

A photograph of the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C., taken at sunset. The building's white neoclassical architecture is illuminated by the warm, orange and pink light of the setting sun. The large dome is the central focus, topped with a statue. In the foreground, a large equestrian statue of George Washington stands on a stone pedestal, flanked by two lion statues. The building is reflected in the calm water of the reflecting pool. A decorative graphic element, a yellow and blue line forming a partial frame, is on the left side of the image.

Eye on the election: 2026 midterms

October 2026

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1 Introduction

The landscape for control of the House and Senate after the November 3 elections is dynamic and will likely remain so between now and Election Day. The president's party typically loses seats in midterm elections, and Democrats face their own challenges, including intraparty tensions. Voters are concerned about affordability, including healthcare, gas and grocery prices. Regardless of outcomes, there will be major policy implications.

To gain control of the currently 53-47 Republican-controlled Senate, Democrats would likely need to hold all their current seats and flip four Republican seats. This would possibly entail defeating Maine incumbent Susan Collins (R) and winning the North Carolina seat of retiring Senator Thom Tillis (R), plus winning in two more states that President Trump won in 2024, such as Alaska, Iowa, Ohio or Texas. Senator Collins is the only Senate Republican incumbent running in a state President Trump lost in the 2024 election. Other GOP-held seats are competitive, including in Texas and Iowa.

There are many factors influencing the outlook for control of the House, such as the historical trend for the president's party to lose seats in the midterms (see below). The potential for Democratic gains may be offset by redistricting efforts that could put more seats in a favorable position for Republicans, especially after an April Supreme Court decision that struck down parts of the Voter Rights Act. But Missouri's redistricting plan has been pushed off, and redistricting efforts have been credited with a reported surge in Democratic voter turnout in some states.

Year	President	POTUS party House seats	Next-year ratio	POTUS party Senate seats	Next-year ratio
2022	Joe Biden ✓	-9, Republicans won control →	✓ 222R-213D	+1, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 51D-49R
2018	Donald Trump ✓	-40, Democrats won control →	✓ 235D-199R	+2, Republican hold ✓	✓ 53R-47D
2014	Barack Obama ✓	-13, Republican hold ✓	✓ 247R-188D	-9, Republicans won control →	✓ 54R-46D
2010	Barack Obama ✓	-63, Republicans won control →	✓ 241R-194D	-6, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 53D-47R
2006	George W. Bush ✓	-30, Democrats won control →	✓ 233D-202R	-6, Democrats won control →	✓ 51D-49R
2002	George W. Bush ✓	+8, Republican hold ✓	✓ 229R-205D	+2, Republican hold ✓	✓ 51R-49D
1998	Bill Clinton ✓	+5, Republican hold ✓	✓ 223R-211D	0, Republican hold ✓	✓ 55R-45D
1994	Bill Clinton ✓	-52, Republicans won control →	✓ 230R-205D	-8, Republicans won control →	✓ 52R-48D
1990	George H.W. Bush ✓	-8, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 267D-167R	-1, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 56D-44R
1986	Ronald Reagan ✓	-5, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 258D-177R	-8, Democrats won control →	✓ 55D-45R
1982	Ronald Reagan ✓	-26, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 269D-166R	+1, Republican hold ✓	✓ 55R-45D
1978	Jimmy Carter ✓	-15, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 278D-157R	-3, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 59D-41R
1974	Gerald Ford ✓	-48, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 291D-144R	-5, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 62D-38R
1970	Richard Nixon ✓	-12, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 254D-181R	+2, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 55D-45R
1966	Lyndon Johnson ✓	-47, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 248D-187R	-4, Democratic hold ✓	✓ 64D-36R

Source: American Presidency Project, UC Santa Barbara; US House of Representatives; US Senate.



2026 midterm elections: by the numbers

House

220R-215D

Likely House ratio with vacancies filled

Over 60

Members retiring, running for other office or lost primary

13

House Democrats in districts President Trump won in 2024

3

House Republicans in districts Kamala Harris won in 2024

Over 30

Districts rated toss-up or leaning to other party

Senate

53R-47D

Senate party ratio

12

Senators who are in cycle and are retiring or running for other office (Senators Blackburn and Klobuchar not in cycle but are running for governor)

2

Democratic Senate seats in states that President Trump won in 2024 – Michigan (Open), Georgia (Senator Jon Ossoff)

1

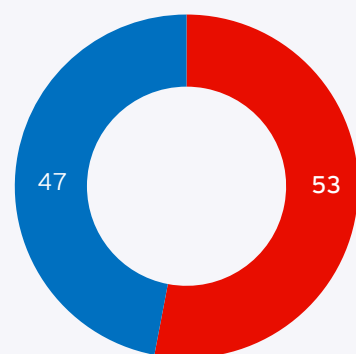
Republican senator in a Harris-won state – Susan Collins (R-ME)

8

Races rated toss-up or leaning to other party

Senate

Current makeup



■ Republicans ■ Democrats

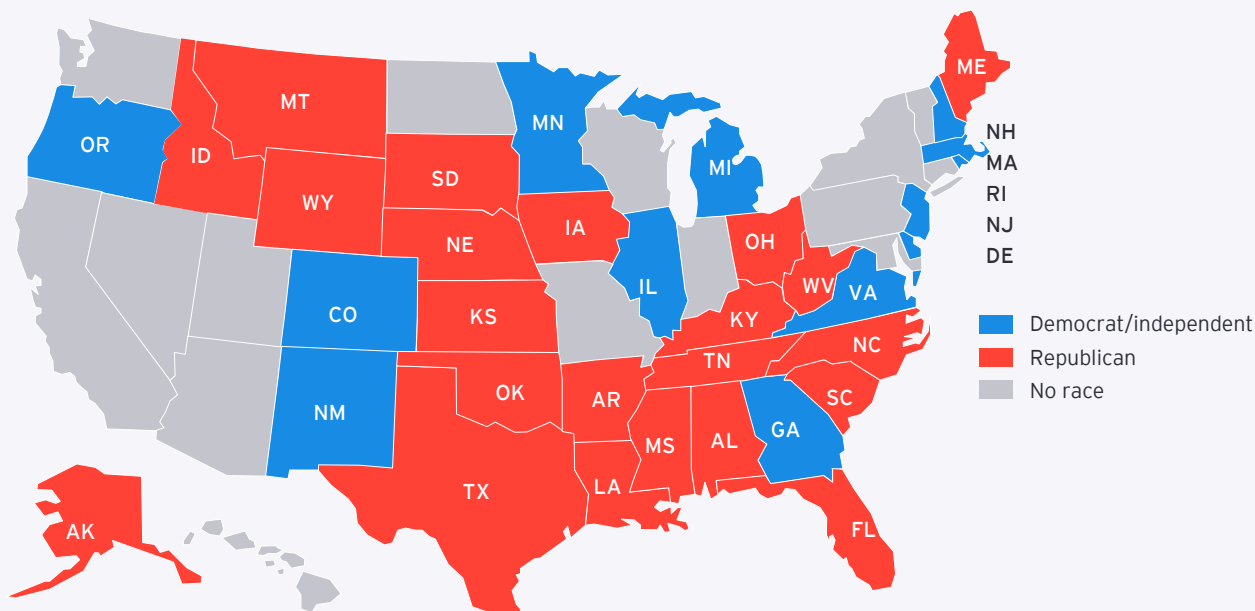
The current Senate party ratio is 53 Republicans to 47 Democrats (including two independents).

States that have potentially competitive races include:

State	Incumbent	Republican	Democrat
Alaska	Dan Sullivan (R-AK)	Sullivan	Former Rep. Mary Peltola (D-AK)
Georgia	Jon Ossoff (D-GA)	Rep. Mike Collins (R-GA)	Ossoff
Iowa	Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA) <i>retiring</i>	Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA)	State Rep. Josh Turek (D)
Kansas	Sen. Roger Marshall (R-KS)	Marshall	Adam Hamilton, Methodist pastor
Maine	Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)	Collins	Former state Sen. Troy Jackson (D)
Michigan	Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI) <i>retiring</i>	Former Rep. Mike Rogers (R-MI)	Abdul El-Sayed
Minnesota	Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN) <i>retiring</i>	Former NFL reporter Michele Tafoya	Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan (D)
New Hampshire	Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) <i>retiring</i>	Former Sen. John Sununu (R-NH)	Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH)
North Carolina	Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC) <i>retiring</i>	Michael Whatley, former RNC chair,	Former governor Roy Cooper (D)
Ohio	Sen. Jon Husted (R-OH)	Husted	Former Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)
Texas	Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) <i>lost primary</i>	State Attorney General Ken Paxton (R)	State Rep. James Talarico (D-TX)

Affordability issues are expected to play a big role in the elections, as candidates highlight the effects of expired healthcare subsidies, fuel costs affected by foreign conflicts and grocery and other consumer costs. State-specific concerns have emerged, such as fertilizer and diesel fuel costs in the farm state of Iowa.

While the focus earlier in the election season was on President Trump's endorsing challengers to GOP incumbents – Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and John Cornyn (R-TX) included – later in the election season, attention has been on progressives challenging mainstream Democrats. In states like Michigan and Minnesota, the Democratic primary was a test of support for the Senate Democratic leadership, as some candidates distanced themselves from current leaders and aligned with more progressive Senate Democrats. Progressives Abdul El-Sayed in Michigan and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan (D) in Minnesota were victorious over their more mainstream opponents, lending credence to the more progressive flank but also raising questions about electability in the general election.



20 Republican seats up for re-election

- Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) vs. community organizer Rachel Fetty Anderson (D)
- Bill Cassidy (R-LA), *lost primary* – Rep. Julia Letlow (R-LA) vs. Jamie Davis (D)
- Susan Collins (R-ME) vs. Former state Senate president Troy Jackson (D)
- John Cornyn (R-TX), *lost primary* – state Attorney General Ken Paxton (R) vs. Rep. James Talarico (D)
- Tom Cotton (R-AR) vs. Hallie Shoffner (D)
- Montana: Steve Daines (R-MT), *retiring* – Alani Bankhead (D), Seth Bodnar (I), Kurt Alme (R)
- Iowa: Joni Ernst (R-IA), *retiring* – Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA) vs. state Rep. Josh Turek (D)
- Lindsey Graham (R-SC), *deceased* – Graham's sister Darline Graham Nordone vs. Annie Andrews (D)
- Bill Hagerty (R-TN) vs. Marquita Bradshaw (D)
- Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS) vs. Scott Colom (D)
- Wyoming: Cynthia Lummis (R-WY), *retiring* – Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-WY) vs. former state Rep. James Byrd (D)
- Roger Marshall (R-KS) vs. Adam Hamilton (D)
- Kentucky: Mitch McConnell (R-KY), *retiring* – Rep. Andy Barr (R-KY) vs. Charles Booker (D)
- Alan Armstrong (R-OK), successor to DHS Sec. Markwayne Mullin – Rep. Kevin Hern (R-OK) vs. N'Kiyla Jasmine Thomas (D)
- Pete Ricketts (R-NE) vs. an independent
- Jim Risch (R-ID) vs. independent candidates
- Mike Rounds (R-SD) vs. an independent
- Dan Sullivan (R-AK) and former Rep. Mary Peltola (D-AK) are the top candidates, though Alaska's ranked choice system sends the top four candidates to the general election regardless of party affiliation
- North Carolina: Thom Tillis (R-NC), *retiring* – former governor Roy Cooper (D) vs. Michael Whatley (R)
- Alabama: Tommy Tuberville (R-AL), *running for governor* – Rep. Barry Moore (R-AL) vs. Everett Wess (D)

Plus, two special elections

- Jon Husted (R-OH), for seat formerly held by Vice President JD Vance, vs. former Sen. Sherrod Brown (D)
- Ashley Moody (R-FL), for seat formerly held by Sec. of State Marco Rubio, vs. Angela Nixon (D)

Note – Senator Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) not up this cycle but running for governor.

13 Democrats up for re-election

1. Cory Booker (D-NJ) vs. Justin Murphy (R)

2. Chris Coons (D-DE) vs. Michael Katz (R)

3. Illinois: Dick Durbin (D-IL), *retiring* – Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton (D) vs. former Illinois GOP Chair Don Tracy (R)

4. John Hickenlooper (D-CO) vs. CO state Senator Mark Baisley (R)

5. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM) vs. Larry Marker (R)

6. Ed Markey (D-MA) vs. John Deaton (R)

7. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) vs. state Senator David Brock Smith (R)

8. Jon Ossoff (D-GA) vs. Rep. Mike Collins (R-GA)
9. Michigan: Gary Peters (D-MI), *retiring* – former public health official Abdul El-Sayed vs. former Rep. Mike Rogers (R-MI)

10. Jack Reed (D-RI) vs. Raymond McKay (R)

11. New Hampshire: Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), *retiring* – Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH) vs. former Senator John Sununu (R)

12. Minnesota: Tina Smith (D-MN), *retiring* – Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan (D) vs. former NFL sideline reporter Michele Tafoya (R)

13. Mark Warner (D-VA) vs. Bert Mizusawa (R)
- Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) not up this cycle but running for governor.

Committee implications

The **Senate Finance Committee**, which currently stands at 14 Republicans/13 Democratic members, will lose at least six members in the next Congress, five Republicans/one Democrat.

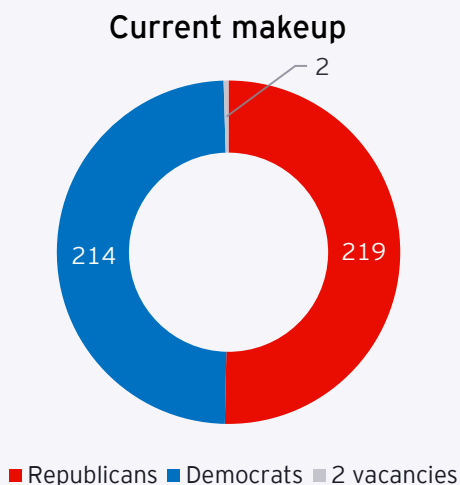
Republicans (now 14)	Democrat (now 13)
John Cornyn (R-TX) <i>lost primary</i>	Tina Smith (D-MN), <i>retiring</i>
Bill Cassidy (R-LA) <i>lost primary</i>	
Steve Daines (R-MT) <i>retiring</i>	
Thom Tillis (R-NC) <i>retiring</i>	
Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), <i>running for governor</i>	

The **Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee**, which currently stands at 12 Republicans/11 Democratic members, will lose at least two Republicans in the next Congress.

Republicans (now 12)
Bill Cassidy (R-LA) <i>lost primary</i>
Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) <i>running for governor</i>

Should Democrats win control of the Senate, committee ratios would flip with additional members moving to their side of the dais.

House



All 435 seats in the House are up for re-election. With the party ratio likely to stand at 220-215 on election day, Democrats need a net gain of only a few seats to win back the majority, and there are more Republican-held seats than Democratic seats rated “toss-up.”

There are more than 60 House members retiring, running for other office or who lost their primaries. Of the 435 seats up for election, the Cook Political Report rates more than 30 races as toss-ups or leaning to the other party.

Earlier in the year, redistricting efforts, which began with Texas, were looking to essentially be a wash, with a roughly equal number of congressional districts redrawn for Democrats and Republicans. Since then, following the April 29 Supreme Court decision concerning aspects of the Voting Rights Act, Republicans are taking a lead in the redistricting campaign and in position to gain up to 16 seats this fall compared with six for the Democrats, meaning a potential net 10-seat GOP gain. Some states like South Carolina and Maryland are looking to 2028 to implement redistricting plans, meaning the ramifications of the issue will extend beyond November.

States that could be affected by redistricting include:

- Texas: up to five additional Republican seats
- California: up to five additional Democratic seats
- Florida: up to four additional Republican seats
- Ohio: up to two additional Republican seats
- North Carolina: one additional Republican seat
- Utah: one additional Democratic seat
- Louisiana: one additional Republican seat
- Alabama: one additional Republican seat
- Tennessee: one additional Republican seat

Pro-GOP Redistricting is energizing Democratic turnout in some districts, including in Tennessee. Wisconsin, Texas, and Georgia have also been cited as having high voter turnout.

Committee implications

The House Ways and Means Committee will lose at least 10 members in the next Congress, five Republicans/five Democrats. If Democrats win control of the House, the ratio will flip and many new Democratic members will be added. The ratio is currently at 26 Republicans/19 Democrats. When Democrats last controlled the House, the Committee ratio was 25 Democrats/18 Republicans. With the loss of five Democratic members, a switch in party control of the House could see a dozen or so new Democrats added to the Committee.

Republicans	Democrats
Vern Buchanan (R-FL) <i>retiring</i>	Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) <i>retiring</i>
Dave Schweikert (R-AZ) <i>lost primary for governor</i>	Danny K. Davis (D-IL) <i>retiring</i>
Jodey Arrington (R-TX) <i>retiring</i>	Dwight Evans (D-PA) <i>retiring</i>
Kevin Hern (R-OK) <i>running for Senate</i>	Stacey Plaskett (D-VI) <i>running for governor</i>
Randy Feenstra (R-IA) <i>lost primary for governor</i>	John Larson (D-CT) <i>lost primary</i>

The House Energy and Commerce Committee, which currently stands at 30 Republicans/24 Democratic members, will lose at least eight members in the next Congress, four Republicans/four Democrats:

Republicans	Democrats
Buddy Carter (R-GA) <i>lost primary for Senate</i>	Diana DeGette (D-CO) <i>lost primary</i>
Neal Dunn, M.D. (R-FL) <i>retiring</i>	Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) <i>retiring</i>
Dan Crenshaw (R-TX) <i>lost primary</i>	Marc Veasey (D-TX) <i>retiring</i>
John James (R-MI) <i>running for governor</i>	Robin Kelly (D-IL) <i>lost primary for Senate</i>

The House Education and Workforce Committee, which currently stands at 21 Republicans/16 Democratic members, will lose at least five members in the next Congress, three Republicans/two Democrats:

Republicans	Democrats
Elise Stefanik (R-NY) <i>retiring</i>	Frederica S. Wilson (D-FL) <i>retiring</i>
Burgess Owens (R-UT) <i>retiring</i>	Haley M. Stevens (D-MI) <i>lost primary for Senate</i>
Julia Letlow (R-LA) <i>running for Senate</i>	



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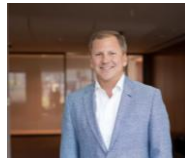
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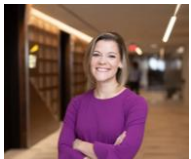
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