

Inside Elections

with

Nathan L. Gonzales

Nonpartisan Analysis

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2026 Gubernatorial Overview: Open Seat Bonanza

By Jacob Rubashkin

Governors are back in the national spotlight as state-level Republicans push forward an unprecedented mid-decade gerrymandering campaign and Democrats scramble to counter with their own redraws, with future presidential contenders such as California's Gavin Newsom, Florida's Ron DeSantis, Maryland's Wes Moore and Texas' Greg Abbott taking center stage and flexing their political muscles ahead of a bruising midterm.

The ongoing redistricting battle is a helpful reminder to the outsize role of governors not only in their own state's affairs but on the national political scene as well. With a few exceptions, only states where one party has a "trifecta" of both houses of the legislature and the governor's office have the opportunity to aggressively gerrymander.

Thirty-eight states will hold gubernatorial elections over the next 15 months. Virginia and New Jersey kick things off this November, and will provide the largest electoral test to date of the political environment of the second Donald Trump administration halfway to the midterms. Democrats are favored to win both states, but how much they win by and who shows up to vote may be more telling than the overall result.

Another 17 governors are headed for the exits next November. That's largely due to term limits, but a few governors — Iowa's Kim Reynolds and Wisconsin's Tony Evers — are choosing not to run again, ratcheting up the competitiveness of those states.

The map is wide, and the most competitive states are largely the usual suspects. As *Inside Elections* rolls out its more specific ratings categories, four states earn initial toss-up ratings: Arizona, Michigan, Kansas, and Wisconsin. Three of those four are swing states at the federal level. Kansas, where Democrats are hoping to hold onto unfavorable terrain, is the odd one out, showing that gubernatorial outcomes don't always conform to partisanship. But it stands alone among the most competitive races in that regard, a sign that even gubernatorial races aren't immune to the ongoing rise of polarization.

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2025-26 Governor Ratings

Toss-up (4D)

KS Open (Kelly, D)
MI Open (Whitmer, D)

WI Open (Evers, D)
Hobbs (D-Ariz.)

Tilt Democratic

Tilt Republican (2R)

GA Open (Kemp, R)
Lombardo (R-Nev.)

Lean Democratic (2D)

NJ Open (Murphy, D) 2025
VA Open (Youngkin, R)# 2025

Lean Republican

Likely Democratic (5D)

ME Open (Mills, D)
NM Open (Lujan-Grisham, D)
Hochul (D-N.Y.)
Shapiro (D-Penn.)
Walz (D-Minn.)

Likely Republican (1R)

IA Open (Reynolds, R)

Solid Democratic (9D)

CA Open (Newsom, D)
CO Open (Polis, D)
Green (D-Hawaii)
Healey (D-Mass.)
Kotek (D-Ore.)
Lamont (D-Ct.)
McKee (D-R.I.)
Moore (D-Md.)
Pritzker (D-Ill.)

Solid Republican (15R)

AK Open (Dunleavy, R)
AL Open (Ivey, R)
FL Open (DeSantis, R)
OH Open (DeWine, R)
OK Open (Stitt, R)
SC Open (McMaster, R)
TN Open (Lee, R)
WY Open (Gordon, R)
Abbott (R-Texas)
Ayotte (R-N.H.)
Huckabee Sanders (R-Ark.)
Little (R-Idaho)
Pillen (R-Neb.)
Rhoden (R-S.D.)
Scott (R-Vt.)

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

CALENDAR

Sept. 9	Virginia's 11th District Special General Election
Sept. 23	Arizona's 7th District Special General Election
Oct. 7	Tennessee's 7th District Special Primary Elections
Nov. 4	Texas' 18th District Special Primary Election
Nov. 4	New Jersey & Virginia Gubernatorial Elections
Dec. 2	Tennessee's 7th District Special General Election

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Report Shorts

Connecticut's 1st District. State Rep. Jillian Gilchrist filed to run, but it's not clear whether she's planning to challenge long-time Rep. John Larson in the Democratic primary or expects there to be an open seat. Roll Call's Daniela Altamari pointed out that Gilchrist took on the West Hartford Democratic machine and defeated a 12-term incumbent in 2018. Solid Democratic.

Florida's 3rd District. GOP Rep. Kat Cammack became the fourteenth woman to give birth while serving in Congress when she and her husband welcomed a daughter last week. Solid Republican.

Iowa's 2nd District. State Rep. Lindsay James announced her campaign. She's been a minister in the Bay Area, a college chaplain in Massachusetts and an adjunct professor at the University of Dubuque. She succeeded Democrat Abby Finkenauer in the state House when Finkenauer was elected to Congress. This could be an open seat if GOP Sen. Joni Ernst does not seek re-election and Rep. Ashley Hinson runs for that seat. Likely Republican.

Maine Senate. Marine veteran/oyster farmer/Tune Inn bartender/political outsider Graham Planter announced his campaign with a profile piece in The New York Times. He faces former Katie Porter chief of staff Jordan Wood in the Democratic race that is awaiting the decision on whether Gov. Janet Mills will run. Republicans expect Sen. Susan Collins to run again, but she won't likely make her plans official until December. Tilt Republican.

Texas' 21st District. GOP Rep. Chip Roy is running for state Attorney General, opening up his seat. The current iteration of the district voted for Trump with 61 percent, while the new district, redrawn by Republicans this month, would have given the president 58 percent. So the most important race will be the primary. Solid Republican.

Utah Redistricting. A Utah district court invalidated the Beehive State's congressional map and ordered the state legislature to offer a remedial map that adheres to the fair districts standards that voters approved in 2018. The GOP-dominated state legislature has until Sept. 24 to propose new maps, but Republicans may try to slow down the process with appeals to prevent a new map from going into effect before the 2026 elections. A new map could give Democrats a pickup opportunity in the Salt Lake County area.

2026 Senate Ratings	
Toss-up (3)	
MI Open (Peters, D)	Ossoff (D-Ga.)
NC Open (Tillis, R)	
Tilt Democratic (0)	Tilt Republican (1)
	Collins (R-Maine)
Lean Democratic (1)	Lean Republican (1)
NH Open (Shaheen, D)	Husted (R-Ohio)
Likely Democratic (1)	Likely Republican (2)
MN Open (Smith, DFL)	Ernst (R-Iowa)
	Cornyn (R-Texas)
Solid Democratic (9)	Solid Republican (17)
IL Open (Durbin, D)	AL Open (Tuberville, R)
Booker (D-N.J.)	KY Open (McConnell, R)
Coons (D-Del.)	Capito (R-W.V.)
Hickenlooper (D-Colo.)	Cassidy (R-Lou.)
Lujan (D-N.M.)	Cotton (R-Ark.)
Markey (D-Mass.)	Daines (R-Mont.)
Merkley (D-Ore.)	Graham (R-S.C.)
Reed (D-R.I.)	Hagerty (R-Tenn.)
Warner (D-Va.)	Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.)
	Lummis (R-Wyo.)
	Marshall (R-Kan.)
	Moody (R-Fl.)
	Mullin (R-Okla.)
	Ricketts (R-Neb.)
	Risch (R-Idaho)
	Rounds (R-S.D.)
	Sullivan (R-Ak.)
Takeovers in <i>Italics</i> , # moved benefiting Democrats, * moved benefiting Republicans	

Michigan Senate. Former state House Speaker Joe Tate dropped out of the race on Monday and endorsed Rep. Haley Stevens. Tate was a lower tier candidate, so his impact previously and now was and is limited, but it narrows the Democratic primary field to Stevens, state Sen, Mallory McMorrow and Abdul El-Sayed. The winner will face 2024 Senate nominee/former Rep. Mike Rogers in the general election. Toss-up. **IE**

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ALABAMA. Open; Kay Ivey (R), term-limited. Filing deadline Jan. 23. Primary May 19. Runoff (if necessary) June 16. Sen. Tommy Tuberville has essentially cleared the field of any GOP opposition, and barring any surprises will be the next governor. The only thing that could make this race remotely interesting is if former Sen. Doug Jones runs as a Democrat; he left the possibility open earlier this year. For now, 2022 Senate nominee Will Boyd is the most prominent Democrat running. Solid Republican.

ALASKA. Open; Mike Dunleavy (R), term-limited. Filing deadline June 1. Primary Aug. 18. Democrats are waiting on former Rep. Mary Peltola to decide whether to run for governor or for Senate. Peltola is in no rush (she's a fellow at the Univ. of Chicago's Institute of Politics this fall) but her ultimate choice will set the parameters for both races. If she runs for governor, she could easily begin the race as the polling frontrunner and give Democrats their best chance at winning the top job in the top state since the Tony Knowles era two decades ago. That's because she's well-known, well-liked, and would clear the Democratic field of serious opponents, while Republicans sort through a mass of contenders; those are the same ingredients to her 2022 House victories. One other Democrat, former state Sen. Tom Begich, isn't waiting for Peltola to make up her mind. The member of Alaska's most prominent political family (his father and nephew have served in the House, while his brother served in the Senate) said he'll leave the race if Peltola enters but thinks that she's going to run for Senate instead.

While Peltola observes from the sidelines, seven Republicans are running credible campaigns with at least one more to join. Bernadette Wilson, a political operative well known in GOP circles, former revenue commissioner Adam Crum, and former state Attorney General Treg Taylor (not officially in the race yet) make up the top tier of candidates. Lt. Gov. Nancy Dahlstrom is also running, and while she has some name ID she'll have to overcome an embarrassing third-place finish in the 2024 House race despite the backing of much of the DC political establishment. Former state Sen. Click Bishop is probably the most moderate member of the field, and at times caucused with a bipartisan coalition in the state legislature. In contrast, state Sen. Shelley Hughes led the small all-GOP minority in the upper chamber from 2023-2025. Mat-Su Mayor Edna DeVries and state medical board member Matt Heilala, a podiatrist, round out the GOP field.

Alaska's unique electoral system means all candidates run on the same ballot in the primary, regardless of party, so voters could face dozens of choices next August. The top four vote-getters advance to a November ranked-choice voting election. Solid Republican, but could become more competitive for Democrats depending on the candidates.

ARIZONA. Katie Hobbs (D), elected 2022 (50%). Filing deadline April 6. Primary Aug. 4. Rep. Andy Biggs is the polling frontrunner in the GOP primary, but businesswoman Karrin Taylor Robson has significant personal resources at her disposal. Trump ultimately endorsed both candidates after previously signaling his support for Robson last year. 1st District Rep. David Schweikert recently floated a gubernatorial bid but it's not obvious what opening the Scottsdale congressman would have. And he'd be vacating a swing House seat at a moment when the White House has been pressuring vulnerable members to stay in their districts rather than run statewide.

Hobbs won a narrow victory in 2022 but will have to contend with Arizona's persistent GOP lean. She has been stockpiling cash ahead of the general election and could enjoy a significant financial advantage over Biggs, though likely not Robson. Toss-up.

ARKANSAS. Sarah Huckabee Sanders (R), elected 2022 (63%). Filing deadline Nov. 11. Primary March 3. Runoff (if necessary) March 31. Huckabee Sanders won't face serious opposition for either the GOP nomination or the general election next year. State Sen. Fred Love is running as a Democrat. Solid Republican.

CALIFORNIA. Open; Gavin Newsom (D), term-limited. Filing deadline March 6. Primary June 2. A clown-car primary field got a little clarity when former Vice President Kamala Harris took herself



Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

Katie Porter

out of the running earlier this summer. The 2024 presidential hopeful would have likely cleared the Democratic field. Another erstwhile frontrunner, Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis followed suit soon after. That narrowed the pack down to just

seven notable Democrats: former state Senate president pro temp Toni Atkins, former Health and Human Services Secretary/state Attorney General Xavier Becerra, former Rep. Katie Porter, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, former state Controller Betty Yee, state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond, and self-funding timeshare company owner Stephen Clooback.

While Porter is the polling and fundraising leader, she's not viewed as an overwhelming frontrunner by many Democratic operatives, who note that her 2024 Senate campaign ultimately struggled to gain traction and that she is not popular among the state's elected Democrats. But she begins with real advantages given the massive field and California's all-party primary. At the moment, the field is incredibly fluid and still subject to change; Los Angeles billionaire Rick Caruso has left the door open to running after coming up short in his mayoral campaign a few years ago. And Sen. Alex Padilla hasn't ruled it out either.

The two most notable Republicans are Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco and former Fox News host/political operative Steve Hilton. But a dozen or more other Republicans could appear on the ballot, and 2022 GOP nominee Brian Dahle could make another attempt as well.

The looming battle over Newsom's hastily assembled redistricting plan will suck up most of the oxygen and money in the Golden State over the next two months, meaning this race isn't likely to get any attention until the beginning of the new year. That's good news for candidates not named Katie Porter who need time to build up their operations, but bad news for anyone trying to handicap the field. Solid Democratic.

COLORADO. Open; Jared Polis (D), term-limited. Filing deadline March 17. Primary June 30. Sen. Michael Bennet is the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination but state Attorney General

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Phil Weiser is still a credible contender who can raise a decent amount of money and run on his record of standing up to Trump. A June poll by GSG for the Bennet campaign found the senator with a 31-point lead but that margin is inflated by his higher name recognition. Former senator/former U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Ken Salazar hasn't officially ruled out a bid but that seems unlikely, while state Secretary of State Jena Griswold and Reps. Joe Neguse and Jason Crow all deferred to Bennet.

On the Republican side, several current and former officeholders are running: state Sen. Mark Baisley, state Rep. Scott Bottoms, former Rep. Greg Lopez, and Teller County Sheriff Jason Mikesell. And state Sen. Barb Kirkmeyer is moving toward a run as well — she was the Republican nominee for the 8th District in 2022. But the Centennial State has become so consistently Democratic in recent years that Republicans begin this race as heavy underdogs no matter who their nominee is. If elected, Bennet, who was originally appointed to succeed Salazar, would appoint his successor in the Senate. Solid Democratic.

CONNECTICUT. Ned Lamont (D), elected 2018 (49.4%), 2022 (56%). Filing deadline June 9. Primary Aug. 11. Lamont is one of two Democratic governors who hasn't declared their intentions for 2026 yet. That hasn't stopped progressive state Rep. Josh Elliott from jumping into the race and proposing a tax hike for the Nutmeg State's top earners. If Lamont doesn't run, the field will get much more crowded. Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz (who lost primaries for governor in 2010 and U.S. Senate in 2012), state Comptroller Sean Scanlon, and state Attorney General William Tong could all run. State Rep. Matt Blumenthal, a Marine Veteran and Yale-educated lawyer whose father is the state's senior senator, is another potential candidate for statewide office.

State Sen. Ryan Fazio recently entered the GOP primary; he represents a swing district in Greenwich. Jen Tooker, the first selectwoman of Westport, is also running. New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart has formed an exploratory committee. She briefly ran for governor in 2018 but switched to the lieutenant governor primary, where she placed second. Solid Democratic.

FLORIDA. Open; Ron DeSantis (R), term-limited. Florida. Ashley Moody (R), appointed 2025. Filing deadline April 24. Primary Aug. 18. The Sunshine State is anything but sunny for Democrats these days. After former Gov. Charlie Crist and the rest of the Democratic ticket suffered a double-digit wipeout in 2022, the national party has moved Florida to the back burner, effectively ceding the expensive, third-most populous state to Republicans after years of competing for its votes and offices. Barring any surprises, the 2026 gubernatorial race will be more of the same.

On the GOP side, Rep. Byron Donalds is the only major candidate in the race and has locked down plenty of establishment support, including an early endorsement from Trump that makes him the candidate to



Byron Donalds

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

beat. The big outstanding question is how DeSantis and his faction of the Florida GOP approach the race; the outgoing governor has a difficult relationship with Trump and isn't happy that the president and onetime primary foe is dictating the terms of his succession. But it's not clear yet who DeSantis will back against Donalds. For a long time the conventional wisdom was that First Lady Casey DeSantis, a former newscaster and one of her husband's best campaign surrogates, would run for the top job herself in 2026. But negative headlines regarding her charity's finances have taken some of the shine off of her ambitions. The new chatter is that Lt. Gov. Jay Collins, who DeSantis appointed to take over from Jeanette Nuñez earlier this summer, is being groomed to run as the DeSantis candidate. Even if he runs, the former Green Beret will be an underdog against Donalds, who would be the first Black Republican governor in America since Reconstruction.

Former Rep. David Jolly, who served a term and a half as a Republican representing St. Petersburg in the 2010s, has undergone an ideological transformation and is running as a Democrat. It's a similar gamble to Crist, another St. Petersburg Republican who swapped affiliations to run for governor. But even Crist fell short in both 2014 and 2022 — and he was a former governor, unlike Jolly, whose electoral record is far thinner. Other potential candidates include Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings, whose wife Val served in the House and ran for Senate in 2022, and former Rep. Al Lawson. State Rep. Angie Nixon also expressed openness to running. If Florida pursues an aggressive mid-decade redistricting this cycle, Rep. Jared Moskowitz's district could be made unwinnable for him and nudge him toward a statewide bid for governor or Senate. Solid Republican.

GEORGIA. Open; Brian Kemp (R), term-limited. Filing deadline March 6. Primary May 19. Both parties have to navigate competitive primaries ahead of one of the biggest general elections in the country. Armed with President Trump's endorsement and a chunk of personal money, Lt. Gov. Burt Jones looks like the initial frontrunner on the Republican side. But state Attorney General Chris Carr jumped into the race early, had respectable fundraising, and defeated a Trump-endorsed candidate in a previous race. The race could get more complicated if state Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, who publicly would not go along with Trump's attempt to overturn the certified results of the 2020 election, jumps in. He's not likely to win the nomination, but could force a runoff.

On the Democratic side, former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms and state Sen. Jason Esteves make up the top tier. But former DeKalb County CEO Mike Thurmond and state Rep. Derrick Jackson are running as well. (Thurmond lost the 2010 Senate race to Republican Johnny Isakson, 58-39 percent.) Former Republican Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan has been mentioned, but isn't likely to get much traction in the Democratic race despite his opposition to Trump. Stacey Abrams, who lost high profile races in 2018 and 2022, hasn't ruled out running again and would be formidable for the nomination, but doesn't look likely to run.

Georgia has become a high-profile battleground state, but Republicans still have the edge under normal conditions. The Peach State hasn't elected a Democratic governor since 1998. Joe Biden's 2020 win was the first by a Democrat for president in 30 years. And the Democratic Senate victories are a stark contrast to Republicans winning every other statewide office. Democrats have a chance with typical midterm trends, but Georgia isn't quite a true toss-up. Tilt Republican.

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HAWAII. Josh Green (D), elected 2022 (63%). Filing deadline June 2. Primary Aug. 8. No Republicans have filed to run against Green. Hawaii's most prominent politician, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, doesn't seem to be interested in running for governor. Solid Democratic.

IDAHO. Brad Little (R), elected 2018 (60%), 2022 (61%). Filing deadline March 6. Primary May 19. Trump endorsed Little, making it unlikely that any other Republican challenges him for the GOP nomination if he seeks a third term. If Little doesn't run again, potential candidates include Rep. Russ Fulcher, Lt. Gov. Scott Bedke, or former 1st District congressman/state Attorney General Raúl Labrador. Solid Republican.

ILLINOIS. J.B. Pritzker (D), elected 2018 (55%), 2022 (55%). Filing deadline Nov. 3. Primary March 17. Pritzker ended speculation about running for a third term over the summer, and the billionaire Hyatt heir starts as the clear favorite given his personal resources and the Democratic lean of the state.

Rep. Darin LaHood is uninterested in running statewide even though he would probably be the GOP's best candidate in either the gubernatorial or Senate races. James Mendrick, the DuPage County sheriff, is the only notable Republican in the race, and has a credible profile as a career law enforcement officer in the state's second-largest county. Conservative policy pundit Ted Dabrowski is also running. Former state Rep. Jeanne Ives, who nearly won the 2018 GOP primary against then-Gov. Bruce Rauner and lost a 2020 House race, is not running. Pritzker might want to post a resounding victory ahead of a potential 2028 run for president. Solid Democratic.

IOWA. Kim Reynolds (R), assumed office 2017, elected 2018 (50.3%), 2022 (58%). Filing deadline March 13. Primary June 2. Reynolds' surprise decision to forgo a third full term kicked off a crowded GOP primary, especially after state Attorney General Brenna Bird passed on a bid herself. Rep. Randy Feenstra is the early frontrunner for the nomination but he'll have to get through former Iowa Department of Administrative Services Director Adam Steen, state Rep. Eddie Andrews and former state Rep. Brad Sherman, and probably state Sen. Mike Bousset as well. Rep. Zach Nunn wanted to run for governor but was shut down by the White House, which wanted him to hold onto his competitive Des Moines congressional district.

On the Democratic side, state auditor Rob Sand is the likely nominee, though he faces a challenge from longtime political operative Julie Stauch. Sand is a strong fundraiser who pulled in \$2 million in his first day as a candidate, and has also relied on his wife's wealthy family to bankroll his previous campaigns. The last statewide elected Democrat in Iowa, Sand is hoping his penchant for Bible quotes and his hunting skills can help him win back voters who have deserted his party. Likely Republican.

KANSAS. Open; Laura Kelly (D), term-limited. Filing deadline June 1. Primary Aug. 4. Given the Republican lean of the state and Kelly's inability to run for a third term, Kansas is the best GOP pickup opportunity on the map this cycle. Several notable Democrats passed on running, including Lt. Gov. David Toland, 2022 attorney general

nominee Chris Mann (running for that job again) and Matt All, currently the president of Blue Cross Blue Shield Kansas and a former counsel to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. The remaining field includes Sens. Ethan



Vicki Schmidt

Corson and Cindy Holscher. Corson has an endorsement from Kelly and begins as the favorite in the primary. State Sen. Dinah Sykes is unlikely to run.

The GOP field is more crowded. Former Gov. Jeff Colyer, state Secretary

of State Scott Schwab, state Insurance Commissioner Vicki Schmidt, and state Senate President Ty Masterson make up the top tier of competitors. Former Johnson County Commissioner Charlotte O'Hara and former Wichita school board member Joy Eakins are also running. Colyer served briefly as governor in 2018 but lost the GOP nomination for a full term that year, and later dropped out of the 2022 primary due to health issues. He begins the race with a name ID advantage over his opponents but will have to assuage concerns that he will be too easily tied back to unpopular former Gov. Sam Brownback, whose term he finished out.

Schwab was the first to enter and may be able to contribute personal money to his campaign. Unlike the others, Masterson has not held statewide office before, but has become a primary antagonist to Kelly from his perch in the state legislature. Schmidt has a reputation as a moderate from her time in the legislature, and has avoided pinning herself down on hot-button issues such as abortion and Medicaid expansion that could give her trouble among GOP primary voters; her opponents are already assailing her as a "Never Trumper." While GOP strategists believe her profile would make her the strongest general election candidate, winning the nomination could be difficult — though easier with a crowded field than in a one-on-one contest. Toss-up.

MAINE. Open; Janet Mills (D), term-limited. Filing deadline March 15. Primary June 9. One Democratic source described the crowded Democratic primary as a "four-way coin toss" between state Secretary of State Shenna Bellows, former state House Speaker Hannah Pingree, former state Senate President Troy Jackson, and energy executive Angus King III. All four are capable fundraisers and have some name ID, and Maine's ranked-choice voting system only ratchets up the uncertainty.

Somewhat surprisingly given his lack of political experience, King begins ahead in limited early polling, but even his allies acknowledge that's largely because voters are conflating him with his father, popular Sen. Angus King, Jr., who served as governor in the 1990s. Jackson, meanwhile, is leaning into support from neighboring Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders as he hopes to carve a more populist, anti-establishment lane. Pingree is running most in the mold of outgoing Gov. Mills, while Bellows has made a name using her office to push against Trump.

There is still speculation that one or more of the gubernatorial candidates might shift to the Senate race against Susan Collins if Mills does not run herself, though none of them have expressed any interest in making that move.

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On the Republican side, state Sen. James Libby, former Assistant Secretary of State Robert Charles, former Planet Fitness president Ben Midgely, real estate executive/2006 gubernatorial candidate David Jones, University of Maine trustee Owen McCarthy, and former Paris Selectman Robert Wessels are all running. Healthcare executive Jonathan Bush is fundraising ahead of an official campaign launch; he is the nephew of former President George H.W. Bush.

Additionally, at least two notable independents are hoping to make the ballot: former state Senate President Rick Bennett, who has run for Senate and House as a Republican, and state Rep. Ed Crockett, who was elected as a Democrat. Independents can win a significant share of the vote in Maine (some, like Sen. King win outright). Unlike the primaries, the general election will use first-past-the-post voting, not ranked choice, so the presence of multiple independents could allow a candidate to win with less than 50 percent of the vote, creating an opening for Republicans in the Democratic-leaning state. Likely Democratic.

MARYLAND. Wes Moore (D), elected 2022 (65%). Filing deadline Feb. 24. Primary June 23. Moore is seeking a second term ahead of a potential 2028 presidential bid and begins as the clear favorite for re-election as he enjoys some national attention for an ongoing feud with Trump. The GOP field is highly unsettled. The most notable candidate is Ed Hale, a former banking CEO and real estate developer who now owns the Baltimore Blast, an indoor soccer team. Hale had been waging a longshot primary bid against Moore but re-registered as a Republican this month. John Myrick, an Air Force veteran and unsuccessful 2024 Senate candidate, is also running. State Del. Christopher Bouchat has formed an exploratory committee but has significant personal baggage. Former Gov. Larry Hogan, who lost the 2024 Senate race, has floated his name — if he ran, he would make the race more competitive. Solid Democratic.

MASSACHUSETTS. Maura Healey (D), elected 2022 (64%). Primary Sept. 15, 2026. Marine veteran Brian Shortsleeve, who was the chief administrator of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, and Mike Kennealy, the former state secretary of housing and economic development, are both running as Republicans. Either would be underdogs against Healey. Solid Democratic.

MICHIGAN. Open; Gretchen Whitmer (D), term-limited. Filing deadline April 21. Primary Aug. 4. Both parties are sorting through crowded primaries while also assessing the impact that Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan's independent run will have on the general election.

State Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson is the frontrunner on the Democratic side. She's raised the most money by far and consistently polls ahead of Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist and Genesee County Sheriff Chris Swanson. On the GOP side, Rep. John James is best positioned after his two close statewide Senate races and



Jocelyn Benson

Courtesy Benson Campaign

relationship with Trump. But state Sen. Aric Nesbitt is proving to be a strong fundraiser and is well-regarded among Republicans in-state. Former state Attorney General Mike Cox is partially self-funding his campaign with at least \$1.5 million so far. Former state House Speaker Tom Leonard is also running but has trailed in the money game. Wealthy auto dealer Kevin Rinke is also keeping his name in the conversation; he pumped \$10 million of his own money into his 2022 bid which resulted in a second-place finish in the GOP primary.

Waiting for the winners in the general election is Duggan, a former Democrat whose well-received tenure leading Michigan's largest city makes him a formidable candidate. He has high name ID in the Detroit area and has led the field in fundraising. Polling shows him winning double-digit support, and pulling votes from both parties thanks to his middle of the road positioning and reputation as a competent manager. While it's not obvious he has a path to victory, his presence makes this race unpredictable no matter who the eventual nominees are. Toss-up.

MINNESOTA. Tim Walz (DFL), elected 2018 (54%), 2022 (53%). Filing deadline June 2. Primary Aug. 11. The Minnesota Star-Tribune recently reported that Walz was "wavering" on whether to seek a third term after the assassination of state House Speaker Melissa Hortman, who was seen as a potential running mate. If Walz doesn't run again, the floodgates could open in the Democratic primary: state Attorney General Keith Ellison, state Secretary of State Steve Simon, St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter and state Sen. Erin Murphy could all run in that case.

On the GOP side, 2022 nominee/former state Sen. Scott Jensen is running again, as is 2022 candidate Kendall Qualls. State Rep. Kristin Robbins is the latest entrant, though she'll have to answer for her endorsement of former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley in the 2024 GOP presidential primary over Trump. Former MMA fighter Brad Kohler is running, too, and can't be dismissed in a state that once elected Jesse Ventura as its chief executive. And former St. Cloud city councilor Jeff Johnson could cause some confusion in the field as he shares a name with the 2018 GOP nominee. State Sen. Julia Coleman ruled out a bid for Senate earlier this year but hasn't said no to running for governor yet. And MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell, long a political gadfly, has mused about running as well. Likely Democratic.

NEBRASKA. Jim Pillen (R), elected 2022 (60%). Filing deadline March 1. Primary May 12. Agribusiness CEO Charles Herbster has floated a challenge to Pillen in the GOP primary next year. He lost to Pillen in the 2022 primary despite receiving an endorsement from Trump. Democratic strategists are mildly interested in this race given the economic uncertainty in the state caused by tariffs, and the potential to face Herbster rather than Pillen. There's been some chatter about former state Sen. Lynne Walz running (she's a distant relative of Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz). But the burden of proof is on the party that hasn't won a statewide race in Nebraska in 20 years. Solid Republican.

NEVADA. Joe Lombardo (R), elected 2022 (49%). Filing deadline March 13. Primary June 9. Lombardo is the most vulnerable GOP governor on the map, and Nevada Democrats are eager to reassert themselves after a difficult two years. State Attorney General Aaron Ford is the likely nominee, and is a credible candidate with a compelling story to tell. He may face Washoe County Commissioner Alexis Hill in the primary but has already consolidated support from most of the

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state's political establishment. Earlier in the year there was some chatter about former Gov. Steve Sisolak making a comeback bid, which would complicate Ford's path to the nomination, but that conversation has died down in recent months.

Ford's larger challenge will be taking Lombardo down a peg, which is easier said than done. The former Clark County sheriff is relatively popular and is curtailed by the Democratic majorities in the state House and Senate. Tilt Republican.

NEW HAMPSHIRE. Kelly Ayotte (R), elected 2025 (54%). **Filing deadline June 12. Primary Sept. 8.** There are plenty of exciting races taking place in the Granite State next year, including open Senate and 1st District seats. But the governor's race has flown under the radar as Democrats remain pessimistic about their chances of beating Ayotte next year after she was just elected last year. Former Sen. Tom Sherman, the 2022 Democratic gubernatorial nominee, left the door open to another bid earlier this year. Solid Republican.

NEW JERSEY. Open; Phil Murphy (D), term-limited. 2025 race. Democratic Rep. Mikie Sherrill is entering the fall with a clear polling lead and the promise of \$20 million in air cover from the Democratic Governors Association. But she can't take anything for granted against former state Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli, who nearly beat Murphy in 2021. Both candidates will have the same amount of money to spend on the campaign side thanks to the state's public financing laws, so Ciattarelli will need outside support if he wants to keep up with Democrats overall thanks to exorbitantly expensive advertising rates in the New York and Philadelphia markets.

Ciattarelli is working hard to capitalize on the shifts among minority voters that helped Trump perform the best of any Republican in New Jersey in a decade, but it's not obvious those gains will translate. Democrats are trying to paint Ciattarelli as too focused on Trump and not the competent, straight-shooting accountant he portrays himself as. New Jersey rarely votes for a governor from the same party three times in a row, but Sherrill has the advantage of a favorable political environment and the onus will be on Ciattarelli once again to put himself into contention. Lean Democratic.

NEW MEXICO. Open; Michelle Lujan Grisham (D), term-limited. **Filing deadline Feb. 3. Primary June 2.** Former Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland remains the candidate to beat in the Democratic primary. But Bernalillo County District Attorney Sam Bergman is a credible candidate who will make Haaland work for it. Former Las Cruces Mayor Ken Miyagashima is also running but is not a threat to win the nomination. In contrast to four years ago, Republicans aren't talking up this race. Rio Rancho Mayor Gregg Hull is technically running and is raising money but hasn't officially "kicked off" his campaign yet and also considered a run for Senate. Former Lt. Gov. John Sanchez is another potential candidate. Likely Democratic.

NEW YORK. Kathy Hochul, assumed office August 2021, elected 2022 (52%). **Primary June 23.** Lt. Gov. Antonio Delgado, who Hochul handpicked to be her running mate in 2022, is now challenging her for the Democratic nomination. But the former congressman, once a rising star in his party's caucus, has a steep hill to climb. A recent Siena College poll found Hochul ahead of Delgado, 50-15 percent,

among Democrats. Hovering at 50 percent isn't particularly comfortable territory for an incumbent, and Delgado showed himself to be a capable campaigner and fundraiser in his House races — though Hochul will likely have a significant financial advantage over him. She had a \$17.5 million to \$1.4 million cash-on-hand advantage at the end of June. For now, Hochul is focused on rallying support among Democrats by sparring with Trump and vowing to redraw the state's congressional map in favor of Democrats before the 2028 elections.

Republicans received some clarity when Hudson Valley Rep. Mike Lawler announced he would not seek the nomination after a year of teasing a run. He's one of several House Republicans from competitive districts who have been nudged away from statewide bids by the White House this cycle. Instead, Rep. Elise Stefanik appears likely to run after her nomination to be U.N. Ambassador fell apart earlier this year. Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman is also still considering a run, but has to win re-election this fall first. Stefanik, the North Country congresswoman and close ally of the president, will hope to build on Lee Zeldin's spirited run against Hochul in 2022. But she will have to contend with a worse national environment and her closer ties to Trump. Plus, after being caught flat-footed by Zeldin and his deep-pocketed backers in 2022, Hochul and her allies are gearing up for a competitive general election more than a year in advance. Likely Democratic.

OHIO. Open; Mike DeWine (R), term-limited. **Filing deadline Feb. 4. Primary May 5.** Tech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy parlayed a brief presidential run into a close relationship with Trump and now a clear path to the GOP gubernatorial nomination in Ohio. Now that former Lt. Gov. Jon Husted has taken a Senate appointment and state Attorney General Dave Yost and state Treasurer Robert Sprague have both dropped out, all that remains is for Lt. Gov. Jim Tressel to decide



Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

Vivek Ramaswamy

if he wants to wage a longshot bid. The former Ohio State football coach said earlier this summer that he was still considering running.

On the Democratic side, the picture got a little more clear after former Sen. Sherrod Brown elected to run for Senate against Husted rather than for governor. That leaves Amy Acton, the former director of the Ohio Department of Health, as the only announced candidate. While Acton's fundraising has lagged Ramaswamy's significantly, her allies are hopeful that with Brown out of the race more donors will open up their wallets. Still deciding on whether to run is former Rep. Tim Ryan, who lost a Senate race in 2022. State Rep. Allison Russo is running for state Secretary of State. Solid Republican.

OKLAHOMA. Open; Kevin Stitt (R), term-limited. **Filing deadline April 3. Primary June 16.** State Attorney General Gentner Drummond is the initial frontrunner for the GOP nomination thanks to his family's deep Oklahoma roots and his own deep pockets. However, he continues to weather attacks from his opponents and Republican

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leaders such as Laura Loomer over his past contributions to Democratic candidates, including a \$1,000 donation to Joe Biden in 2020 that he says his wife made without his knowledge. His main opponent for the nomination is former state House Speaker Charles McCall, though former state Sen. Mike Mazzei is also running a credible campaign. Former state Sen. Jake Merrick and former Mangum City Manager Leisa Haynes are also running.

The biggest remaining question is whether Ryan Walters, the state superintendent of public instruction, will enter the fray. A conservative darling who often earns national headlines (for mandating schools purchase Trump bibles or requiring new teachers to pass an ideological test administered by conservative group PragerU), Walters has teased a run for months. But the prospect of his candidacy has made some national Republicans skittish, even before he was accused of displaying porn on his computer during a Board of Education meeting this month. While his path to the nomination would be narrow, say local sources, if he were the nominee it could provide Democrats a rare opening in the Sooner State. For now, state House Minority Leader Cyndi Munson is the only announced Democratic candidate. Solid Republican.

OREGON. Tina Kotek (D), elected 2022 (47%). Filing deadline March 10. Primary May 19. Republicans are emboldened by the 2024 election results and excited about challenging in dozens of races and states around the country. But Oregon isn't one of them. There's no buzz about defeating Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley or any of the five House Democrats. And there's no chatter about defeating Kotek.

Republicans don't have a top-tier candidate on the horizon and are facing the reality that the Pacific Northwest was not particularly strong for the GOP in 2024. Trump lost to Harris

by 14 points, which was only 2 points closer than the 2020 margin.

Marion County Commissioner Danielle Bethell, genomics researcher Kyle Duyck and business manager/2022 labor commissioner candidate Robert Neuman are running on the GOP side, but it's unclear how Republicans win next November. Republicans haven't won a gubernatorial race in the Beaver State since 1982. Solid Democratic.

PENNSYLVANIA. Josh Shapiro (D), elected 2022 (57%). Filing deadline March 10. Primary May 19. State Treasurer Stacy Garrity is running for the GOP nomination, which is a boost to the party in a swing state where they have struggled to recruit top-tier gubernatorial candidates. Garrity, a decorated former Army colonel, won two close statewide contests in 2020 and 2024 — in the latter race, Shapiro notably did not endorse her Democratic opponent.

But she may not have the field to herself. State Sen. Doug Mastriano, whose 2022 gubernatorial campaign was mired in controversy and ended in a double-digit loss to Shapiro, has been teasing a run for nearly a year, even posting several different versions of a campaign logo online. But he says he won't make an official decision for several more months.

Pennsylvania's evenly divided partisanship makes this a race to watch, and recruiting Garrity helps Republicans keep the pressure on Shapiro. But the incumbent is very popular and GOP strategists are skeptical that voters will reject him even if their own nominee is stronger than in 2022. On Shapiro's part, he's hoping a strong performance in the swing state will help springboard him to the top tier of presidential contenders in 2028. Likely Democratic.

RHODE ISLAND. Dan McKee (D), assumed office March 2021, elected 2022 (58%). Filing deadline June 24. Primary Sept. 8. McKee parted ways with his campaign manager last week as the governor continues to lag financially behind his potential opponents, former CVS executive Helena Foulkes (who is running all but officially) and state House Speaker Joe Shekarchi, who is keeping his cards much closer to the vest. McKee narrowly beat Foulkes for the nomination in 2022 but his 33 percent of the vote was underwhelming for an incumbent governor. Solid Democratic.

SOUTH CAROLINA. Open; Henry McMaster (R), term-limited. Filing deadline March 30. Primary June 9. Runoff (if necessary) June 23. The GOP primary in the Palmetto State is shaping up to be one of the nastiest in the nation. Reps. Nancy Mace and Ralph Norman, state Attorney General Alan Wilson (son of Rep. Joe Wilson), and Lt. Gov. Pam Evette all have credible paths to the nomination (state Sen. Josh Kimbrell is also in the race but less of a factor). Mace has used her national platform and Twitter profile to earn headlines on trans issues and accuse Wilson of covering up sexual assault in the state. Democrats haven't won a governor's race since Jim Hodges in 1998, and he lost re-election four years later. Solid Republican.

SOUTH DAKOTA. Larry Rhoden (R), assumed office January 2025. Filing deadline March 31. Primary June 2. Runoff (if necessary) July 28. Gov. Larry Rhoden, who ascended to the top spot when Kristi Noem joined the Trump administration, hasn't said if he'll seek a full term in his own right. But other Republican hopefuls aren't deferring to the incumbent. Rep. Dusty Johnson, state House Speaker Jon Hansen, and auto dealer Toby Doeden have all jumped in the race. State Attorney General Marty Jackley is running for Johnson's House seat. Solid Republican.

TENNESSEE. Open; Bill Lee (R), term-limited. Filing deadline March 10. Primary Aug. 6. Sen. Marsha Blackburn made her much-anticipated gubernatorial bid official this summer, setting up a clash between the senior senator and Rep. John Rose. The limited public polling suggests Blackburn is a heavy favorite against Rose, who represents Middle Tennessee and is a former state agriculture commissioner. Democratic Memphis city Councilwoman Jerri Green is running, but the attorney is a longshot in a state where Democrats haven't won a statewide election in 20 years. If she wins, Blackburn will appoint her successor in the Senate. Solid Republican.

TEXAS. Greg Abbott (R) elected 2014 (59%), 2018 (56%), 2022 (55%). Filing deadline Dec. 8. Primary March 3. Runoff (if necessary) May 26. Abbott flexed his political muscle by pushing through a mid-decade redistricting plan at the behest of the Trump White House, despite Democrats breaking quorum to slow down the process.

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Tina Kotek

Courtesy Kotek Campaign

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The governor is at the height of his powers and it shows in the lack of serious Democratic opposition to him, even as Democrats allow themselves to hope once again that the concurrent Senate race will be competitive. A handful of Democrats have been circling this race: state Rep. James Talarico, whose star is rising nationally, former Rep. Beto O'Rourke, who lost to Abbott in 2022, Rep. Joaquin Castro, and former San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg. But at least three of them — Talarico, O'Rourke, and Castro, are also considering running for Senate. The group has reportedly been in communication with each other, and with Senate candidate Colin Allred, to deconflict ahead of the primaries. But time is running out for O'Rourke and Talarico to meet their self-imposed end-of-summer deadlines for making decisions. Solid Republican.

VERMONT. Phil Scott (R), elected 2016 (53%), 2018 (55%), 2020 (69%), 2022 (71%), 2024 (73%). Scott typically waits until the last minute to say whether he will seek another two-year term, which means this race is in limbo until next May. If he runs, he'll win; if he doesn't run, this becomes Democrats' best chance at picking up a governor's office. Any number of current and former Democratic officeholders could run in that case. So might Republican Lt. Gov. John Rodgers, who would be a credible candidate for the GOP. Solid Republican.

VIRGINIA. Open; Glenn Youngkin (R), term-limited. 2025 race. Democratic former Rep. Abigail Spanberger had a significant fundraising edge over Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears, \$15.2 million to \$4.5 million, as of June 30, and is flexing that advantage with a \$10 million fall TV ad reservation.

Earle-Sears has struggled to find her footing as the general election nominee after spending the summer dealing with campaign personnel issues and feuding with the GOP lieutenant governor nominee. She has brought on a new campaign manager and is sharpening her focus on school boards as Labor Day approaches, a move that Republicans appreciate and even Democratic strategists say is smart. She's also trying to make the most of an offensive sign held by a Democratic protestor at a campaign appearance earlier this month, which Spanberger condemned.

But Earle-Sears trails in polling and faces the historical headwinds associated with Virginia off-year elections, which virtually always break against the party in the White House. And the Trump administration's effort to downsize the federal government, which is a major component of the Virginia economy, doesn't help. While the final margin might not be as wide as some earlier polling suggests, Earle-Sears is a clear underdog. Move from Tilt Democratic to Lean Democratic.

WISCONSIN. Tony Evers (D), not seeking re-election. Filing deadline June 1. Primary Aug. 11. With Evers declining to seek a third term, there are open primaries on both sides of the aisle in one of the nation's premier swing states. Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez was the first

Democratic candidate to announce, jumping in the race immediately after Evers announced his decision. Somewhat surprisingly, the registered nurse and former state legislator has had the field largely to herself as other potential candidates wait on the sidelines (American Family Field beer vendor Ryan Strnad is also running). Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley is the likeliest to join the fray but for now is focused on the aftermath of flooding that left nearly 2,000 homes destroyed. State Sen. Kelda Roys has also expressed interest in running; she ran for governor in 2018, losing to Evers in the primary.



Courtesy Schoemann Campaign

Josh Schoemann

kept very quiet since Evers' announcement. Other potential candidates mentioned are state Sen. Chris Larson and former state party chairman Ben Wikler. State Secretary of State Sarah Godlewski is running for lieutenant governor instead.

On the Republican side, Washington County Executive Josh Schoemann, an Army veteran and seventh-generation Wisconsinite, and manufacturing executive Bill Berrien, a pedigreed Navy SEAL veteran, are both in. Berrien has some self-funding capacity but will have to overcome skepticism from some GOP voters after supporting Nikki Haley in the 2024 presidential primary. The outstanding question is whether Rep. Tom Tiffany runs. The northern Wisconsin congressman has floated his name for various statewide offices over the years but has never pulled the trigger. He did, however, commission a poll from Trump's pollster Tony Fabrizio showing that he would dominate a GOP gubernatorial field. 2024 Senate nominee Eric Hovde is also keeping his name in the mix though he's seen as less likely to run. Former Gov. Scott Walker briefly teased a comeback campaign but took himself out of contention. Toss-up.

WYOMING. Open; Mark Gordon (R), term-limited. Filing deadline May 29. Primary Aug. 18. State Sen. Eric Barlow is the latest Republican to throw his hat in the ring; the former state House Speaker is a Marine veteran and large animal veterinarian. He joins Marine veteran/2022 gubernatorial candidate Brent Bien in the GOP primary. Financial executive Reid Rasner, who ran for Senate in 2024, has filed to run but it isn't obvious if he really intends to seek the office — he has also filed to run for the Senate again. Several other potential candidates are waiting on Rep. Harriet Hageman to decide whether she wants to run. She placed third in a competitive GOP primary for governor back in 2018 but would begin as the clear favorite for the nomination this time around. State Secretary of State Chuck Gray and state House Speaker Chip Neiman have both said they would not run if she runs. Beyond that, there are any number of current and former officeholders who could make a run for it, including state Treasurer Curt Meier, state Senate President Bo Biteman, and state Superintendent of Public Instruction Megan Degenfelder. Solid Republican.



Abigail Spanberger

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

A Detailed Analysis of Texas' New Congressional Map

By Nathaniel Rakich

Fearful of losing their majority in the House of Representatives, Republicans have embarked on a multi-state offensive to redraw congressional maps in their favor. This month, they won the first, and arguably biggest, battle of that campaign: The state legislature passed (and Gov. Greg Abbott will soon sign into law) a new Texas congressional map that will probably deliver at least three, and possibly as many as five, additional House seats to Republicans.

Unlike in California, this new map doesn't need voter approval in order to take effect; it is now the law of the land, although voting-rights advocates have already filed a lawsuit against it alleging it violates the Voting Rights Act and the U.S. Constitution. As a result, *Inside Elections* is changing our ratings in five Texas House races, all in Republicans' favor.

Texas Rating Changes

District	Old Rating	New Rating
TX-09	Solid Democratic	Solid Republican
TX-28	Lean Democratic	Tilt Democratic
TX-32	Solid Democratic	Solid Republican
TX-34	Tilt Democratic	Toss-up
TX-35	Solid Democratic	Likely Republican

Overview

The Lone Star State's now-former congressional map was drawn by Republicans to help elect Republicans. After Democrats made gains in the state in 2018, Republicans in 2021 drew a map that sought to protect Republican incumbents against what was then seen as a rising cerulean tide. According to *Inside Elections'* Baseline, our measure of the baseline partisanship of states and congressional districts, the map used in 2022 and 2024 had 24 districts that were R+5 or redder. Only 13 districts were D+5 or bluer, and one district was between R+5 and D+5.

The new map takes this imbalance even further. Under the new lines, 27 districts are R+5 or redder, nine districts are D+5 or bluer, and two districts are in between.

Another way to measure a gerrymander is a statistic called "efficiency gap," or the difference between how many votes a map "wastes" for one party versus the other. (For our purposes, any vote cast for the losing party in a district, or cast for the winning party after it already won a majority, is wasted.) Based on the results of the 2024 presidential election, Texas's old map had an efficiency gap of R+13 — already a hefty Republican bias. But the new map has an even more extreme efficiency gap of R+20. (For comparison, the proposed California map drawn by Democrats has an efficiency gap of D+20.)

The Bottom Line

If you assign all currently vacant seats to the party that last held them, Republicans have a 220-215 majority in the House. That means Democrats have to gain only three seats to take back control in the

Old vs. New Texas District Maps

DISTRICT	INCUMBENT	PARTY	BASELINE	
			Old	New
TX-01	Nathaniel Moran	R	R+50	R+49
TX-02	Dan Crenshaw	R	R+28	R+27
TX-03	Keith Self	R	R+22	R+25
TX-04	Pat Fallon	R	R+32	R+26
TX-05	Lance Gooden	R	R+26	R+21
TX-06	Jake Ellzey	R	R+28	R+25
TX-07	Lizzie Fletcher	D	D+18	D+25
TX-08	Morgan Luttrell	R	R+34	R+25
TX-09	Al Green	D	D+48	R+11
TX-10	Michael McCaul	R	R+24	R+21
TX-11	August Pfluger	R	R+46	R+34
TX-12	Craig Goldman	R	R+23	R+23
TX-13	Ronny Jackson	R	R+50	R+47
TX-14	Randy Weber	R	R+32	R+25
TX-15	Monica De La Cruz	R	R+2	R+2
TX-16	Veronica Escobar	D	D+31	D+31
TX-17	Pete Sessions	R	R+29	R+21
TX-18	VACANT	D	D+39	D+61
TX-19	Jodey Arrington	R	R+51	R+51
TX-20	Joaquin Castro	D	D+29	D+38
TX-21	Chip Roy	R	R+24	R+23
TX-22	Troy Nehls	R	R+19	R+25
TX-23	Tony Gonzales	R	R+9	R+11
TX-24	Beth Van Duyne	R	R+18	R+21
TX-25	Roger Williams	R	R+35	R+21
TX-26	Brandon Gill	R	R+25	R+26
TX-27	Michael Cloud	R	R+26	R+21
TX-28	Henry Cuellar	D	D+8	D+16
TX-29	Sylvia Garcia	D	D+37	D+40
TX-30	Jasmine Crockett	D	D+52	D+54
TX-31	John Carter	R	R+26	R+24
TX-32	Julie Johnson	D	D+22	R+17
TX-33	Marc Veasey	D	D+40	D+41
TX-34	Vicente Gonzalez	D	D+16	D+1
TX-35	Greg Casar	D	D+40	R+7
TX-36	Brian Babin	R	R+36	R+23
TX-37	Lloyd Doggett	D	D+48	D+60
TX-38	Wesley Hunt	R	R+23	R+26

2026 midterms. However, this new map in Texas makes it likely that Democrats will lose at least three seats of their own, meaning Democrats effectively now have to flip at least six Republican-held seats. (This task would be made much easier if California's proposed new congressional map, a Democratic gerrymander, becomes law.)

Midterm elections are usually bad for the president's party, so history is still on Democrats' side in 2026. The president's party has lost at least six House seats in 16 of the 20 midterm elections since World War II. Early indicators such as polls and special elections also suggest that 2026 is shaping up to be a Democratic-leaning year. In other words, Democrats still have a good shot to flip the House even with this new Texas map and without California's help. But in case a blue wave does not materialize and Democrats' gains are minimal, the seats they lose in Texas could be decisive.

For district-specific analysis in the most affected districts in North Texas, Greater Houston, Central Texas and the Rio Grande Valley, read the rest of the article at [InsideElections.com](https://www.insideelections.com)

A Detailed Analysis of California's (Maybe) New Congressional Map

by Nathaniel Rakich

If you thought the midterm elections wouldn't start until 2026, think again. Control of multiple House seats will now effectively be decided this fall.

The California Legislature is soon expected to advance a new congressional map for the Golden State that is heavily biased in Democrats' favor. It's the party's first move in the mid-decade redistricting arms race that broke out when President Donald Trump, seeking to tilt the House playing field in Republicans' favor, pushed for a redraw of Texas's congressional map that would likely flip several seats from blue to red.

That map is currently making its way through the Texas Legislature, but California Democrats' task is harder. The Golden State has an independent redistricting commission that is enshrined in the state constitution, so the legislature can't simply pass a new map on its own. Instead, the measure it passed this week is a state constitutional amendment that would temporarily override the commission's map for the 2026, 2028, and 2030 elections. But in California, state constitutional amendments need to be approved by voters, so this resolution will trigger a special statewide election on November 4 in which voters will have the final say on whether the legislature's map goes into effect.

If the referendum passes, the revised map would turn three reliably red seats into reliably blue ones and make two Republican-held seats much easier for Democrats to flip, parrying the effects of the proposed Texas map with almost eerie similitude. Democrats need a net gain of three seats nationwide to win a House majority in 2026, so changes in even a handful of districts can be significant. Here at Inside Elections, we won't be issuing ratings for the new districts until the new map officially passes (if it even does), but here's a detailed analysis of the changes to the districts' partisan composition.

Overview

Make no mistake about it: The proposed map is an aggressive Democratic gerrymander. One way of measuring the bias of a congressional map is called "efficiency gap," or the difference between how many votes the map "wastes" for one party versus the other. (For our purposes, any vote cast for the losing party in a district, or cast for the winning party after it already won a majority, is wasted.) Based on the results of the 2024 presidential election, the proposed California map has an efficiency gap of D+20. By contrast, the current, commission-drawn map has an efficiency gap of D+8, indicating a modest Democratic bias. (The ideal efficiency gap is 0, but small deviations on either side are often inevitable.)

Furthermore, 46 of the 52 districts in the proposed map are bluer than D+5, according to Inside Elections' Baseline, our measure of the baseline partisanship of states and congressional districts. Just four districts are redder than R+5, and just two districts fall in the competitive zone between D+5 and R+5. Under the current map, just 37 districts are bluer than D+5, while eight districts are redder than R+5 and seven districts are in the middle. So not only would the proposed map turn some seats from red to blue, but it also shores up multiple swing districts for Democrats and makes them more difficult for Republicans to win.

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Current vs. Proposed California District Maps

DISTRICT	INCUMBENT	PARTY	BASELINE	
			Current	Proposed
CA-01	Doug LaMalfa	R	R+26	D+11
CA-02	Jared Huffman	D	D+45	D+24
CA-03	Kevin Kiley	R	R+9	D+6
CA-04	Mike Thompson	D	D+31	D+14
CA-05	Tom McClintock	R	R+20	R+22
CA-06	Ami Bera	D	D+13	D+6
CA-07	Doris Matsui	D	D+32	D+11
CA-08	John Garamendi	D	D+50	D+37
CA-09	Josh Harder	D	D+3	D+17
CA-10	Mark DeSaulnier	D	D+31	D+30
CA-11	Nancy Pelosi	D	D+71	D+71
CA-12	Lateefah Simon	D	D+80	D+80
CA-13	Adam Gray	D	R+0.1	D+7
CA-14	Eric Swalwell	D	D+39	D+38
CA-15	Kevin Mullin	D	D+52	D+52
CA-16	Sam Liccardo	D	D+46	D+46
CA-17	Ro Khanna	D	D+42	D+43
CA-18	Zoe Lofgren	D	D+35	D+34
CA-19	Jimmy Panetta	D	D+34	D+33
CA-20	Vince Fong	R	R+33	R+35
CA-21	Jim Costa	D	D+8	D+10
CA-22	David Valadao	R	D+2	D+7
CA-23	Jay Obermole	R	R+18	R+21
CA-24	Salud Carbajal	D	D+21	D+21
CA-25	Raul Ruiz	D	D+9	D+9
CA-26	Julia Brownley	D	D+11	D+13
CA-27	George Whitesides	D	D+3	D+11
CA-28	Judy Chu	D	D+28	D+26
CA-29	Luz Rivas	D	D+49	D+47
CA-30	Laura Friedman	D	D+50	D+49
CA-31	Gil Cisneros	D	D+23	D+15
CA-32	Brad Sherman	D	D+36	D+28
CA-33	Pete Aguilar	D	D+16	D+16
CA-34	Jimmy Gomez	D	D+65	D+64
CA-35	Norma Torres	D	D+17	D+12
CA-36	Ted Lieu	D	D+38	D+37
CA-37	Sydney Kamlager-Dove	D	D+72	D+71
CA-38	Linda Sánchez	D	D+21	D+16
CA-39	Mark Takano	D	D+15	D+14
CA-40	Young Kim	R	R+9	R+17
CA-41	Ken Calvert	R	R+7	D+16
CA-42	Robert Garcia	D	D+38	D+10
CA-43	Maxine Waters	D	D+59	D+59
CA-44	Nanette Barragán	D	D+43	D+48
CA-45	Derek Tran	D	D+1	D+5
CA-46	Lou Correa	D	D+24	D+19
CA-47	Dave Min	D	D+2	D+6
CA-48	Darrell Issa	R	R+20	D+0.1
CA-49	Mike Levin	D	D+3	D+6
CA-50	Scott Peters	D	D+24	D+12
CA-51	Sara Jacobs	D	D+21	D+17
CA-52	Juan Vargas	D	D+31	D+25

