

Inside Elections

with
Nathan L. Gonzales
Nonpartisan Analysis

JULY 10, 2025

VOLUME 9, NO. 13

Pennsylvania 10: Familiar Faces

By Jacob Rubashkin

Will 2026 be the year that Pennsylvania Democrats finally catch up to one of their most elusive opponents?

GOP Rep. Scott Perry has survived three tough challenges since his Central Pennsylvania district was redrawn in 2018, but shifting political trends and the potential for a strong repeat nominee have Democrats as optimistic as ever that the upcoming midterms will see the former Freedom Caucus chairman go down in defeat.

Perry's allies, however, remain confident in the underlying Republican DNA of the district, where blue collar workers coexist with a growing professional community that has sprung up around the state capitol.

The Lay of the Land

The 10th District includes all of Dauphin County, including the state capital Harrisburg, as well as the northern part of York County (which includes the city of York) and the western part of Cumberland County. The Susquehanna River, which runs through Harrisburg, bisects the district running southeast.

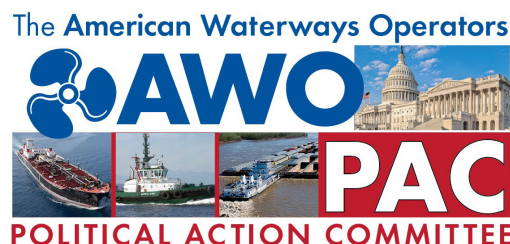
Demographically, the 10th resembles the commonwealth as a whole, with 69 percent White residents, 11 percent Hispanic, 10 percent Black, and 5 percent Asian. With a median household income of \$79,000, the district is in line with both Pennsylvania (\$73,000) and the entire United States (\$77,000); the largest employers include the state government, Hersheypark and the Hershey Chocolate Company, and the region's two major hospitals.

While Republican-leaning, the 10th has trended in Democrats' direction over the past decade thanks to growth in well-off, suburban areas and is winnable for statewide Democratic candidates under the right circumstances.

In 2016, the 10th voted for Donald Trump by 10 points, 53-43 percent, and for GOP Sen. Pat Toomey by 13 points, 55-42 percent, though Democrat Eugene DePasquale carried it narrowly in the state auditor

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2026 House Ratings

Toss-Up (3D, 8R)

AZ 6 (Ciscomani, R)	MI 7 (Barrett, R)	VA 2 (Kiggans, R)
CA 13 (Gray, D)	NC 1 (Davis, D)	
CA 45 (Tran, D)	NE 2 (Open; Bacon, R)#	
CO 8 (Evans, R)	NY 17 (Lawler, R)	
IA 1 (Miller-Meeks, R)	PA 7 (Mackenzie, R)	

Tilt Democratic (7D)

CA 47 (Min, D)
ME 2 (Golden, D)
MI 8 (McDonald Rivet, D)
NM 2 (Vasquez, D)
NY 4 (Gillen, D)
TX 34 (Gonzalez, D)
WA 3 (Perez, D)

Tilt Republican (5R)

AZ 1 (Schweikert, R)
MI 10 (Open; James, R)
NJ 7 (Kean Jr., R)
PA 10 (Perry, R)
WI 3 (Van Orden, R)

Lean Democratic (16D)

CA 21 (Costa, D) NV 1 (Titus, D)
CA 27 (Whitesides, D) NV 3 (Lee, D)
CA 49 (Levin, D) NV 4 (Horsford, D)
CA 9 (Harder, D) NY 19 (Riley, D)
FL 23 (Moskowitz, D) NY 3 (Suozi, D)
IN 1 (Mrvan, D) TX 28 (Cuellar, D)
MN 2 (Open; Craig, DFL) VA 7 (Vindman, D)
NH 1 (Open; Pappas, D)
NJ 9 (Pou, D)

Lean Republican (5R)

CA 22 (Valadao, R)
CA 40 (Kim, R)
CA 41 (Calvert, R)
IA 3 (Nunn, R)
PA 8 (Bresnahan, R)

Likely Democratic (8D)

CA 25 (Ruiz, D) PA 17 (Deluzio, D)
IL 17 (Sorensen, D)
MI 3 (Scholten, D)
NH 2 (Goodlander, D)
NY 18 (Ryan, D)
NY 22 (Mannion, D)
OR 5 (Bynum, D)

Likely Republican (11R)

AK AL (Begich, R) PA 1 (Fitzpatrick, R)
AZ 2 (Crane, R) TX 15 (De La Cruz, R)
CA 3 (Kiley, R) VA 1 (Wittman, R)
CO 5 (Crank, R) WI 1 (Steil, R)
FL 13 (Luna, R)
IA 2 (Hinson, R)
MI 4 (Huizenga, R)

Pending New Map (3D)

OH 1 (Landsman, D)
OH 9 (Kaptur, D)
OH 13 (Sykes, D)

	GOP	DEM
Solid	181	176
Likely/Lean/Tilt	21	31
Total	202	207
Toss-up	11	
Ohio map TBD	15	
Needed for majority	218	

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

CALENDAR

July 15	Arizona's 7th Special Election Democratic Primary
Sept. 9	Virginia's 11th District Special General Election
Nov. 4	Texas' 18th District Special Primary
Nov. 4	New Jersey & Virginia Gubernatorial Elections

North Carolina Senate: Tillis Decision Creates Open Seat

By Nathan L. Gonzales

In the face of opposition from President Donald Trump, GOP Sen. Thom Tillis announced he will not seek re-election in 2026. The senator's decision doesn't change the overall Senate battleground, but it makes the seat more vulnerable to a Democratic takeover without an incumbent.

After Tillis declined to support the so-called "one big beautiful bill," Trump threatened to support a primary challenger against the senator. Now that Tillis has stepped aside, all eyes will be on Trump to anoint a preferred candidate in order to avoid a messy primary that could make it easier for Democrats to take over the seat.

Most of the early attention is on Trump's daughter-in-law / former RNC co-chair Lara Trump, but she'd need to move back to the state by Sept. 20 to meet the residency requirement, according to the Raleigh News & Observer. Other potential candidates include Reps. Pat Harrigan and Addison McDowell, former Rep. Patrick McHenry and 2024 superintendent of public instruction nominee Michele Morrow.

On the Democratic side, former Rep. Wiley Nickel is running, but former Gov. Roy Cooper has been seriously considering the race since before Tillis made his announcement. If Cooper passes for some reason, Lt. Gov. Rachel Hunt, former EPA Administrator Michael Regan, former CDC Director Mandy Cohen, and 2018 9th District nominee Dan McCready could all take a fresh look.

Inside Elections rated the North Carolina Senate race as a Battleground before Tillis' decision and the open seat remains a Battleground for now. We'll move to our full spectrum of ratings (Toss-up, Tilt, Lean, Likely and Solid) at the end of July.

Overall, Republicans are early favorites to maintain control of the Senate, but North Carolina is arguably the GOP's most vulnerable seat. Maine is a more Democratic state, but GOP Sen. Susan Collins will be difficult to defeat. Democrats need a net gain of four seats for a majority.

Considering three-straight presidential victories by Trump, Republicans are confident they'll hold the seat. Trump won North Carolina by nearly 4 points in 2016, by 1 point in 2020, and 3 points in 2024. But the state is more competitive when taking into account other elections. According to Inside Elections' Baseline, the typical GOP statewide candidate has just a 2.2-point advantage (50.9-48.6 percent). And this seat has featured two very close Senate races in the recent past. Tillis was first elected in 2014 when he defeated Democratic Sen. Kay Hagan, 48.8-47.3 percent. And he was re-elected in 2020, 48.7-46.9 percent, over Cal Cunningham.

2026 Senate Ratings	
BATTLEGROUND	
Democratic-Held (4)	Republican-Held (2)
Jon Ossoff (D-Ga.)	Susan Collins (R-Maine)
MI Open (Gary Peters, D)	NC Open (Tillis, R)
MN Open (Tina Smith, DFL)	
NH Open (Jeanne Shaheen, D)	
Solid Democratic (9)	Solid Republican (20)
IL Open (Dick Durbin, D)	AL Open (Tommy Tuberville, R)
John Hickenlooper (D-Colo.)	KY Open (Mitch McConnell, R)
Chris Coons (D-Del.)	Dan Sullivan (R-Ak.)
Ed Markey (D-Mass.)	Tom Cotton (R-Ark.)
Cory Booker (D-N.J.)	Ashley Moody (R-Fla.)
Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.)	Jim Risch (R-Idaho)
Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.)	Joni Ernst (R-Iowa)
Jack Reed (D-R.I.)	Roger Marshall (R-Kan.)
Mark Warner (D-Va.)	Bill Cassidy (R-La.)
	Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.)
	Steve Daines (R-Mont.)
	Pete Ricketts (R-Neb.)
	Jon Husted (R-Ohio)
	Markwayne Mullin (R-Okla.)
	Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.)
	Mike Rounds (R-S.D.)
	Bill Hagerty (R-Tenn.)
	John Cornyn (R-Texas)
	Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.V.)
	Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.)

Tillis is the seventh senator to announce they will not seek re-election. There's been an average of at least five open Senate seats each election year since Herbert Hoover was president and there were only 48 states in the union.

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Nebraska 2: Without Bacon, Are Republicans Cooked?

By Jacob Rubashkin

Don Bacon's decision not to seek re-election upends the race for his Omaha, Nebraska-based district, which is the most Democratic seat currently held by a Republican. Vice President Kamala Harris finished ahead of President Donald Trump in the 2nd District by 4 points, 51-47 percent.

Bacon, a genial Air Force veteran and outspoken member of the GOP's more moderate flank had been a thorn in the side of Democrats in Nebraska and Washington, DC ever since flipping the 2nd District in 2016. A top target in 2018, 2020, 2022 and 2024, Bacon withstood millions of dollars in attack ads and unfavorable political environments.

An open seat race, the first in the 2nd District since 1998, presents Democrats with their best chance of flipping the district and getting one step closer to the three-seat net gain needed to win back the majority. Bacon's retirement also rockets this district to the top of the list of competitive races this cycle, and makes this race a toss-up.

The last time either party successfully defended an open seat won by the loser of the previous presidential election was 2002. Among open seats, Republicans won every Trump-won district in 2022, Democrats won every Clinton-won district in 2018, Republicans won every Romney-won district in 2014 and McCain-won district in 2010, and Democrats won every Kerry-won district in 2006.

In 2002, Republicans won four open seats that Al Gore won in 2000: Colorado's 7th, Nevada's 3rd, Georgia's 12th, and Pennsylvania's 6th districts.

Party strategists on both sides of the aisle anticipate contested primaries ahead of next year's race. On the Democratic side, political organizer Denise Powell and state Sen. John Cavanaugh are already in the race. Two other candidates, Douglas County Clerk of the District Court Crystal Rhoades and former Veterans' Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary Kishla Askins, could also run. Less traditional candidates such as former Nebraska football standout Tony Veland have also had their names floated.

Cavanaugh comes from one of the most politically prominent families in Nebraska; his father represented the 2nd District in the 1970s, his sister serves with him in the state legislature and his uncles have held various Douglas County offices.

Powell was the first to enter the race and has backing from former state Sen. Tony Vargas, the Democratic nominee in 2022 and 2024. She announced raising \$215,000 in her first day in the race, a significant sum for a first-time candidate that impressed Democratic strategists.

Rhoades, a former public service commissioner, is a seasoned Democratic campaign operative who most recently helped shepherd Democrat John Ewing to an upset victory in the Omaha mayoral race. But she's a controversial figure within state Democratic politics, and has feuded with state party chairwoman Jane Kleeb for years.

Askins is a 30-year Navy veteran who served as a physician's assistant and is pursuing a doctorate at the University of Nebraska while running a consulting business. She has a compelling profile and the potential to



Denise Powell

Courtesy Powell Campaign

2026 House Open Seats

District	Outgoing Member	2024 Results	2024 Presidential	2026 Rating
AZ-05	Andy Biggs, R	60%	Trump 60%	Solid Republican
FL-19	Byron Donalds, R	66%	Trump 64%	Solid Republican
GA-01	Buddy Carter, R	62%	Trump 58%	Solid Republican
IL-02	Robin Kelly, D	68%	Harris 66%	Solid Democratic
IL-08	Raja Krishnamoorthi, D	57%	Harris 53%	Solid Democratic
IL-09	Jan Schakowsky, D	68%	Harris 68%	Solid Democratic
IA-04	Randy Feenstra, R	67%	Trump 65%	Solid Republican
KY-06	Andy Barr, R	63%	Trump 57%	Solid Republican
MI-10	John James, R	51%	Trump 52%	Tilt Republican
MI-11	Haley Stevens, D	58%	Harris 57%	Solid Democratic
MN-02	Angie Craig, DFL	56%	Harris 51%	Lean Democratic
NE-02	Don Bacon, R	51%	Harris 52%	Toss-up
NH-01	Chris Pappas, D	54%	Harris 51%	Lean Democratic
PA-03	Dwight Evans, D	Unopposed	Harris 88%	Solid Democratic
SD-AL	Dusty Johnson, R	72%	Trump 63%	Solid Republican
TN-06	John Rose, R	68%	Trump 67%	Solid Republican

raise national money but minimal ties to the district, only just moving from Alexandria, Virginia to Nebraska a few months ago.

On the Republican side, former state Sen. Brett Lindstrom and Omaha City Councilman Brinker Harding are already in the race. Dan Frei, the regional sales director who ran insurgent campaigns for this district in 2014 and 2024, could also run.



Brinker Harding

Lindstrom, a former backup quarterback for the Nebraska Cornhuskers, ran for the 2nd District in 2012 against incumbent Lee Terry, losing the primary 60-23 percent. He served in the state legislature from 2015 to 2023, and ran for the GOP gubernatorial nomination in 2022, placing a close third with 26 percent behind winner Jim Pillen (34 percent) and agribusinessman Charles Herbster (30 percent).

Harding is a three-term city councilman who also works as a vice president at real estate firm Colliers. He also worked as an adviser to former Omaha Mayor Hal Taub, who represented the 2nd District in the 1980s. He has been endorsed by Sen. Deb Fischer.

Frei ran against Bacon in 2024, spending little money but winning 38 percent of the vote by arguing Bacon was not sufficiently pro-Trump. In 2014, Frei came even closer to winning the nomination, losing to Terry 53-47 percent despite spending just \$51,000.

IE

California 13: Republican Reclamation?

By Jacob Rubashkin

The race for California's 13th District in 2022 was one of the closest in modern history. The rematch in 2024 was even closer.

And while 2026 won't see a rubber match between Democrat Adam Gray and Republican John Duarte, it's still shaping up to be a highly competitive and expensive fight at the center of the House battlefield.

Gray, in his first term as a congressman after a long career in the state capitol as a staffer and legislator, is looking to hold onto a seat he clawed back for Democrats even as it shifts rightward. Duarte is not running for a third time but is working to elevate the next GOP nominee in his stead, in the type of district that Republicans believe is moving in their direction.

The 13th and its Central Valley companion districts are among the most difficult to poll or predict thanks to wildly variable turnout and shifting demographic coalitions, but that hasn't stopped the race for 2026 from kicking off in earnest as Democrats hope to bring back all of their incumbents while securing a net gain of three seats elsewhere to win back the House and Republicans look to pick off enough seats to offset losses and buck history to keep control.

The Lay of the Land

California's 13th District is situated in the middle of the Central Valley; it includes all of Merced County (which casts roughly 40 percent of the vote) and parts of Stanislaus (28 percent), Madera (16 percent), Fresno (10 percent) and San Joaquin (7 percent) counties.

Roughly 37 percent of the district lives in the Merced metro area, with another 29 percent in the Modesto area. The district casts among the fewest votes of any congressional district thanks in part to its low proportion of citizens. Just 83 percent of residents are citizens, according to the American Community Survey, compared to 93 percent nationwide.

The 13th is majority-Hispanic at 66 percent, with 20 percent white residents; 7 percent are Asian. Nearly all of the district's Hispanic residents are of Mexican origin. The electorate is less Hispanic; the citizen voting-age population is just 53 percent Hispanic and 33 percent white.

The median household income is \$65,557, significantly lower than the national average of \$77,719 and ranking 325th out of 435 House districts. Just 14.5 percent of residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, less than half the national rate of 36 percent.

The 13th is heavily agricultural: more than 10 percent of the population works in agriculture, compared to less than 2 percent nationwide.

Politically, the 13th has become significantly more favorable toward Republicans over the past four years. Democrats have a 10-point voter registration advantage, but that is reduced from 15 points in 2022.

And while Democrats won the district in every statewide race from 2016 through 2020, Republicans have since won the 13th in all but one contest since then: Gray's narrow 2024 victory.

Trump won the 13th by 5 points, 51-46 percent, in 2024, thanks to an increase in support from Hispanic voters. He had lost the district by 9 points to Joe Biden in 2020, 53-44 percent, and by 13 points in 2016.

The rightward turn was first seen in 2021, when the 13th narrowly voted to recall Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom by 3 points after previously voting for him by 4 points in 2018. In 2022, the 13th voted for

every statewide GOP candidate by margins ranging from 3 to 10 points as it narrowly voted for Duarte in the House race.

The Democratic Incumbent

Gray, 47, is only in his first term in Congress but developed a reputation as a political operator during his decade in the general assembly representing Merced and Stanislaus counties. From 2012 to 2022, Gray had a relatively moderate record and was known as a "Valleycrat" — a centrist Democrat from the Central Valley — and clashed with Democratic leadership.

Gray jumped into politics after graduating from UC Santa Barbara in 2002, first as a staffer in the state legislature and then in 2012 as a candidate for state Assembly. After an easy first victory he was a top target of the GOP in 2014 and won an expensive race, 53-47 percent. His 2016, 2018, and 2020 wins were much more comfortable.

In 2022, Gray ran for the 13th District after incumbent Democrat Josh Harder shifted to the open 9th District following redistricting. Gray placed second in the all-party primary behind Duarte, 34-31 percent, and went on to lose a general election that attracted nearly \$14 million in outside spending. The 564-vote margin (50.2-49.8 percent) was the second-closest result of the cycle.

In 2024, Gray ran again, this time the only Democrat to take



Courtesy: Office of Adam Gray

Adam Gray

on Duarte. He overhauled his campaign team and significantly boosted his fundraising, more than doubling his 2022 haul (\$6.4 million vs. \$2.4 million). And even as Trump carried the district handily, Gray eked out a 187-vote victory over

Duarte in a contest that saw more than \$30 million in outside spending.

In Congress, Gray sits on the Agriculture and Natural Resources committees and is a member of the Blue Dog Caucus.

His campaign team includes media consultant John Lapp of Ralston Lapp Guinn and EMC Research for polling.

The Republican Challengers

Two Republicans are currently in the race. Ceres Mayor Javier Lopez is the most notable contender but Vin Kruttiventi, who ran for a different district in 2024, is also running. Perennial candidate/memorabilia salesman David Giglio is making noises as well. Overall, the field is still relatively fluid and the filing deadline is not until March.

Lopez, 41, is just beginning his second term as mayor of Ceres, a city of 49,302 just south of Modesto.

The Los Angeles-born Lopez grew up in Ceres and has worked as a fire suppression technician since graduating high school. He has owned a gym and personal training business since 2015 and is the assistant

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coach for the freshman football team at Central Valley High School.

In 2020, Lopez pulled off an upset in the nonpartisan mayoral race as a political newcomer, defeating longtime Ceres councilman Bret Durossette, 54-46 percent (5,187-4,431 votes), despite being significantly outspent.

In 2024, Lopez won a closer re-election, 44-39 percent, over Gary Condit (the grandson of the former congressman of the same name, who, in a coincidence, is Gray's father-in-law).

Duarte helped recruit Lopez into the congressional race earlier this year, pre-emptively endorsing him while he ruled out running himself.

Lopez's general consultant is Duane Dichiaro of Axiom Strategies, who was also Duarte's general consultant.

Kruttiventi, 50, is a longtime technology CEO who runs a cloud consulting business. An Indian immigrant who graduated from Osmania University in Hyderabad in 1996, Kruttiventi came to the US in 2002 and has founded several cloud-based startups in the San Francisco area.

While Kruttiventi began donating to Republicans in 2020, he more fully entered politics in 2024, when he challenged Democratic Rep. Eric Swalwell in the 14th District, which is based entirely in Alameda County. Kruttiventi placed second in the all-party primary with 18 percent, behind Swalwell's 67 percent. In the general election, Swalwell defeated him 68-32 percent.

He is personally wealthy — his personal financial disclosure estimates his company is worth more than \$50 million — and loaned his 2024 campaign \$700,000. Kruttiventi lives in Pleasanton, which is 30 miles outside the 13th District.

His campaign team includes pollster Brent Buchanan of Cygnal.

Giglio, 36, owns a sports collectible shop in Clovis, California. While he hasn't officially jumped in the race, he has created a "Draft David" website and commissioned a poll from Rasmussen Reports testing both a primary and general election.

This would be Giglio's third run for Congress. The University of Scranton (2011) graduate worked as a schoolteacher in Connecticut before moving to California and opening his store in Fresno County.

In 2022 he ran for the 13th District, raising \$389,000 and contributing another \$331,000 out of his own pocket, but placed fourth behind Duarte, Gray, and Democrat Phil Arballo with 15 percent.

After Rep. Kevin McCarthy was ousted from his post as Speaker of the House in 2023, Giglio announced he would challenge McCarthy for re-nomination, arguing the incumbent was insufficiently "America First." But Giglio struggled to raise money, and after McCarthy resigned, creating an open seat, Giglio ultimately withdrew from the race two weeks before the primary and finished in seventh place with 1 percent of the vote.

The All-Party Primary

All candidates will appear on the same ballot in the June 2, 2026 primary, and the top two vote-getters, regardless of party, will advance to the general election.



Javier Lopez

Courtesy Lopez Campaign

2026 Governor Ratings

Battleground

Democratic-held (8D)

Hobbs (D-Ariz.)
Hochul (D-N.Y.)
Shapiro (D-Penn.)
Evers (D-Wisc.)
KS Open (Kelly, D)
ME Open (Mills, D)
MI Open (Whitmer, D)
NM Open (Lujan Grisham, D)

Republican-held (3R)

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

Solid Democratic (10D)

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

Solid Republican (15R)

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

2025 RACES

Tilt Democratic

VA Open (Youngkin, R)

Lean Democratic

NJ Open (Murphy, D)

As the incumbent and only major Democrat in the race, Gray is a shoo-in for one of the two spots in the general election, leaving the Republicans to vie for a chance to take him on.

National Republicans are most optimistic about Lopez because of his blue-collar background, Hispanic heritage, support from Duarte and ties to the district. And they like the contrast between the high school football coach and the career politico — to say nothing of the personal element to a matchup that would pit Gray against the man who defeated his nephew in last year's mayoral race.

But while Lopez has impressed Republicans in Washington, DC, his challenge will be to win over Republicans in the district ahead of a primary where he probably begins behind, thanks to his competitors' residual name ID and financial resources.

Both Kruttiventi and Giglio have shown capacity to put at least some personal money into their campaigns, especially Kruttiventi, who loaned himself \$700,000 for a no-shot race last year and is the only candidate to have begun paid media advertising with a five-figure digital buy. Lopez is not personally wealthy — his mayoral salary is just \$8,400 — and has no experience fundraising for a congressional race.

One California Republican said that Lopez's fundraising has been off to a slow start, calling it a "major concern" given how competitive the district will be. Lopez's three-month fundraising report is due July 15.

If Lopez can't put together a stronger fundraising operation, it may be difficult for him to catch up to either Giglio or Kruttiventi, both of whom have already released polling showing themselves in second place.

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A Rasmussen Reports survey for Giglio from early May found Gray ahead with 40 percent followed by Giglio (21 percent), Lopez (13 percent), and Kruttiventi (5 percent). A Cygnal poll for Kruttiventi taken June 12-13 found Gray ahead with 35 percent followed by Kruttiventi with 12 percent, Giglio with 10 percent, and Lopez with 7 percent.

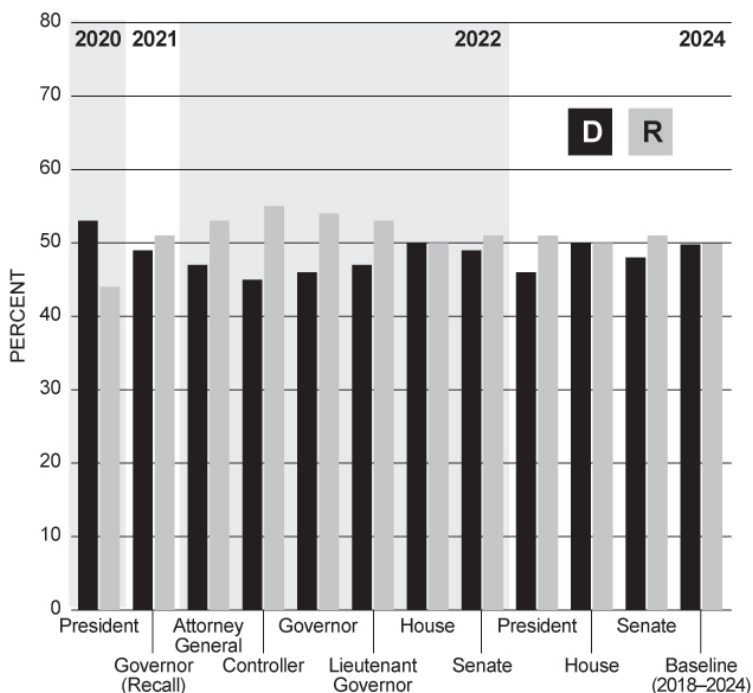
If he can kick his finances into a higher gear, Lopez has the pieces to put together a compelling candidacy, especially if outside GOP groups determine that the other candidates in the race would struggle to win a general election.

Kruttiventi's vulnerabilities include his lack of ties to the district and background as a Bay Area tech entrepreneur. While Alameda County borders the northern part of the 13th District, the tech-heavy 14th District is plurality Asian-American, boasts a median household income twice that of the 13th, and more than three times as many residents have a college degree.

Giglio, meanwhile, has earned gadfly status among California and national Republicans for his quixotic primary bid against McCarthy, his lawsuit against now-Rep. Vince Fong attempting to disqualify him from the ballot, and his affiliation with fringe Trump-world figures such as Michael Flynn and Roger Stone.

With a filing deadline eight months away, there's potential for other Republicans to join the race. Two GOP state legislators represent constituencies that overlap with the 13th District: state Sen. Marie Alvarado-Gil (who left the Democratic Party in 2024) and state Assemblyman Juan Alanis. Both represent about a third of the 13th District, but of the two, Alanis might be the more compelling candidate as he lives just outside the district and has a law enforcement background. Alvarado-Gil is also in the midst of an ugly legal fight stemming from sexual harassment allegations made against her by Gray's brother-in-law, Chad Condit.

Statewide Election Results in California's 13th District



The General Election

The 13th's rapid political shift and the sharp dropoff in turnout expected in a midterm election introduces plenty of uncertainty in handicapping this district, and much may depend on the caliber of the GOP nominee.

But at the moment both parties are gearing up for another hard-fought general election campaign in the mode of the previous two races, which were decided by a combined margin of 751 votes. "It's going to be tight all the way," said one Democratic source, "and it's a really difficult district to poll."

Gray has focused on burnishing his moderate bona fides in Congress, joining the Blue Dog Caucus and focusing on Central Valley issues such as water rights and wildfire prevention.

The Democrat will also look to press his financial advantage after fixing his fundraising issues last cycle. He raised \$397,000 in the first three months of 2025, the most he has raised in an odd-numbered year. And the late California primary could give him an opportunity to stockpile cash as the GOP sorts out its nominee, allowing him to repeat his strategy of advertising in the more expensive Sacramento media market earlier in the cycle (early September in 2024, versus late October in 2022).

Gray will also look to repeat his successful strategy of using local law enforcement validators. One of his 2024 campaign's most effective ads feature the Republican sheriffs of the two largest counties in the district endorsing him as the tough on crime candidate.

Republicans are also holding out hope that California Democrats will pick Harris as their gubernatorial standard-bearer. The former vice president is not currently running but may join the race and would begin as the frontrunner, and Republican strategists believe she would struggle to carry this district after losing it in the presidential race. A GOP gubernatorial win at the top of the ticket in the 13th could create some headwinds for Gray, though he overperformed the governor race in 2022 by 8 points. Even some Democratic strategists acknowledge that while Harris would be the prohibitive favorite to win statewide, she might not be a boost for downballot Democrats, but, as one Gray ally notes, neither was Newsom in 2022.

Democrats harbor their own hopes regarding the governor's race, including the prospect that Republicans nominate British-American Fox News personality Steve Hilton, who may not play well in the Central Valley.

Overall, Democratic strategists are confident that at least two issues that have predominated national politics in recent months — immigration and healthcare — will be significant positives for Gray against any Republican. More than one-third of 13th District residents are on Medicaid, and one-in-five residents in the district is a Latin American immigrant.

The Bottom Line

It's still early in the Central Valley, where voters often wait until close to Election Day to tune into their congressional contests.

But in Washington, DC this district is squarely at the center of the political battlefield and is already receiving significant attention. As Democrats continue to navigate a shifting relationship with Hispanic and Latino voters, districts such as the 13th take on larger prominence in the fight for the House majority. And the memories of weeks of vote-counting and uncertain outcomes in both 2022 and 2024 are still fresh in both parties' minds.

For his part, Gray is trying to keep up his impressive streak as the only Democrat to win the 13th District in the past 13 electoral contests — and return to Congress for a second term as Democrats look to hold all of their incumbents and flip three more seats to regain control of Congress.



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race. In 2018, incumbent Democrats Sen. Bob Casey and Gov. Tom Wolf both won the 10th, by 1 and 9 points, respectively.

In 2020, Trump again won the district but by a reduced 4-point margin, 51-47 percent, as other statewide GOP candidates won it by margins ranging from 3 to 12 points.

In 2022, the 10th split its ticket between Democratic gubernatorial candidate Josh Shapiro, who defeated Republican Doug Mastriano 55-43 percent, and GOP Senate candidate Mehmet Oz, who narrowly won, 49-48 percent.

The 2024 cycle saw Republicans regain some ground in the 10th, as Trump won the district by a slightly wider 52-47 percent margin and GOP Senate candidate Dave McCormick won it 51-46 percent over Casey.

Dauphin casts the most votes of the three counties, at roughly 36 percent of the electorate, and is the most Democratic part of the district. Cumberland casts 34 percent and is more closely divided. York casts 30 percent and is more reliably Republican.

The engine of the district's leftward drift is Cumberland, which is increasingly suburban and a growing share of the district (in 2016 it cast just 32 percent of the 10th's votes while Dauphin cast 38 percent). The Cumberland portion of the district voted for Trump by 17 points in 2016 but only by 8 points in 2020. In 2024, the Cumberland portion voted for Trump by just 7 points even as he improved districtwide and across the state.

The Republican Incumbent

Perry, 63, is in his seventh term representing Harrisburg in Congress, and prior to that served six years in the state House.

The San Diego-born Perry grew up in Dillsburg, Pennsylvania under hard circumstances, in a house that lacked electricity or running water. After high school he worked an array of jobs — picking fruit, selling insurance, and working as a dockman, among others — and attended Harrisburg Community College before graduating from Penn State in 1991. After college he founded a mechanical contracting business.

Perry joined the Army National Guard in 1980, eventually becoming a helicopter pilot and deploying to Bosnia and Iraq, where he flew combat missions. He retired from the Army in 2019 at the rank of brigadier general.

In 2006, Perry ran for an open seat in the Pennsylvania state House representing York County, outpacing physician Jay McKiernan 41-24 percent in the GOP primary. He won an easy general election victory, 71-29 percent, and won two more terms unopposed in 2008 and 2010.

In 2012, York County Congressman Todd Platts retired after hitting his self-imposed term limit and Perry ran to succeed him, easily winning the GOP primary with 53 percent. In the general election he defeated Democrat Harry Perkinson, 60-34 percent, which was 3 points better than Mitt Romney's 57 percent.



Scott Perry

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

2026 Open Senate Seats

State	Outgoing Senator	2024 Presidential	2026 Rating
Alabama	Tommy Tuberville, R	Trump 65%	Solid Republican
Illinois	Dick Durbin, D	Harris 54%	Solid Democratic
Kentucky	Mitch McConnell, R	Trump 65%	Solid Republican
Michigan	Gary Peters, D	Trump 49.7%	Battleground
Minnesota	Tina Smith, DFL	Harris 51%	Battleground
New Hampshire	Jeanne Shaheen, D	Harris 51%	Battleground
North Carolina	Thom Tillis, R	Trump 51%	Battleground

Perry won easy re-elections with 75 and 66 percent of the vote in 2014 and 2016. But a decision by the Pennsylvania state Supreme Court resulted in his district being redrawn ahead of the 2018 midterm elections to include all of Democratic Dauphin County, making the renumbered 10th District significantly more competitive.

That cycle, Perry faced his first tough general election, against former CIA officer and pastor George Scott, who outspent the incumbent. The race attracted some attention from outside groups and Perry ultimately won, 51-49 percent.

In 2020, Democrats believed they had an all-star candidate in state Auditor Eugene DePasquale, who had carried the district in his statewide run in 2016. National groups were much more heavily involved, with Democratic and Republican outside groups each spending \$6 million to support their candidate. The result was not particularly close as Trump and Perry outperformed polling and he won, 53-47 percent.

Democrats did not seriously contest the 10th District in 2022; underfunded Harrisburg city councilwoman Shamaine Daniels lost to Perry, 54-46 percent.

In 2024, Democrats were more excited about their chances with longtime newscaster Janelle Stelson as their nominee, releasing polling showing Perry in danger of losing. But Republicans largely insisted Perry was in fine shape until the final weeks of the race, when the Congressional Leadership Fund, Club for Growth, and House Freedom Caucus poured \$6 million into the district to rescue the congressman.

Perry scraped out a 1.2-point victory, 50.6-49.4 percent.

In Congress, Perry sits on the Foreign Affairs and Transportation committees, and is a former chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, which he led from 2021 to 2024. Perry was heavily involved in Trump's efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, lobbying the president to replace the acting attorney general with a lawyer more amenable to the stolen election conspiracy and urging the Justice Department to pressure the state of Georgia into retracting its electoral certification despite no evidence of fraud. In 2022, the FBI seized Perry's phone as a part of its investigation into the aftermath of the 2020 election.

Perry's campaign team includes general consultant Brian Nutt of Ignite Strategies, who is also doing the direct mail, and media consultant John Brabender of BrabenderCox. Tarrance Group is doing the polling.

The (Likely) Democratic Nominee

Stelson, 65, is expected to get into the race in a matter of days and will likely be the Democratic nominee for a second cycle. Dauphin County Commissioner Justin Douglas is also exploring a bid but is not seen as a

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top-tier candidate in the primary.

The Fairbanks, Alaska-born Stelson is a familiar face in the district after 26 years as a reporter and anchor on WGAL, the Lancaster-based NBC affiliate, and before that several years as an anchor on Harrisburg CBS affiliate WHP-TV.

A 1982 graduate of the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington, Stelson began her career as a speechwriter for the Egyptian Embassy in Washington, DC, where she worked for four years before leaving because she was concerned her employers were anti-Semitic.

In 1986, she arrived in Harrisburg to work as a weather and weekend reporter for WHTM, the Harrisburg ABC affiliate, where she worked until moving briefly to Miami to cover hurricanes and drug busts for WPGL-TV, also an ABC affiliate. She later returned to Lancaster and WGAL.

Stelson left WGAL in late 2023 to prepare for a run against Perry, motivated in part, she says, by her experience reporting on the Supreme Court's reversal of *Roe v. Wade* the previous year. Though she was a registered Republican until 2023, and did not live in the 10th District, Stelson won a wire-to-wire Democratic primary victory with 44 percent over former TOPGUN pilot Mike O'Brien (23 percent) and 2022 nominee Daniels (15 percent).

In the general election, Stelson outraised Perry overall, \$6 million to \$4.5 million, but the incumbent's high fundraising burn rate and lingering legal expenses meant he had significantly less money to put toward advertising than she did.

Ultimately Stelson spent \$4.4 million on paid media compared to Perry's \$1.2 million, and Democrats were excited about the opportunity to flip the 10th for months leading up to Election Day, with party strategists considering Stelson one of their strongest contenders.

Stelson's campaign team includes J.J. Balaban of Technicolor Political and pollster Jill Normington of Normington Petts.

Douglas, 41, has served as a county commissioner since 2024, when he won a narrow upset victory that helped flip control of the county's board toward Democrats for the first time in over a century.

A 2006 graduate of Liberty University, where he also received an MA of religious studies in 2011, Douglas has worked as a pastor in Dauphin County since 2015. He led The Bridge Church for four years before the church fired him over a video he filmed welcoming LGBTQ worshippers. He was also evicted from his church-owned housing.

Douglas then founded a non-denominational inclusive congregation,

where he was the pastor until running for office, and launched a podcast called "Defund the Church," which advocates for anti-racism efforts in Christian spaces. He also coaches Crossfit.

In 2023, Douglas ran a longshot campaign for county commission after being recruited by Run for Something, making the high death rate at Dauphin's prison his top issue. He spent just \$12,000, including on a striking billboard advertisement, but earned a spot on the three-person board by 42 votes, narrowly outpacing incumbent Republican Chad Saylor to clinch the third and final spot.

Douglas, who identifies as a progressive and cuts a striking profile with ear gauges and dozens of tattoos, hasn't officially announced a bid yet. National Democrats are cool to his potential candidacy, though, and are skeptical he can raise the money necessary to run a congressional race.

How It Plays Out

National Democrats are high on this race and see Stelson as one of their top candidates thanks to her fundraising capability and ease



Janelle Stelson

appearing on camera. Party operatives were particularly impressed with her ability to run ahead of the top of the ticket and believe that even a slightly improved political environment and Shapiro (rather than Harris) at the top of the ticket will help

push Stelson over the top. And Republicans in this district and across the country understand the challenge of turning out Trump-focused voters in a midterm without Trump on the ballot.

While both parties anticipate that Republicans will field a stronger candidate against Shapiro than 2022 nominee Doug Mastriano, that's a low bar and operatives in both parties believe Shapiro will win the 10th and help Stelson. Perry's allies argue that he has won twice while Democrats carried the district in the gubernatorial race, but in 2022 he faced an underfunded opponent and Democrats did not target him.

"If Shapiro wins this district by 12 points, we could lose four seats in PA," said one Perry ally, pointing to not just the 10th but the 1st, 7th and 8th districts. The Republican said they hoped Republicans coalesced around a strong opponent against the governor to avoid that outcome. And some Republicans believe Shapiro is not as strong as his 2022 performance would suggest, noting that he actually lost the 10th District in his 2020 campaign for attorney general, 50-47 percent.

In addition to the political environment, the other major difference in a rematch will be the length of the campaign and the attention paid to the race. Last cycle, Stelson launched her campaign in October 2023 and began the general election in April 2024 following the primary. And while national Democrats were quick to train their focus on the 10th, national Republicans kept their distance until the final weeks of the race.

This cycle, Democratic leadership (such as Shapiro and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries) will likely coalesce quickly around Stelson, who will be in general election mode immediately. In 2024, her

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Inside Elections Podcast

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

Episode 50: A legacy of nonpartisan political handicapping with Stuart Rothenberg, founder of The Rothenberg Political Report

Episode 49: Women's congressional softball game preview with Bridget Bowman of NBC News

Episode 48: Congressional baseball game and fight for the Senate majority with Nathaniel Rakich (formerly of FiveThirtyEight)

Continued from page 8

fundraising only picked up after she won the nomination; she raised just \$576,000 of her \$6.5 million haul before the primary. In 2026, she could raise significantly more and much earlier.

Perry may also benefit from an earlier start. His fundraising over the first three months of 2025 — \$565,000 — ranks among the most he's ever raised in a fundraising quarter. And national Republicans will begin this cycle more clear-eyed about Perry's vulnerability after last year's close call, meaning he may see greater support earlier in the year from outside groups and GOP leadership.

With additional time and resources, Stelson's allies say she may try to address some of the areas where she struggled last cycle, particularly among Black and Latino voters in Harrisburg.

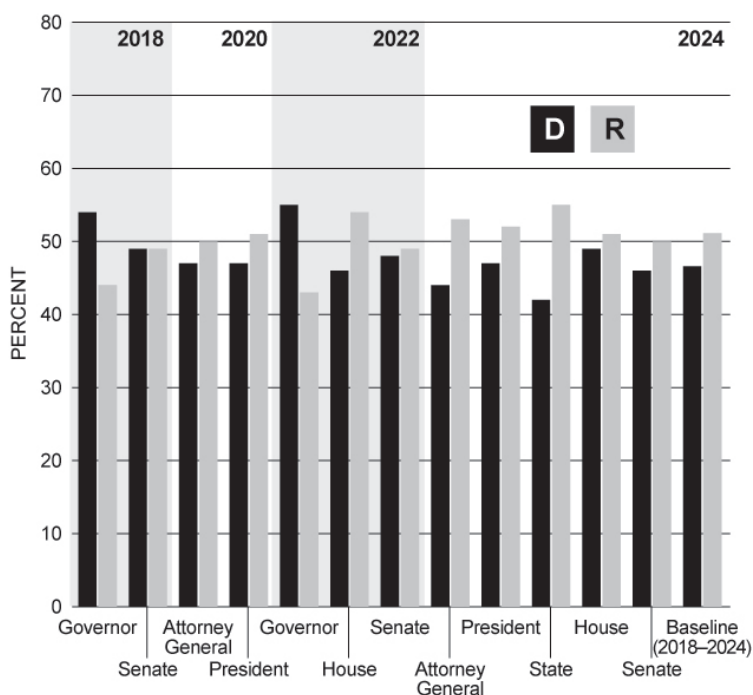
Trump's increased strength among Black and Hispanic voters helped him improve his performance in majority-minority Harrisburg by 8 points, from a 70-point deficit to a 62-point defeat, and his overall margin in Dauphin County improved 3 points. While Stelson did slightly better than Harris in Harrisburg, winning the city by 65 points, it was the area where she outran the top of the ticket by the least amount.

Notably, Stelson did 5 points worse in Harrisburg than Daniels had in 2022, despite doing 6 points better districtwide. (Daniels is Black and a Harrisburg councilwoman.)

Like many Democratic candidates in 2022 and 2024, Stelson put abortion issues front and center in her messaging; in addition to discussing how the *Dobbs* decision motivated her to run for Congress, Stelson hit Perry on his support for the Life at Conception Act in campaign ads. While some Democratic campaigns may be less inclined to focus on abortion after the issue didn't deliver victory in 2024, Stelson may continue to foreground it, especially as a proof point for a larger argument that Perry is too extreme for the district.

Stelson and her allies will also point to Perry's stances on Social

Statewide Election Results in Pennsylvania's 10th District



Security, including his longstanding support for raising the retirement age to 69 and a line on his 2016 campaign website calling for reducing Social Security benefits.

By contrast, Stelson has sought to craft a more moderate image, especially on immigration: "More border agents, Deport illegal migrants, Shut down border" blared one Stelson ad from 2024. "She was aggressive about being moderate on air," said one ally, "and that's important."

Last cycle Republicans utilized three main hits on Stelson and believe they landed on an effective playbook to turn the well-liked news anchor into a more partisan figure.

The biggest hit on Stelson last cycle was that she did not live in the



Courtesy Douglas Campaign

Justin Douglas

district. That attack appeared in ads from Perry and his allies at the Club for Growth, and is one of the few things some Democrats believe Stelson faltered on last cycle. "It was an unnecessary and unforced error," said one Pennsylvania

Democrat, who said it "wasn't a huge hit, but it's a hit."

Stelson's allies don't believe that the attack hurt her, thanks to voters' widespread familiarity with her and the small distance involved. But Stelson has moved into the district ahead of this cycle. Republicans, for their part, may still hit her as a newcomer. But it's not obvious how effective that line will be in one of the few growing parts of the state (as opposed to more parochial enclaves such as the Lehigh Valley).

Republicans also zeroed in on Stelson's 2024 comments to *New York Magazine* that she would not vote to extend the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (now extended in the recently passed reconciliation bill) and hope to use that to attack her as a tax-raiser. Stelson later said she would support making the tax cuts permanent "for the middle class," but Republicans will look to make taxes an issue this cycle and give Perry credit for extending the cuts by voting for Trump's signature bill.

Republicans also seized on a decade-old offensive joke Stelson made on-air about Asians eating cats to attack her as a racist — one of Stelson's opponents first surfaced the clip in the Democratic primary, and Stelson apologized at the time.

The Bottom Line

Democrats need a net gain of three seats and have other offensive targets in more promising districts. But Perry's unique profile as a villain for much of the Democratic Party establishment, and the reputation that Stelson earned last cycle as a strong campaigner, means that Democrats will be locked in on this race.

While the 10th isn't integral to a majority, it is firmly in the next tranche of seats that Democrats will look to target and pad a potential majority. And the trajectory of this evolving district could tell observers which way the overall political winds are blowing ahead of the midterms. If Republicans are rushing to save Perry next fall or have begun to triage his race as other vulnerabilities require more attention, Democrats are likely en route to a significant seat gain.

Conversely, if Perry still looks in control by next fall, it may be a sign that Democrats may see more constrained gains.

Report Shorts

Alaska Senate. In an interview on GD Politics with Galen Druke, Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski said she's open to becoming an independent and caucusing with Democrats. Murkowski is not up for re-election (her Republican colleague Dan Sullivan is) but this scenario would reduce the number of seats Democrats need to gain for a Senate majority from four to three.

Georgia Governor. Lt. Gov. Burt Jones joined state Attorney General Chris Carr in the GOP race to replace term-limited Gov. Brian Kemp. Democrats also have a competitive primary with a field featuring former Atlanta mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, state Sen. Jason Esteves and others. Republicans will likely start the general election with the advantage but the race should be competitive in one of the country's emerging swing states. Battleground.



Chris Carr

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

Iowa Senate. Democratic state Sen. Zach Wahls became the latest Democrat to jump into the race, joining a field that already includes mechanic/local chamber of commerce CEO Nathan Sage and pro baseball player/state Rep. J.D. Scholten. Any of them would be underdogs against Republican Sen. Joni Ernst — though a recent *Wall Street Journal* story suggested that Ernst might not actually seek re-election. Solid Republican.

Nebraska Senate. Independent Dan Osborn announced his challenge to GOP Sen. Pete Ricketts. Osborn ran as an independent in 2024 against GOP Sen. Deb Fischer. Republicans rallied to revive her sleepy campaign and the senator prevailed by 6 points. This time around, Osborn won't catch Ricketts napping, but will have a sharp contrast as a former labor leader against a multi-millionaire. Solid Republican.

New Jersey's 9th District. Clifton Councilwoman Rosie Pino is running against Rep. Nellie Pou, giving Republicans their first candidate in this newly competitive North Jersey seat. The 9th swung from a Biden +19 seat in 2020 to a Trump +1 seat in 2024 thanks to Trump's increased strength among Latino voters. Pino previously served on the Clifton Board of Education and is the mother of 11. Lean Democratic.

Ohio's 9th District. Republican Derrick Merrin officially launched his campaign against Democratic Rep. Marcy Kaptur in a potential rematch of one of the closest races of 2024. But Merrin doesn't have the GOP field to himself with Air National Guard Lt. Col. Alea Nadeem and state Rep. Josh Williams running as well. Even if Republicans don't make the district more friendly in redistricting, Kaptur is likely to have a tough race.

Pennsylvania's 3rd District. Democratic Rep. Dwight Evans is not running for re-election. But Kamala Harris won his Philadelphia-area seat with 88 percent, so the most important race will be the Democratic primary. The Democratic field is still taking shape but already includes state Sen. Sharif Street, state Rep. Chris Rabb, and physician Dave Oxman. DNC vice-chairman/state Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta could also run. Solid Democratic.

Pennsylvania Governor. GOP Rep. Dan Meuser (9th District) is not planning to run for governor, according to ABC News. Meuser had floated the potential to challenge to Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro, and appeared to have President Donald Trump's blessing, but it looks like Meuser will seek re-election. Even though Pennsylvania is a swing state, Shapiro is considered a formidable incumbent and Republicans are still searching for a top challenger. State Treasurer Stacy Garrity will get renewed attention. Battleground.

South Dakota's At-Large District. GOP Rep. Dusty Johnson is running for governor, so Republicans will fight to replace him in a district where President Trump received 63 percent. State Attorney General Marty Jackley is already in the race, but others will likely look at the open seat. Solid Republican.

Tennessee's 7th District. GOP Rep. Mark Green is scheduled to resign on July 20 to take another job. Even though the district leans Republican, the yet-to-be-scheduled special election is attracting



Aftyn Behn

Courtesy Behn Campaign

candidates from both parties. State Reps. Jody Barrett and Jay Reedy, Montgomery County Commissioner Jason Knight, Iraq/Afghanistan war veteran/commercial helicopter pilot Jon Thorp and former state cabinet secretary Matt Van Epps are

running on the Republican side. State Reps. Aftyn Behn and Bo Mitchell are running on the Democratic side, while former Nashville mayor/2024 Democratic nominee Megan Barry is mentioned. Solid Republican.

Texas Senate. Astronaut Terry Virts and former Rep. Colin Allred launched their campaigns for the Democratic nomination in the seat held by GOP Sen. John Cornyn. Virts is a retired Air Force fighter pilot and a previous commander of the International Space Station. Allred is a former member from Dallas who lost to Sen. Ted Cruz in 2024. Cornyn faces a difficult primary against state Attorney General Ken Paxton. If Paxton wins the nomination, the race becomes more competitive. Solid Republican.

Virginia's 11th District. Democrat James Walkinshaw won the recent, special Democratic primary to replace the late Gerry Connolly. Walkinshaw, who is Connolly's former chief of staff, is the heavy favorite to win the September 9th special general election and be sworn into Congress soon after the results are certified. Solid Democratic.