

# Inside Elections

with  
**Nathan L. Gonzales**  
Nonpartisan Analysis

JANUARY 8, 2026

VOLUME 10, NO. 1

## Georgia 14 Special: Greene New Deal

By Jacob Rubashkin

Marjorie Taylor Greene's surprise resignation announcement sent shockwaves through Congress, as the onetime staunch ally of President Donald Trump transformed seemingly overnight into one of his chief antagonists.

But the North Georgia congresswoman's abrupt decision also caught her own district by surprise, triggering a free-for-all special election in early March. More than a dozen candidates have already said they're running, another dozen are still eying a bid, and the field could look radically different over the next few weeks as candidate qualifying begins and Trump-world begins to make its preferences known.

An April runoff is also a near-certainty, adding a layer of complexity to the still-developing race — and depriving House Speaker Mike Johnson of a crucial vote for another month at a time when his majority will be as razor-thin as it can get.

### The Lay of the Land

The 14th sits in Georgia's northwest corner, bordering Alabama and Tennessee. Though the district, which spans nine complete and one partial county, is largely rural and exurban, it does extend south into Paulding County and part of Cobb County in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Those two counties cast a third of the district's overall votes, are fast-growing, and are more politically competitive.

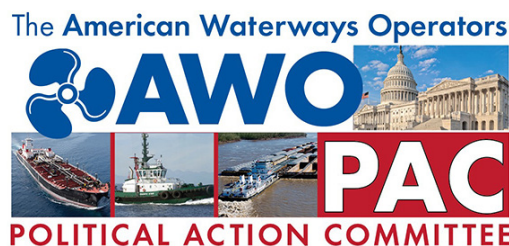
The district has two notable cities outside of the Atlanta region: Rome (pop. 37,000) and Dalton (pop. 34,000). Most residents live within the Atlanta media market but about 40 percent live in the Chattanooga, TN market.

The 14th is predominantly white (roughly 80 percent of the citizen voting age population); 12 percent of the citizen voting age population is Black, and another 7 percent is Hispanic. Black and Hispanic residents are largely concentrated in Paulding and Cobb counties, the two southernmost counties in the district. There is also a significant Hispanic population in Dalton and significant Black population in Rome.

Just 24 percent of district residents have a bachelor's degree, 12

*Continued on page 6*

*This issue brought to you by*



## 2026 House Ratings

### Toss-Up (2D, 8R)

AZ 1 (Open; Schweikert, R) IA 1 (Miller-Meeks, R) OH 1 (Landsman, D) TX 34 (Gonzalez, D)  
AZ 6 (Ciscomani, R) MI 7 (Barrett, R) PA 7 (Mackenzie, R) VA 2 (Kiggans, R)  
CO 8 (Evans, R) NY 17 (Lawler, R)

### Tilt Democratic (6D, 2R)

CA 13 (Gray, D)  
CA 45 (Tran, D)  
CA 48 (Issa, R)  
NE 2 (Open; Bacon, R)  
NM 2 (Vasquez, D)  
NY 4 (Gillen, D)  
TX 28 (Cuellar, D)  
WA 3 (Perez, D)

### Tilt Republican (2D, 6R)

CA 22 (Valadao, R)  
MI 10 (Open; James, R)  
NC 1 (Davis, D)  
NJ 7 (Kean Jr., R)  
OH 9 (Kaptur, D)  
PA 8 (Bresnahan, R)  
PA 10 (Perry, R)  
WI 3 (Van Orden, R)

### Lean Democratic (11D)

CA 21 (Costa, D) NY 3 (Suoizzi, D)  
FL 23 (Moskowitz, D) VA 7 (Vindman, D)  
IN 1 (Mrvan, D)  
MI 8 (McDonald Rivet, D)  
NH 1 (Open; Pappas, D)  
NJ 9 (Pou, D)  
NV 1 (Titus, D)  
NV 3 (Lee, D)  
NY 19 (Riley, D)

### Lean Republican (4R)

IA 3 (Nunn, R)  
MI 4 (Huizenga, R)  
PA 1 (Fitzpatrick, R)  
VA 1 (Wittman, R)

### Likely Democratic (8D)

CA 6 (Open; Bera, D) OH 13 (Sykes, D)  
CA 25 (Ruiz, D) PA 17 (Deluzio, D)  
CA 47 (Min, D)  
NH 2 (Goodlander, D)  
MN 2 (Open; Craig, DFL)  
NV 4 (Horsford, D)

### Likely Republican (2D, 9R)

AK AL (Begich, R) ME 2 (Open; Golden, D)  
AZ 2 (Crane, R) TN 5 (Ogles, R)  
CO 5 (Crank, R) TX 15 (De La Cruz, R)  
FL 7 (Mills, R) TX 35 (Open; Casar, D)  
FL 13 (Luna, R) WI 1 (Steil, R)  
IA 2 (Open; Hinson, R)

	GOP	DEM
Solid	190	185
Likely/Lean/Tilt	23	27
Total	213	212
Toss-up	10	
Needed for majority	218	

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

## CALENDAR

<b>Jan. 8</b>	Utah Filing Deadline
<b>Jan. 9</b>	Kentucky Filing Deadline
<b>Jan. 31</b>	Texas' 18th District Special Election Runoff
<b>Feb. 6</b>	Winter Olympics Begin
<b>March 3</b>	Texas, North Carolina, Arkansas Primaries

# Governor Report Shorts

**Minnesota Governor.** DFL Gov. Tim Walz announced he will not seek re-election. He was already trying to buck history by trying to secure a third term, but news snowballed against him when a YouTuber highlighted allegations of significant fraud in the state’s childcare system and Somali community.

Now, all eyes are on DFL Sen. Amy Klobuchar. Similar to Democrat Michael Bennet in Colorado and Republican Marsha Blackburn in Tennessee, she would not have to give up her seat in order to run. If elected, she’d get to appoint her successor and there would be a special election in November 2027. If Klobuchar doesn’t run, state Attorney General Keith Ellison and Secretary of State Steve Simon and others would likely take a look.

On the Republican side, MyPillow founder Mike Lindell is running with President Donald Trump’s blessing, but the field also includes state House Speaker Lisa Demuth, businessmen Patrick Knight and Kendall Qualls, attorney Chris Madel, state Reps. Peggy Bennett and Kristin Robbins, and former state Sen. Scott Jensen, who was Walz’s 2022 opponent.

The fraud story is complicating Democrats’ efforts to hold the governorship. But the GOP is struggling to mount anything close to a serious race for the Senate and Lindell would be a flawed GOP nominee for governor. Likely Democratic.

**New York Governor.** Rep. Elise Stefanik unexpectedly ended her gubernatorial bid and announced she would not seek re-election to Congress, capping a turbulent year for her that included an aborted nomination to be Trump’s Ambassador to the United Nations. Stefanik’s exit leaves Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman as the likely GOP nominee, though Rep. Mike Lawler has put his name back in the mix after ruling out a run earlier this year. Likely Democratic.

**Ohio Governor.** Both prohibitive frontrunners have chosen their running mates in the Buckeye State. 2024 GOP presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy selected state Senate President Rob McColley of northwest Ohio. McColley was previously thought to be gearing up to challenge Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur in the 9th District, in what is one of Republicans’ top takeover opportunities in the country.

Democratic health official Amy Acton selected former state party chairman David Pepper of Cincinnati to be her running mate. But the

# 2026 Governor Ratings

Toss-up (4D)	
KS Open (Kelly, D)	WI Open (Evers, D)
MI Open (Whitmer, D)	Hobbs (D-Ariz.)
Tilt Democratic	Tilt Republican (2R)
	GA Open (Kemp, R)
	Lombardo (R-Nev.)
Lean Democratic	Lean Republican
Likely Democratic (5D)	Likely Republican (1R)
ME Open (Mills, D)	IA Open (Reynolds, R)
NM Open (Lujan-Grisham, D)	
MN Open (Walz, DFL)	
Hochul (D-N.Y.)	
Shapiro (D-Penn.)	
Solid Democratic (9D)	Solid Republican (15R)
CA Open (Newsom, D)	AK Open (Dunleavy, R)
CO Open (Polis, D)	AL Open (Ivey, R)
Green (D-Hawaii)	FL Open (DeSantis, R)
Healey (D-Mass.)	OH Open (DeWine, R)
Kotek (D-Ore.)	OK Open (Stitt, R)
Lamont (D-Ct.)	SC Open (McMaster, R)
McKee (D-R.I.)	TN Open (Lee, R)
Moore (D-Md.)	WY Open (Gordon, R)
Pritzker (D-Ill.)	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

duo has their work cut out for them in a state that’s only had one term of a Democratic governor (Ted Strickland) in the last 35 years. The race is rated Solid Republican but could become more competitive in this political environment.



Inside Elections

with Nathan L. Gonzales

Nonpartisan Analysis



Nathan L. Gonzales  
Editor & Publisher  
nathan@insideelections.com  
@nathanlgonzales



Jacob Rubashkin  
Deputy Editor  
jacob@insideelections.com  
@jacobrubashkin



Bradley Wascher  
Contributing Analyst  
bradley@insideelections.com  
@bradwascher

Will Taylor  
Production Artist  
will@insideelections.com

Stuart Rothenberg  
Senior Editor  
stu@insideelections.com

609 H Street NE, 4th Floor  
Washington, DC, 20002  
202-546-2822

# Wyoming Senate: Cowboy State Roundup

By Jacob Rubashkin

Wyoming Sen. Cynthia Lummis’ retirement announcement took Capitol Hill by surprise, and she set off a domino effect in the least populous and most Republican state in the union.

But the fight for her seat looks to be a few broncos short of a rodeo.

Rep. Harriet Hageman, the state’s lone House member, wasted little time launching her Senate bid and quickly secured an important endorsement from President Donald Trump. That puts her in pole position to secure the GOP nomination, and with it a general election victory.

It also leaves her House seat up for grabs, and reshapes the gubernatorial race many initially thought Hageman would run for.

## The Lay of the Land

Since the 1990s, Wyoming has been largely inhospitable to Democrats: the only Democrat to win a statewide race since 1990 is Dave Freudenthal, who served two terms as governor from 2003 to 2011.

According to *Inside Elections’* Baseline, Wyoming is by far the most Republican state. A typical GOP candidate is expected to win by 45 points, a margin 10 percent greater than in the next state on the list, North Dakota (R+35).

Republicans maintain an overwhelming 77-12 percent voter registration advantage, though some of that margin is padded by Democrats who re-registered as Republicans to vote in the 2022 GOP House primary for then-Rep. Liz Cheney. But even in 2021, Republicans had a 69-17 percent advantage. The larger trend is also not in Democrats’ favor — back in 2008, the last time a statewide race in Wyoming was competitive, Republicans had a 62-27 percent edge.

That year, Democrat Gary Trauner held Lummis to a 10-point win in her first run for Congress, losing 52-42 percent even as John McCain won at the top of the ticket by 35 points. Two years prior, Trauner had nearly pulled off the upset of the cycle against incumbent Barbara Cubin, losing to the Republican by less than 1 percent.

Since then, Democratic candidates have struggled to crack 30 percent of the vote. In the 2024 presidential election, Trump defeated Vice President Kamala Harris by 46 points, 72-26 percent.

## The GOP Senate Candidate(s)

Hageman is the only announced GOP contender, though Gov. Mark Gordon has also been mentioned as a candidate, and wealth management CEO Reid Rasner is up to something as well.

Hageman, 63, is a fixture in state politics now in her second term in Congress. Hailing from Ft. Laramie on the state’s eastern border



Harriet Hageman

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

## 2026 Senate Ratings

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

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

with Nebraska, Hageman is the daughter of former state Rep. James Hageman, who served 23 years in the state legislature.

After graduating from the University of Wyoming in 1983 and from University of Wyoming Law School in 1986, Hageman clerked for Tenth Circuit Judge James Barrett (a former Wyoming attorney general).

She then returned to Wyoming to work as a water and natural resources attorney, often representing the state in its battles against federal environmental regulations. For her work on those cases, and penchant for dressing in all black, Hageman was dubbed “The Wicked Witch of the West” by environmentalists, a title she embraced.

In 2016, Hageman was a delegate for Ted Cruz at the Republican National Convention, and was a key player in an unsuccessful last-minute ploy to “unbind” delegates and deny Trump the nomination.

In 2018, she ran for governor, placing third in the primary with 21 percent. Gordon, then the state treasurer, won with 33 percent, followed by the Trump-endorsed billionaire Foster Friess with 25 percent.

Hageman was more successful in her 2020 bid for one of Wyoming’s two seats on the Republican National Committee, besting Cubin, the former congresswoman, 152-105. In that contest, she aligned herself with Trump against the more moderate Cubin.

After Cheney broke ranks with Republicans, voting to impeach Trump following the January 6 insurrection and participating in the January 6 committee investigation, Trump began searching for a

Continued on page 4

*Continued from page 3*

candidate to support against her in the 2022 primary. After interviewing several options, Trump settled on Hageman, who entered the race in September 2021 with his endorsement. Most other notable candidates dropped out, giving Hageman a clean shot against the incumbent.

Ultimately, Hageman easily toppled Cheney, 66-29 percent, with the incumbent carrying just two counties statewide (the most Democratic of the bunch). She breezed past Democrat Lynette Grey Bull in the general election, 68-24 percent.

Her campaign team includes Nick Trainer of American Made Media Company.



Mark Gordon

Courtesy National Governors Association

Gordon, 68, is nearing the end of his second term as governor. While current state law limits governors to two terms, the law was ruled unconstitutional in regard to state legislators and many in the state are waiting for a governor to challenge it as well.

The New York-born, Wyoming-raised Gordon is the scion of a prominent and wealthy New England textile family, and is also related to legendary General George Patton. Gordon graduated from Middlebury College in 1979, and operated a ranch in Wyoming and a catalog business with his wife.

In 2008, Gordon ran for Wyoming's open House seat, self-funding his candidacy with \$1.1 million. Though he had support from venerable Sen. Alan Simpson, he took heavy fire for his previous donations to Democratic candidates and lost to Lummis, 46-37 percent.

Gordon was appointed state treasurer by Gov. Matt Mead in 2012 and won election unopposed in 2014.

In 2018, Gordon launched his gubernatorial campaign, winning the hotly contested GOP primary against Friess and Hageman after spending \$1.5 million of his own money and easily winning the general election.

As governor, the Toyota Prius-driving Gordon has often clashed with the most conservative elements of his party, and drew a primary challenge from Marine veteran Brent Bien, who held him to a 62-30 percent win. Gordon won a landslide in the general election, 74-16 percent, the largest contested win in state history.

Rasner, 41, is a financial executive in Casper, Wyoming who made national headlines last year for claiming he had assembled \$47.45 billion to buy social media app TikTok from its Chinese parent company. The 2014 graduate of University of Wyoming previously spent several years in Las Vegas, where he finished in seventh place in a 2017 city council election.

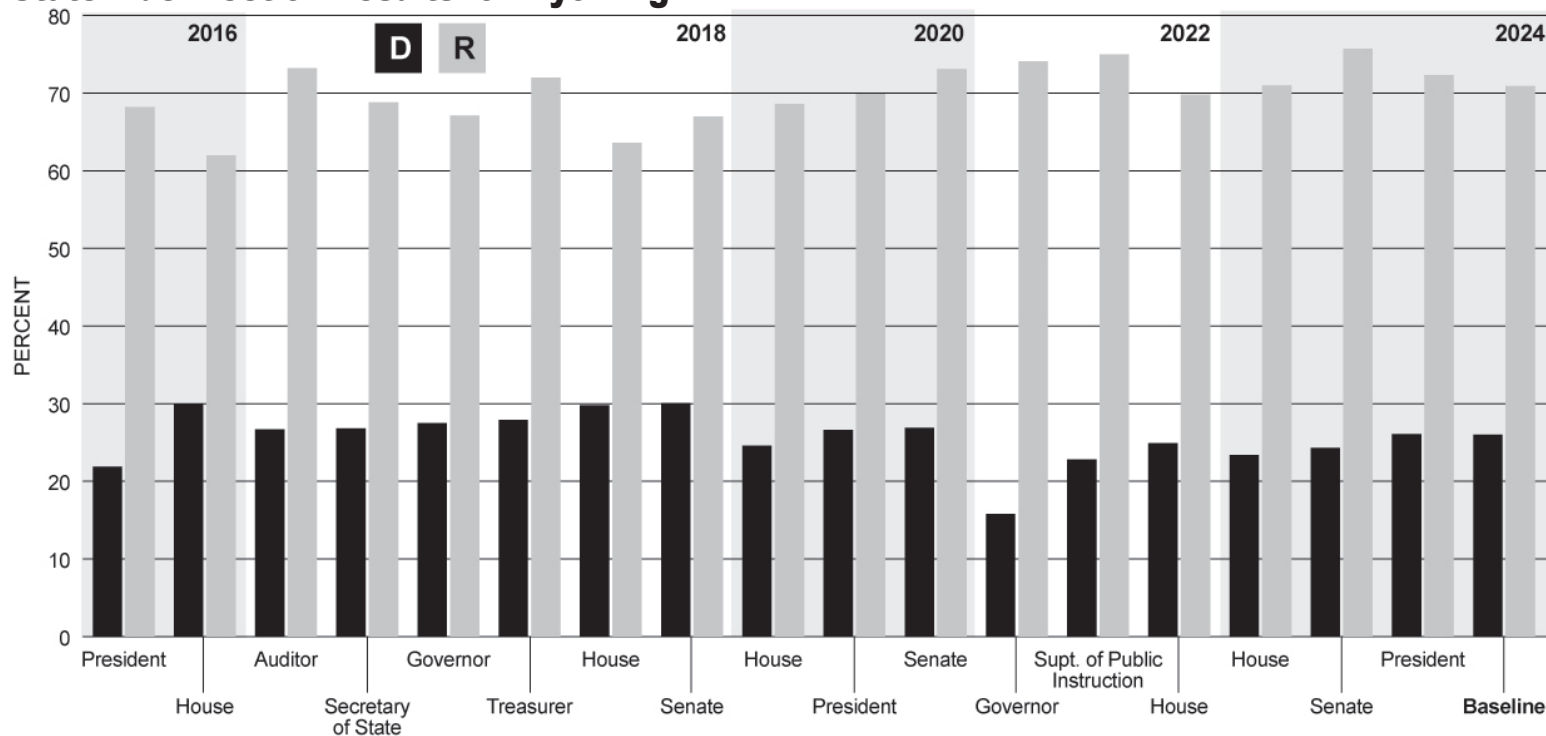
Rasner ran for the US Senate in Wyoming in 2022, losing in the GOP primary to incumbent John Barrasso, 68-25 percent after self-funding \$1.3 million. Last year, he filed to run for Senate and for governor, and even spent \$200,000 from his campaign account, but never formally launched any campaign and recently ruled out a gubernatorial bid. He has also been running commercials on social media paid for by his company, Omnivest, that are largely biographical with the feel of political ads.

## How the Senate Race Plays Out

Local sources are skeptical that Gordon or Rasner will ultimately run for the Senate, and anticipate that Hageman will ultimately face little resistance to the GOP nomination. She is among the most popular politicians in the state, and with backing from Trump and the National Republican Senatorial Committee, she would be difficult to beat in a primary.

*Continued on page 5*

## Statewide Election Results for Wyoming



Continued from page 4

Even Gordon would likely begin as an underdog given his clashes with his own party, though his personal wealth and name ID would make him a formidable challenger.

## The House Race

The more exciting contest may be to succeed Hageman in the House. One candidate is already in the race: state Secretary of State Chuck Gray, who briefly sought the seat in 2022. But others are sure to join.

Oil executive and University of Wyoming Trustee Paul Ulrich has floated a bid, and local Republicans expect EPA regional administrator and former state Rep. Cyrus Western to join the field as well. Rasner, State Sens. Bo Biteman and Tara Nethercott are potential candidates as well. Still others may join, and with an August 18 primary, there's plenty of time for the field to develop.

Gray, 35, is a controversial figure in the state who often clashed with Gordon over energy policy, and has positioned himself as a staunch ally of Trump with a focus on election integrity issues and claims that the 2020 presidential election was stolen. Some of Gray's GOP former colleagues in the state House even contemplated curbing his powers as secretary of state after he filed amicus briefs in support of Trump in other states in 2024.

A 2012 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, the Los Angeles-born Gray spent summers in Wyoming and moved there permanently after college to host a talk radio show on a station owned by his father. He lost a close GOP primary for state House in 2014 against an incumbent before winning in 2016 and again in 2018 and 2020.

In 2020, he briefly challenged Cheney but dropped out when Hageman entered the race. Instead, he ran for secretary of state, secured a Trump endorsement and defeated Nethercott, 48-40 percent. In that race, Nethercott defended the 2020 elections as secure, saying



Chuck Gray

Courtesy Gray campaign

there was "no objective evidence to indicate that the 2020 presidential election was stolen."

Nethercott is another potential candidate in this race. The fifth-generation Wyomingite graduated from the University of Wyoming law school in 2009 and has worked as an attorney in Cheyenne since then. She won her first election in 2016, and won re-election unopposed in 2020.

Western, 36, is currently the Regional Administrator for the Mountains and Plain regions in the Trump administration, and previously represented part of Sheridan County along the Montana border from 2019 to 2025. The Washington & Jefferson College (2012) and Harvard (master's in environmental science, 2016) graduate won three terms in the state legislature in 2018, 2020, and 2022; his last campaign he only narrowly won the GOP primary, 51-49 percent, and chose not to seek re-election in 2024.

Ulrich, 52, is a fourth-generation Wyomingite who served five years on active duty as a Naval intelligence officer before returning to Wyoming in 1995 and working for Republicans Cubin and Gov. Jim Geringer. Since 1999, Ulrich has been a lobbyist and government affairs professional for the oil and gas industry, as well as an avid outdoorsman and fly fishing guide.

He was appointed to the University of Wyoming board in 2025 by Gordon.

Biteman, 47, is the current state Senate president and a longtime landman who came to the Mountain West after graduating from Michigan's Grand Valley State University in 2002.

In 2016, he ousted state House Majority Leader Rosie Berger in a contentious GOP primary, 56-44 percent, in a Sheridan County district on the Montana border. He sought a promotion to the upper chamber in 2018, winning comfortably in the primary and general elections, and had little trouble winning re-election in 2022.

Biteman has a reputation of being one of the legislature's more conservative members, and rose to the top spot in the Senate after the state Freedom Caucus had a successful 2024 election cycle. He's also a favorite of Trump, who pressed him to run against Gordon for governor in 2022. Biteman also considered running for the House against Cheney that year but passed on a bid.

Earlier this year, Gray commissioned a survey showing himself leading a GOP House primary with 16 percent, followed by Nethercott at 7 percent. But the poll, conducted July 15-17 by Fabrizio Lee & Associates, also included state Sen. Eric Barlow and Marine veteran Brent Bien, both of whom are running for governor.

More recent private polling of the state shows that while Gray is the best-known of the potential House candidates, he also has the greatest number of detractors.

## The Bottom Line

While Hageman may be approaching shoo-in status for the Senate seat, there's still plenty of intrigue for Wyoming politicians this year. In addition to the wide-open race for House, there is an open gubernatorial contest that already features Barlow and Bien and could attract rising star Megan Degenfelder, the state superintendent of public instruction. That would also mean open races for superintendent and secretary of state.

Wyoming may be blood red, but that doesn't mean the outcomes of the GOP primaries don't matter in the state or in Washington, DC. One need not look further than the differences between Hageman and Cheney to see why.

IE

## Inside Elections Podcast

*Nathan, Jacob and expert guests discuss the latest election news in a nonpartisan, data-driven and accessible way.*

**Episode 62:** From Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to party recruitment and Star Trek to the Seattle Seahawks, Nathan and Jacob cover a lot of ground with a holiday mailbag.

**Episode 61:** Nathan, Jacob and University of Virginia's Larry Sabato talk about the most important aspects of political analysis and learn about Larry's path into the world of punditry.

**Episode 60:** Nathan, Jacob and Kirk Bado of National Journal's Hotline discuss what Republicans, Democrats and even President Donald Trump should be thankful for during this holiday season.

*Continued from page 1*

points lower than the national average. The region's economy has a much diminished but still significant textile sector, especially the Dalton area, which produces 70 percent of America's carpeting. Egg farming dominates the agricultural landscape.

The 14th is strongly Republican, and voted for Trump by 37 points in 2024, 68-31 percent. It also has a clear preference for Republicans downballot, with a Baseline of R+41, suggesting that a generic Republican candidate should win by a margin of 70-29 percent. Even in the 2025 elections for Public Service Commissioner, in which the Democratic candidates won statewide by 26 points, the Republican candidates both won the 14th by 13 points.

However, the 14th was one of just 19 districts around the country in which Vice President Kamala Harris actually did better than Joe Biden had four years earlier: Biden would have lost the 14th by a slightly greater 38 points.

The improvement is entirely attributable to Paulding and Cobb counties, where Harris improved on Biden's margin by 5 and 3 points, respectively. She lost ground relative to Biden in the rest of the district.

"It's a tale of two worlds," said one Georgia Republican. "Cobb County is very cosmopolitan, Paulding is becoming like Cobb, and the rest of the district is as far-right, deep red as it goes."

Most recently, Greene won re-election by 29 points, significantly underperforming the top of the ticket.

## The Republican Candidates

Nearly two dozen Republicans have declared their intention to run in the special election so far: state Sen. Colton Moore, Lookout Mountain District Attorney Clay Fuller, former Paulding County Commissioner Brian Stover, 14th District GOP chairman Jim Tully, pastor Tom Gray, Marine veteran Christian Hurd, Dalton City Councilman Nicky Lama, 2024 6th District nominee Jeff Criswell, veteran and farmer Jenna Turnipseed, former FEMA official Star Black, and attorney and 2022 3rd District candidate Jared Craig.

Also running are former firefighter and Dalton boat salesman Marty Brown, teacher Joseph Bergeman, comedian and aspiring actor Elvis Casely, horse trainer and former Senate candidate Reagan

Box, real estate agent Beau Brown, web design firm owner Ben Cope, sales executive Eric Cunningham, former IRS officer Linvel Risner, and healthcare worker Jacqueline Wilmer.

The field may not be set yet. Beyond the hurdle of the \$5,220 filing fee that may weed out some of the less viable candidates, there are as many as a dozen potential candidates still sitting on the sidelines. Candidates must file by January 14.

State Rep. Katie Dempsey, attorney Sarah Pritchard, and Chattanooga businessman Marshall Brock are all eyeing the race but haven't moved formally toward running.

Neurosurgeon John Cowan, who ran against Greene in 2020, and state Senate Majority Leader Jason Anavitate don't appear likely to run.

Both would be formidable candidates, Cowan because of his self-funding capabilities and Anavitate because of his political relationships in-state and his popularity among national Republicans in Washington, DC.

Moore, 32, is an auctioneer with a reputation as a rabble-rouser who has served in the state Senate since 2023 and previously served two years in the state House. The Dade County, GA-born Moore graduated from the University of Georgia in 2016 and also runs his family's trucking

business. In 2018, Moore challenged a three-term incumbent in the GOP primary and defeated him, 54-46 percent, before winning the general election unopposed.

Two years later, Moore challenged Jeff Mullis, the chairman of the state Senate

Rules Committee, in the GOP primary, losing 55-35 percent but drawing enough blood that Mullis opted to retire in 2022. That year, Moore narrowly defeated Mullis' chosen candidate, 51-49 percent, and won the general election unopposed. He won re-election in 2024, 79-21 percent.

Moore has proven deeply unpopular among his colleagues thanks to his willingness to attack fellow Republicans. In the state House, he repeatedly assailed then-Speaker David Ralston with accusations of corruption, and as a state senator in 2023 Moore was banned from the state House chamber after disparaging Ralston during a day of remembrance for the late speaker. In 2025, Moore challenged the ban in an attempt to attend a joint session of the legislature, and was handcuffed and arrested after a scuffle with police at the chamber door.

Moore was also expelled from the state Senate GOP caucus in 2023 after making calls for a special session to address the prosecution of Trump by Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis. Moore's calls were also derided by Gov. Brian Kemp as a "grifter scam."

Fuller is the top prosecutor for Dade, Catoosa, Walker, and Chattooga counties. An eighth-generation Georgian, Fuller is also a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force National Guard in the Judge Advocate Corps. Fuller attended the Air Force Academy for two years before graduating from Emory in 2004. He earned an MPA from Cornell University in 2006 and a law degree from Southern Methodist University in 2009.

Fuller joined the Lookout Mountain District Attorney's office in 2010 as an assistant district attorney and has worked there ever since, save for a year spent as a White House fellow during the first Trump administration. He also received a master's in military arts from the Air Force's Air Command and Staff College in 2020.

That year, Fuller ran for the 14th District in the GOP primary, coming fourth out of nine candidates, with 7 percent. He raised \$144,000 and loaned himself another \$218,000.

In 2023, Kemp appointed Fuller to be the district attorney for the circuit — he was elected in his own right unopposed the following year.

Fuller's general consultant is Mitch Hunter of Public Strategies 360.

Stover, 49, served one term on the Paulding County Commission from 2019 to 2024. The lifelong Dallas, GA resident has owned and operated multiple businesses in the region for decades, most notably a waste removal and processing business he's run for 20 years. He ousted

*Continued on page 7*

Courtesy Tully Campaign



Jim Tully

Courtesy Fuller Campaign



Clayton Fuller

*Continued from page 6*

an incumbent in the 2018 GOP primary for the north Paulding seat, 64-36 percent, and won general elections that year and in 2022 unopposed. In 2024, he resigned his seat to run for county commission chairman, but lost the GOP primary, 56-44 percent.

Stover's general consultant is Mike Leavitt of GP3 Strategies, which is also handling direct mail.

Gray, 59, is the senior pastor of Mars Hill Community Church in Cobb County. The Radcliff, KY native played quarterback at Vanderbilt in the 1980s, receiving his undergraduate degree in 1988 and an MBA in 1989.

Gray worked as the quarterback and receiver coach at Livingston University, a Division II school now called University of West Alabama, before earning a divinity degree from the Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Tennessee, and has lived in Cobb County since the mid-1990s.

In addition to his role as a pastor, Gray produces short-form Christian radio spots that air on local stations and has taught management classes at Kennesaw University.

In 2018, Gray ran for a state House district. In the GOP primary he faced Ginny Ehrhart, whose husband had held the seat for 30 years. He narrowly lost a primary runoff, 51-49 percent.

Tully, 63, is the chairman of the 14th District Republican Party and previously was the chairman of the Paulding County GOP. He has also worked as a field representative for Greene since mid-2024 and runs a furniture installation business in Dallas, GA.

Lama, 25, is the youngest candidate in the field but has served on the Dalton City Council for two years. He was first elected to that role in 2023, winning 64 percent in a nonpartisan special election, and won re-election unopposed in November 2025. Lama comes from a prominent family in Dalton: his grandfather, Ed Painter, was the 14th District GOP chairman in the 2010s and an adviser to Gov. Nathan Deal, and his parents own local businesses. Lama himself works in real estate, construction, and as a gym trainer.

Hurd, 28, is a Marine veteran and Dalton County native. A 2020 graduate of the University of Georgia, Hurd served five years in the Marine Corps, from 2021 to 2025. He deployed to the Philippines as an intelligence officer.

Hurd's campaign team includes Steve Walsh of RMC Strategies.

Turnipseed, 47, is a 20-year Army veteran and Coos Bay, Oregon native who now runs a sustainable farm in Walker County. Turnipseed, who retired as a major, served as a logistics officer and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan during her career.

A 2008 graduate of Excelsior University, Turnipseed also received a master's in military studies from the for-profit American Military University in 2013 and a master's in operations from the Army Command and General Staff College in 2021.

Black, 63, initially launched her campaign against Greene over the summer, styling herself as a more establishment-friendly alternative

to the bombastic congresswoman. A 1985 graduate of Texas State University, Black recently completed 28 years of work at FEMA, where she was a public assistance experiential learning team leader.

Black reported \$78,000 in campaign funds on Sept. 30, though \$75,000 of that came from a personal loan.

Criswell, 66, was also already in the race against Greene before she announced her resignation and was a vocal detractor of the congresswoman, who he called a "non-stop embarrassment" whose "delusional paranoia would make Freud blush." The Virginia-born Criswell, who left home and hitchhiked to Atlanta as a teenager, founded baseball company AD Starr in 1990 and sold the brand to Dick's Sporting Goods in 2000. He earned a bachelor's degree from University of Virginia in 2001, and later earned master's degrees from Morehead State in 2014 and Kennesaw State in 2025. Along the way, Criswell worked as a rideshare driver, test grader, and roadside service provider, before beginning a career as a language arts teacher at a public school in Gwinnett County in 2022.

In 2024, Criswell ran for Congress in the 6th District against Democrat Lucy McBath. He raised just \$15,000 and lost by a decisive 75-25 percent.

Craig, an attorney from Newnan, GA, previously ran against Drew Ferguson in the 3rd District, which sits south of the 14th. He lost that race, 83-17 percent. Craig is a 2006 graduate of the University of West Georgia and 2009 graduate of John Marshall Law School.

## The Democratic Candidate

Just one Democrat has declared for the seat, retired Brigadier General Shawn Harris, who was the party's nominee in 2024. He lost to Greene, 64-36 percent.

A Blakely, GA native, Harris joined the Marine Corps in 1984, later graduating from Tuskegee University in 1991 and commissioning into the Alabama Army National Guard. Harris moved to Michigan and worked as a middle school teacher while rising in the ranks of the

Michigan Guard. His overseas deployments included Afghanistan in 2007-2008, Liberia, and Kosovo; his final posting was as a defense attache in Israel.

Harris also earned a master's in education from Michigan's Grand Valley State University

in 2010 and a master's in military strategy and leadership from the War College in 2011.

In 2023, Harris retired from the military and returned to Georgia to operate a cattle farm in Polk County. He won the 2024 Democratic primary in a runoff, 61-39 percent. Thanks to Greene's high profile and his own military background, Harris was able to raise a significant \$3.1 million despite his negligible chance of victory.

He was already running against Greene a second time and had stockpiled \$680,000 on Sept. 30. End of the year reports are due Jan. 31.

Another Democrat, Clarence Blalock, had said he would run against Greene but later switched races to the labor commissioner contest. He may switch back to running for the congressional seat.

*Continued on page 8*



Brian Stover

Courtesy Stover Campaign



Shawn Harris

Courtesy Harris Campaign

Continued from page 7

The All-Party Primary

The first round of the primary will take place on March 10, with a potential runoff scheduled for April 7. Early voting for the first round will begin on February 16, with mail-in ballots distributed around the same time.

In special elections in Georgia, all candidates from all parties appear on the same ballot. If no candidate receives a majority of votes cast, the top two vote getters advance to a runoff, regardless of party. The runoff would take place 28 days after the initial round of voting.

Republicans dominate the 14th. But with just one Democrat running (who has significant resources and likely some name ID leftover from his 2024 bid), and more than a dozen GOP names on the ballot, it appears likely that Harris will secure a spot in the runoff — leaving the many Republicans to fight over the other remaining spot.

But if even one more notable or well-funded Democrat entered the race, that could open the possibility for two Republicans to squeak through. After candidate qualifying closes, Republican candidates may have to readjust their spending plans if it looks like getting to the runoff won't be the end of the story.

How It Plays Out

While the GOP field is vast and unsettled, local and national sources say that there are a handful of candidates who begin as the most serious contenders: Colton Moore, Clay Fuller, Brian Stover, and potentially Jim Tully and Tom Gray.

One private poll of the race found Moore ahead among Republicans with 10 percent, and 72 percent undecided. With just two months before Election Day, and one month before mail-in voting begins, that makes this wide-open contest a sprint to boost name identification more than anything else.

Moore is the only current candidate who has run competitive races in

the district, and his state senate seat accounts for a quarter of the 14th's population. He also has a following thanks to his willingness to buck GOP leadership in the state legislature, and his bombastic style of politics is the most in line with Greene — at least before her break with Trump — of any of the contenders.

But in contrast to Greene, Moore also has a reputation of being personally standoffish and difficult to work with, and he's never shown himself to be



Colton Moore

a strong fundraiser or capable of self-funding, as Greene did in her first campaign. House GOP leadership is wary of him as well as they deal with a slim majority, says one national source, "and he's the one everyone doesn't want because he would be a

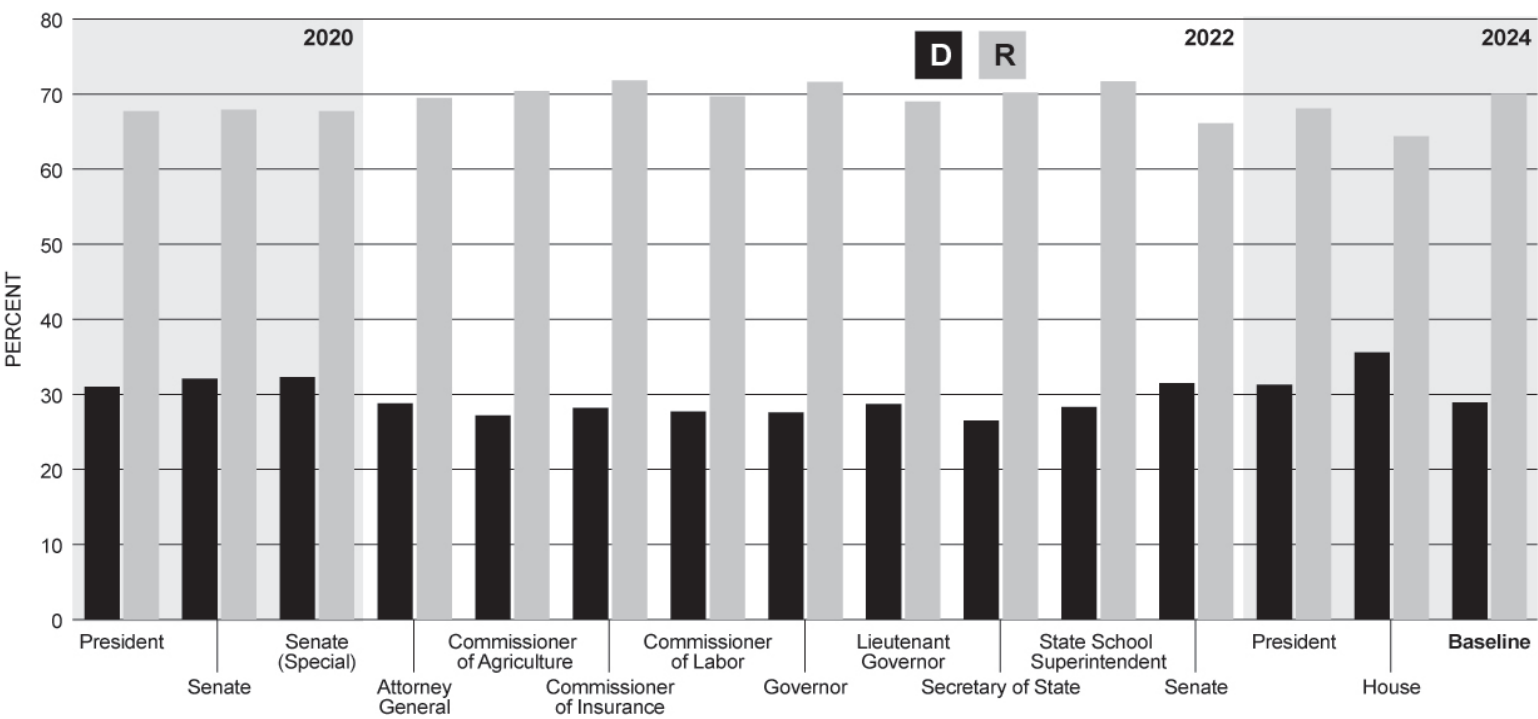
nightmare scenario." That said, there's no sign yet of an "anyone but Moore" movement from Republicans, says another source, and he may get support from groups aligned with the House Freedom Caucus.

"He has a floor of support," said one Georgia Republican operative, "and he'll do well in the counties he represents, but I don't think he has the curb appeal that Greene has."

Fuller's biography, especially his military service and battle against thyroid cancer a decade ago, makes him attractive to some national Republicans. As one Georgia Republican source put it, "he has the PR package.". He's aiming to thread the same needle Greene successfully did for years, balancing a personable reputation in-district with a pugilistic presence online — his recent tweets refer to New York City's Zohran

Continued on page 9

Statewide Election Results for Georgia's 14th District



*Continued from page 8*

Mamdani as “Mayor Beta,” argue for the expulsion of Minnesota Rep. Ilhan Omar from Congress and the denaturalization of Somalis, and call to “ban all immigration and travel from third world countries who hate us.”

Stover comes from the most populous county in the district, but his calling card may be his financial advantage. The race is buzzing with rumors that he will self-fund \$1 million, which would make him the instant cash leader.

It’s unlikely that we will know the extent of any candidate fundraising until late February due to an understaffed FEC, but in such a crowded field and in a region where there’s not much money to be raised in-district, that sum could be a game-changer if it allows Stover to advertise on TV. Stover has already aired one ad, during the Georgia-Ole Miss football game, and is also running digital ads.

“This race can be bought and will be bought if anyone can come in with a million dollars,” said one Georgia GOP operative. “I 100 percent think if he’s the only one on TV he could be the nominal frontrunner,” concurred another Georgia Republican, who also cautioned that Stover’s loss in last year’s Paulding County Commission chairman election might undercut his claim to the geographic base.

Tully is also from Paulding and is expected to lean on his relationships formed as county and district chair to activate a

network across the district. Calling Tully a “regional field director” belittles his role,” said one GOP source, who noted that Tully will also have to navigate his relationship with Greene as the congresswoman’s popularity takes a hit across the district.

Gray’s campaign is still nascent, without even a website, but local sources say to take him seriously, especially with his potential to win votes and donations among the wealthier and more politically engaged



Tom Gray

Courtesy Mars Hill Church

residents of the Atlanta suburbs. “West Cobb folks really like him, Marietta folks like him,” said one GOP operative.

Looming over the district is the prospect of a Trump endorsement, which would reset the race in favor of whichever candidate receives



Jenna Turnipseed

Courtesy Turnipseed Campaign

it. At least a dozen current or potential contenders have made the trek to the White House in recent days to meet with the president’s political team, and it’s possible Trump ultimately endorses someone not currently running.

But the president may prefer to see how things unfold over the next few weeks before weighing in on which candidate he sees as the strongest. And with polling serving a limited purpose under such a compressed timeline and with no clear frontrunners, fundraising ability and TV presence are likely to rank high among the metrics the president’s team will use to determine strength.

Already, some of the candidates are trying to associate themselves with Trump and cast aspersions on their opponents’ MAGA credentials. Moore, who is blanketing the district with text messages linking to a two-year old video of Trump praising him, will also have to contend with his affinity for Kentucky Rep. Thomas Massie, a perennial thorn in Trump’s side. Gray may have to answer for old tweets comparing Trump to a Muppet (specifically Sam Eagle).

## The Bottom Line

Races in the most Republican and most Democratic districts typically don’t get a lot of attention. However, with the GOP’s narrow majority in the House, the race for Georgia’s 14th is important because Speaker Johnson will be a vote short until the seat is filled — and the type of Republican that gets elected will help determine how much easier Johnson’s job will be.

IE

# Report Shorts

**Alaska Senate.** Former Rep. Mary Peltola is interviewing campaign managers ahead of a potential challenge to GOP Sen. Dan Sullivan, according to Axios. This would be a recruitment win for Senate Democrats considering Peltola might have had an easier chance getting elected governor and her entry would put the Senate seat on the battleground. Peltola would still be the underdog in a state with a GOP advantage, but it would be a serious race. We’ll move the race from Solid Republican to a more competitive category if she gets in the race.

**Maryland’s 5th District.** Steny Hoyer, 86 and the longest serving House Democrat, announced he will not seek re-election this year. The former House Majority Leader’s retirement could kick off a spirited and crowded Democratic primary for his Southern Maryland House seat. In 2024, an open race in Maryland’s 3rd District attracted two dozen candidates. Solid Democratic.

**Montana’s 1st District.** 2024 gubernatorial nominee Ryan Busse and wildland firefighter / union leader Sam Forstag both entered the Democratic primary to take on GOP Rep. Ryan Zinke. They join former Army Blackhawk pilot Matt Rains and Navy Veteran Russell Cleveland in the primary. Inside Elections broke the news of Forstag’s interest in running in September. Solid Republican.

**Washington’s 4th District.** It’s only been three weeks since GOP Rep. Dan Newhouse announced he will not seek re-election, but there’s already some clarity in the race. President Trump announced his full and total support for Yakima County Commissioner Amanda McKinney making her the initial frontrunner for the GOP nomination and thus to be the successor to Newhouse. Republicans have a 24-point Baseline edge in the district, so the cycle would really have to slide for Democrats to have a shot. Solid Republican.

IE

# Republicans Try to Maintain House Majority Before November

By Nathan L. Gonzales

The unexpected death of California Republican Doug LaMalfa is a sad reminder of the fragility of the GOP's House majority on Capitol Hill.

In 2024, House Republicans won a 220-215 majority. But that's with all of the seats filled, and that margin has fluctuated over the past 12 months with four deaths and four departures. In fact, Republicans began the 119th Congress at 219 seats, with Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz resigning before lawmakers were sworn in.

LaMalfa's death coupled with the resignation of Georgia Republican Marjorie Taylor Greene leaves the House at 218 Republicans and 213 Democrats. Yet the GOP majority is functionally narrower with Indiana Republican Jim Baird recovering after a car crash and presumably unable to make it to Washington for votes. Meanwhile, Democrats have two vacancies of their own.

While it's still unlikely that control of the House will switch party hands before the November elections, it can't be ruled out completely.

The last time control of a chamber flipped in the middle of a congressional year was more than 20 years ago. In May 2001, Vermont Sen. James M. Jeffords left the Republican

Party to become an independent and caucus with Democrats, making South Dakota Democrat Tom Daschle the new majority leader.

The last time the House changed hands before a full election was nearly a century ago. In 1930, Republicans won a razor-thin majority on Election Day but by the time Congress convened some 13 months later, enough members had died and been replaced that it was Democrats who organized the chamber.

Republicans are still emboldened by the 2024 results that saw them win the White House, flip the Senate and retain the House, but Speaker Mike Johnson's grip on the House continues to be precarious. Even though the vacant seats have so far opened up in safe Republican or Democratic territory, the timing of those vacancies still has an impact on chamber control and Republicans' ability to pass legislation.

House Democrats will gain a vote following the Jan. 31 special election run-off in Texas' 18th District. The seat has been vacant since Democratic Rep. Sylvester Turner died in March last year. The party is guaranteed to hold the seat considering two Democrats, former Houston City Council Member Amanda Edwards and acting Harris County Attorney Christian Menefee, are facing off. That will bring the House to 218 Republicans and 214 Democrats.

The all-party special election in Georgia's 14th District to succeed Greene will take place March 10. But an April 7 run-off looks probable at this point, with a large field of unknown candidates. Given that President Donald Trump finished ahead of Kamala Harris in the district by 37 points, the seat will likely have a new Republican voting in Congress when the dust settles. That would bring the House to 219 Republicans and 214 Democrats.

Democrats then are likely to hold New Jersey's 11th District, which is vacant after Rep. Mikie Sherrill resigned in November following her election as governor. Democrats here have a 13.5-point advantage, according to Inside Elections' Baseline metric. Given that and the current political environment, the Feb. 5 Democratic primary will be the most important race. But the seat won't be filled until after the April 16 special general election. That would bring the House to 219 Republicans and 215 Democrats.

LaMalfa's 1st District in California was redrawn last year to be safely Democratic. But the special election to succeed him will be conducted under the current lines – which saw Trump best Harris here by 25 points – so a Republican will be heavily favored to win. According to state law, Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has 14 days to declare a special election, which can take place between 126 and 140 days after that. That means the initial race could take place on June 2, at the same time as the regular primary for the newly redrawn 1st District. If no one takes a majority of the vote in the special election, a face-off between the top two vote-getters would be necessary.

If the GOP holds the 1st District as expected, the House would finally be back to full strength, with 220 Republicans and 215 Democrats. But it seems unlikely that there won't be more vacancies this year.

Beyond politics, LaMalfa's death is a sad reminder of mortality and the fragility of life. At 65, he certainly wasn't the oldest member of Congress (127 incumbent lawmakers are older), and there wasn't public evidence of an underlying illness.

Some of the oldest members are not running for reelection, but that doesn't mean there won't be any deaths before the election.

Also, tragedies happen. Baird's current situation is an eerie reminder of 2022, when 58-year-old Republican Rep. Jackie Walorski of Indiana was killed in a car crash.

But deaths are not the only thing that could tip the balance of power this year, considering departures account for some of the vacancies as well. Greene left after coming to an impasse with Trump and his administration, particularly over the Jeffrey Epstein files. GOP Rep. Mark Green left Tennessee's 7th District to take another job. Gaetz and fellow Florida Republican Mike Waltz left to join the Trump administration, though only one of them made the successful jump.

Legal issues could also be a factor. For instance, New York Republican George Santos was expelled in 2023, opening up a Long Island seat that Democrats went on to flip. But an expulsion seems less likely this time around, even in extreme circumstances, based on the narrowness of the House majority.

And not long ago, there was talk of other disgruntled Republicans joining Greene at the exits. South Carolina Rep. Nancy Mace batted down those resignation rumors last month, but that doesn't mean other lawmakers won't entertain the possibility as the cycle evolves.

Even if Republicans technically maintain a majority, passing legislation could be a challenge. There could be more members like Baird who won't be able to make it to Washington for votes, and there are lawmakers such as Kentucky Republican Thomas Massie who don't appear interested in blindly supporting the president.

The phrase "Every seat matters" is typically dismissed as a cliché. But for the 119th Congress, it really does apply.



Marjorie Taylor Greene

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call