

# Inside Elections

with

Nathan L. Gonzales

Nonpartisan Analysis

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## 2024 House Overview: Republicans Try to Hold the Line

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

While it took more than a year for the 2022 House battleground to come into focus because of redistricting, this cycle is less complicated. With district lines in place in the vast majority of states and one cycle worth of election results, it's easier to identify most of the competitive seats where both parties will be spending their resources this cycle.

But Republicans' narrow 222-213 majority means there's still plenty of uncertainty about which party will control the House in 2025.

The initial House battleground comprises 66 competitive races, with each party defending 33 of the vulnerable seats. The symmetry is unintentional, and not necessary for non-partisan analysis (remember the imbalance of the Senate battleground), but a function of an evenly-divided Congress in an evenly-divided country.

Technically, Democrats need a net gain of five seats for a majority. But that number obscures the added disadvantage Democrats will have if Republicans are able to draw new, friendlier congressional maps in Ohio and North Carolina.

Joe Biden carried 11 of the 12 initial toss-up races in 2022, giving Democrats a path to the majority assuming the Democratic presidential nominee can match or exceed his 2020 performance. Democrats will likely need to replicate 2022, when they overperformed and won the vast majority of toss-up races.

It looks like Republicans have a narrow initial advantage to hold the House, but the top of the ticket will matter once again. In 2020, only 16 districts voted for a president from one party and a House member from another. And just 23 of 435 seats voted for one party's presidential nominee in 2020 and then the other party's House nominee in 2022.

Republicans are also running against a bit of history. In the modern era (going back to 1946) the GOP has never gained House seats in three consecutive election cycles. (Democrats have done it three times in that time period.) It's possible for Republicans to lose seats and maintain the majority, but the GOP doesn't have a lot of margin for error.

This issue brought to you by



### 2024 House Ratings

#### Toss-Up (4D, 8R)

CA 13 (Duarte, R)	NY 3 (Santos, R)
CA 27 (Garcia, R)	NY 4 (D'Esposito, R)
CO 8 (Caraveo, D)	NY 17 (Lawler, R)
MI 7 (Open; Slotkin, D)	NY 22 (Williams, R)
NJ 7 (Kean Jr., R)	OR 5 (DeRemer, R)
NM 2 (Vasquez, D)	WA 3 (Perez, D)

#### Tilt Democratic (3D)

CA 47 (Open; Porter, D)
PA 7 (Wild, D)
PA 8 (Cartwright, D)

#### Tilt Republican (7R)

AZ 1 (Schweikert, R)
AZ 6 (Ciscomani, R)
CA 22 (Valadao, R)
IA 3 (Nunn, R)
MI 10 (James, R)
NY 19 (Molinaro, R)
VA 2 (Kiggans, R)

#### Lean Democratic (14D)

AK AL (Peltola, D)
CT 5 (Hayes, D)
IL 17 (Sorensen, D)
ME 2 (Golden, D)
MI 3 (Scholten, D)
MN 2 (Craig, DFL)
NV 1 (Titus, D)
NV 3 (Lee, D)
NH 1 (Pappas, D)
NY 18 (Ryan, D)
OR 6 (Salinas, D)
PA 17 (Deluzio, D)
VA 7 (Spanberger, D)
WA 8 (Schrier, D)

#### Lean Republican (6R)

CA 41 (Calvert, R)
CA 45 (Steel, R)
CO 3 (Boebert, R)
NE 2 (Bacon, R)
NY 1 (LaLota, R)
TX 15 (De La Cruz, R)

	GOP	DEM
Solid	172	168
Likely/Lean/Tilt	25	29
Total	197	197
Toss-up		12
Ohio/North Carolina		29
Needed for majority		218

#### Likely Democratic (12D)

CA 49 (Levin, D)
FL 9 (Soto, D)
FL 23 (Moskowitz, D)
IN 1 (Mrvan, D)
KS 3 (Davids, D)
MD 6 (Trone, D)
MI 8 (Kildee, D)
NV 4 (Horsford, D)
NH 2 (Kuster, D)
TX 28 (Cuellar, D)
TX 34 (Gonzalez, D)
VA 10 (Wexton, D)

#### Likely Republican (12R)

CA 3 (Kiley, R)
CA 40 (Kim, R)
FL 13 (Luna, R)
FL 27 (Salazar, R)
IA 1 (Miller-Meeke, R)
IA 2 (Hinson, R)
MT 1 (Zinke, R)
PA 1 (Fitzpatrick, R)
PA 10 (Perry, R)
SC 1 (Mace, R)
WI 1 (Steil, R)
WI 3 (Van Orden, R)

Ohio and North Carolina ratings are being withheld pending new maps.

**Alaska.**

**At-Large, Mary Peltola, D, re-elected 55%. Trump 53%.** The parties disagree about what happened here. Democratic strategists believe Peltola is a special candidate who has positioned herself perfectly within Alaska’s unique electorate. Republicans believe her win was more a result of the state’s ranked-choice voting and the deeply unpopular Sarah Palin running against her. With the right candidate, GOP strategists believe they can retake the Last Frontier.

Nick Begich, who finished third in the 2022 House race, could run again. 2022 GOP Senate candidate Kelly Tshibaka seems less likely to run, but is focused on a major project analyzing why friendly voters didn’t turn out last cycle. Former Assistant Secretary of the Interior Tara Sweeney, the Alaska Native Republican, has been mentioned but she received just 6 percent in the initial special nonpartisan primary and is not popular with Republican voters. Lean Democratic.

**Arizona.**

**1st District (Northeastern Phoenix and Scottsdale) David Schweikert, R, re-elected 50%. Biden 50%.** The Republican congressman barely won re-election last November, scraping by with 50.4 percent of the vote in his suburban district after winning a heated Republican primary. Schweikert is attempting to moderate his image ahead of 2024, announcing in February that he was leaving the House Freedom Caucus. Jevin Hodge, a former vice chairman of the Arizona Democratic Party, appears to be gearing up for a rematch and would start his campaign in a strong position. But the 29-year-old Head Start program leader might face competition in the primary. Schweikert’s opponent in 2020, former emergency room doctor Hiral Tipirneni, could come back for another round. Andrew Horne, an orthodontist from Scottsdale, has already announced a campaign. Former Arizona Democratic Party Chairman Andrei Cherny and state Rep. Amish Shah are two other names to watch. Tilt Republican.

**3rd District (Downtown and western Phoenix) Open; Ruben Gallego, D, running for Senate.** Biden 75%. This open, deep blue district has drawn interest from a long list of local Democrats. Arizona state Sen. Raquel Terán has stepped down from her position as Senate minority leader as she weighs running for the seat, and Phoenix City Councilmember Laura Pastor — the daughter of Gallego’s predecessor — has made her congressional aspirations clear. Phoenix City Councilmembers Yassamin Ansari and Betty Guardado are mulling bids as well. This Democratic primary could draw attention from both local and national groups. Solid Democratic.

**6th District (Southeastern Arizona and eastern Tucson area) Juan Ciscomani, R, elected 51%. Biden 49.3%.** The Latino congressman will be a top target for Democrats this cycle after the 2022 race was closer than expected. Former Arizona state Sen. Kirsten Engel is interested in running again, but she’s not the only Democrat in Tucson weighing a bid. Meanwhile, Ciscomani’s profile is growing; last month, he delivered the Spanish-language Republican response to the State of Union. Tilt Republican.

**California.**

**3rd District (Northeastern Sacramento suburbs and Lake Tahoe to Death Valley) Kevin Kiley, R, elected 54%. Trump 49.7%.** While



Courtesy, Kiley Campaign

**Kevin Kiley**

Democratic strategists believe this district is trending in their direction, it doesn’t feel like it’s quite ripe this cycle. 2022 nominee Kermit Jones, a physician and Navy veteran, is well-regarded and could run again. Likely Republican.

**12th District (Oakland and Berkeley) Open; Barbara Lee, D, running for Senate.** Biden 89%. Lateefah Simon, a longtime civil rights advocate and a member of the Bay Area Rapid Transit board of directors, is the heavy favorite to succeed Lee. Former Oakland City Councilman Loren Taylor may run as well. Solid Democratic.

**13th District (Mid-Central Valley) John Duarte, R, elected 50%. Biden 54%.** Duarte won by just 584 votes last year and will be a top Democratic target, especially given Biden’s substantial victory here in 2020. Democrats’ 2022 nominee, former state Assemblyman Adam Gray, has filed to run again but has not announced a campaign. Phil Arballo, the Fresno businessman who made unsuccessful bids for Congress in 2020 and 2022, might run as well. But Democrats are on the prowl for other options. Toss-up.

**22nd District (Southern Central Valley and eastern Bakersfield area) David Valadao, R, re-elected 52%. Biden 55%.** Former state Assemblyman Rudy Salas looks poised to run again after coming up short against Valadao last year. Democratic strategists hope that a second

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run could be more fruitful now that Salas's time is no longer being split between the campaign trail and the state legislature. There's some appetite in D.C. for a different challenger given Salas's loss last cycle, but even his detractors acknowledge he'd be hard to get past in a primary. Democrats are heartened by the fact that Valadao underperformed the top of the ticket for the first time. Tilt Republican.

**27th District (Santa Clarita, Lancaster, and Palmdale in northern Los Angeles County) Mike Garcia, R, re-elected 53%.** Biden 55%. Democrats in California and D.C. are breathing a collective sigh of relief that former state Assemblywoman Christy Smith is not running against Garcia for a fourth time in a row. Instead, the party seems to be coalescing quickly around George Whitesides, who was the chief of staff of NASA during the Obama administration, and was also the CEO of spaceflight company Virgin Galactic. But Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Commissioner Franky Carrillo is gearing up for a run as well. Democrats believe Garcia is out of step politically with the district but acknowledge he will be tough to beat. Toss-up.

**30th District (Los Angeles, Burbank, and Glendale) Open; Adam Schiff, D, running for Senate.** Biden 72%. It's a melee to succeed Schiff. Top contenders include state Sen. Anthony Portantino, state Rep. Laura Friedman, former city attorney Mike Feuer, and Los Angeles school board member Nick Melvoin. Actor Ben Savage is running as well but isn't expected to be a significant factor. While more progressive candidates like West Hollywood Mayor Sepi Shyne and Silverlake Neighborhood Councilor Maebe A. Girl aren't in a position to win, they could siphon off valuable votes. Solid Democratic.

**40th District (Eastern Orange County) Young Kim R, re-elected 57%.** Biden 49.9%. Kim is one of the best-positioned Republicans in a district Biden carried in 2020. Democratic strategists say this seat is a lower priority than most pickup opportunities and will require an exceptionally strong candidate. Likely Republican.

**41st District (Southern Riverside suburbs to Palm Springs) Ken Calvert, R, re-elected 52%.** Trump 50%. Former federal prosecutor Will Rollins looks likely to run again after holding Calvert to a 5-point win in 2022. Rollins was a strong fundraiser and this district is trending in Democrats' direction. Lean Republican.

**45th District (Western Orange County) Michelle Steel, R, re-elected 52%.** Biden 52%. Steel has proven a tougher out for Democrats than they initially anticipated. Former Garden Grove City Council Member Kim Bernice Nguyen is the only announced candidate, but she still has a ways to go to win over Democratic strategists in D.C., given her loss last year for an Orange County supervisor seat and her bumpy campaign rollout this cycle. While some national Democrats are warming up to her, she may not have the field to herself, either. Tustin City Councilwoman Letitia Clark could run, and 2022 nominee Jay Chen, the Navy reserve officer who lost to Steel in an often-contentious race, could run again as well. Lean Republican.

**47th District (Coastal Orange County and Irvine) Open; Katie Porter, D, running for Senate, re-elected 52%.** Biden 54%. Republicans are consolidating behind Scott Baugh, the former state Assembly minority leader who came within three points of defeating Porter in 2022. Democrats have several options, most notably former Rep. Harley Rouda, who represented part of this district for one term from 2019 to 2021, and state Sen. Dave Min. Democratic insiders in Washington believe Min has the inside track to the general election but Rouda's personal wealth makes this race more interesting. Porter had to spend

\$28 million last cycle, but Democrats believe a candidate with less progressive politics might fit the district better. Trump would be a big liability for Republicans here. Tilt Democratic.

**49th District (Coastal southern Orange and northern San Diego counties) Mike Levin, D, re-elected 53%.** Biden 55%. Republicans made a late push for this seat in 2022, but in a presidential year it doesn't seem like Levin is a top target. Likely Democratic.

## Colorado.

**3rd District (Pueblo area and Western Slope) Lauren Boebert, R, re-elected 50%.** Trump 53%. Boebert's 2022 re-election was unexpectedly the closest race of that cycle. While Adam Frisch, the former Aspen city councilman who ran against her last time, is running again, that doesn't mean this race is destined for another photo finish. After being caught off-guard last time, Boebert knows she's in serious electoral danger. And in a presidential year, the district's partisan lean helps more than it hurts; that wasn't the case last year, when Colorado Republicans performed abysmally at the top of the ticket. Boebert's controversial image clearly isn't winning her many friends in the district, but Frisch still has his work cut out for him — even with the many millions of dollars he'll raise from small donors across the country. Lean Republican.

**8th District (Northern Denver suburbs and Greeley area) Yadira Caraveo, D, elected 48%.** Biden 51%. Caraveo's victory last year was a minor upset, and she was able to pull it off in part because a Libertarian

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# 2024 Senate Ratings

## BATTLEGROUND

### Democratic-Held (8)

MI Open (Stabenow, D)  
Baldwin (D-Wis.)  
Brown (D-Ohio)  
Casey (D-Penn.)  
Kaine (D-Va.)  
Manchin (D-W.V.)  
Rosen (D-Nev.)  
Tester (D-Mont.)

### Republican-Held (0)

### Independent-Held (1)

Sinema (I-Ariz.)

### Solid Democratic (14)

CA Open (Feinstein, D)  
Cantwell (D-Wa.)  
Cardin (D-Md.)  
Carper (D-Del.)  
Gillibrand (D-N.Y.)  
Heinrich (D-N.M.)  
Hirono (D-Hawaii)  
King (I-Maine)  
Klobuchar (DFL-Minn.)  
Menendez (D-N.J.)  
Murphy (D-Ct.)  
Sanders (I-Vt.)  
Warren (D-Mass.)  
Whitehouse (D-R.I.)

### Solid Republican (11)

IN Open (Braun, R)  
Barrasso (R-Wy.)  
Blackburn (R-Tenn.)  
Cramer (R-N.D.)  
Cruz (R-Texas)  
Fischer (R-Neb.)  
Hawley (R-Mo.)  
Ricketts (R-Neb.)  
Romney (R-Utah)  
Scott (R-Fla.)  
Wicker (R-Miss.)

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

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candidate won 4 percent of the vote. Caraveo ran behind both Democrats at the top of the ticket by several points. The big question right now is if 2022 nominee GOP Barb Kirkmeyer, a state senator, will run again. Thornton Mayor Jan Kulmann, who placed second in the GOP primary last year, could run again as well. Toss-up.

## Connecticut.

**5th District (Northern Fairfield County and northwestern Connecticut) Jahana Hayes, D, re-elected 50%. Biden 55%.** Hayes put up an uninspired performance in 2022, eking out a 0.8-point win and underperforming the governor and senator at the top of the ticket. But given the district's overall partisan lean — Biden carried it by 11 points in 2020 — GOP strategists believe they need a special candidate to win it during a presidential year. It's not clear if 2022 nominee George Logan is going to run again. Lean Democratic.

## Florida.

**9th District (Orlando and southern suburbs) Darren Soto, D, re-elected 54%. Biden 58%.** Soto might be in trouble in 2024. Despite his district becoming more Democratic after redistricting, the congressman defeated political newcomer Scotty Moore by just 7 points last November. Republicans believe that the right candidate could make this race competitive. The 9th is majority-Hispanic and has a large Puerto Rican population — Soto was the first Puerto Rican elected to Congress from Florida. Likely Democratic.

**13th District (Part of St. Petersburg and suburbs) Anna Paulina Luna, R, elected 53%. Trump 53%.** After a brutal election cycle in 2022, Democrats aren't that optimistic about their chances in the Sunshine State. But Luna might be slightly more vulnerable than her Republican colleagues in politically similar districts. She was the only Republican member in Florida to win her race by less than 10 points, and the *Washington Post* reported that she may have embellished parts of her biography as she pursued a career in GOP politics. But unseating her probably won't be a priority for Democrats — unless former Gov. Charlie Crist makes a run at his old seat. Likely Republican.

**23rd District (Coastal Fort Lauderdale area) Jared Moskowitz, D, elected 52%. Biden 56%.** Moskowitz defeated his GOP opponent, a political newcomer who raised less than \$200,000, by just 5 points last November as a red wave swept across Florida. While both parties kept an eye on this district, it stayed on the edge of the 2022 battlefield. In 2024, the freshman congressman is likely to face a more serious Republican challenge. Likely Democratic.

**27th District (Miami and southern suburbs) Maria Elvira Salazar, R, re-elected 57%. Trump 49.9%.** South Florida continues to slip away from Democrats' grasp, and Salazar defeated former state Sen. Annette Taddeo by nearly 15 points in 2022. Taddeo was seen as one of the Democratic Party's stronger recruits last cycle (she was former Gov. Charlie Crist's running mate in 2014 and had run for Congress in the region twice before). After losing her bid to chair the Florida Democratic Party, Taddeo isn't likely to run for this seat again. Democrats will need to find the right candidate if they hope to seriously compete in this district. Likely Republican.

## Illinois.

**17th District (North-central Illinois cities from Rockford to Quad Cities area to Bloomington) Eric Sorensen, D, elected 52%. Biden 53%.**

The 17th remains Illinois' most competitive House district. Sorensen, a long time weathercaster in the region, has the edge in a district that Biden carried by 8 points in 2020. After falling short last cycle, Republicans are looking for their candidate. Esther Joy King, the Army Reserve officer who was the GOP nominee in 2020 and 2022, doesn't look like she's running again. Potential candidates include Rafael Estrada, a businessman from Galesburg, and Mike Garrigan, a local TV anchor from Rockford. Lean Democratic.

## Indiana.

**1st District (Northwestern Indiana) Frank Mrvan, D, re-elected 53%. Biden 53%.** House Republicans want 2022 nominee Jennifer-Ruth Green to run again, but that's unlikely to happen this cycle. She'll more likely run for lieutenant governor or wait for another opportunity. This Rust Belt district is slipping away from Democrats, and Mrvan could have another competitive race on his hands even if Green doesn't run here. Likely Democratic.

**3rd District (Northeastern Indiana) Open; Jim Banks, R, running for Senate. Trump 64%.** Even as Banks has locked up support for



Courtesy Allen Circuit Court

Wendy Davis

the Republican nomination, the race to succeed the congressman is still wide open. GOP state Sen. Andy Zay was the first serious contender to throw his hat in the ring. But several other Republicans, including former Rep. Marlin Stutzman and Allen County Circuit Judge Wendy Davis, might run as well. Whoever wins the Republican primary could have a long career in Congress ahead of them thanks to the district's red hue. Solid Republican.

**5th District (Northern Indianapolis suburbs and part of central Indiana) Open; Victoria Spartz, R, not running for re-election. Trump 57%.** After serving in Congress for a little over one term, Spartz announced that she wouldn't run for re-election (or for any other political office). This suburban district is home to many ambitious Republicans, and strategists expect a crowded primary to succeed Spartz. Megan Savage, the former chief of staff to former Rep. Susan Brooks, is considering running, along with former state Sen. John Ruckelshaus, state Rep. Chuck Goodrich, and a host of other elected officials in the region. Though this district is trending in Democrats' favor, Republicans should be favored to hold this seat for the next several years. Solid Republican.

## Iowa.

**1st District (Southeastern Iowa) Marianne Miller-Meeks, R, re-elected 53%. Trump 50%.** What once was the most reliably Democratic seat in the state is moving in the wrong direction for Democrats, who don't view Miller-Meeks as a strong campaigner but can't figure out how to beat her. Former state Rep. Christina Bohannon could run again but otherwise the party has a thin bench. Likely Republican.

**2nd District (Northeastern Iowa) Ashley Hinson, R, re-elected 54%. Trump 51%.** Democrats got the candidate they wanted against Hinson

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last cycle, but state Sen. Liz Mathis didn't come close to winning. This time around, the 2nd District is at the bottom of the priority list for Iowa Democrats. Likely Republican.

**3rd District (Des Moines and southwestern Iowa) Zach Nunn, R, elected 50%. Trump 49%.** This was one of the closest races in 2022, but Democratic strategists are divided on whether former Rep. Cindy Axne is the best candidate to flip this seat back. Businesswoman Theresa Greenfield, the party's 2020 Senate nominee, could run here. She wanted to run for this seat in 2018 but was disqualified because of a petitioning issue. She's currently the USDA rural development director for Iowa. Either Axne or Greenfield would be formidable candidates for Democrats, but Iowa is only getting more difficult for the party. Tilt Republican.

## Kansas.

**3rd District (Kansas City suburbs) Sharice Davids, D, re-elected 55%. Biden 51%.** Republican strategists don't like to admit it, but Davids is quietly a political powerhouse. State Republicans redrew her district to be substantially more Republican after 2020, but she defeated the same opponent by an even greater margin despite less room for error. Republicans will be looking for a different candidate this time, preferably someone without any connection to former Gov. Sam Brownback. Likely Democratic.



Sharice Davids

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

## Maine.

**2nd District (Northern Maine) Jared Golden, D, re-elected 53%. Trump 52%.** Republicans still don't have an answer to Golden, whose tatted-up Marine persona fits well with this rural district despite its GOP lean. Former Rep. Bruce Poliquin didn't come close in his comeback bid last year. State Senate Minority Leader Trey Stewart could run here, as could state House Minority Leader Billy Bob Faulkingham. The burly lobsterman has the kind of profile Republicans are looking for, but a legal history that makes Golden's ad-makers salivate. Lean Democratic.

## Maryland.

**6th District (Western Maryland and northwestern D.C. exurbs) David Trone, D, re-elected 55%. Biden 54%.** Trone had a moment of panic last year when the cycle looked like it was turning south for Democrats. But one \$10 million personal loan later and he handily defeated state Del. Neil Parrott despite his district being redrawn to be significantly less Democratic. If Sen. Ben Cardin retires, Trone is likely to run for his seat, creating the potential for a crowded Democratic primary: former Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner, state Sen. Brian Feldman, Montgomery County Councilor Marilyn Balcombe, former Montgomery County Councilor Craig Rice, and U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce April McClain-Delaney could all run. Likely Democratic.

## Michigan.

**3rd District (Grand Rapids and Muskegon areas) Hillary Scholten, D, elected 55%. Biden 53%.** Scholten's victory last November was bolstered by two key factors: a blue wave that swept across the state, and a polarizing Republican opponent. Former Trump administration official John Gibbs ousted then-Rep. Peter Meijer in the Republican primary after Meijer voted to impeach the then-president. Three months later, Scholten, an evangelical Christian, won her Grand Rapids-based district appealing to many of the same voters who supported Meijer. If the former congressman decided to run for his old seat, this race could become more competitive — but it looks like Meijer is more interested in running for the open Senate seat. Lean Democratic.

**7th District (Lansing area and northwestern Detroit exurbs) Open; Elissa Slotkin, D, running for U.S. Senate. Biden 50%.** Now that Slotkin is officially running for Michigan's open Senate seat, the 7th becomes an even more attractive target for Republicans in 2024. State Sen. Tom Barrett, who lost to Slotkin by 5 points last November, is planning on running again, and may not face much competition for the GOP nomination. Meanwhile, Democrats have a deep bench of candidates who could run in this district. Lansing Mayor Andy Schor announced he's formed an exploratory committee as he weighs a campaign, and Ingham County Clerk Barb Byrum has made her interest clear. Other Democrats to keep an eye on include former state Sen. Curtis Hertel, state Sen. Sarah Anthony, and state Reps. Angela Witwer and Julie Brixie. Toss-up.

**8th District (Flint and Tri-Cities areas) Dan Kildee, D, re-elected 53%. Biden 50%.** Another Michigan member who was seen as particularly vulnerable in 2022, Kildee ended up defeating his Republican opponent Paul Junge by 10 points. Junge, a wealthy former local news anchor, may run again, though he's viewed by many Republicans as a particularly weak candidate for the working-class district. Republicans tried to recruit former Attorney General Bill Schuette to challenge Kildee last cycle, and it appears that this cycle Republicans have their eye on Schuette's son, 27-year-old state Rep. Bill G. Schuette. Likely Democratic.

**10th District (Macomb County) John James, R, elected 49%. Trump 49.8%.** This suburban district was thought to be out of reach for Democrats in 2022, and the race drew minimal outside attention. But James, a two-time Senate nominee, only won by half of a percentage point. Democrats are hoping that former Rep. Andy Levin challenges James in 2024 — last year, Levin decided to run against his colleague Rep. Haley Stevens in the 11th rather than run in the 10th, though both new districts overlapped with his old district after redistricting. Meanwhile, former Macomb County Judge Carl Marlinga is interested in a rematch, and Diane Young, the owner of Athena Financial Group who ran for a state Senate seat in 2016, is weighing a bid as well. Tilt Republican.

## Minnesota.

**2nd District (Southern Minneapolis-St. Paul suburbs) Angie Craig, DFL, re-elected 51%. Biden 52%.** Craig defeated Marine veteran Tyler Kistner by several points last November — even with Legal Marijuana Now candidate Paula Overby, who died in early October but remained on the general election ballot, winning 3.5 percent of the vote and likely lowering Craig's ceiling a bit. Republican state Sen. Zach Duckworth, who represents the Twin Cities suburbs, has been floated as a potential

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candidate. Duckworth flipped his seat in 2020, defeating Democratic state Sen. Matt Little by 10 points. Former Lexington Mayor Mike Murphy, who ran for governor last year and failed to make the GOP primary ballot, also signaled interest in the race. But he isn't seen as a serious contender. Lean Democratic.

## Montana.

**1st District (Western Montana) Ryan Zinke, R, elected 49.6%. Trump 52%.** This is the rare district where Democratic strategists would rather run against an incumbent than contend with an open seat. Zinke's personal baggage led him to underperform the fundamentals of the district in 2022, when he scraped out a 3-point win. Zinke is considering a run for Senate, and 2022 Democratic nominee Monica Tranel is considering running for House again. Likely Republican.

## Nebraska.

**2nd District (Greater Omaha area) Don Bacon, R, re-elected 52%. Biden 52%.** Despite their efforts over the past four election cycles, Democrats have been unable to take down Bacon, a retired Air Force general with a strong independent streak. Democrats were excited about their nominee in 2022, state Sen. Tony Vargas, and though he fell short last cycle, they believe he's their best option in 2024. Vargas hasn't announced anything official yet but is expected to run. Bacon has effectively cultivated a moderate image, most recently through excoriating the Freedom Caucus Republicans who attempted to block Kevin McCarthy from becoming the House speaker. Democrats believe Bacon's greatest vulnerability is his pro-life position. Lean Republican.

## Nevada.

**1st District (Eastern Las Vegas area) Dina Titus, D, re-elected 52%. Biden 53%.** All three of Nevada's Democratic members now represent competitive districts, to varying degrees. Democrats were particularly worried about Titus last November, as she was running in a competitive district for the first time in a decade and lacked the fundraising chops of her colleagues. But Titus won by 6 points, and she has the upper hand in 2024 regardless of who Republicans nominate. Mark Robertson, the party's nominee last cycle, has filed for 2024, but at least one Republican strategist doesn't expect him to run. Flemming Larsen, a restaurateur who ran for state Assembly last November and lost to a Democratic incumbent by just 2 points, has filed to run in this district, and has the personal wealth to fund a campaign. State Assemblywoman Danielle Gallant, who represents Boulder City, is another Republican to watch. Lean Democratic.

**3rd District (Southwestern Las Vegas area) Susie Lee, D, re-elected 52%. Biden 52%.** Republicans spent \$14 million attempting to unseat Lee last November. The 3rd is still seen as the party's best pick-up opportunity in 2024, though they haven't found a candidate yet. April Becker, a lawyer from Las Vegas who ran against Lee last year, is eyeing Nevada's Senate seat. Former state Sen. Elizabeth Helgelien was the first Republican to announce a campaign, touting her support for the 2nd Amendment and small businesses as she carried a rifle in her launch video. Helgelien served in the state Senate for one term before resigning in 2012. State Assemblywoman Heidi Kasama could also run for this district. Lean Democratic.

**4th District (Northern Las Vegas area and rural central Nevada) Steven Horsford, D, re-elected 52%. Biden 53%.** Republicans don't have

a challenger in this district either. Sam Peters, the 2022 nominee, is now the CEO of McShane LLC, the GOP consulting firm that worked with Peters last cycle. Former state Assemblywoman Annie Black, who came in second-place in the GOP primary, could run again. She was one of several Republican candidates last cycle who was at the Capitol on Jan. 6. Likely Democratic.

## New Hampshire.

**1st District (Eastern New Hampshire) Chris Pappas, D, re-elected 54%. Biden 52%.** If GOP Gov. Chris Sununu doesn't seek re-election (to



Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

**Chris Pappas**

run for president or otherwise), Pappas would be top of the list to run for governor, leaving this an open seat and a top pickup opportunity for the GOP. 2022 GOP nominee Karoline Leavitt has remained in the public eye since her loss to Pappas

last year, though the Newsmax contributor wouldn't be the preferred candidate of GOP strategists. Lean Democratic.

**2nd District (Western and northern New Hampshire) Annie Kuster, D, re-elected 56%. Biden 54%.** Keene Mayor George Hansel could run against Kuster again. He was the preferred candidate of the D.C. GOP establishment but couldn't win the primary against a more conservative option in Robert Burns. New Hampshire GOP primary voters weren't acting in their electoral interests in either district last cycle, and it will be incumbent on the party to reorient itself for 2024, especially if Trump — who lost the state handily in 2020 — is the GOP nominee again. Likely Democratic.

## New Jersey.

**7th District (Southwestern New York City suburbs and exurbs) Tom Kean Jr., R, elected 51%. Biden 51%.** Former Rep. Tom Malinowski could run for his old seat after narrowly losing to Kean last year, though he recently turned his campaign committee into a PAC focused on public schools. If Malinowski does run again, he'll be tough to beat in a primary, given his formidable fundraising capabilities and narrow loss to Kean even after state Democrats threw him under the bus during the redistricting process. If he doesn't, any number of Democrats could run. The most prominent Democrat in the mix right now is former state Sen. Ray Lesniak. State Working Families Party director Sue Altman could run as well, as a more progressive option. No matter who the Democratic nominee is, this will be a competitive fight. Toss-up.

## New Mexico.

**2nd District (Southern New Mexico and western Albuquerque area) Gabe Vasquez, D, elected 50%. Biden 52%.** Yvette Herrell, who lost a race for this seat in 2018, won it in 2020, and lost it again in 2022, could run again. Vasquez was beset by bad headlines but still managed to oust an incumbent (with some redistricting help). That doesn't bode great for the GOP now that he's in office himself. Toss-up.

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## New York

**1st District (Eastern Long Island and north shore of Suffolk County) Nick LaLota, R, elected 54%.** Biden 49.5%. Biden would have narrowly carried this redrawn seat in 2020, but Republicans seriously overperformed on Long Island in 2022, and Democratic strategists think they'll need a great candidate to compete here. But their recruitment efforts could be complicated by local elections taking place this fall. A bad result for Democrats could scare away stronger candidates, like state Assemblyman Steve Stern or 2020 nominee Nancy Goroff. Lean Republican.

**3rd District (Northern Nassau County) George Santos, R, elected 54%.** Biden 54%. Neither Democratic nor Republican strategists expect America's most famous congressman to be on the ballot next November, either because he declines to run again or loses a primary now that the entire Long Island GOP apparatus is engaged against him. The more pressing question is whether Santos' myriad legal troubles will force him from office sooner than then, precipitating a special election.

The list of potential candidates is long on both sides, but former Rep. Tom Suozzi looms large. He just took a lobbying job, but that doesn't mean he can't make a comeback bid. Two 2020 candidates, Nassau County Legislator Josh Lafazan and Robert Zimmerman (who lost to Santos) are positioning themselves to run again. Democratic state Sen. Anna Kaplan ran in 2016 and could run again. Because it's not clear whether Santos will leave voluntarily, Republicans are treading more carefully. Alison Esposito, the 2022 GOP nominee for lieutenant governor, is a possibility, as are Nassau County Legislator Mazi Pilip, Nassau County Treasurer Elaine Phillips, Hempstead Town Supervisor Jennifer DeSena and Brookville Mayor Daniel Serota. County Executive Bruce Blakeman doesn't look like he's running. Republicans probably have a better chance of holding an open seat in a regularly-scheduled election than in a special election. Toss-up.

**4th District (Southern Nassau County) Anthony D'Esposito, R, elected 52%.** Biden 57%. Biden would have won this district by more than any other GOP-held seat, making it a top Democratic target nationwide. Former Hempstead Town Supervisor Laura Gillen could run again after losing last cycle, as could former Nassau County Executive Laura Curran, though strategists say the two are unlikely to run against each other. Former Olympic figure skater Emily Hughes is another potential candidate. Toss-up.

**17th District (Lower Hudson Valley) Mike Lawler, R, elected 50%.** Biden 55%. Former Rep. Mondaire Jones, who represented part of this district for one term before redistricting and then-DCCC chairman Sean Patrick Maloney pushed him elsewhere, is considering a run here. Jones ran a puzzling bid for a Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan district last cycle despite having no connection to the area. Lawler had significant outside support last cycle because he was running against the chairman of the DCCC, and can't count on that again. Toss-up.

**18th District (Upper Hudson Valley) Pat Ryan, D, re-elected 51%.** Biden 53%. Ryan was the only Hudson Valley Democrat to escape unscathed in 2022, and he begins in decent position given the partisan lean of the district and the advantages of incumbency (in his previous run he was dealing with a new district after winning a special election). No Republicans have emerged to take him on yet. Former state Rep. Colin Schmitt was not considered the strongest candidate but came close last time and could run again. Orange County Executive Steve Neuhaus could run, as could state Assemblyman Brian Maher. Lean Democratic.

**19th District (Southeastern upstate New York) Marc Molinaro, R, elected 51%.** Biden 51%. Democratic strategists see this seat as the most difficult Hudson Valley battle this cycle. Josh Riley, the former Boies Schiller partner who narrowly lost to Molinaro in 2022, is looking at running again. State Sen. Michelle Hinchey, whose father Maurice represented this area for 20 years, is also being mentioned, but she passed up a bid last cycle. Tilt Republican.

**22nd District (Syracuse and Utica areas) Brandon Williams, R, elected 51%.** Biden 53%. Democrats feel like they shouldn't have lost this seat last cycle after moderate Republican John Katko retired, given the seat's overall partisan lean. Francis Conole, who lost to Williams, has ruled out another bid. Sarah Klee Hood, a DeWitt town councilwoman and Air Force veteran, could run again; she nearly beat Conole in the primary last year. But Democratic strategists in D.C. would prefer a different candidate. Manlius Town Councilwoman Katelyn Kriesel has already suspended her campaign. State Sen. John Mannion could run — he just won re-election in an upset by 10 votes (0.008 percent). Toss-up.

## North Carolina

The Old North State is, again, engulfed in a complicated redistricting battle. The map used in 2022, which created seven Republican-leaning districts, six Democratic-leaning districts, and a purple district, was put in place by the North Carolina Supreme Court, controlled by Democrats at the time. But that map is temporary. And now that Republicans control the state Supreme Court, it's likely that the Republican majority in the state Legislature will be able to draw a congressional map much more favorable for the GOP. At the same time, the U.S. Supreme Court is preparing to rule on *Moore v. Harper*, a case that arose in North Carolina, which could limit the role that courts have in drawing congressional maps.

Four Democratic members are most likely to be affected by a new map: Wiley Nickel, in the Raleigh-based 13th, Jeff Jackson, in the Charlotte-based 14th, Kathy Manning, in the Greensboro-based 6th, and Don Davis, in the northeastern 1st. Until the new map is finished, the campaign cycle is frozen, though a few Republican candidates from last cycle appear interested in running again. Army veteran Christian Castelli, who ran against Manning, and Bo Hines, the 27-year-old who ran against Nickel, have both filed with the FEC. Manning's predecessor, former GOP Rep. Mark Walker, might run against the congresswoman as well.

## Ohio

The Buckeye State's congressional map will also be redrawn ahead of 2024 — the map used in the 2022 election was declared unconstitutional by the Ohio Supreme Court, but the ruling came after the primary when it was too late to change the lines. That decision was appealed to the Supreme Court by Ohio Republicans, and will also be affected by the high court's ruling on *Moore v. Harper*.

Ohio's constitution explicitly bars partisan gerrymandering, so Republicans in the state won't be able to draw the kind of aggressive gerrymander that they're expected to draw in North Carolina. But Ohio's three competitive districts — all held by Democrats — could change under the new map. Even if the lines don't change much, Republicans will be targeting Marcy Kaptur, in the Toledo-based 9th, Emilia Sykes, in the Akron-based 13th, and Greg Landsman, in the Cincinnati-based 1st. Air Force veteran J.R. Majewski, a Trump acolyte who lost to Kaptur by 13 points, said he's considering running again, and conservative

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commentator Madison Gesiotto Gilbert has filed to run in 2024 too. Majewski is a uniquely flawed candidate, and Republicans will be looking for better options in the 9th.

## Oregon

**5th District (Southern Portland suburbs and central Oregon) Lori Chavez-DeRemer, R, elected 51%. Biden 53%.** There's no shortage of Democrats interested in challenging the congresswoman in her first re-election race. Former Clackamas County commissioner/Metro Council President Lynn Petersen, state Rep. Janelle Bynum (who defeated Chavez-DeRemer in two state legislative races in 2016 and 2018), state Senate President Rob Wagner, Bend City Councilor Anthony Broadman, and Bend Mayor Melanie Kebler are all possibilities. It's also unclear whether 2022 nominee Jamie McLeod-Skinner will run again. Toss-up.

**6th District (Salem area and southwestern Portland suburbs) Andrea Salinas, D, elected 50%. Biden 55%.** Republicans are keeping an eye on this district, which could be competitive in the right political environment, but they haven't found a challenger yet. Mike Erickson, who lost last cycle, could run again, as could state Rep. Ron Noble, who finished second in the 2022 GOP primary. Erickson is suing Salinas for defamation because of some of her 2022 ads. Lean Democratic.

## Pennsylvania

**1st District (Northern Philadelphia suburbs) Brian Fitzpatrick, R, re-elected 55%. Biden 52%.** Democrats would love to flip this suburban district, which should be competitive by the numbers. But among the Republicans who represent districts Biden carried, Fitzpatrick may be the strongest. The moderate congressman defeated his Democratic opponent by 10 points in 2022, after outraising her by \$3.5 million. The district may get more attention in 2024, if Democrats can find the right candidate who could compete with Fitzpatrick in fundraising. Likely Republican.

**7th District (Lehigh Valley) Susan Wild, D, re-elected 51%. Biden 49.7%.** Hampered by polarizing Republican candidates at the top of the ticket, Republican nominee Lisa Scheller lost to Wild by 2 points. Republicans believe Scheller could have won without Doug Mastriano on the ballot — she came close to defeating the congresswoman in 2020 as well. Potential candidates in 2024 include Scheller and state Rep. Ryan McKenzie. Tilt Democratic.

**8th District (Scranton/Wilkes-Barre and northeastern Pennsylvania) Matt Cartwright, D, re-elected 51%. Trump 51%.** Cartwright has successfully won over working-class voters through his populist message, and garnered enough crossover support from Trump voters to hold the 8th during two difficult election cycles. He'll be a top target in 2024, though there aren't any Republicans who've publicly signaled interest in challenging him. Jim Bogner, Republicans' nominee in 2020 and 2022, appears to be considering a third campaign. Tilt Democratic.

**10th District (Harrisburg and York areas) Scott Perry, R, re-elected 54%. Trump 51%.** Despite representing a purple district, Perry has been a staunch, vocal ally of Trump. The FBI seized the congressman's phone last summer in their investigation of the former president's efforts to overturn the 2020 election results. Democrats believe that Perry could be vulnerable in 2024 if they can find a strong candidate. Likely Republican.

**17th District (Western and northern Pittsburgh suburbs) Chris Deluzio, D, elected 53%. Biden 52%.** Though Republicans believed

they were in a strong position to flip this open seat in 2022, Mastriano's terrible performance dragged down GOP nominee Jeremy Shaffer — the gubernatorial nominee lost this district by 25 points. Deluzio, an Iraq War veteran who shared some similarities with his predecessor, Conor Lamb, won by 7 points. But Republicans in D.C. are hoping that Shaffer runs again in 2024. Lean Democratic.

## Rhode Island

**1st District (Eastern and southern Providence and eastern Rhode Island) Open; David Cicilline, D, resigning to lead the Rhode Island Foundation. Biden 64%.** A Democrat will replace Cicilline, but beyond that not much is clear about the special election expected to take place later this year. The election's date is up in the air, and so is the candidate field. Lt. Gov. Sabina Matos looks like the most likely to toss her hat in the ring, but 2022 gubernatorial candidate Helena Foulkes, state Sen. Sandra Cano, and two dozen other local elected officials and political figures are still deciding on whether to run. The result could be a crowded race where the winner squeaks by with just a fraction of the vote. Solid Democratic.

## South Carolina

**1st District (Coastal South Carolina and Charleston suburbs) Nancy Mace, R, re-elected 57%. Trump 54%.** Federal judges ruled two months ago that South Carolina's new congressional map was racially gerrymandered, accusing the Republican-controlled state Legislature of intentionally drawing Black voters out of the 1st District and ordering lawmakers to draw a new map. Republicans are appealing the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, and depending on how the high court rules, this district could become more competitive under new lines. Mace has an independent streak; she faced a Trump-endorsed primary challenger last summer and has more recently become quite critical of her party's stance on abortion. Likely Republican.

## Texas.

**15th District (Rio Grande Valley to the outer San Antonio metro area) Monica De La Cruz, R, elected 53%. Trump 51%.** The 15th remains the most competitive district in Texas. Monica De La Cruz won by 8 points last November, but she faced a Democratic opponent seen as too progressive for the swing seat. Trump only won this seat by 3 points in 2020, and Democrats believe Biden has a decent chance of winning this district next year. Democrats' 2022 nominee, Michelle Vallejo, is staying active in local politics and has started a new group to organize Democrats in the region. But some Democrats are hoping to recruit a more moderate option. Other Democrats in the Valley who could run include Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez and Hidalgo County Commissioner Ellie Torres. Lean Republican.

**23rd District (San Antonio suburbs to El Paso suburbs) Tony Gonzales, R, re-elected 56%. Trump 53%.** Gonzales should be safe from a competitive general election — he won re-election by 17 points last November. But he's facing heat on the right, as Texas Republicans skewer him for voting to support gay marriage rights and expand federal gun regulations. Gonzales has also been a vocal opponent of his conservative colleague Rep. Chip Roy's border security proposal. Medina County Republican Chair Julie Clark and retired ICE agent Victor Avila, who ran for Texas Land Commissioner in 2022, have announced primary challenges, and the Texas GOP voted to censure him, opening up the door to supporting one of Gonzales' primary opponents. Solid Republican.

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**28th District (Laredo and eastern San Antonio suburbs) Henry Cuellar, D, re-elected 57%.** Biden 53%. Cuellar has proved to be incredibly resilient. The most conservative member in the House Democratic Caucus defeated Jessica Cisneros, a progressive attorney with national support, in the primary, and went on to win the competitive general election by double-digits — all while under investigation from the FBI. There’s certainly still an appetite among some Democrats to challenge the congressman in a primary, but it’s not clear whether Cisneros would run again, and finding another challenger would be difficult. If new developments emerge from the investigation (Cuellar maintains that he’ll be cleared of any wrongdoing), both progressives and Republicans might take a closer look in 2024. Likely Democratic.

**34th District (Eastern Rio Grande Valley) Vicente Gonzalez, D, elected 53%.** Biden 57%. Republicans flipped the older, more competitive version of this district in a special election last summer. But despite having an incumbent congresswoman with a national platform on the ballot, the party couldn’t hold the new district, and Democratic Rep. Vicente Gonzalez (who represented the neighboring 15th at the time) won by 9 points. This district could be competitive again with the right candidate, but it’s not a priority for Republicans for now. Likely Democratic.

## Virginia

**2nd District (Suburban Hampton Roads) Jen Kiggans, R, elected 52%.** Biden 50%. Former Rep. Elaine Luria looks unlikely to run against Kiggans for a second time, so Democrats will have to find another strong candidate to match up against Kiggans, who was a top recruit for Republicans last year. Potential candidates include Missy Cotter Smasal, a Navy veteran who ran for state Senate in 2019; and former state Rep. Cheryl Turpin, who narrowly lost a state Senate race to Kiggans in 2019. Tilt Republican.

**7th District (Southern D.C. exurbs) Abigail Spanberger, D, re-elected 52%.** Biden 52%. Republican Yesli Vega never recovered from remarks she made about pregnancies resulting from rape during last year’s campaign. The GOP needed to run a lights-out campaign to defeat Spanberger, one of Democrats’ strongest fundraisers and national stars. For next year, former Army Green Beret Derrick Anderson is a potential candidate — he came in second to Vega in the GOP primary in 2022. Lean Democratic.

**10th District (Southwestern D.C. suburbs and exurbs) Jennifer Wexton, D, re-elected 53%.** Biden 58%. Wexton received a scare when Republican Hung Cao made a late push in this Democratic-leaning district. She ultimately won by 6 points despite Biden carrying the seat by 18 points in 2020. It’s not as likely Republicans catch her off guard this time, though. Cao, a Navy veteran, could run again, but he is also considering a run for Senate against Tim Kaine. Likely Democratic.

## Washington

**3rd District (Southwestern Washington) Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, D, elected 50.4%.** Trump 51%. Perez should be one of the most vulnerable Democrats in the country. The congresswoman is one of just five Democrats who represent districts Trump won in 2020, and she’s less politically experienced than her peers in this group. But if she faces Joe Kent again in the general election, Perez has a fair chance of holding together the coalition of Democrats, independents and moderate Republicans who carried her to victory in 2022. Republicans are attempting to find a more viable alternative to Joe Kent (former Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, ousted by Kent in the 2022 primary, appears

unlikely to run again for this seat), but Kent’s base of GOP support could be difficult to overcome. Toss-up.

**8th District (Eastern Seattle suburbs and part of Central Washington) Kim Schrier, D, re-elected 53%.** Biden 52%. Schrier, a pediatrician who flipped the 8th in the 2018 “blue wave,” defeated her Republican opponent by 7 points last year — her largest victory yet. Unseating the battle-tested congresswoman won’t be an easy task for Republicans, but the district remains competitive. Republican Carmen Goers, a commercial banker in Kent, announced she was running for Congress, promising to “make sure D.C. manages their budget” if she’s elected. Goers ran for a state House seat in 2022 and came in last place with 14 percent in the all-party primary. Lean Democratic.

## West Virginia

**2nd District (Eastern and northern West Virginia) Open; Alex Mooney, R, is running for Senate.** Trump 68%. The current favorite to succeed Mooney is state Treasurer Riley Moore, the scion of the Moore political dynasty that includes a former governor and a sitting U.S. senator. But this race could shift rapidly depending on how things play out in the state’s premier contest for Joe Manchin’s Senate seat. State Attorney General Patrick Morrissey could run for Senate, governor, or this seat. And Mooney could drop down from the Senate race if Gov. Jim Justice bigfoots that contest. Solid Republican.

## Wisconsin

**1st District (Southeastern Wisconsin) Bryan Steil, R, re-elected**



Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

**Bryan Steil**

**54%.** Trump 50%. Democrats didn’t target this district last year because of how they perceived the national political environment, but in its redrawn form it could be highly competitive. The seat votes about two points more Republican than

the state as a whole. But first Democrats need to find a viable candidate. Likely Republican.

**3rd District (Southwestern Wisconsin) Derrick Van Orden, R, elected 52%.** Trump 51%. Van Orden won by a much narrower-than-expected margin. When both parties stopped paying close attention to this race in 2022, Van Orden had a polling lead of 5 points in Democratic polls and 13 points in GOP polls. He won by 3 points. But Democrats will need a strong candidate to challenge him given the GOP lean of the seat. Likely Republican. **IE**

## CALENDAR

<b>May 16</b>	Kentucky Governor Primary
<b>Aug. 8</b>	Mississippi Governor Primary
<b>Aug. 10</b>	Louisiana Governor Filing Deadline
<b>Aug. 29</b>	Mississippi Governor Primary Runoff (if necessary)
<b>Oct. 14</b>	Louisiana Governor Primary
<b>Nov. 18</b>	Louisiana Governor Runoff (if necessary)

# California 12: Simon Says, 'I'm Running'

By Jacob Rubashkin

Longtime California Rep. Barbara Lee became the third major candidate to toss her hat in the ring for the Golden State's open Senate seat next year. And while her main competition, Reps. Adam Schiff and Katie Porter, set off heated battles for their congressional districts now that they are running statewide, it's a different story in Lee's 12th District.

Though safe seats such as the 12th only come around once in a generation — Lee has served since 1998 and before her Rep. Ron Dellums represented Oakland for 27 years — most Democrats are deferring a run in Lee's Bay Area seat. The result is a comparatively sleepy primary in a state that is playing host to pitched battles in nearly all its other corners.

## The Lay of the Land

The 12th District encompasses the city of Oakland and some surrounding cities: Berkeley, Alameda, Albany, Emeryville, and most of San Leandro. Oakland makes up 58 percent of the population, with Berkeley making up another 16 percent and Alameda 10 percent.

The district is incredibly diverse, with relatively equal proportions of white (33 percent), Asian (25 percent), Hispanic (24 percent) and Black (19 percent) residents. The Black population in the district has decreased as Oakland's Black population has dropped precipitously since the days of Dellums.

Politically, the district is among the most Democratic in the nation. Joe Biden would have carried the 12th by 80 points, 89-9 percent. In 2022, Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom won the district, 90-10 percent, and Democratic Sen. Alex Padilla won it, 91-9 percent.

## The Successor

What could have been a massive primary has already winnowed down to just one Democrat: Bay Area Rapid Transit director and longtime civil rights and police reform advocate Lateefah Simon, who announced her bid to succeed Lee at the end of February.

Simon, 46, grew up in San Francisco's Western Addition neighborhood. She was the youngest woman ever to receive the MacArthur Fellowship "Genius grant" for her leadership of the Center for Young Women's Development which helped at-risk women including sex workers, addicts and drug dealers, victims of domestic violence and others.

From 2005 to 2008, Simon worked for then-San Francisco District Attorney Kamala Harris, and in 2008, she became the executive director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area. Since 2011 she has worked at various social justice nonprofits and philanthropies, including currently at the Meadow Fund, a philanthropy funded by Patty Quillin, the wife of billionaire Netflix founder Reed Hastings.

In 2016, she defeated incumbent Zakhary Mallett in the race for BART District 7, an expensive contest that saw her leverage support from unions and officeholders including Harris and Newsom to win 51-27 percent.

Simon, who is legally blind and has never driven a car, received an undergraduate degree from Mills College in 2017, and later earned a

Masters of Public Administration from the University of San Francisco in 2022.

She was easily re-elected to the board in 2020, 64-36 percent. In 2022, Simon was briefly removed from the BART board because she moved just outside of her district — a law firm later found her removal



Lateefah Simon

unfounded and she was reinstated.

Simon's longtime consulting team is helmed by Bearstar Strategies, whose lead partner Ace Smith is also a top adviser to Newsom.

Most of the other obvious potential candidates, such as

state Assemblywomen Mia Bonta and Buffy Wicks, former Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, and state Sen. Nancy Skinner quickly took themselves out of the running.

The most notable politician to keep his name in the mix is former Oakland City Councilman Loren Taylor.

Taylor, 45, narrowly lost the 2022 Oakland mayoral race to Sheng Thao, 50.3-49.7 percent. The Oakland native and Case Western (1999), University of Connecticut (MS, 2001), and Berkeley (MBA, 2005) graduate had the support of many local mayors in that race including Schaaf, San Francisco's London Breed, and San Jose's Sam Liccardo.

Taylor, a management consultant, expressed interest in running to succeed Lee but has not spoken about his plans since Simon entered the race.

## How It Plays Out

If Taylor does run, he would almost certainly make the general election as well, given his base of support in Oakland, the district's partisan lean, and California's top-two election system. But he would be a serious underdog, given Simon's deep relationships with the local unions and organizing networks, the political power players in the state, and her connections to some of the region's wealthiest Democratic donors. Simon announced that she had raised \$140,000 in the first 24 hours of her campaign.

Simon would be one of Congress's most progressive members, and has staked out positions on issues such as defunding the police that might make more moderate members of the Democratic caucus anxious. But that's not necessarily a liability in this district. Lee is also one of the chamber's most progressive members, and before her, Dellums was the first self-described socialist to serve in Congress in the post-war era.

Taylor, the former councilman, did recently make news for chastising Thao, the current mayor, for suspending Oakland's police chief after a report detailing police misconduct was released, calling the decision "excessive."

But the district is so Democratic, it's not clear if there would be room for Taylor to run effectively to Simon's right, and he can't rely on the few GOP voters to help him compile a majority.