flipping GOP Seats to Blue Seats

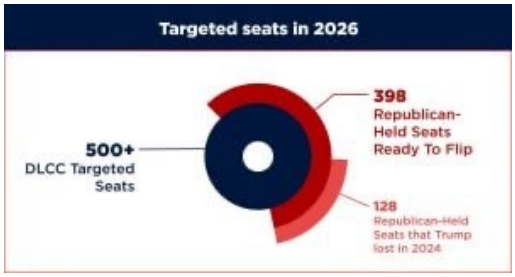
10 Most Competitive U.S. House Races:

- CO-03 (Hurd, R) → Stayed Red (by 2 pts)
- FL-09 (OPEN D) → Stayed Blue (Dem by 1500 votes)
- FL-22 (OPEN D) → Stayed Blue
- IA-02 (OPEN R) → Flipped to Blue
- ME-02 (OPEN D) → NO CALL; Headed to RCV
- MT-01 (OPEN R) → Flipped to Blue
- OH-07 (Miller, R) → Flipped to Blue
- PA-01 (Fitzpatrick, R) → Flipped to Blue
- TX-15 (De La Cruz, R) → Flipped to Blue (by 24+ pts)
- TX-35 (OPEN D) → Stayed Blue

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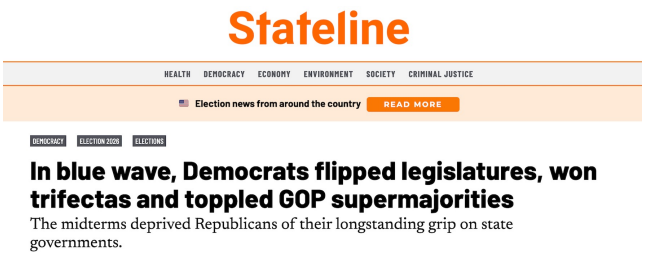
Key Element – Flipping GOP Areas to Blue Areas

- Additionally, Democratic wins crushed GOP supermajorities in several states. In Florida, the loss of the Republican supermajority takes away the party's power to override rules regarding procedure and debate and override the governor's veto.
- Democratic gains also ended supermajorities in the Indiana state House, the Kansas House, both of Missouri's legislative chambers, the Ohio House, and the South Carolina House.



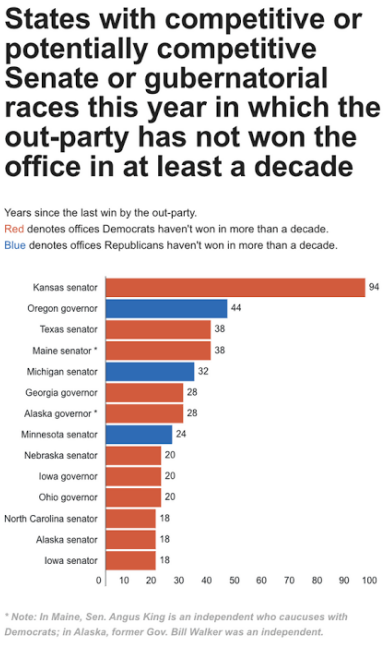
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https://stateline.org/2026/11/04/in-blue-wave-democrats-flipped-legislatures-won-trifectas-and-toppled-gop-supermajorities/

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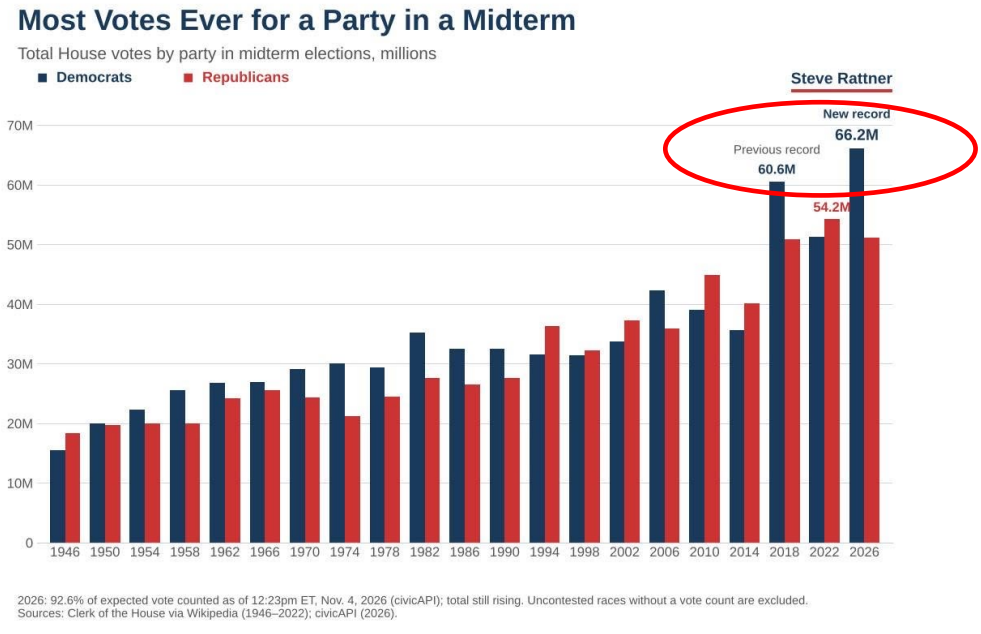
Midterm Loss, In-Party, Over History, Found Here:

https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/lessons-from-history-house-incumbents-from-the-non-presidential-party-rarely-lose-reelection-in-midterms/

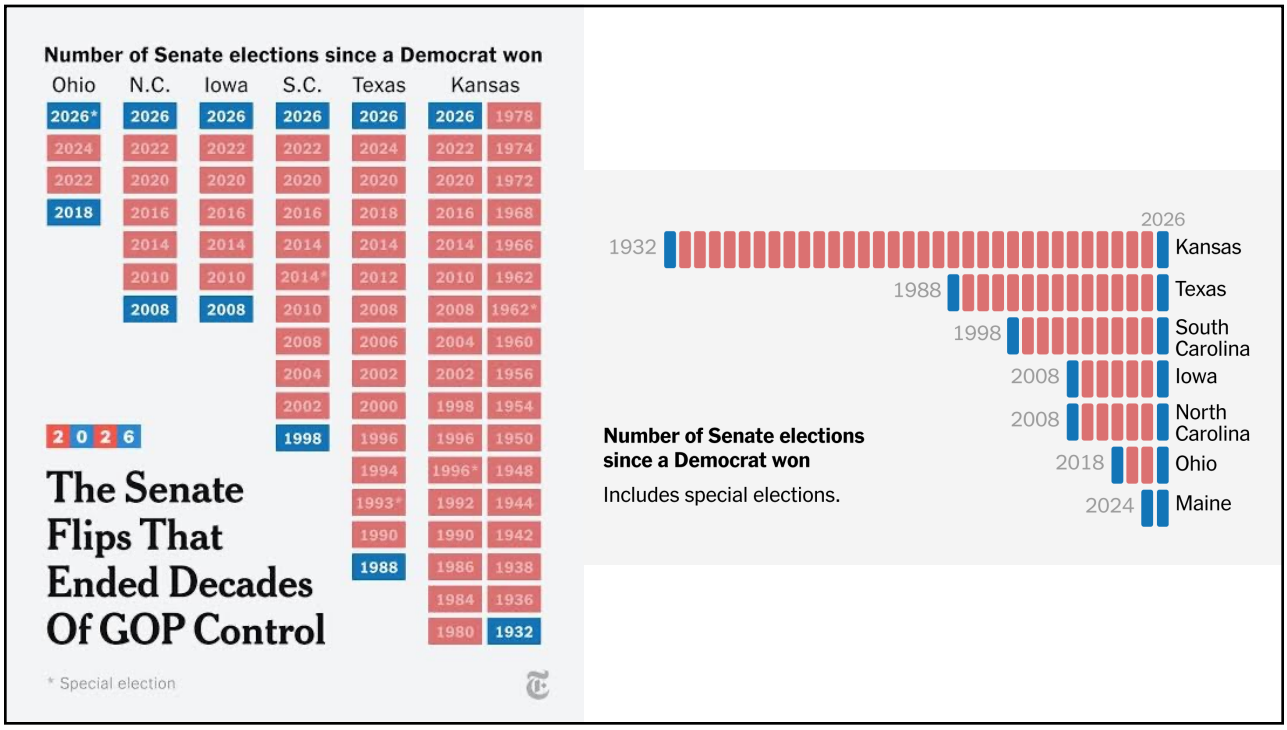
Midterm	District	Incumbent loser	Winner	Overall midterm net change
1974 (Democrats)	ME-1	Peter Kyros	David Emery	D +48
	OH-1	Tom Luken	Bill Gradison	
	PA-25	Frank Clark	Gary Myers	
	SD-1	Frank Denholm	Larry Pressler	
1978 (Republicans)	FL-12	J. Herbert Burke	Edward Stack	R +15
	MD-8	Newton Steers	Michael Barnes	
	MI-3	Garry Brown	Howard Wolpe	
	MI-10	Elford Cederberg	Donald Albosta	
	WI-7	John Cunningham	Mike Lowry	
1982 (Democrats)	NY-14	Leo Zeferetti	Guy Molinari*	D +26
	NY-22	Peter Peyser	Benjamin Gilman*	
	OH-12	Bob Shamansky	John Kasich	
1986 (Democrats)	MO-2	Robert Young	Jack Buechner	D +5
1990 (Democrats)	CA-1	Douglas Bosco	Frank Riggs	D +8
	CA-44	Jim Bates	Duke Cunningham	
	MD-1	Roy Dyson	Wayne Gilchrest	
	NC-11	James Clarke	Charles Taylor	
	PA-18	Doug Walgren	Rick Santorum	
	WI-2	Bob Kastenmeier	Scott Klug	
1994 (Republicans)	NONE			R +54
1998 (Republicans)	KS-3	Vince Snowbarger	Dennis Moore	D +4
	NJ-12	Mike Pappas	Rush Holt	
	NM-3	Bill Redmond	Tom Udall	
	PA-13	Jon Fox	Joe Hoeffel	
	WA-1	Rick White	Jay Inslee	
2002 (Democrats)	CT-5	James Maloney	Nancy Johnson*	R +7
	FL-5	Karen Thurman	Ginny Brown-Waite	
	IL-19	David Phelps	John Shimkus*	
	MN-2	Bill Luther	John Kline	
	MS-3	Ronnie Shows	Chip Pickering*	
2006 (Democrats)	NONE			D +30
2010 (Republicans)	HI-1	Charles Djou	Colleen Hanabusa	R +64
	LA-2	Joseph Cao	Cedric Richmond	
2014 (Republicans)	FL-2	Steve Southerland	Gwen Graham	R +13
	NE-2	Lee Terry	Brad Ashford	
2018 (Democrats)	NONE			D +41
2022 (Republicans)	NM-2	Yvette Herrell	Gabe Vasquez	R +9
	OH-1	Steve Chabot	Greg Landsman	
	TX-34	Mayra Flores	Vicente Gonzalez*	

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Midterm Participation, Over History



20


Number of Senate elections since a Democrat won
Ohio
2026*
2024
2022
2018
N.C.
2026
2022
2020
2016
2014
2010
2008
Iowa
2026
2022
2020
2016
2014
2010
2008
S.C.
2026
2022
2020
2016
2014*
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Texas
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1966
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1962*
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1954
1950
1948
1944
1942
1938
1936
1932
2026
The Senate Flips That Ended Decades Of GOP Control
* Special election
1932
1988
1998
2008
2008
2018
2024
Kansas
Texas
South Carolina
Iowa
North Carolina
Ohio
Maine
Number of Senate elections since a Democrat won
Includes special elections.

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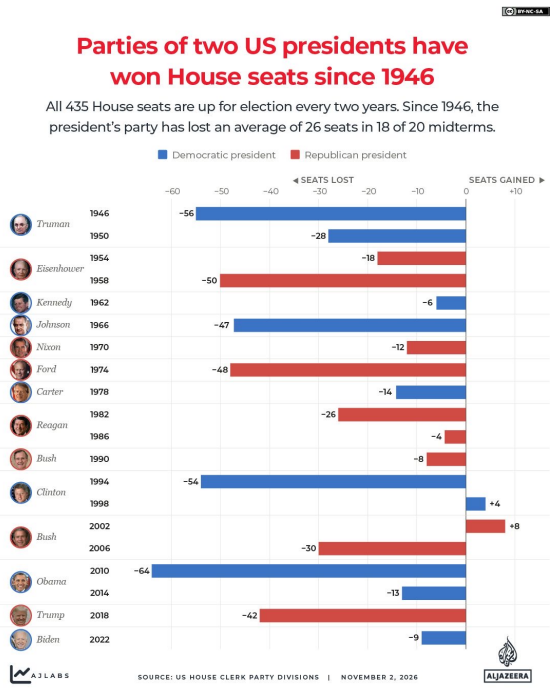

Which U.S. President Lost the Most Seats in Midterm Elections?
President | Year | House Seats Lost | Senate Seats Lost | Total Seats Lost
FDR | 1938 | 72 | 7 | 79
Obama | 2010 | 63 | 6 | 69
Truman | 1946 | 56 | 12 | 68
Clinton | 1994 | 54 | 8 | 63
Eisenhower | 1958 | 48 | 13 | 61
FDR | 1942 | 45 | 9 | 54
Ford | 1974 | 48 | 5 | 53
Johnson | 1966 | 47 | 4 | 48
Trump* | 2026 | 39 | 7 | 46
Trump | 2018 | 41 | +2 | 39
Reagan | 1982 | 26 | +1 | 25
Reagan* | 1986 | 5 | 8 | 13
*Final votes still being counted

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Why Does the President's Party Usually Lose Midterm Elections?
20 of 22
In 20 of the 22 U.S. midterms from 1938 to 2022, the president's party lost House seats.


But History Has Exceptions
The president's party has not always lost seats in midterm elections. Two notable exceptions since 1938 are:
1998
Clinton's Democrats gained 4 House seats,
amid strong presidential approval and a backlash against Republican impeachment efforts.
House Seats
+4
Democratic Gain
2002
George W. Bush's Republicans gained 8 House seats,
as the country rallied together in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.
House Seats
+8
Republican Gain
A historical pattern, not a guarantee.
By History Source

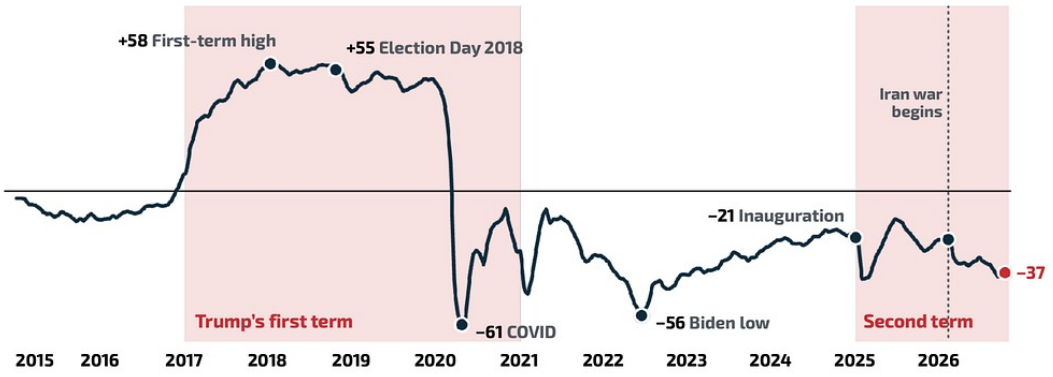
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Parties of two US presidents have won House seats since 1946
All 435 House seats are up for election every two years. Since 1946, the president's party has lost an average of 26 seats in 18 of 20 midterms.
Democratic president
Republican president
◂ SEATS LOST
SEATS GAINED ▸
−60 −50 −40 −30 −20 −10 0 +10
Truman 1946 −56
1950 −28
Eisenhower 1954 −18
1958 −50
Kennedy 1962 −6
Johnson 1966 −47
Nixon 1970 −12
Ford 1974 −48
Carter 1978 −14
Reagan 1982 −26
1986 −4
Bush 1990 −8
Clinton 1994 −54
1998 +4
Bush 2002 +8
2006 −30
Obama 2010 −64
2014 −13
Trump 2018 −42
Biden 2022 −9
AJLABS
SOURCE: US HOUSE CLERK PARTY DIVISIONS | NOVEMBER 2, 2026
ALJAZEERA

24

In 2018, Trump was viewed negatively but the economy positively. In 2026, voters were deeply negative about both.

Civiqs daily tracking of registered voters: national economy rated good minus bad

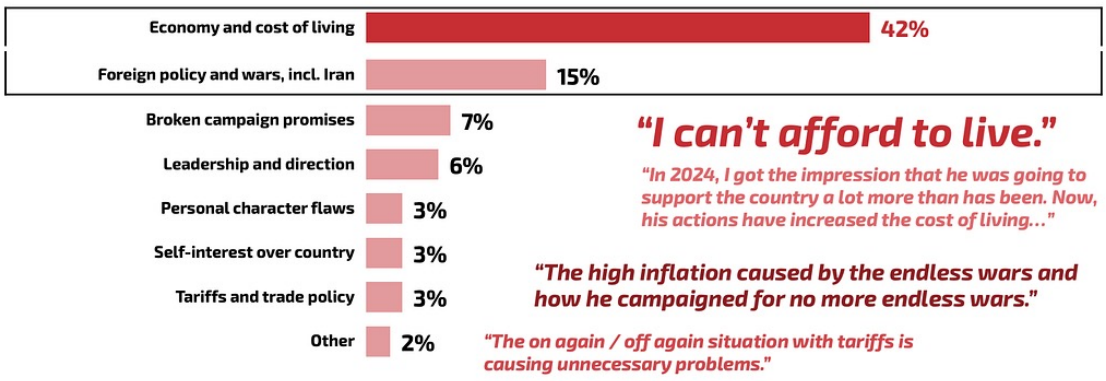


Q. How would you rate the condition of the national economy right now? (Very/fairly good minus very/fairly bad.) Civiqs daily tracking of registered voters, modeled trendline, January 15, 2015 – November 2, 2026. Shading: Trump's terms in office. 2026 Election Day point is the Nov. 2 reading, the latest available.

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In their own words: Trump voters who now disapprove

Q. You indicated that you voted for Donald Trump in 2024 and currently disapprove of the way Trump is handling his job as president. What are the main reasons you feel that way? [OPEN END, CODED]



"I can't afford to live."

"In 2024, I got the impression that he was going to support the country a lot more than has been. Now, his actions have increased the cost of living..."

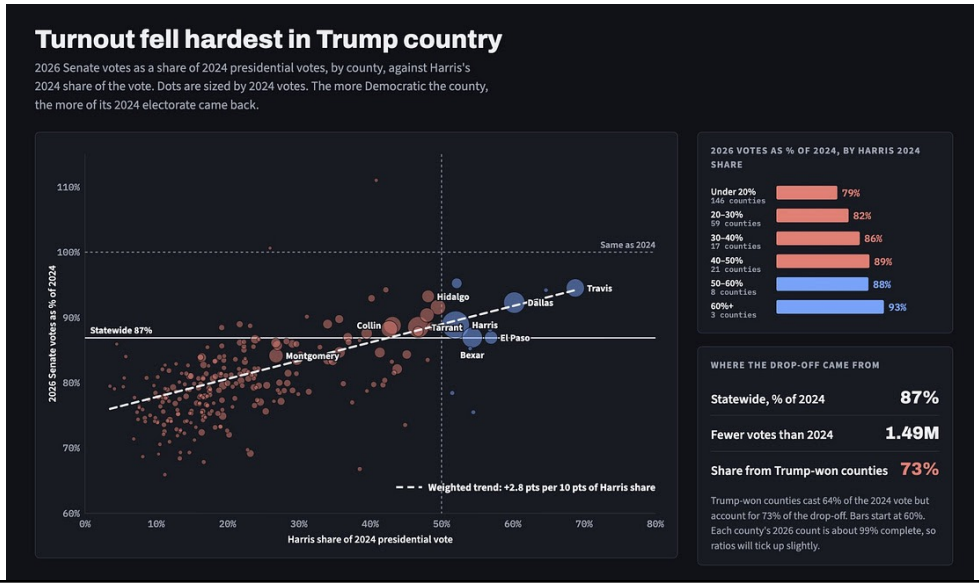
"The high inflation caused by the endless wars and how he campaigned for no more endless wars."

"The on again / off again situation with tariffs is causing unnecessary problems."

Asked of n=112 Trump 2024 voters who disapprove of Trump. N=1,002 Registered Voters in the Likely Electorate nationwide, September 17–21, 2026, Verified Voter Omnibus. Margin of error ±3.6 percentage points.

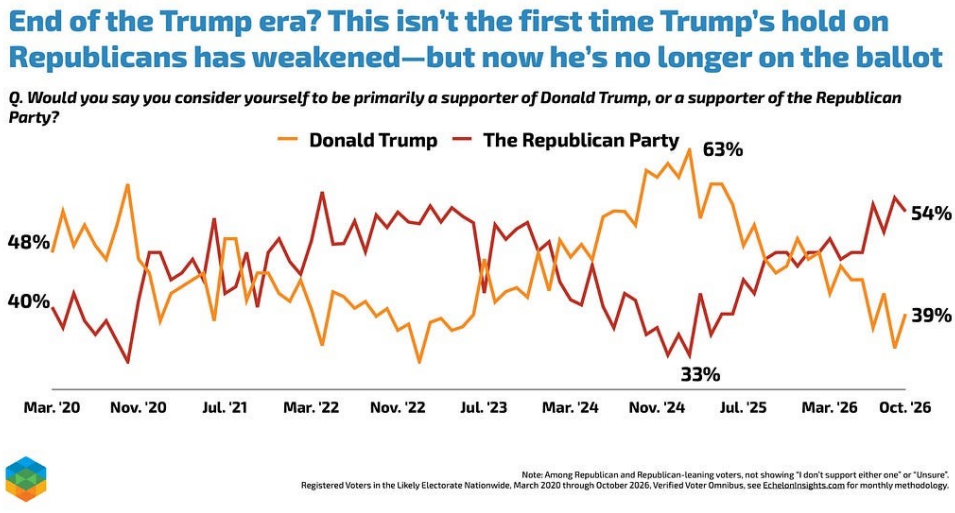
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The GOP / Trump Turnout Problem in 2026

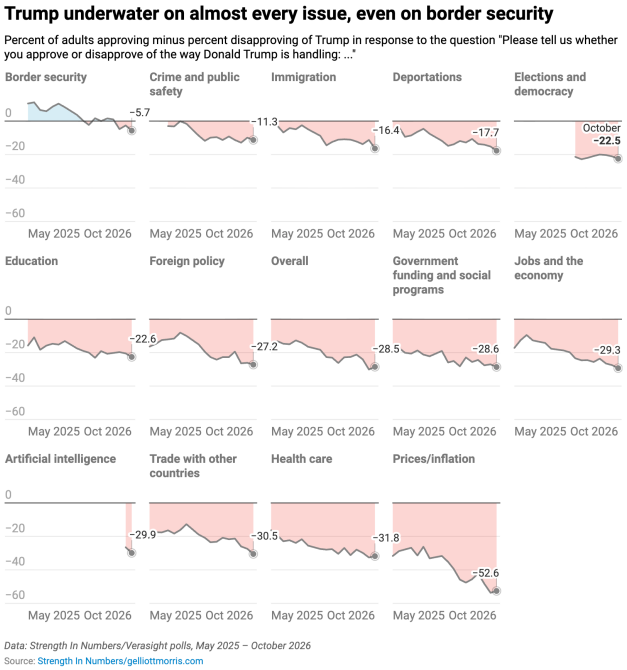


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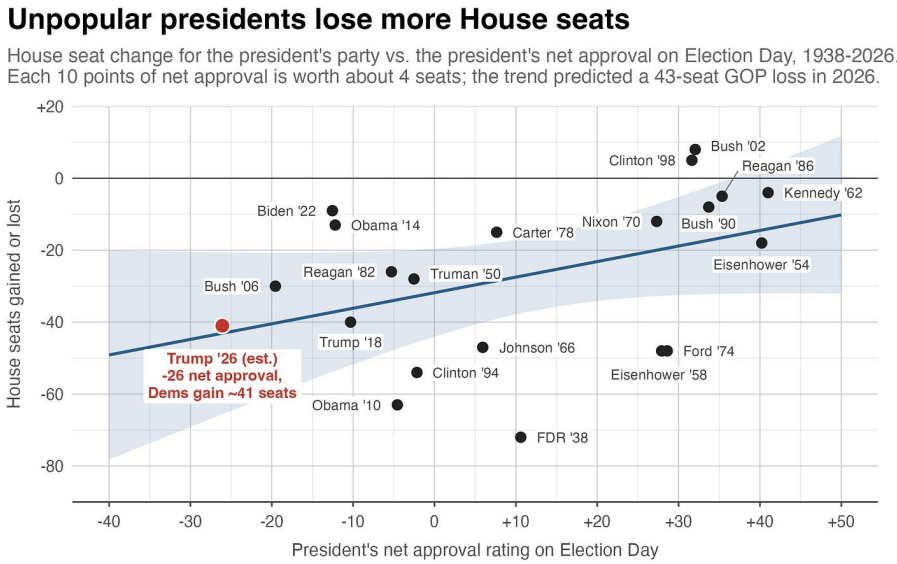
Is This the End of the Trump Era?



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Trump underwater on almost every issue, even on border security
Percent of adults approving minus percent disapproving of Trump in response to the question "Please tell us whether you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling: ..."
Border security
Crime and public safety
Immigration
Deportations
Elections and democracy
Education
Foreign policy
Overall
Government funding and social programs
Jobs and the economy
Artificial intelligence
Trade with other countries
Health care
Prices/inflation
0
−20
−40
−60
−5.7
−11.3
−16.4
−17.7
October
−22.5
−22.6
−27.2
−28.5
−28.6
−29.3
−29.9
−30.5
−31.8
−52.6
May 2025 Oct 2026
Data: Strength In Numbers/Verasight polls, May 2025 – October 2026
Source: Strength In Numbers/gelliottmorris.com

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Unpopular presidents lose more House seats
House seat change for the president's party vs. the president's net approval on Election Day, 1938-2026.
Each 10 points of net approval is worth about 4 seats; the trend predicted a 43-seat GOP loss in 2026.
House seats gained or lost
+20
0
-20
-40
-60
-80
Bush '02
Clinton '98
Reagan '86
Kennedy '62
Biden '22
Obama '14
Carter '78
Nixon '70
Bush '90
Eisenhower '54
Reagan '82
Truman '50
Bush '06
Trump '18
Johnson '66
Ford '74
Trump '26 (est.)
-26 net approval,
Dems gain ~41 seats
Clinton '94
Eisenhower '58
Obama '10
FDR '38
-40
-30
-20
-10
0
+10
+20
+30
+40
+50
President's net approval rating on Election Day
Source: Presidential approval averages from FiftyPlusOne.news; House seat changes as of each election; 2026 is an estimate.
Trend line and shaded 95% confidence interval are fit to 1938-2022.
Strength In Numbers
gelliottmorris.com

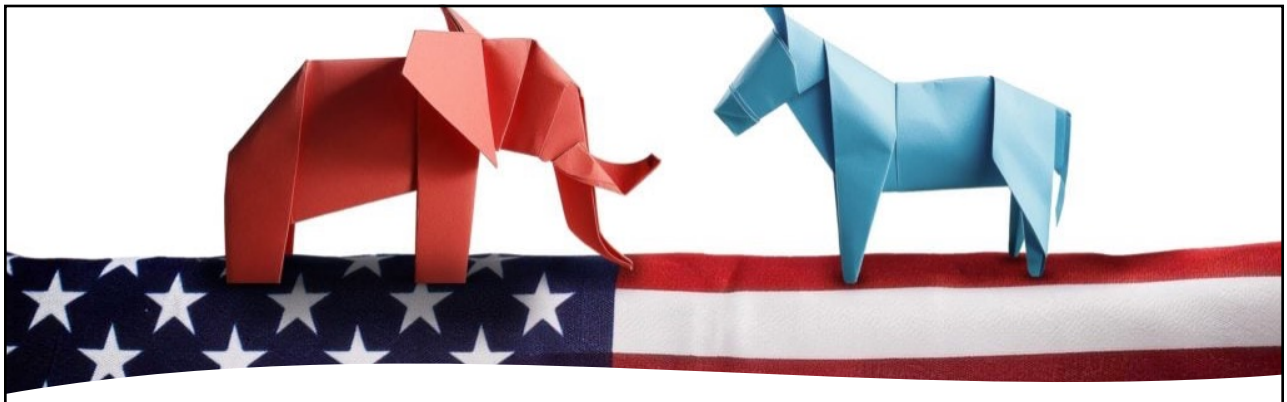
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31

Part II: What Comes *Next?*

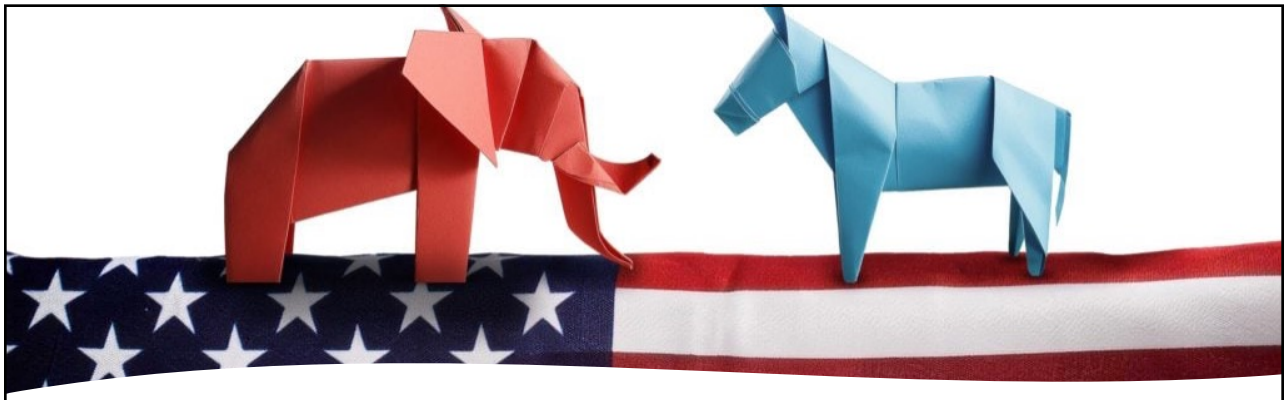
32



What Comes *Next?*

- **Post-election period:** November 4, 2026, to January 3, 2027 (or later)
- **First Day of the 120th Congress:** January 3, 2027 (or later)
- **What else??**

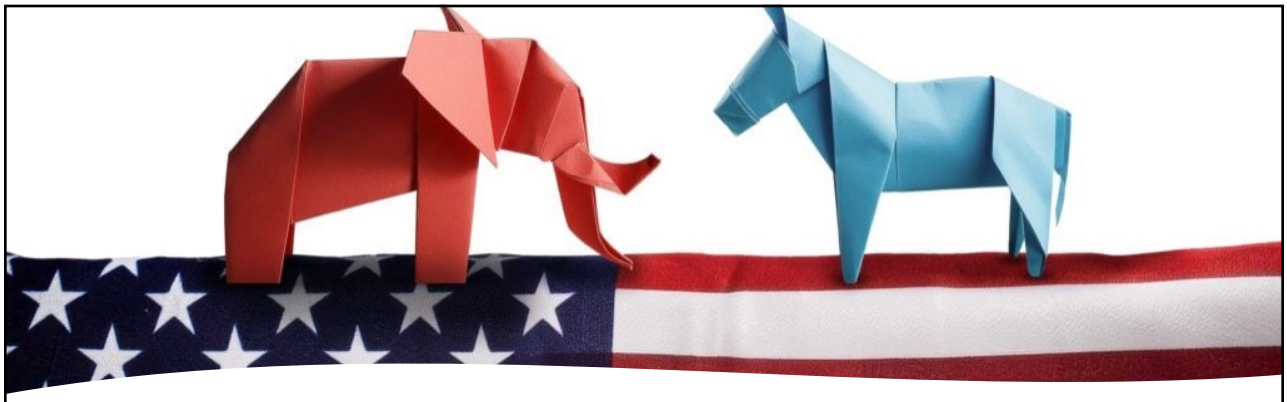
33



What Comes *Next?*

- Legislative session between the election and the seating of a new Congress is known as the "lame duck" session (U.S. Senate).
- This is generally a time for Congress to complete any unfinished business.
- Also a time for decisions on leadership positions and committees, as well as crafting legislative priorities, strategy, and planning.

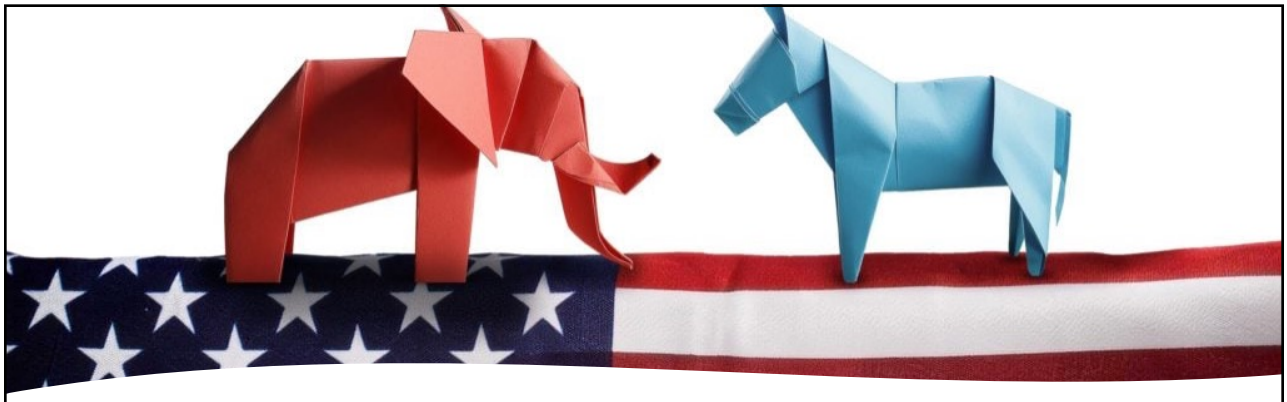
34



What Comes *Next?*

- 119th Congress is in place for the rest of this calendar year.
- Highest priority is presumably funding the federal government, either through an omnibus appropriations bill or another "Continuing Resolution." Current "CR" expires December 11, 2026 (P.L. 119-103).
- If this matter is not resolved, the federal government would shut down.
- Congress also must enact the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and possibly consider a supplemental appropriations bill for the war in Iran.

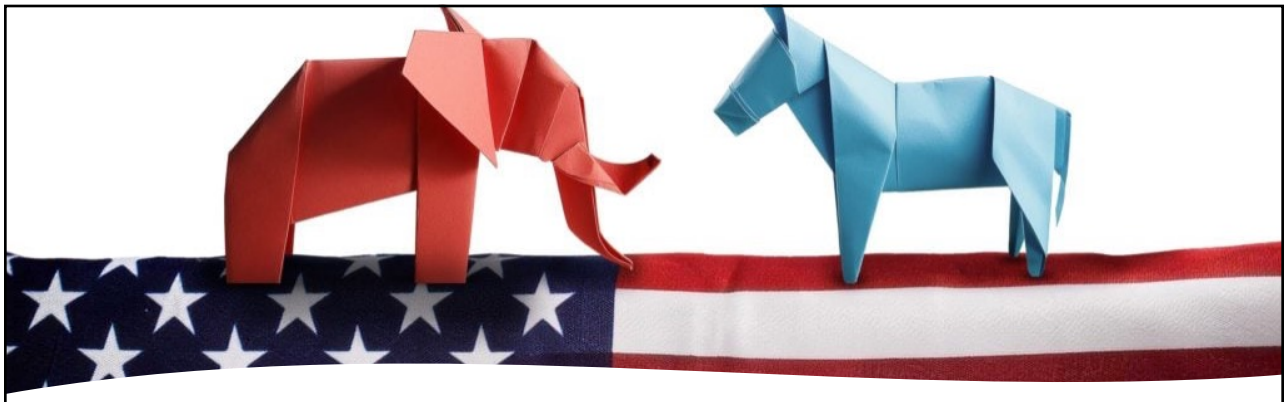
35



What Comes *Next?*

- President Trump requested $70 billion in additional funding for the war.
- Note that Congress is expected to be in session for just 20 scheduled days, and there appear to be many priorities, much of which were pre-election aspirations that are unlikely now.
- What was uncertain and unlikely before, should be considered very much in doubt now.

36



What Comes *Next?*

- **First Day of the 120th Congress:** January 3, 2027
- **Can be another day:** Since this is a Sunday, could change

37

The Likely Democratic Leaders



38

- The Twentieth Amendment to the Constitution requires that "the Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3rd day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.".
- January 3, 2027, falls on a Sunday.
- When the first day of the new Congress fell on a Sunday in the past, Congress has sometimes—yet not always—picked a later date to convene.
- The 117th Congress, for instance, did convene on January 3rd, 2021, despite falling on a Sunday; however, the 106th Congress chose to convene instead on Wednesday, January 6, 1999.
- For the first day of the 120th Congress to start on any other than January 3, 2027, the current Congress would have to enact, and the president would need to sign into law, a bill.



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- Even before new Members take the official oath of office, the first major item of business in the House is typically electing the Speaker, chosen by a simple majority vote cast by members-elect.
- In some instances, no nominee has been able to attain a majority of votes and these proceedings have lasted days or even months.
- The Majority and Minority Leaders and other party floor officers of the Senate are elected privately by their respective caucuses and not ratified on the floor.



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- **The second major item of business for the House (and typically the first for the Senate) is to swear in the newly elected and re-elected members. Individuals possessing election credentials issued by the appropriate authority in their state (usually the Secretary of State or other chief election official) are presumed to be the representative-elect or senator-elect.**
- **However, Article I, Section 5 of the Constitution states that "each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members."**
- **Accordingly, if the outcome of an election is disputed, parties typically raise the matter at this time and the member-elect in question may be asked to stand aside while other members take the oath of office.**

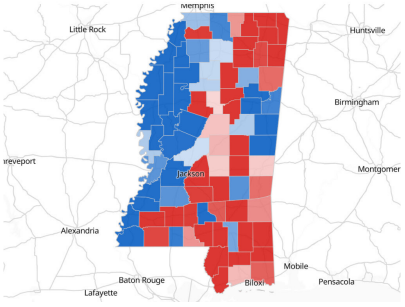


41

Still to Decide…

2026 Mississippi US Senate

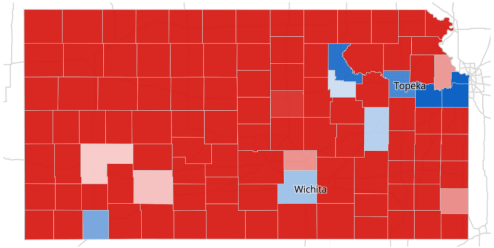
CANDIDATE	PARTY	VOTES	PCT
Scott Colom	DEM	468,339	49.09%
Cindy Hyde-Smith*	GOP	465,643	48.81%
Ty Pinkins	IND	20,043	2.10%
Nov 6, 7:41 PM EST		954,025	DDHQ
		>95%	



VOTES votes.decisiondeskhq.com

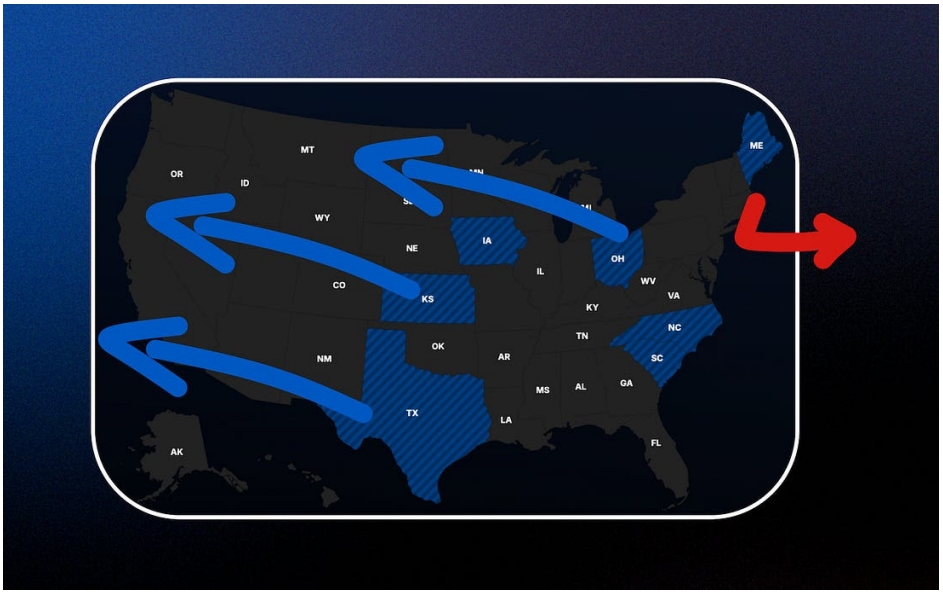
2026 Kansas Governor

CANDIDATE	PARTY	VOTES	PCT
Cindy Holscher	DEM	551,248	50.35%
Ty Masterson	GOP	543,601	49.65%
Nov 7, 8:30 AM EST		1,094,849	DDHQ
		>95%	



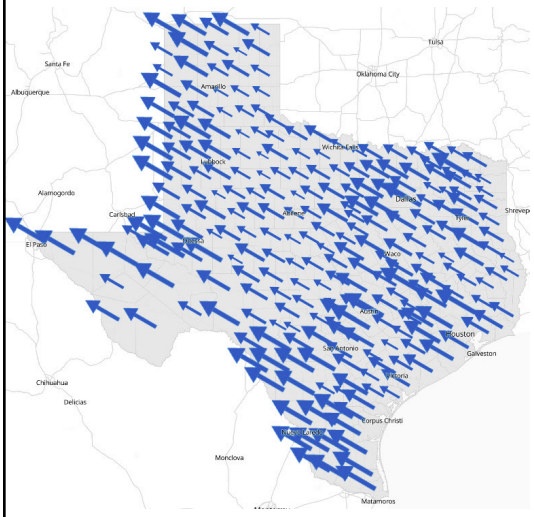
VOTES votes.decisiondeskhq.com

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43

Texas & Kansas – Impressive Swings to the Left (Backlash?)



Year	Democrat	%	Republican	%	Margin
1912*	William H. Thompson	49.3%	Walter R. Stubbs	43.3%	D+6.0
2026	**Adam Hamilton**	**51.0%**	**Roger Marshall†**	**46.0%**	**D+5.1**
1932	George McGill†	45.7%	Ben S. Paulen	42.0%	D+3.6
1930	George McGill	50.0%	Henry J. Allen‡	47.9%	D+2.1
1974	William R. Roy	49.1%	Bob Dole†	50.9%	R+1.7
1936	Omar B. Ketchum	48.4%	Arthur Capper†	51.0%	R+2.6

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State	2024 Pres. Margin	2026 Sen. Margin	Swing
TX	**R+13.7**	**D+12.1**	**D+25.8**
MS	R+22.9	D+0.3	D+23.2
NC	**R+3.2**	**D+19.6**	**D+22.8**
SC	**R+17.9**	**D+4.5**	**D+22.4**
KS	**R+16.1**	**D+5.1**	**D+21.2**
LA	R+22.0	R+1.8	D+20.2
GA	R+2.2	D+18.0	D+20.2
KY	R+30.6	R+12.1	D+18.5
IA	**R+13.3**	**D+4.2**	**D+17.5**
OH*	**R+11.2**	**D+4.9**	**D+16.1**
NE‡	R+20.6	R+6.2	D+14.3
AK†	R+13.1	D+0.3	D+13.4
NH	D+2.8	D+13.7	D+10.9
FL*	R+13.1	R+2.9	D+10.2
MT‡	R+19.9	R+10.6	D+9.3
MI	R+1.4	D+7.1	D+8.5
MN	D+4.2	D+10.2	D+5.9
ME	**D+6.9**	**D+6.1**	**R+0.8**

'26 Texas Swing was more vs. '24 Than Other Senate Races

Swing in margin in states with remotely competitive 2026 Senate races vs. the state's 2024 presidential margin, as of Nov. 9, 2026 (**Democratic pickups bolded**)

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Thank YOU for an AMAZING CLASS!!



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46

YOUR Questions, Comments, & Concerns

Anything further, please Contact me at:

david.mccuan@sonoma.edu

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Part III:

Review of Past Course Materials on Midterms & the "Rules" of a President's Second Midterm

48

The Ruling Facts About These 2026 Midterms….

- This was **THE MOST EXPENSIVE MIDTERM** ever… ≅ $15.4 BILLION (est'd);
- This also was ***THE MOST DIVERSE MIDTERM*** ever…;
- Buying NATIONAL TV Advertising became less expensive than buying time in some media markets (like CA, TX, and NY);
- The timeline / dates /events – and consequences of what happens from The Day After (04 NOV) to the start of the 120th Congress (03 JAN 2027, a Sunday) – recall these…

49

Some General Midterm Election Trends – Over Time

- **First**: the President's party almost ***always loses ground*** in midterm House elections, as has happened in 20 of the past 22 midterm elections stretching back to 1938, and both exceptions reflected unusual circumstances (1998; 2002).
- **Second**: the President's **SECOND MIDTERM** election usually has the steepest loses, going back to the Civil War era;
- **Third: Who votes** in Midterm elections is really, really distinct from General Elections for President.

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How Do We Explain U.S. Midterm Election Outcomes?

- **Referendum on the president vs. "Backlash" on the president?**

- Reversion to Party ID (PID) and/or ideology
- Response to economy & job approval
- Response to other issues (war/peace, etc.) / "October Surprise"
- Action of strategic politicians (such as "strategic retirements")
- Money and / or turnout races

- Reliable pattern of the 19th AND 20th centuries save 4 elections

- *What is "average" midterm presidential seat loss?*
- What "variables" determine the depth of seat loss?

51

The Big Picture – Why the Stakes Are High?

Today's politics are marked by –

Extreme polarization – the political parties are far apart, at both the leadership and mass levels;

Extreme competitiveness—the parties are very closely matched, with power hanging on the balance with each election.

52

52

Pay Attention to These Elements…

- Late $$$ -where are the $$$ coming from and dollars going?
- Late Polling Trends / the "Break" (*NYT* / Siena College, for example)
- Early Vote ---> Trend Line ---> What are the FUNDAMENTALS this Election?
- Key Early Race Indicators on E-Night – what to watch?
- What the Elites are Saying, The Blame Game…

53

Reading the Tea Leaves…







54

What Do Our Models Show *UPDATED ELECTION DAY?*

- House Likelihood:

93% – 95%
of a Δ
From GOP to Dem

(Dems need +3 seats)

- Senate Likelihood:

72% – 74%
of a Δ
From GOP to Dem

(Dems need +4 seats)

55

What Do Our Models Show *UPDATED TODAY?*

- House Seats: Lowest Limit

223 DEM seats
198 GOP seats

15 seats straight "toss-ups"

(Dems need +3 seats)

- Senate Seats: Lowest Limit

49 DEM seats
45 GOP seats

7 seats straight "toss-ups"

(Dems need +4 seats)

56

What to Watch *DOWN BALLOT?* Governorships

- 36 Governorships are UP:

18 DEM
18 GOP

*GOP Overall controls 26 overall;
Dems control 24

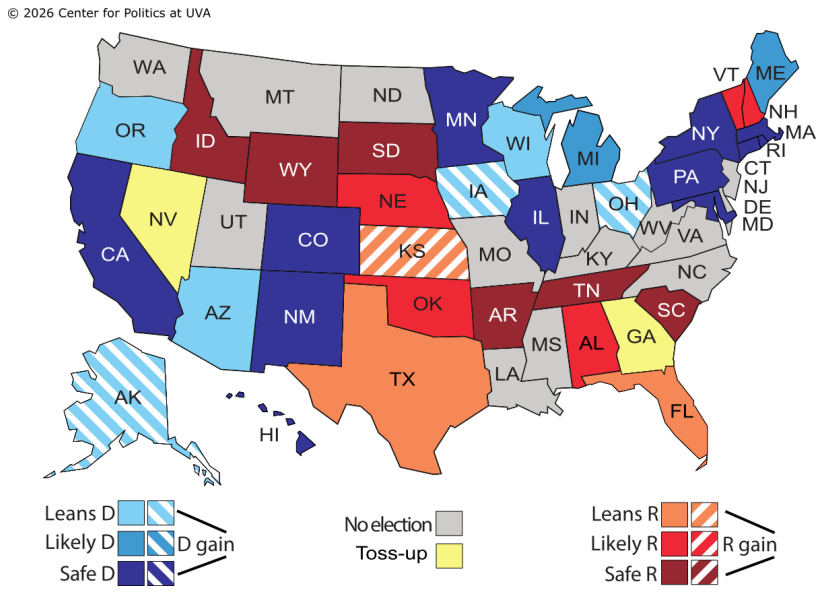
- Current Model(s):

24 states lean DEM
12 states lean GOP

Possible Dems pickups range from 21 to 24 Governorships

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How Larry Sees it… Governorships



58

What Does Our UPDATED "Time for Change" (TfC) Model Predict?:

Republican generic ballot margin	Predicted number of GOP seats	Predicted change in GOP seats
0	213	-7
-2	208	-12
-4	202	-18
-6	197	-23
-8	192	-28
-10	187	-33

THIS TRANSLATES TO:
Conservative, Lower Limit DEM SEATS: +28 (99% Confidence Interval; and Upper Limit DEM SEATS: +38 (95% Confidence Interval) – IF the GENERIC BALLOT GOES to -9 (-10)? NUMBERS JUMP!!

59

FiftyPlusOne

General election averages

61.5% DISAPPROVE **35.4%** APPROVE

Presidential Approval

Donald Trump's approval rating for his second term.

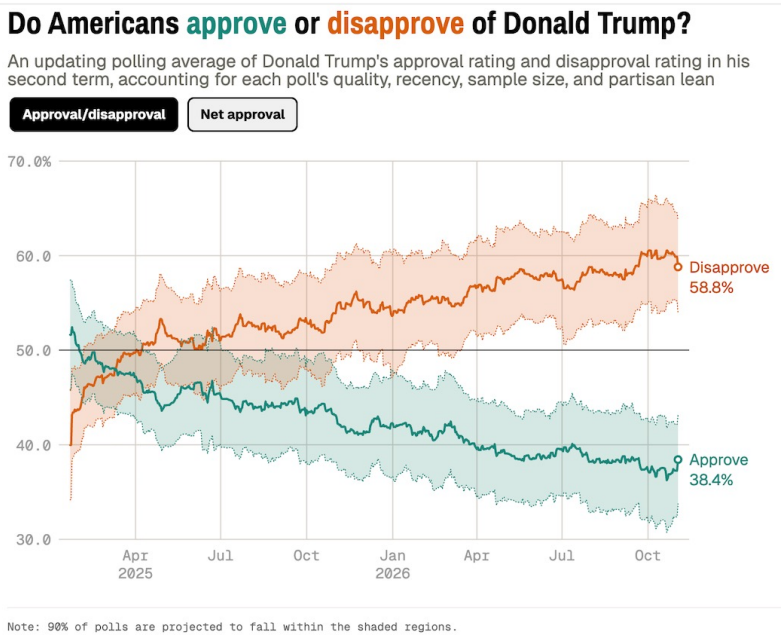
52.7% DEMOCRATS **44.1%** REPUBLICANS

Generic Ballot

Will the Republicans or Democrats win the U.S. House popular vote this November?

See: https://fiftyplusone.news/polls/approval/president and more at: https://fiftyplusone.news/

60

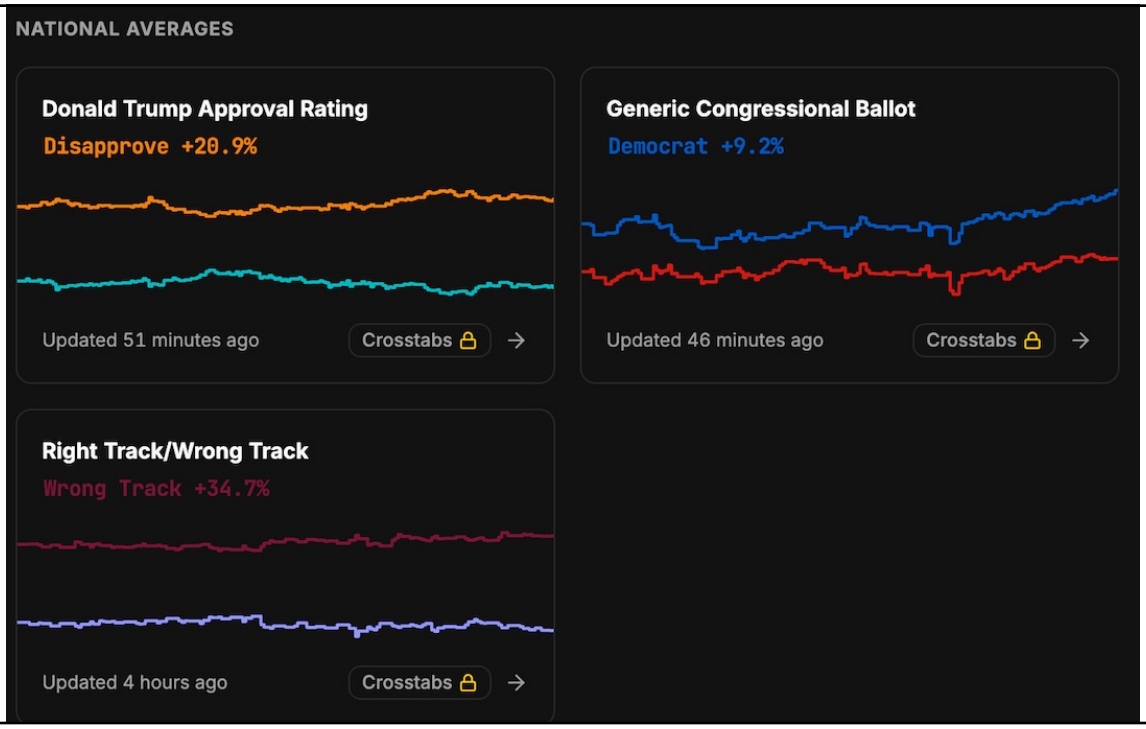


58.8
+
38.4
=
97.2%

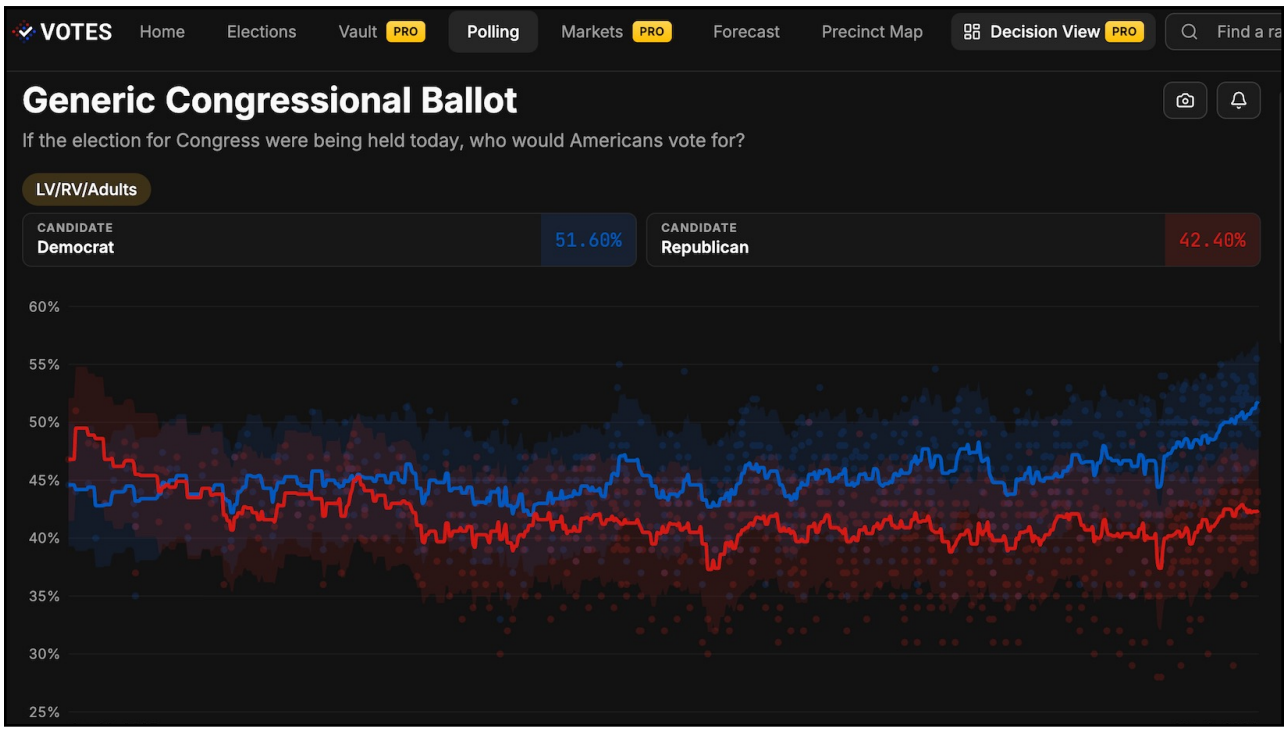
DJT *up* .12 pts from last week

STILL At a – 20.4 point diff

61

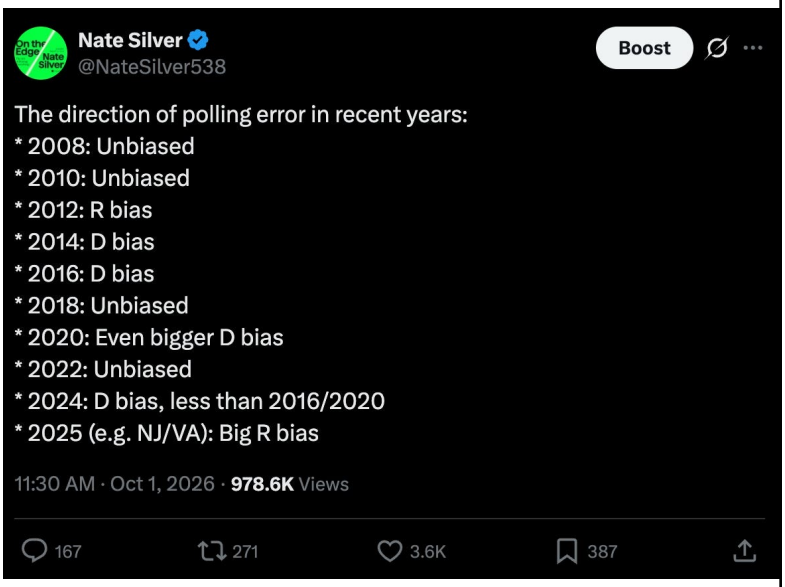


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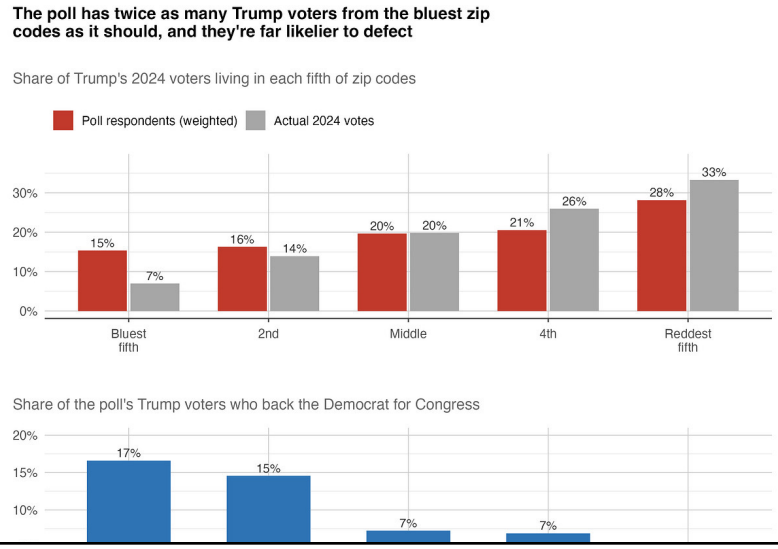
Polling Bias Ahead?



64

Broader Polling Bias Concern for 2026…, cont'd

- **POLL WEIGHTING in Practice – a Case Study in Polling:**



65

What to Consider With Polls?

Polling Questions - for General Elections:

1. Who conducted the poll?
2. Where, how, and when was the poll conducted? ***REGION MATTERS!!***
3. This close (+/- 7 days out to E-Day), ***LVs*** or RVs?
4. ***Outlier poll?*** Or consistent results with others?;
5. National polling sample? ***Or state-level poll?;***
6. ***Track-record operation?*** Or candidate – or campaign operation conducting the poll?
7. Leading questions? ***Can You actually see / find / examine the questions asked?***

66

Which way could the polls miss?

Possible sources of error in 2026 midterm polls, by the party they would overstate

Polls may be too favorable to Democrats

Too few rural Trump voters
Our poll has twice as many Trump voters from the bluest zip codes as it should, and they're likelier to back Democrats

Discouraged Republicans skip polls
Bad news for the GOP may make Republicans less willing to answer surveys, tilting samples toward Democrats

Low-effort respondents lean Republican
If people who skip polls resemble the people who rush through them, polls overstate Democrats

Undecideds "coming home"
Among undecided voters, Trump voters outnumber Harris voters nearly 2 to 1

Polls underestimated Republicans in 2016, 2020 and 2024
Final Senate polls overstated Democrats by 3.4, 5.4 and 2.5 points

Polls may be too favorable to Republicans

Trump voters who stop admitting it
Soured Trump voters stop saying they voted for him, so weighting to 2024 inflates his loyalists

Weights frozen at 2024
Past-vote weights and stale party-ID targets miss the electorate's shift toward Democrats

Missing disengaged voters
Low-knowledge Trump voters have swung toward Democrats almost three times as far as high-knowledge ones

Undecideds break against incumbent party
In 2022, voters who were undecided before the election broke 55-45 against the president's party

GOP-aligned pollsters flooding the zone
In 2022 they were over a third of late Senate polls and overstated Republicans by 3.5 points

Polls underestimated Democrats in 2022 and 2025
Final polls overstated Republicans by 2.1 points in 2022 Senate races, and by 8.7 and 5.3 in the 2025 New Jersey and Virginia governor races

67

The Oct. Strength In Numbers/Verasight poll tied for most accurate in predicting House generic ballot

Margin for the Democratic Party minus Republican Party vote shares on the U.S. House generic congressional ballot, compared to actual Democratic margin in the U.S. House popular vote*, likely voter surveys in final 3 weeks of the campaign. Using a predicted margin of 13 points for the Democrats as of 11:30 AM Nov 5,, 2026.

Rank	Pollster	Num. Polls	Missed Dem. margin by
1	**Strength In Numbers/Verasight**	**1**	**−1.0**
1	Big Data Poll	1	−1.0
1	Tufts/YouGov	1	−1.0
4	AtlasIntel	1	1.1
5	Siena Univ/NYT	1	−2.0
6	Verasight/The Argument	1	−2.2
7	Prolific	1	−2.3
8	Emerson	1	−3.0
8	TIPP	1	−3.0
10	YouGov	4	−4.2
11	Cygnal	1	−4.6
12	Clarity	1	−5.0
13	Focaldata	2	−5.0
13	Marist University	1	−5.0
15	Ipsos	3	−5.3
16	Morning Consult	3	−5.7
17	ActiVote	2	−5.8
18	John Zogby Strategies	1	−7.0
19	Echelon Insights	2	−8.0
20	HarrisX/Harris Poll	1	−9.0
21	McCourtney Institute/YouGov	1	−9.0
22	Targoz Market Research	1	−10.0

*AtlasIntel was left off an original version of this chart because their original poll release said they surveyed all adults. They have since clarified they sampled likely voters, and now appear in this chart. **The final survey from The Argument published a rounded lead of D+10 on their published toplines. I have been sent their unrounded lead for Democrats of 11 points. The chart has been updated. This puts them essentially tied with the New York Times.

Source: Strength In Numbers/gelliottmorris.com • Created with Datawrapper

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Where to Get Early Turnout (T.O.)…

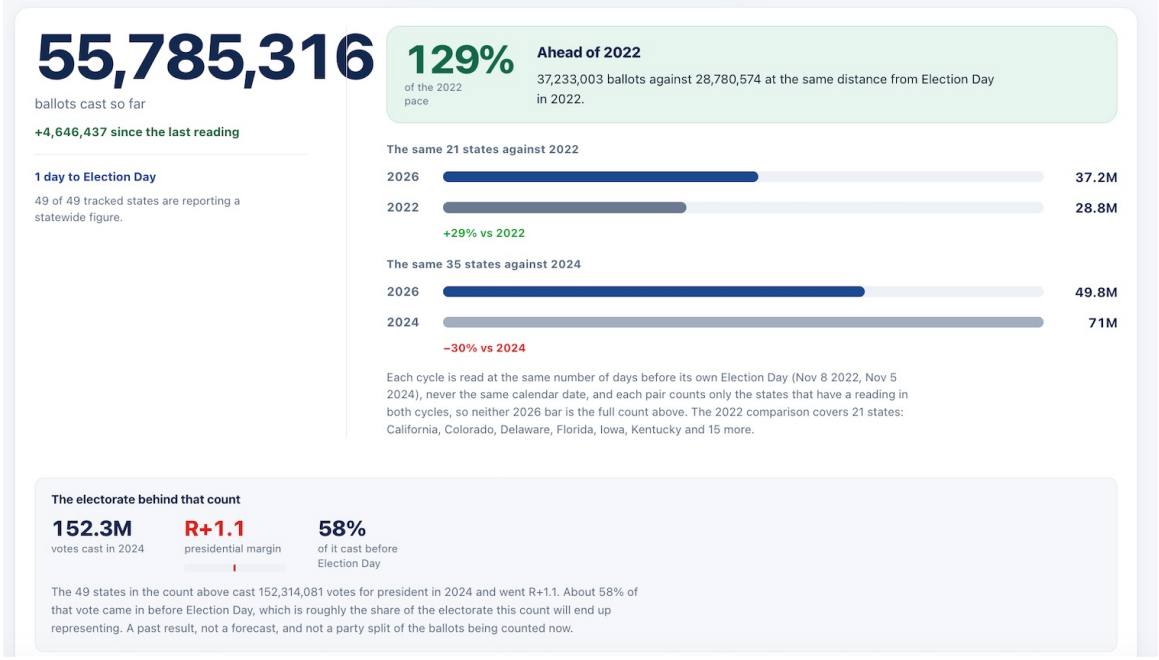


https://election.lab.ufl.edu/early-vote/2026-early-voting/

- ANOTHER EARLY VOTE WEBSITE:

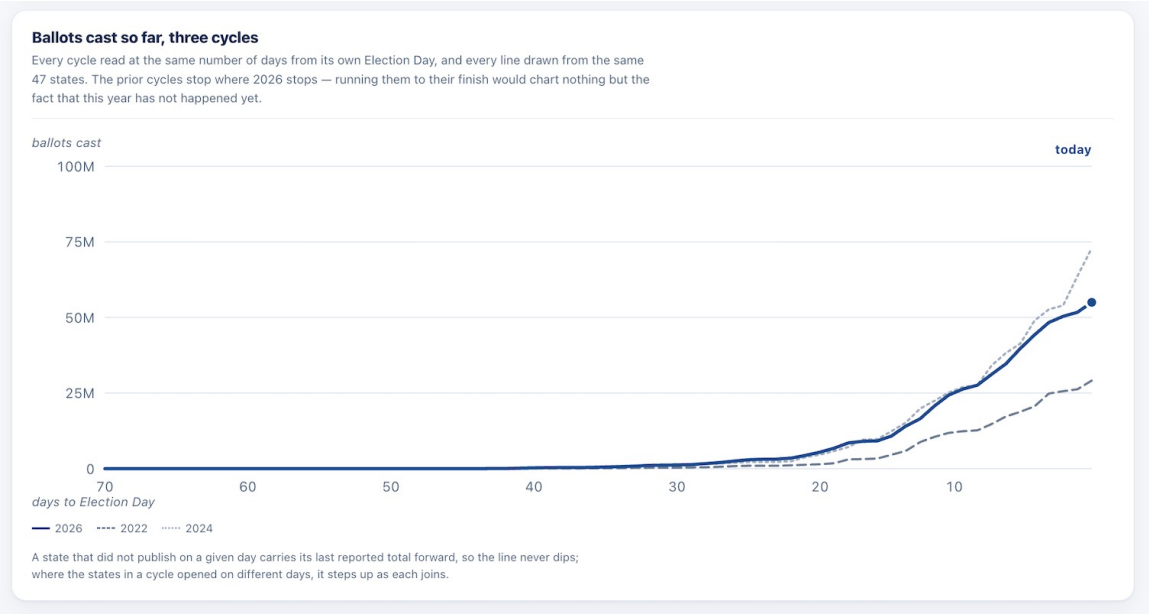
https://electindex.com/early-vote/

69



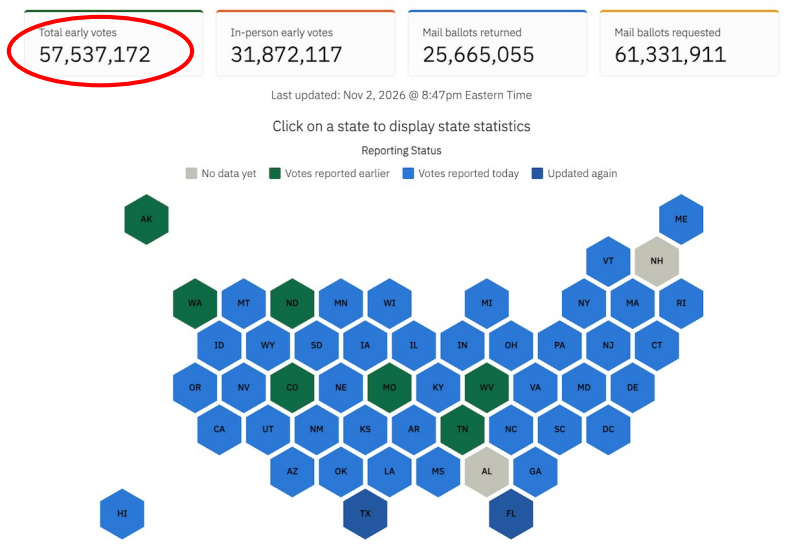
https://electindex.com/early-vote/

70



https://electindex.com/early-vote/

71



Where is the Early Vote?

Navigate here:

https://election.lab.ufl.edu/early-vote/2026-early-voting/

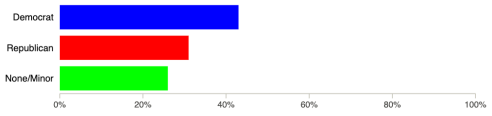
72

Early Vote, Synopsis, 02 NOV 2026

Total Voted by Party Registration

Reporting states with party registration data: AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, ID, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, NE, NV, NJ, NM, NC, OK, OR, PA, RI, SD, UT, WV, WY

Party	Total Voted	Percent
Democrat	12,587,456	43.0 %
Republican	9,188,020	31.4 %
None/Minor	7,477,569	25.6 %
TOTAL	29,253,045	100 %

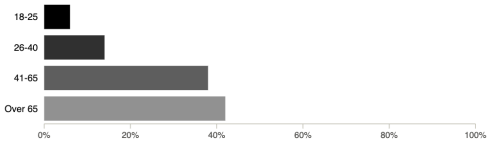


Note: Party registration statistics are for states that have party registration. These statistics are not actual votes. By federal law, election officials do not begin counting ballots until Election Day, although they may start the process of preparing ballots for counting in advance.

Total Voted by Age

Reporting states with age data: CO, CT, DE, GA, ID, IA, KS, MI, NV, NC, OK, PA, RI, VT

Age	Total Voted	Percent
18-25	833,036	6.3 %
26-40	1,826,125	13.8 %
41-65	5,027,447	38.1 %
Over 65	5,509,299	41.8 %
TOTAL	13,195,907	100 %



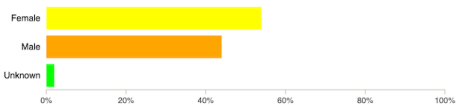
73

Early Vote, Synopsis, 02 NOV 2026

Total Voted by Gender

Reporting states with gender data: CO, GA, ID, KS, LA, MI, NC, WA

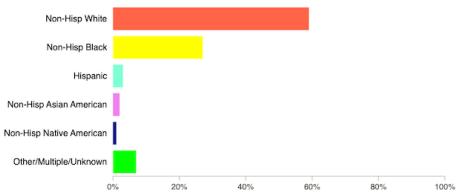
Gender	Total Voted	Percent
Female	6,682,597	54.2 %
Male	5,410,311	43.9 %
Unknown	235,110	1.9 %
TOTAL	12,328,018	100 %



Total Voted by Race and Hispanic Ethnicity

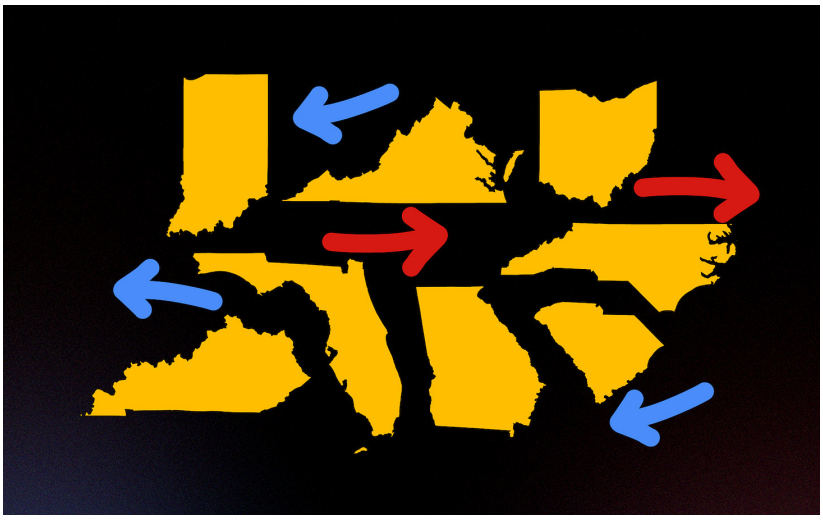
Reporting states with race and Hispanic ethnicity data: GA, LA, NC, SC

Race	Total Voted	Percent
Non-Hisp White	3,684,773	59.3 %
Non-Hisp Black	1,703,299	27.4 %
Hispanic	201,910	3.2 %
Non-Hisp Asian American	130,195	2.1 %
Non-Hisp Native American	32,024	0.5 %
Other/Multiple/Unknown	465,098	7.5 %
TOTAL	6,217,299	100 %



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What to Watch…



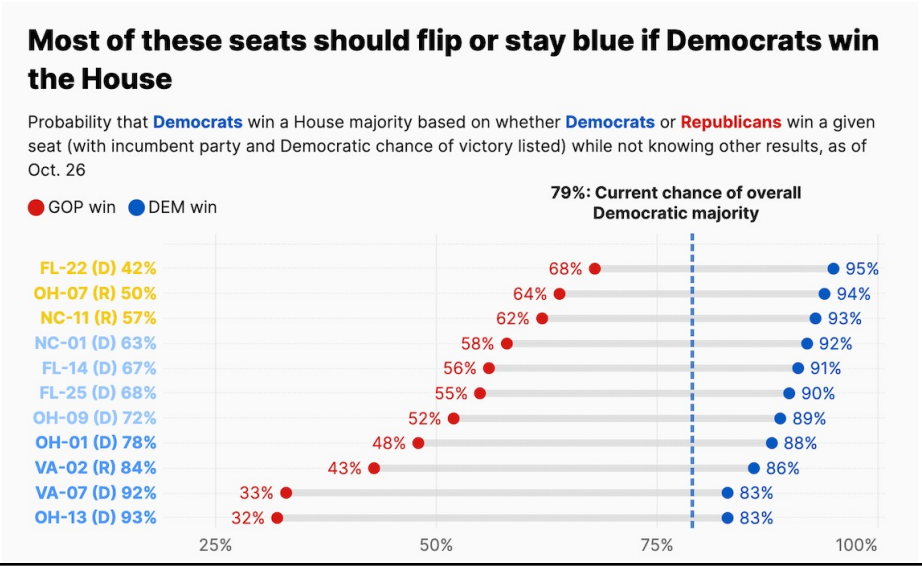
75

The Early, Early Vote Results – Early Signs of Direction?

- Eight states with potentially interesting House races will have mostly or entirely finished voting by 7:30 p.m EST. Eastern: Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, and Virginia.
- Early results in those states will tell us something about the trajectory of midterm elections in the House relative to the baseline set by our forecasting model which gives Democrats a 91% chance of capturing the House.
- The first group will signal if the likely Democratic majority is panning out.
- The second cohort will help indicate if a clearer blue "wave" is actually developing. And the third group includes seats that Democrats generally should not win, but could if things are going especially poorly for the GOP.

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These Seats Should Flip or Stay Blue, if Democrats Win the House



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Key Races to Watch – Then at *What TIME??*

- NC CD-1 vs. NC CD-11
- CO-08
- **New Jersey** and **Alabama** that both report early - will reveal more about swings in purple districts (i.e., New Jersey's 7th District) and turnout among Black voters (Alabama's 2nd District).
- The PA Races:

  PA-1; PA-10; then..PA-7; PA-8
- FL Races:

  FL-9 and FL-22
- TX Races:

  TX-34 & TX-35

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10 Most Competitive U.S. Senate Races:

- Alaska (Sullivan, R)
- Florida (Moody, R)
- Kansas (Marshall, R)
- Iowa (OPEN R)
- Maine (Collins, R)
- Michigan (OPEN D)
- Nebraska (Ricketts, R)
- Ohio (Husted, R)
- South Carolina (Graham, R)
- Texas (OPEN R)

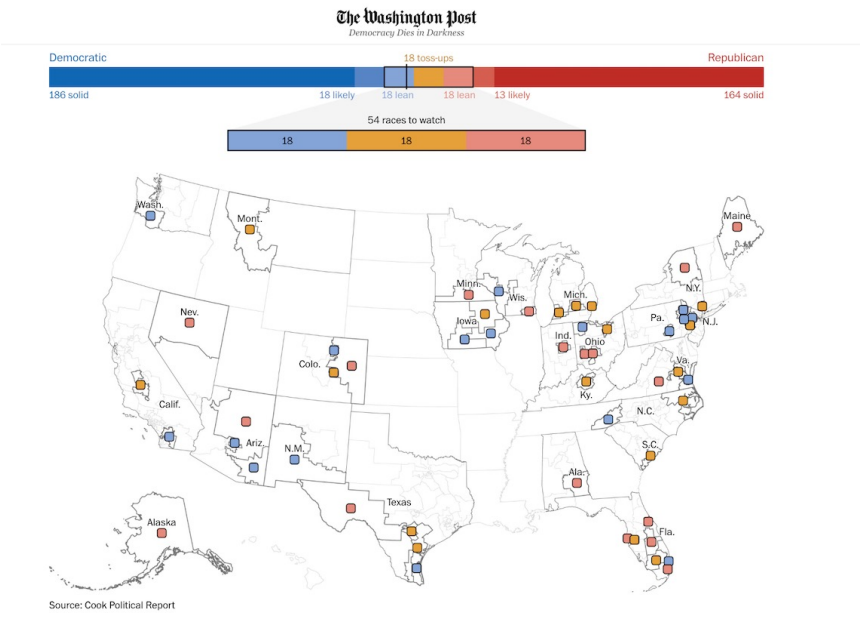
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10 Most Competitive U.S. House Races:

- CO-03 (Hurd, R)
- FL-09 (OPEN D)
- FL-22 (OPEN D)
- IA-02 (OPEN R)
- ME-02 (OPEN D)
- MT-01 (OPEN R)
- OH-07 (Miller, R)
- PA-01 (Fitzpatrick, R)
- TX-15 (De La Cruz, R)
- TX-35 (OPEN D)

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Washington Post, "House Races to Watch," courtesy CPR



Based on: https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/house-race-ratings

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A FUNDAMENTAL REMINDER!!

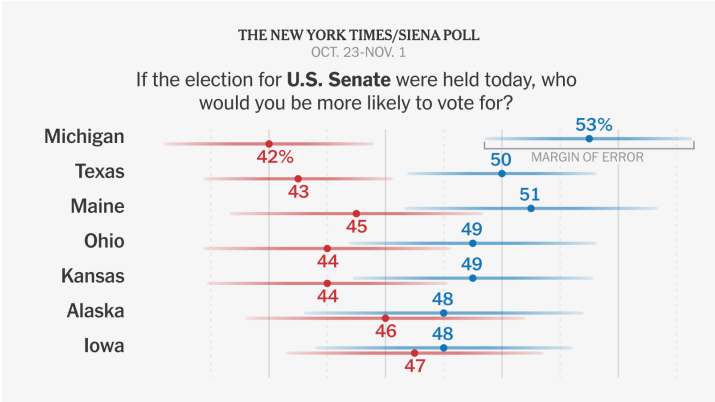
- House seats:
- Number of "Marginals?" vs. "Swing Seats?"
- Expanding vs. Contracting maps?
- Waves are smaller than in the past (: redistricting)
- Blue wave confined to Red states?

- Senate "fundamentals:"
- Party base + "types of independents / leaners"
- Candidate Quality & Ability to self-fund?
- Challengers NEED to be +5 by Halloween
- Blue wave confined to Red states?

KEY QUESTION: Where do competitive Senate seat races have to be by Halloween weekend?

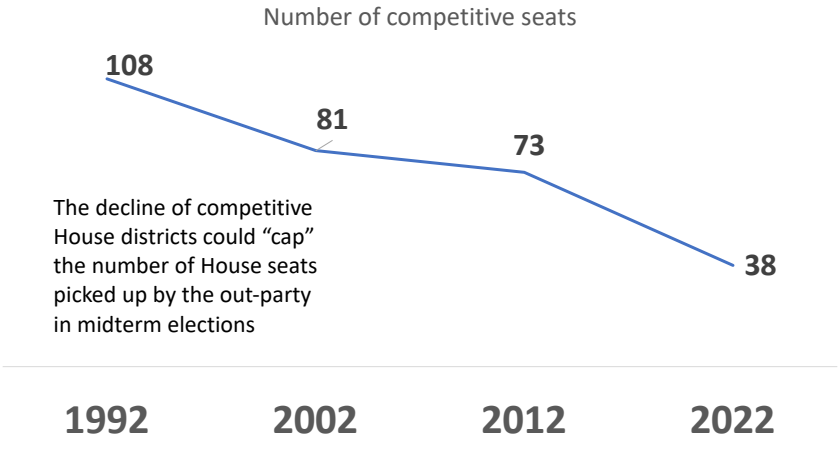
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NYT / Siena Poll



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Reminder: Decline in "Competitive" House Seats



Source: *NY Times*, Feb 7, 2022 for 1992, 2002, and 2002. The 2002 number estimated by author from multiple sources. A competitive seat is defined as one in which the presidential candidates in prior election were within 5 percentage points of each other.

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Part IV

Where to get Information on politics…

Resources on AMERICAN Politics - Looking to 2026 and beyond…

Links on the following pages

Anything further, please Contact me at:

david.mccuan@sonoma.edu

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Where to Find Info.: The Politics of the New Roaring '20s

Websites for General Elections Info.:

- www.thegreenpapers.com
- www.votesmart.org
- http://election.princeton.edu
- www.opensecrets.org (on $$$)
- http://funderscommittee.org/ (Dem. $$)
- www.politico.com
- www.centerforpolitics.org (UVA)
- www.electoralmaps.org
- www.uselectionatlas.org
- www.smartvoter.org
- www.factcheck.org
- www.vote.caltech.edu

- The Election Resource Hub @ MIT:
- https://electionlab.mit.edu/

Websites for Polling…Data…and DD:

- https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/latest-us-opinion-polls
- http://www.ppic.org/survey/
- https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll
- https://igs.berkeley.edu/library/california-ballot-measure-guides
- http://www.iandrinstitute.org/
- http://www.iandrinstitute.org/data.cfm

- https://gking.harvard.edu/electit/#ours_race_rcp_pace-history_err-hist_rp-expected

How to Read Polls, in general, some guidelines:

- https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/here-are-five-questions-ask-when-analyzing-political-polls-n1053401

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What to Consider With All of These Polls?

Polling Resources:

- https://fiftyplusone.news/latest-polls
- https://www.natesilver.net/p/trump-approval-ratings-nate-silver-bulletin
- https://morningconsult.com/articles/tag/political
- https://www.thegreenpapers.com/
- https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/latest-us-opinion-polls
- http://www.ppic.org/survey/
- https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll
- https://www.pewresearch.org/u-s-surveys/
- https://ssrs.com/ssrs-solutions/voter-poll/

How to Read Polls, in general, some guidelines:

- https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/here-are-five-questions-ask-when-analyzing-political-polls-n1053401

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What are "Midterm Elections?" Tools to Arm Yourself for the 2026 Midterms:

On All Things Midterms of 2026:

- https://statesunited.org/resources/2026-midterm-elections-resource-hub/
- https://www.usvotefoundation.org/when-are-2026-midterm-elections-and-what-their-purpose
- Factcheck.org
- https://www.us.vote/how-to-vote
- https://www.usvotefoundation.org/

On All Things Redistricting:

- Moritz Law School, The Ohio State:
- http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/election-law/information-analysis/
- Loyola School of Law:
- http://redistricting.lls.edu/
- The Brennan Center, NYU School of Law:
- http://www.brennancenter.org/

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More Websites for Politics & Elections Info.

- elections.gmu.edu
- www.pollster.com
- www.gallup.com
- www.pollsandvotes.com
- www.cqpolitics.com
- www.rollcall.com ; www.thehill.com
- www.fivethirtyeight.com
- www.pewresearch.org
- http://blog.lib.umn.edu/cspg/smartpolitics/

Just on money / $$$ below:

- www.opensecrets.org
- www.maplight.org
- www.followthemoney.org
- www.campaignfinance.org

Top CA Elections Resources:

- CVF Online Guide:
- www.calvoter.org
- https://calvoter.org/covg
- Voter's Edge:
- http://votersedge.org/
- https://votersedge.org/ca/
- Official CA Voter's Guide:
- http://www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov/
- California Choices Guide:
- http://www.californiachoices.org
- CA Dept. of Finance, Demographic Research Unit:
- http://www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/

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Top CA Elections Resources: NOV 2026 CA Resources

- CVF Online Guide:

www.calvoter.org

https://calvoter.org/covg

- **Voter's Edge**: KEY, HELPFUL RESOURCE FOR ALL OF US!

http://votersedge.org/

https://votersedge.org/ca/

- Official CA Voter's Guide:

http://www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov/

- California Choices Guide:

http://www.californiachoices.org

- CA Dept. of Finance, Demographic Research Unit:

http://www.dof.ca.gov/Forecasting/Demographics/

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Where to Monitor Social Media (SM) Trends on Campaigns, Elections, & Politics?

Observatory on Social Media, Indiana U.

OSoMe ("awe•some") highlights the results of a broad research project aimed to study information diffusion in social media. Site has tools to explore how people spread ideas through online social networks.

https://osome.iu.edu/

Center for an Informed Public (CIP), U. of Washington

The Center for an Informed Public is an interdisciplinary research initiative at the University of Washington that helps individuals, communities, and institutions navigate our complex information environments.

https://www.cip.uw.edu/research/

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On Polling & Polling "Error" in 2024

- Pew Public Opinion Polling Basics:
  - https://www.pewresearch.org/course/public-opinion-polling-basics/

and

- Washington Post (WaPo) Polling Averages Methodology, Pres Elections:
  - https://www.washingtonpost.com/elections/2024/06/26/presidential-polling-averages-methodology/

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