



## Election 2024: Changes in Conditions Affecting Down Ballot Races & Δ in Public Opinion

**OLLI Fall 2024  
Class #3**

**Wednesday, 02 October 2024**



David McCuan, Professor & Graduate Coordinator  
Sonoma State University  
Department of Political Science  
Email: [david.mccuan@sonoma.edu](mailto:david.mccuan@sonoma.edu)



1



**Slides, for each week, are sent to [Grace Burroughs](mailto:Grace.Burroughs@sonoma.edu) for You All**

**Additional questions, comments, & concerns to:**

**[david.mccuan@sonoma.edu](mailto:david.mccuan@sonoma.edu)**



2

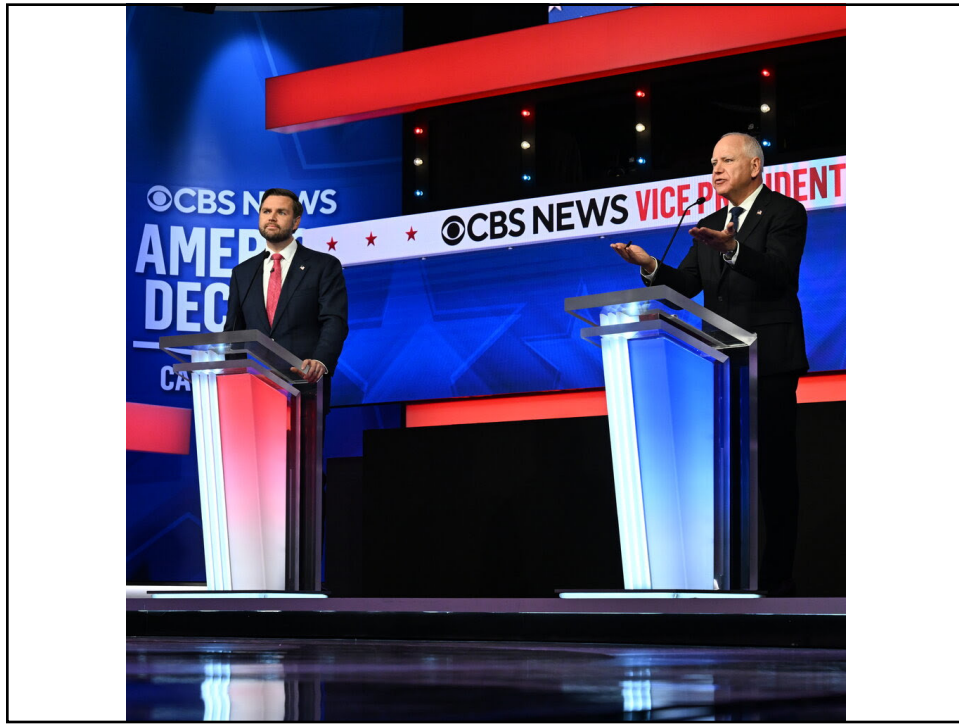
## Here's Our Plan for Each Week of the Course: We Take a Break, Halfway, Each Weekly Session

- ~~Class #1, 18 SEPT 2024:~~
  - What matters to watch over the next eight weeks?;
  - What to make of this close race?;
  - Where to get information?
- ~~Class #2, 25 SEPT 2024:~~
  - Deep dive into polling and public opinion formation;
  - Focus on the "Culture Wars" in American politics
  - Guest Speaker, 10:05-10:45 over Zoom;
- **Class #3, 02 OCT 2024:**
  - Briefly more on Public Opinion;
  - VP Debate Wrap-up;
  - Down-ballot races & sub-national elections;
  - How having kids in school matters for the vote;
- Class #4, 09 OCT 2024:
  - Direct Legislation & voting in CA;
  - CA politics-focus;
  - Guest Speaker (Over Zoom, Assemblyman Jim Wood);
- Class #5, 16 OCT 2024:
  - Guest Speaker: Congressman Mike Thompson, in-class
  - Consequences of the Three Presidencies Hypothesis;
  - State of the Race & Issues vs. Ideology
- Class #6, 23 OCT 2024:
  - Guest Speaker: Ben Shultz, American Sunlight Project
  - Artificial Intelligence (AI) discussion;
  - Mal-, mis-, and disinformation in elections;
  - What to watch Election NIGHT & Week?
  - What happens after the race?

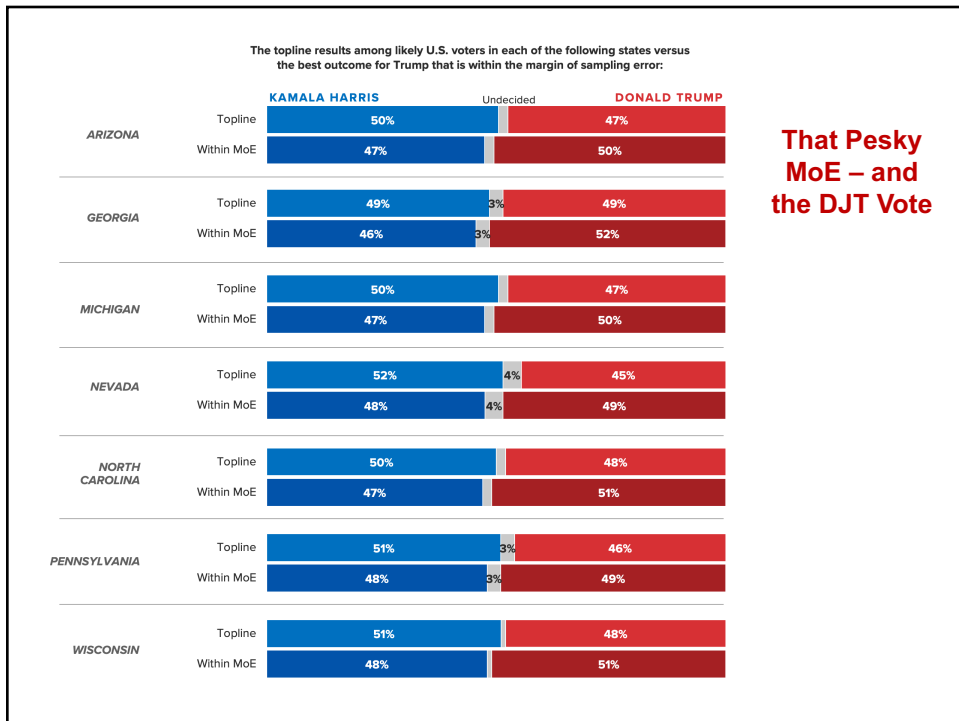
3

## Given Events of the Last 24 Hours, Where Can We Go To Get Inside Information & the "Latest D.C. Thinking?"

4



5



6

## The Plan This Day, Class #3

- Part I: Briefly a bit more on Public Opinion & its role in American elections and politics; the Zaller “RAS” Model; divides & challenges of “electioneering vs governing;”
- Part II: Overview on the race, post-VP Debate; still focusing on WHAT TRENDS MATTER in shaping the 2024 elections;
- Last two weeks, we began to examine the conditions & expectations affecting the Politics of 2024 onwards to 2028 along with WHAT TO WATCH this year & moving forward?
- In Part III for TODAY: We focus on....the BIFURCATION OF THE VOTE – the “SILOING” of the vote
- Thinking about 2016, 2020, and onto to 2024, we can compare votes cast and voting trends in the 2024 presidential election with those of previous races.
- HOWEVER – how will / is this changing for 2024 to 2028 and beyond?
- Part IV: Your Role in the Political Socialization of this nation



7

## Recall Our Focus Last Week...We Start With...

- Our politics right now are defined by three things: **partisanship**, **polarization**, and **parity**;
- Most voters are partisans, and **partisanship** determines your political attitude more than anything else.
- You may change your mind(s) even on issues they care a lot about (like abortion), then change the party they identify with.
- This leads to **polarization**, where Democrats hate Republicans more than they ever did before, and Republicans hate Democrats more than they ever did before.
- And then you have **parity**, which is that the two parties are basically even in terms of identification – which makes it very hard to move voters.

8

## Part I: An Introduction to Public Opinion

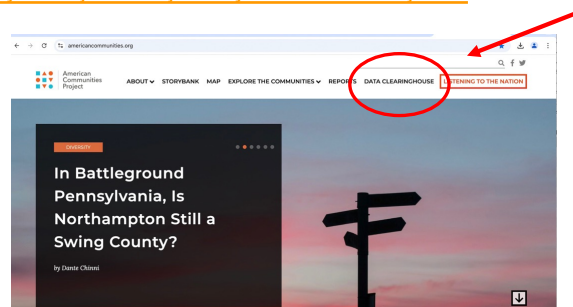
- Public Opinion
  - The distribution of the population’s beliefs about politics and policy issues
- “Demographics as Destiny”
  - The science of population changes frames the above distribution
- U.S. Census – Critical Element of State, as well as Midterm, and National Presidential Elections
  - A valuable tool for understanding population changes
  - Required every 10 years by the Constitution
  - Use the product, “[American Community Survey](#)” (ACS) and a separate, independent companion, “[American Communities Project](#)”

9

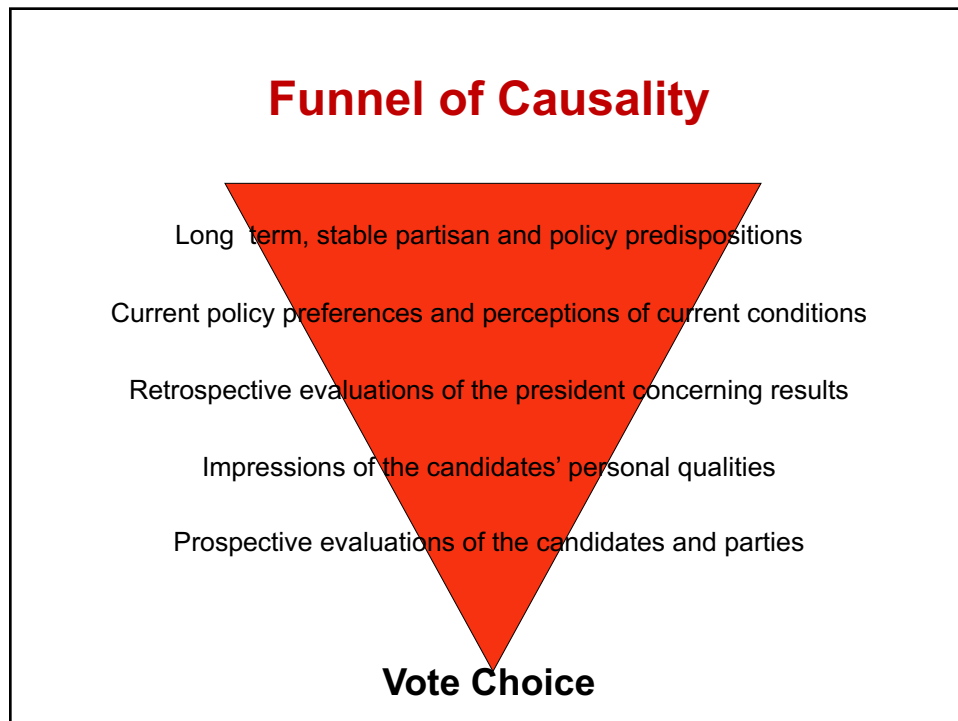
## The “American Communities Project”

- Check this out:

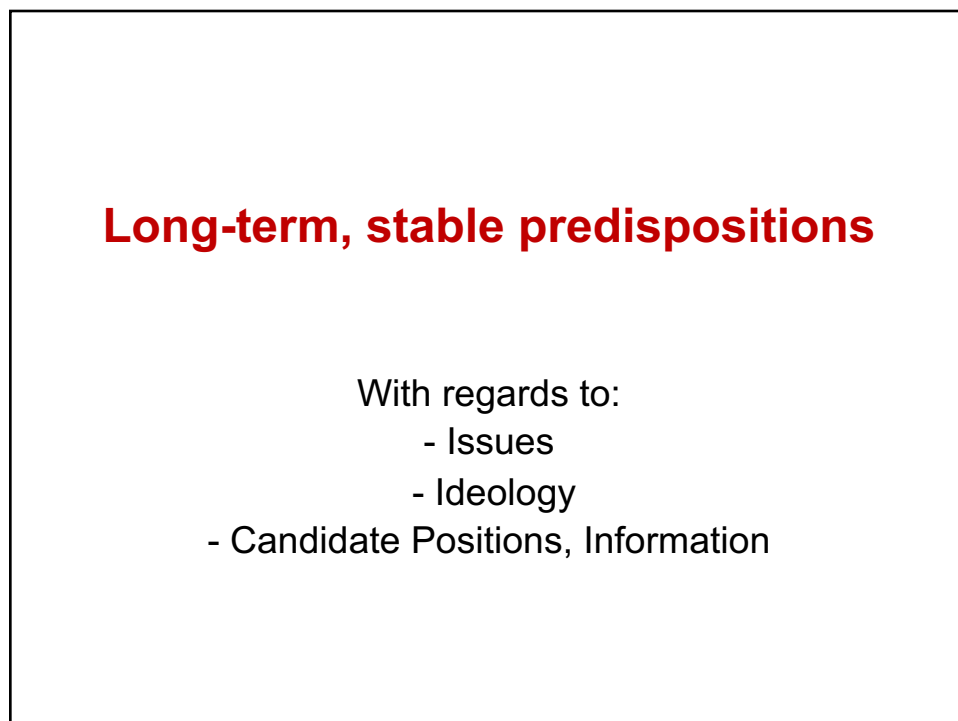
[https://app.americancommunities.org/?\\_gl=1%2a1qs21hl%2a\\_ga%2aMzUwOTg0MDY0LjE3MjcwMzI5NiI.%2a\\_ga\\_72CXLLPW01%2aMTcyNzAzMjk2MS4xLjAuMTcyNzAzMzAxNC4wLjAuMA...](https://app.americancommunities.org/?_gl=1%2a1qs21hl%2a_ga%2aMzUwOTg0MDY0LjE3MjcwMzI5NiI.%2a_ga_72CXLLPW01%2aMTcyNzAzMjk2MS4xLjAuMTcyNzAzMzAxNC4wLjAuMA...)



10



11



12

## John Zaller's RAS Model\*

Receive, Accept, Sample

1. Reception Axiom  
The greater the person's level of cognitive engagement with an issue the more likely he or she is to be exposed to and comprehend — in a word, to receive — political messages concerning that issue.
2. Resistance Axiom  
People tend to resist arguments that are inconsistent with their political predispositions, but they do so only to the extent that they possess the contextual information necessary to perceive a relationship between the message and their predispositions.
3. Accessibility Axiom  
The more recently a consideration has been called to mind or thought about, the less time it takes to retrieve that consideration or related considerations from memory and bring them to the top of the head for use.
4. Response Axiom  
Individuals answer survey questions by averaging across the considerations that are immediately salient or accessible to them.

\*Source: Zaller, John R. (1992) *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

13

## John Zaller's RAS Model\*

Receive, Accept, Sample

1. **Reception** Axiom
2. **Resistance** Axiom
3. **Accessibility** Axiom
4. **Response** Axiom

\*Source: Zaller, John R. (1992) *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Let's look at this [in practice over a few specific elections](#)....

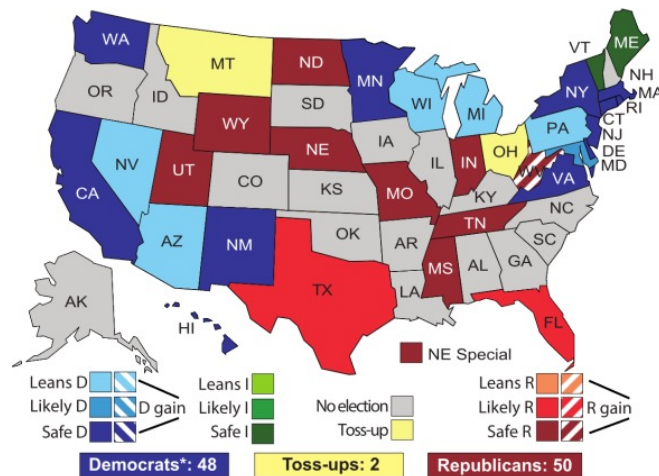
14

## Down-Ballot Elections – The KEY Differences

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. Federal:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Challengers &amp; Cand. Types</li> <li>– U.S. House vs.</li> <li>– U.S. Senate</li> <li>+</li> <li>– M.C.D. (CF / \$\$\$)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The States:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– SCOs vs.</li> <li>– Direct Legislation (or DD) vs.</li> <li>– "The Locals" +</li> <li>– M.C.D. (CF / \$\$\$)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|--|---|

15

### U.S. Senate Map as of 05 SEPT...watch change of Montana on 06 SEPT – Next Slide



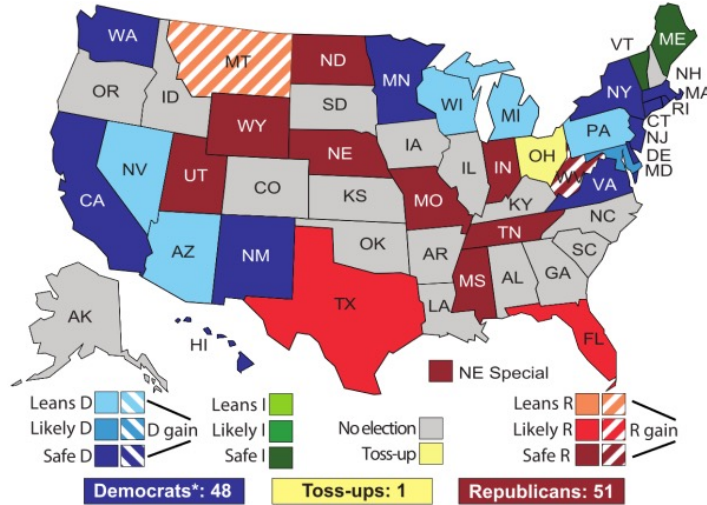
Notes: \*Angus King (I-ME) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) caucus with the Democrats in the Senate, so their seats are counted in the Democratic column. © 2024 Center for Politics at UVA

16

16



Sabato's UVA, Center for Politics, US Senate Map, 06 SEPT 2024

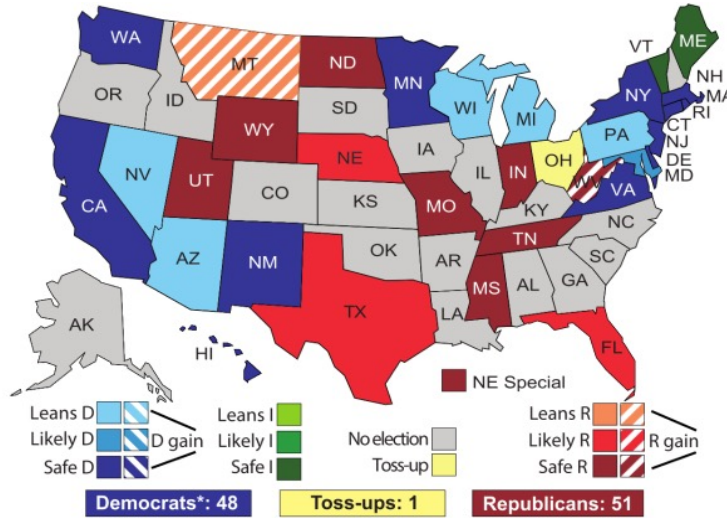


Notes: \*Angus King (I-ME) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) caucus with the Democrats in the Senate, so their seats are counted in the Democratic column.  
© 2024 Center for Politics at UVA

17

17

Sabato's UVA, Center for Politics, US Senate Map, 25 SEPT 2024



Notes: \*Angus King (I-ME) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) caucus with the Democrats in the Senate, so their seats are counted in the Democratic column.  
© 2024 Center for Politics at UVA

18

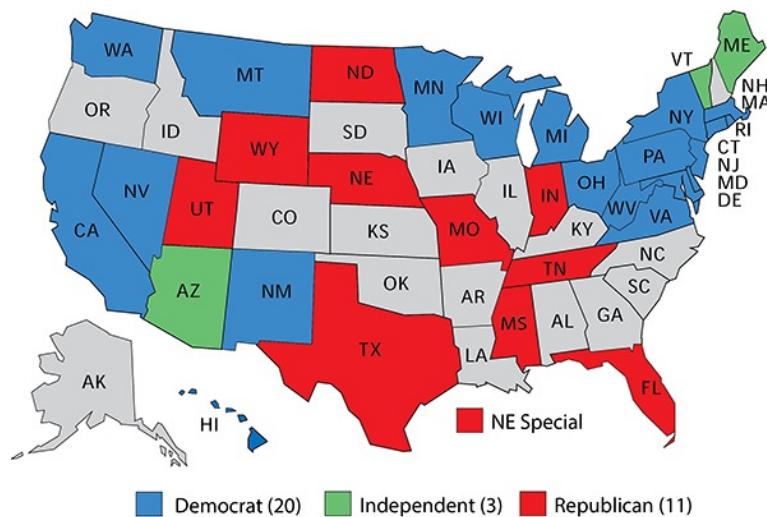
## US Senate Outlook, Mid-Sept 2024

- Republicans remain favored to flip the Senate majority this year;
- Democrats are still in the game, but need to win **all** the closest races just to get to 50-50, and are likely behind in at least one of those races, Montana;
- In addition, the OH US Senate race (Democrat Sherrod Brown's re-election race) is too close to call; and
- There is also the Democrats' "VULNERABILITY Index" of 20-23 seats vs. the GOP's 11 seats.

19

19

## Democrats Defending A LOT of Turf in NOV 2024

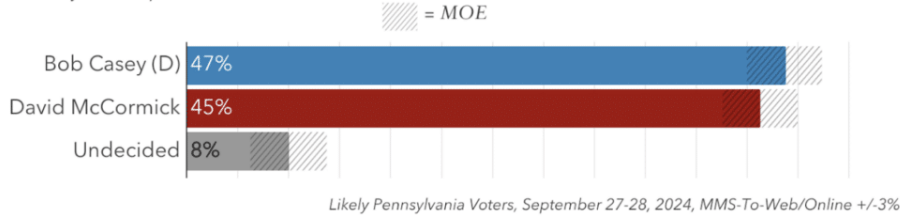


20

## Released THIS A.M. @ 0708

### PENNSYLVANIA POLL

In the U.S. Senate election between Democrat Bob Casey and Republican David McCormick, who would you vote for at this time?

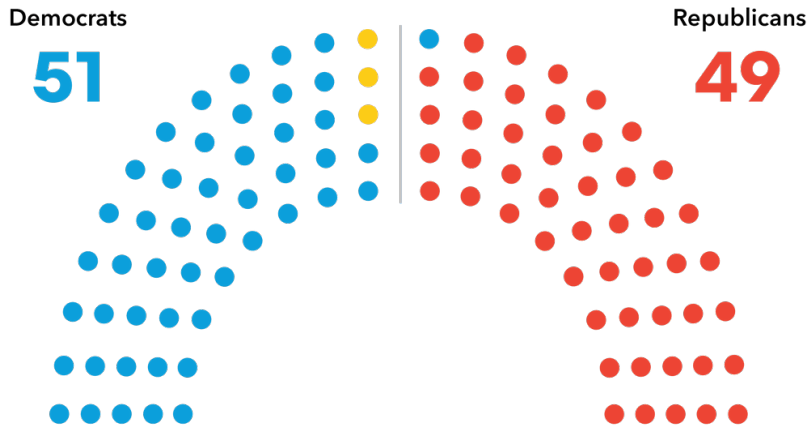


The Pennsylvania US Senate election is really close:  
 47% support incumbent Democratic Senator Bob Casey, while 45% support Republican David McCormick;  
 8% are undecided

21

## US Senate Current BOP, Sept 2024

### Senate Balance of Power



22

## House Outlook, 2024

Republicans		
TOSS-UP (9)	LEANS REPUBLICAN (9)	LIKELY REPUBLICAN (11)
Juan Ciscomani (AZ-6)	Ken Calvert (CA-41)	Kevin Kiley (CA-3)
David Schweikert (AZ-1)	Michelle Steel (CA-45)	Young Kim (CA-40)
John Duarte (CA-13)	M. Miller-Meeks (IA-1)	CO-3 Open (Boebert)
Mike Garcia (CA-27)	Zach Nunn (IA-3)	Anna Paulina Luna (FL-13)
David Valadao (CA-22)	John James (MI-10)	Maria Elvira Salazar (FL-27)
Don Bacon (NE-2)	Ryan Zinke (MT-1)	Nick LaLota (NY-1)
Mike Lawler (NY-17)	Tom Kean Jr. (NJ-7)	Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-1)
Marc Molinaro (NY-19)	Scott Perry (PA-10)	Andy Ogles (TN-5)
L. Chavez-DeRemer (OR-5)	Jen Kiggans (VA-2)	Monica De La Cruz (TX-15)
		Bryan Steil (WI-1)
		Derrick Van Orden (WI-3)

SAFE REPUBLICAN FLIPS (3)
NC-14 Open (Jackson)
NC-6 Open (Manning)
NC-13 Open (Nickel)

Total seats rated Safe Republican: 191  
 Total seats rated Safe, Likely, or Leans R: 211

Democrats		
TOSS-UP (10)	LEANS DEMOCRATIC (14)	LIKELY DEMOCRATIC (16)
CA-47 Open (Porter)	Mary Peltola (AK-AL)	AL-2 Open (Moore)
Yadira Caraveo (CO-8)	Jahana Hayes (CT-5)	Josh Harder (CA-9)
Jared Golden (ME-2)	Frank Mrvan (IN-1)	Mike Levin (CA-49)
MI-7 Open (Slotkin)	Eric Sorensen (IL-17)	Sharice Davids (KS-3)
MI-8 Open (Kildee)	Angie Craig (MN-2)	MD-6 Open (Trone)
Don Davis (NC-1)	Gabe Vasquez (NM-2)	Hillary Scholten (MI-3)
Emilia Sykes (OH-13)	Anthony D'Esposito (NY-4)	NH-2 Open (Kuster)
Matt Cartwright (PA-8)	Pat Ryan (NY-18)	Chris Pappas (NH-1)
Susan Wild (PA-7)	Brandon Williams (NY-22)	Susie Lee (NV-3)
M. Gluesenkamp Perez (WA-3)	Marcy Kaptur (OH-9)	Steven Horsford (NV-4)
	Chris Deluzio (PA-17)	Dina Titus (NV-1)
	Henry Cuellar (TX-28)	Tom Suozzi (NY-3)
	Vicente Gonzalez (TX-34)	Greg Landsman (OH-1)
	VA-7 Open (Spanberger)	Val Hoyle (OR-4)
		Andrea Salinas (OR-6)
		Kim Schrier (WA-8)

SAFE DEMOCRATIC FLIP (1)
Garret Graves (LA-6)

Total seats rated Safe Democratic: 175  
 Total seats rated Safe, Likely, or Leans D: 205

23

## For Classes #2 & #3, We Draw Heavily From:

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

and

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

24