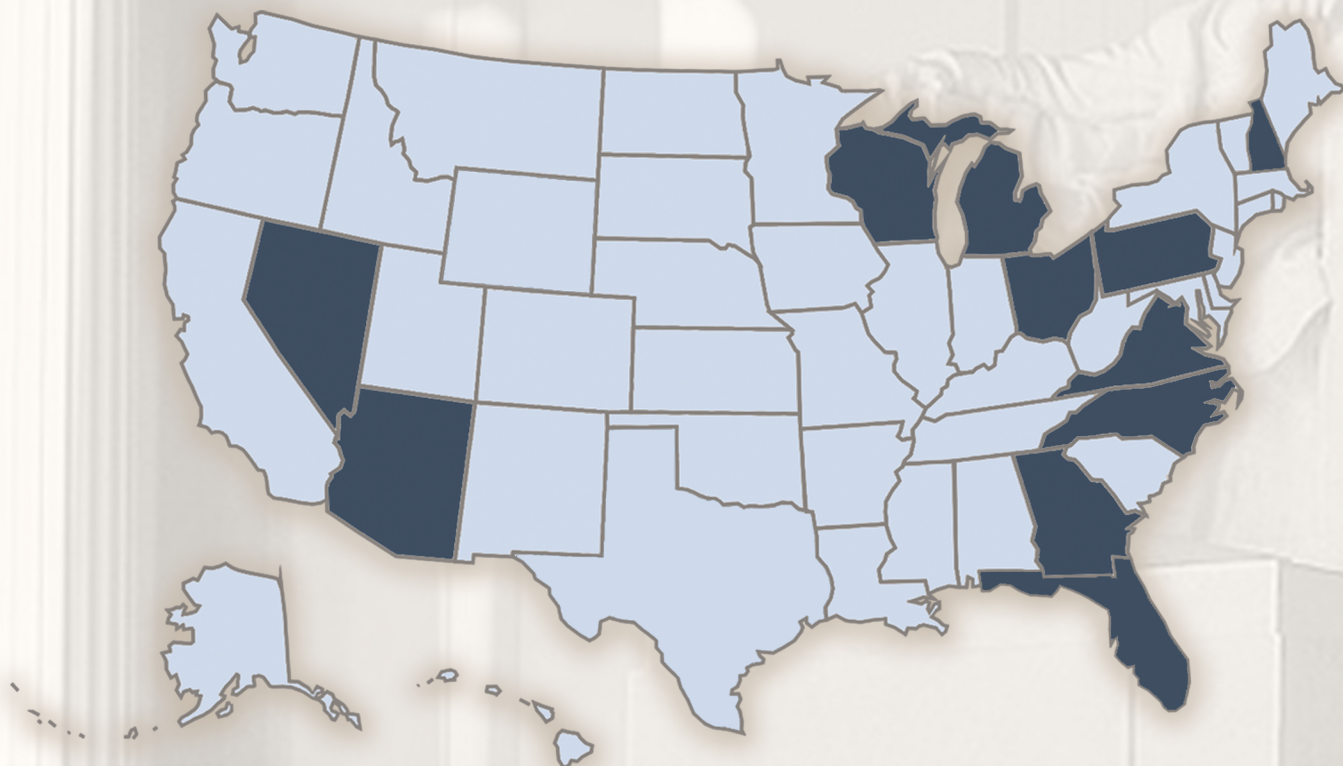




THE LINCOLN PROJECT

TOP 22 RACES FOR DEFENDING AMERICAN DEMOCRACY



After analyzing 350 races across the country, we have identified these 22 races as the most critical in defending democracy. Each race was evaluated and scored on whether it plays an outsized role in defending a pro-democracy outcome in 2024, the importance towards controlling the state's governor's office and Congressional delegation, and finally, an individual candidate's support for democracy. This list will fluctuate as races evolve throughout the cycle and The Lincoln Project re-evaluates the scores. Please find TLP's first 14 write ups below.

ARIZONA
GOVERNOR
SENATE

FLORIDA
GOVERNOR

WISCONSIN
GOVERNOR
SENATE

OHIO
SENATE

PENNSYLVANIA
GOVERNOR
SENATE
HOUSE DISTRICT 7
HOUSE DISTRICT 8
HOUSE DISTRICT 17

NORTH CAROLINA
SENATE
MICHIGAN
GOVERNOR
SECRETARY OF STATE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
HOUSE DISTRICT 7

VIRGINIA
HOUSE DISTRICT 2
HOUSE DISTRICT 7
NEW HAMPSHIRE
SENATE

GEORGIA
GOVERNOR
SENATE

NEVADA
SENATE



Michigan Governor General Election

Current Democracy Score

20 of 20
Ranking Top Two

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

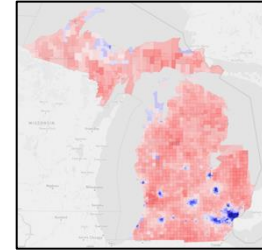
10

The Governor's race in Michigan is perhaps the most important election in the country for defending America's democracy. A pivotal state in Presidential elections, the Michigan Governor will either be a check on attempts to overturn election results or an enabler if a future Republican Governor's party loses and the Republican Controlled legislature overturns the results. The race presents incumbent Democrat Gretchen Whitmer, who is seeking a second term, against a

Republican candidate who will be chosen in the GOP primary on August 8th. Following the April 19 filing deadline, the Republicans have a field (right now) of ten candidates vying for the nomination.

While there is no GOPer who would normally be considered a stellar contender, there are five considered to be above the rest: self-funders Perry Johnson and Kevin Rinke, former Detroit police chief James Craig, conservative activist and chiropractor Garrett Soldano, and former conservative TV personality Tudor Dixon. There are questions as to whether Johnson, Craig, or Dixon will ultimately be on the primary ballot due to challenges to their nominating petitions, all of which have serious deficiencies or are rife with fraudulent and duplicate signatures. All five "front-runners" are courting the support of Donald Trump, with Johnson or Dixon viewed as

most likely to receive the nod. We expect there will be explosive court challenges should all or any of these candidates be disqualified from the ballot. Whitmer has been a fundraising powerhouse and Michigan has never denied re-election to a governor seeking a second four-year term, but the state's economy is somewhat lagging, and the partisan intensity clearly favors the Republicans despite a lackluster field of candidates.



Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

Michigan is one of five states that will determine the winner of the 2024 Presidential Elections. A Republican Governor could give the party complete control of the election certification process. The race will likely drag state-wide down ballot candidates across the finish line for whichever party wins this race. Moreover, turnout for the parties' gubernatorial candidates will impact the results in several House races which will be critical in determining control of the US House of Representatives.

Democrats have two vulnerable incumbents in the state (Slotkin in MI07 and Kildee in MI08).

Illiberal

5

Illiberalism in the Election

The field of potential Republican nominees for Governor in Michigan is lacking a pro-business, traditional Republican candidate. Instead, the field ranges from casual Trumpers to avowed advocates for overturning the 2020 election results in the state.

Current State of the Race

Whitmer is currently slightly ahead of both a generic opponent and her rivals (that have been tested) according to a smattering of public polling. The race is currently considered a "toss up."

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. The Whitmer campaign must ensure turnout in Detroit and greater Wayne County, as well as the I-75, I-96, and I-94 corridor counties to offset a generic Republican advantage nationally. If Whitmer wins either Kent County or Macomb County (she won both in 2018) she will win re-election.
2. The defining of the Republican candidate as untested and dangerously unpredictable (and an embarrassment to Michigan) must begin immediately after the primary.
3. Substantial efforts must be put in place to define the Governor's race among white, college-educated, upper income, suburban voters as one between a tested, steady candidate (Whitmer) and an unstable candidate (the eventual GOP nominee).



Wisconsin Governor General Election

Current Democracy Score

20 of 20
Ranking Top Two

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

10

The outcome of the Wisconsin Governor's race will be crucial to protecting democracy. Incumbent democrat Governor Tony Evers is seeking reelection in this critical swing state in Presidential elections. Evers serves as a protection against efforts by the Republican state legislative majority to gerrymander and contest the outcome of the elections in the state and more recent efforts to decertify the 2020 results post factum. Races in the states have traditionally been incredibly close.

For example, President Biden won the state by just over 17,000 votes in 2020, after Donald Trump had flipped the state in 2016 to the Republican column by only 22,745 votes. In both 2022 and 24, the state will continue to be incredibly tight statewide, while the state legislature will remain firmly under Republican control due to gerrymandering. Thus, the Governor's race will be critical to determining if any bulwark remains to protect the 2024 results in the state.

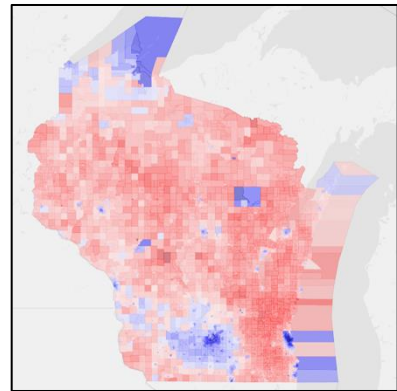
Impact for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

In addition to the importance of the Governor's race for future elections, this race will impact two other races in the state that affect control of Congress. First, Wisconsin will be holding a marquee US Senate election in which Ron Johnson is seeking a third term. The unpopular Johnson is potentially vulnerable, but the success of the Evers campaign will be critical in driving turnout in the key

counties of Milwaukee and Dane (Madison) for Democrat candidates. The Governor's race will also impact the race for the House in WI-03, a Trump-won district, where Democrat Ron Kind is retiring, and Republicans hold a slight advantage.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

The three Republican candidates running for Governor all have called into question, to varying degrees, the outcome of the 2020 elections in Wisconsin. A central driver of this has been State Representative Tim Ramthun's entry into the race. In the statehouse, Ramthun has been pushing efforts

to decertify the 2020 Presidential results. He is a driving force behind a "full forensic physical cyber audit" of the elections. The popularity of the audit has forced former Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Klieffisch to embrace the effort, moving further to the right than she was when serving as Scott Walker's top deputy. Candidate Kevin Nicholson is pushing hard to receive Donald Trump's endorsement. His SuperPAC has spent over **\$ 11 million**, obtained from Trump Mega-donor Richard Uihlein and his wife, Liz. The primary is August 9th.

Current State of the Race

According to the highly respected Marquette University poll, Evers is currently running slightly behind both a generic opponent and each of his rivals. As of the end of March, President Biden's approval ratings in the state stands at 44% approve and 55% disapprove. The race is currently considered a "toss-up."

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. The Evers campaign must ensure turnout in Milwaukee and Dane to offset a generic Republican advantage nationally which will be elevating turnout in the Republican suburbs.
2. Defining of the Republican nominee as extremist (and an embarrassment to Wisconsin) must begin immediately after the primary, if not before.
3. Substantial efforts must be put in place to make the Governor's race one between boring (Evers) and crazy (the eventual GOP nominee) among white, upper income, suburban and mid-sized outstate city voters.



Arizona Governor General Election

Current Democracy Score

17 to 20
Ranking Top Four

2024 Implication of the Election

2024 Score

8 to 10

The implications of the election for Governor of Arizona in 2022 are strongly correlated to the Republican Primary between Kari Lake and Karrin Taylor Robson, slated for August 2nd. The most likely outcome appears to be a victory by Lake, who is the Trump-supported candidate in the race. The self-financing Robson, who has the backing of the Ducey/McCain wing of the Arizona GOP, still has time to leverage this into eking out a victory. If Lake prevails, the general election will

immediately elevate its potential impact on 2024. Such a race in this pivotal swing state in national elections creates an environment where the entire apparatus of elections would be at risk of falling under the control of individuals actively embracing the notion the 2020 elections were fraudulent. Control of the state's executive branch by such forces, along with a state legislature that will remain under Republican control after the 2022 elections, gives illiberal loyalists an insurmountable advantage in the state. A Robson victory would provide greater assurances she would govern more like outgoing Republican Governor Doug Ducey and would be less inclined to support overturning a Presidential election in the state. Lake and Robson have raised more combined than all candidates running for Governor in 2018 did during the entire election cycle that year.

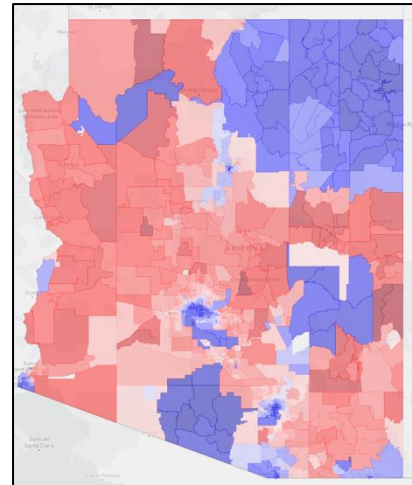
Implications for Control of State and Congress

Control Score

5

The state of Arizona is the venue for perhaps the most important US Senate race in the country, where incumbent Democrat Mark Kelly is seeking reelection for the first time. Unlike in other states with marquee US Senate races, the Arizona Governor's race is more

likely to be impacted by Kelly's Senate bid serving as the driver of turnout. Thus, Arizona contrasts with states like Pennsylvania, Michigan, or Wisconsin, where Governor's races drive Senate election turnout. However, with both control of the state's election mechanisms and the lesser but massive implications down the ballot on candidates in critical races, the Governor's race will matter greatly.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

3 to 5

A victory in the primaries by the Trump-endorsed Lake, a regular guest on Newsmax and OAN, would be a victory for the former president's forces. She is a sure thing as chief executive for election conspiracy theories. She has the potential to elevate turnout for other like-minded illiberal candidates in important primaries for both the US House and Senate and the state-level bodies. Meanwhile, Robson would represent a movement back to the establishment wing, which would more than likely translate across the state.

Current State of the Race

As pointed out previously, the primary on the GOP side is a case of the activist Trumpian base colliding with the monied establishment wing of the party. Recent polling shows the Democrat Hobbs slightly behind both candidates in this GOP-leaning state organically. The odds favoring Lake in the primary, coupled with Hobbs struggling for traction, makes this race, at the moment, one of the top four elections in the nation for democracy.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Opportunities must be identified, and actions taken, to link Hobbs' campaign to Kelly's organization.
2. The drumbeat along the Bannon line in suburban Phoenix, focusing on defining Lake's levels of crazy, must begin in earnest immediately after the primary election if she is nominated.
3. Effort must be made to stifle attempts by Lake to gain endorsements from the mainstream of the GOP, specifically Cindy McCain and Governor Ducey, if she prevails in the GOP Primary.



Pennsylvania Governor General Election

Current Democracy Score

20

Ranking Top Four

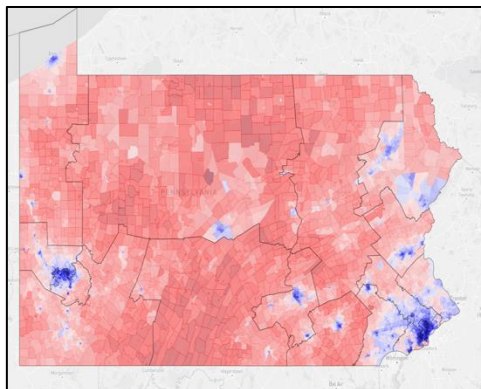
2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

10

It is nearly impossible for a Democrat Presidential candidate to prevail without winning in the Keystone state in presidential elections. One of the appealing factors of Joe Biden was his deep roots in the state, as he was born and raised in Scranton. Yet, statewide elections in the state are complicated. As Democrat strategist James Carville noted, "Pennsylvania elections are Pittsburgh and Philly with Alabama." This dynamic will be central to the eventual outcome of the

Gubernatorial race in the state, which will feature Democrat Attorney General John Shapiro going against State Sen. Doug Mastriano, a full-on MAGA candidate running entirely on support and loyalty to Donald Trump. If Democrats lose the Governor's race, it is hard to envision them winning critical down-ballot races in the state and the US Senate election.



Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

This race matters significantly. It is critically important for securing the outcome of the state's elections in 2024. The Governor's race will also be the central driver for turnout in the critical US Senate race in 2022. It can be decisive

for Democrats in defending highly competitive House races they need to maintain their majority. Adding to the stakes is that if Democrats lose these House seats, Republicans will gain a majority in the state's Congressional delegation. Such an outcome would deliver Pennsylvania to a Republican candidate should a Presidential election be thrown into the House.

Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

Senator Mastriano was a leading advocate in the state in calling on Congress to decertify the 2020 Presidential election results and has been called in for questioning by the 1/6 Select Committee questioning his role at the U.S. Capitol on 1/6.

Current State of the Race

Shapiro's campaign got the match-up they prefer with Mastriano. But, we must assume it will be a close general election.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Turnout among the African American community will be essential for Shapiro to be competitive in the race.
2. Depending on the winner of the GOP primary, defining that nominee as too extreme in the suburbs of Philly and Pittsburgh and along the New Jersey border will be critical.
3. Along the Bannon line, the race must be a referendum on the tradition of state-based leadership demonstrated over decades by Pennsylvania Governors from both parties (Shapiro) versus a candidate who want to bring the national MAGA dysfunction into the Governor's mansion (Mastriano).



Arizona US Senate General Election

Current Democracy Score

18 of 20

Ranking Top Ten

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

8

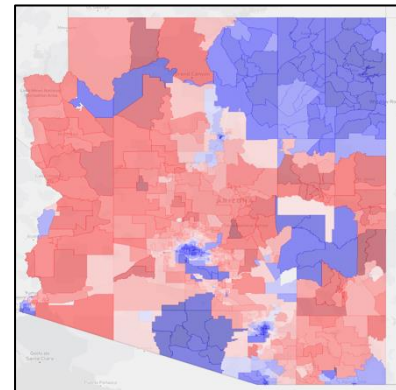
Incumbent Democrat Senator Mark Kelly is running for reelection for the first time after being elected in a special election in 2018 to fill a seat held by both John McCain and Barry Goldwater. In that race, he defeated Republican Congresswoman Martha McSally. A loss by Kelly would render Democratic hopes of retaining the Senate nearly impossible. On the Republican side, all the likely contenders among the five candidates running have made Trumpism and the 2020 elections central themes of their campaigns. Trump has not endorsed but likely will before the August 2nd primary. The stakes of the Senate race are increased due to the impact it will have on critical elections across the state. On the Democratic side, the well-funded Kelly campaign will need to be the organizational and turnout driver for Democrats across Arizona.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

As mentioned, a Kelly loss would be an existential blow to Democrats' hopes to be thwarting Mitch McConnell's drive to retain leadership of the Senate. Beyond the national ramification, the race's high visibility and massive spending will make it the driver of outcomes in other races, including the critical election for Governor. Arizona has two US House seats, both currently held by Democratic incumbents, which will be competitive in 2022. In Arizona's 1st CD, Tom O'Halleran will face an uphill reelection battle after his district was made more Republican-leaning during redistricting. In the open 6th district comprising northern Maricopa County, a loss by Kelly would ensure this seat flips as well. The stark reality facing democrats is If Kelly loses, they will more than likely lose the Governorship, two House seats, and all other statewide offices to more illiberal officials.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

While the Arizona Governor's race features a clear divide between the establishment wing of the GOP and the Trump wing, the Senate primary has five candidates, all attempting to build coalitions across both sides. Thus, the GOP's eventual nominee could be a more establishment candidate by biography who has heavily endorsed Trump staples like CRT, the 2020 elections, and immigration like Mark Brnovich or Jim Lamon. Alternatively, the candidate might be a true MAGA believer like Blake Masters, who benefits heavily from the financial support to his SuperPAC by his former boss, Peter Thiel. Whichever candidate eventually survives this free for all, they will have firmly ensconced themselves in the illiberalism of Trumpism.

Current State of the Race

The Kelly campaign is raising a lot of money and won't lose due to a lack of resources. Polling in the state consistently shows him hovering around 48-49% and leading his potential GOP rivals by one or two percentage points. However, the question of this race isn't whether Kelly can win (he can) but can he do so in a way that pulls other Democrats across the finish line with him.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. The Kelly campaign needs to build an organization statewide that impacts his race and provides turnout and activism impacting other races, especially the Governor's race.
2. Depending on his opponent (and Hobbs' too) Kelly will likely need to attract high-profile Republicans behind him.
3. Outside groups need to be linking Kelly's brand to a long tradition of political mavericks from the state with both Bannon line voters and those who strongly backed Senator McCain's political operation.



Georgia -- US Senate General Election

Current Democracy Score

18 of 20
Ranking Top Ten

2024 Implication of the Election

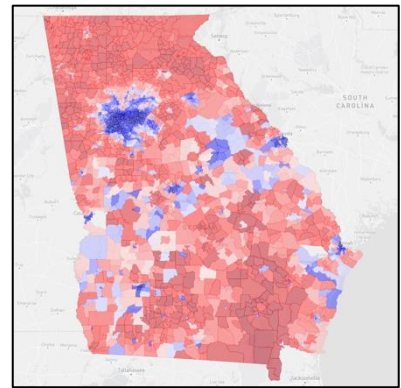
2024 Score
8

In 2020, two Senate run-offs in Georgia tipped Senate control from Republicans and Mitch McConnell to Democrats. One of those elections was a special in which Raphael Warnock defeated appointed incumbent Kelly Loeffler by under 100,000 votes. In 2022 Warnock is seeking a full-term. His success or failure will matter significantly for control of the United States Senate and symbolically in the battle to defeat Trumpism. On the Republican side, Trump favorite, and University of Georgia football legend Herschel Walker, has essentially cleared the field. He is now also backed by establishment Senate Republicans. A victory by Walker provides Republicans a pickup and gives Trump a significant win and supporter within the Senate. Conversely, a Warnock victory creates a clear path for Democrats to retain their majority. In addition, this race has the potential to interact with the state's governor's race, where Governor Brian Kemp, who Trump has vowed to defeat at all costs, appears likely to prevail in the GOP primary. Such a scenario creates the potential for a massive division within the GOP, focusing on the 2020 election and Trump. Of course, this would impact their outcomes, but it has the potential to portend future divisions on Trump and Trumpism within the GOP across the country when Presidential primaries begin.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

Control Score
5

Should Warnock prevail and Democrats hold on to their other incumbents, the party will need to win only one race in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, or possibly North Carolina to ensure a minimum of fifty seats and control. However, while not fatal to Democrats' chances to retain the Senate, a Warnock defeat would considerably complicate the math and national outcome required to get them there. In fact, it might make it impossible given the current national political environment, and addition by subtraction rarely works in politics.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal
5

The Walker for Senate run is built entirely around the encouragement provided personally by former President Trump for him to seek office. He wasn't even living in the state when he officially announced his candidacy. While Walker's campaign has been focusing on biographical aspects of his resume, the reality is a Senator Walker would fall into the Cruz-Hawley wing of the Republican Senate Caucus. He would be assumed to be an illiberal vote on any future election questions and would be a dependable vote for the MAGA agenda in the United States Senate.

Current State of the Race

The Warnock and Walker campaigns have been running advertising in the months leading up to the May 24th primaries focusing on their biographies. Each campaign appears very well funded, and neither will lose because of a lack of resources. The central question now is who the GOP's gubernatorial nominee will be and how that impacts the Senate race. Polling has consistently shown the race tied with few undecided voters.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Herschel Walker has nearly universal name identification in Georgia and is known primary as a football hero. It is imperative for several less favorable elements of his biography to be defined in voters' minds.
2. Tying Walker to Trump will be critical among Bannon-line voters, with messaging that says if you support Kemp because of Trump, you shouldn't support Walker or even perhaps can support Warnock.
3. Elevating turnout among white liberals in places like Savannah and Athens will be essential to the Warnock campaign.



Michigan Secretary of State General Election

Current Democracy Score

18 of 20
Ranking Top Ten

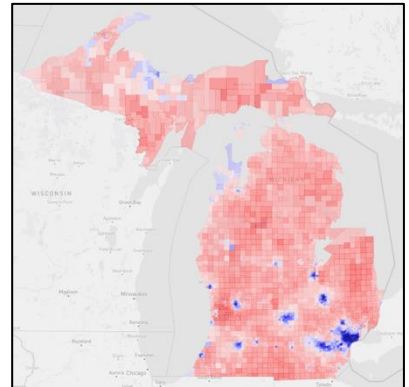
2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

9

The Michigan Secretary of State position isn't foremost on the radars of most political observers and pundits, but it should be. The Secretary oversees elections in Michigan and plays a role parallel to the governor in the certification of the election results. The incumbent Democrat, Jocelyn Benson, is opposed by Trump-endorsed conspiracy theorist and political gadfly Kristina Karamo. Karamo has called for overturning the results of the 2020 election in Michigan, which Joe Biden won by more than a 154,000-vote margin. She has also gained notoriety for vowing to combat Satanic forces in government and culture. On the other hand, Benson has been a steadfast defender of democracy and played a leading role in thwarting the GOP efforts to nullify Michigan's 5.5 million votes in 2020. As a result, many traditional Republican donors and business PACs are likely to bypass funding either Karamo or Matt DePerno, the GOP's choice for Attorney General. However, the RNC and Trump-world PACs have indicated they will be devoting resources to these statewide races in Michigan. While it is difficult to see a win by Whitmer not translating into a success by Benson, there is ample precedent in Michigan's electoral history for incumbent Secretaries of State or Attorney General to win re-election even if the top-of-the-ticket goes to the opposing party. We need to prepare for either circumstance, and underestimating Karamo could prove fatal.

The Michigan Secretary of State alone appoints the occupant who serves as the state's Director of Elections. Together, the two positions will be at the forefront of Michigan's 2024 election certification process. The Secretary will also have tremendous sway as to whether the state replicates its aggressive push for mail-in absentee votes as occurred in 2020, when roughly 3.5 million of the total 5.5 million votes were cast by mail/absentee.



Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

4

A strong and successful campaign by Benson will help prevent erosion as voters move down the ticket and help pay dividends for pro-democracy candidates for the U.S. House and for both chambers of the Michigan Legislature.

Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

The Republicans have nominated a candidate for Secretary of State who rivals the Mike Lindels and Sydney Powells of MAGA world when it comes to her stance on the 2020 election, and the threat she poses to democracy in 2024.

Current State of the Race

Benson has been consistently ahead of Karamo in public and private polling. Yet the macro-climate in Michigan is awful for the Democrats at the moment. President Biden's approval ratings in the state currently stand at 44% approve and 55% disapprove. The race is currently considered to "lean Democratic" but that could easily shift to toss-up if Biden continues to be so far under water and if the generic continues to decidedly disfavor Democrats.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. The Benson campaign must rely on Whitmer and the Michigan Democrats One Campaign for voter registration and turnout.
2. Benson needs to significantly increase her name ID and favorable perception of the job she is doing in office.
3. Substantial efforts must be made to disqualify Karamo with college-educated white voters who are ticket-slitters or who lean Republican. Karamo offers so many potential points of attack that narrowing the list and condensing the opposing message will be essential.



Ohio US Senate General Election

Current Democracy Score

18

Ranking Top Ten

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

9

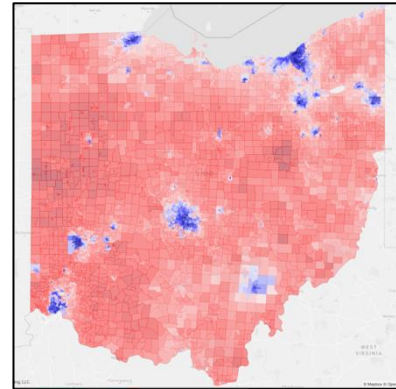
Ohio is no longer the bellwether of American Presidential politics, given how firmly the state has become ensconced in the GOP column. Nevertheless, the Senate race to replace Republican incumbent Rob Portman will be pivotal in determining the outcome of the 2022 elections nationally. The race features Republican candidate, investment banker, and critic of Donald Trump in 2016, JD Vance, who went complete MAGA (and perhaps beyond) to receive his coveted endorsement. In the primary, Trump's backing and over \$15 million put into an outside group financed by Peter Thiel enabled him to prevail over five opponents. On the Democratic side is Congressman Tim Ryan, who represents the working-class city of Youngstown. In Congress, Ryan has created a unique brand fusing progressive working-class economic views with a populist cultural consensus appeal fitting the area he represents. Ultimately, 2024's Senate race in Ohio will matter because it is a microcosm of America's battle between moderation versus MAGA to the extreme.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

4

Along with Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, the Ohio race presents Democrats with one of their best opportunities to capture a GOP-held seat. This race can also impact critical House races in districts where Democrats are on defense defending a vulnerable incumbent (CD 9) and an open seat in the 13th, which is Ryan's current seat. Additionally, Vance's victory in the primary pulled MAGA backing Republican candidates across the finish line in two competitive House races currently held by the GOP, which creates potential opportunities for Democrats to flip some seats in the state.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

While the race presents Democrats with a tremendous opportunity to flip a seat, it also provides the illiberal forces of MAGA and Trumpism one of their best chances to add another advocate in the Senate. Similar to Ted Cruz, Josh Hawley and Ron DeSantos, JD Vance, while advocating an America First Agenda, has Ivy League degrees and the potential to sell Trumpism with a better face should he be elected to the US Senate. It is this combination which makes this race so critical.

Current State of the Race

Tim Ryan Is a strong candidate who has won the election repeatedly in a Republican-leaning seat. He has strong union backing and can unite the factions within the Democrat party. What is unclear is his appeal to Bannon-line suburban voters statewide. JD Vance is a candidate who has proven he will be or say whatever he needs to win. Ultimately, this race will be one of the most expensive in the country and one of the closest.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Vance must be prevented from extracting himself from his full-fledged embrace of MAGA and Trump to win the primaries. This means targeting suburban voters who come from the Kasich, Portman, and DeWine establishment wings of the party.
2. Ryan must be contrasted as steady and reasonable along the Bannon line as the Vance campaign attempt to portray him as very liberal and out of step with them on issues.
3. It will be critical for the Ryan campaign to ensure turnout in the African American communities of Toledo and Cleveland, as well as the student vote in Columbus and other college towns across Ohio.



Nevada US Senate General Election

Current Democracy Score

17

Ranking Top Ten

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

7

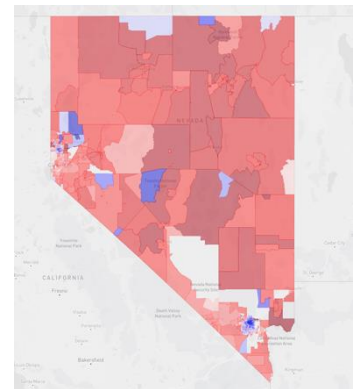
Since Barack Obama's election in 2008, Nevada has reliably been in the Democratic column in presidential elections. However, while Obama won with large margins, the past two contests have been close. In 2016 Democrats won the state by 27,202 votes in 2016 and only 33,596 in 2020. The increasing Democrat success in the state is primarily a result of people moving into the state from California. Nevertheless, the Nevada Senate race will test the limits of whether Democrats can maintain and solidify their advantage in the state. Incumbent Democratic Senator Catherine Cortez-Masto faces former Nevada Attorney General (2015-2019) Adam Laxalt. Laxalt has gone full-fledged Trump supporter despite being the grandson of a long-time Nevada Senator Paul Laxalt, an icon of the Washington, DC, GOP establishment. Cortez-Masto was Nevada's Attorney General (2007-2015) before winning the seat in the Senate in 2016 in a closely contested race. Her father was a powerful local elected official and union boss in Las Vegas. The 2022 race will be one of the most contested in the country in a state where Laxalt was the leader of Donald Trump's campaign and his efforts to overturn the results in the state.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

Much like in neighboring Arizona, the Nevada race is critical to Democrats' hopes of retaining control of the Senate. A loss by Cortez-Masto would force Democrats to win all their remaining incumbent seats and capture two of three in PA, WI, and OH. Unlike the race in Arizona, however, the Nevada Senate race is less likely to impact or be impacted by races up and down the ballot like the Governor's race and the four marginally competitive House races Democrats must hold across the state.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

Adam Laxalt's family name makes him near royalty in some Republican circles. Not only was his grandfather Senator Paul Laxalt, but his father was former New Mexico Senator Pete Domenici (his mother raised him, and his father was never publicly acknowledged until he was nearly thirty). Thus, it was surprising to some when he fully embraced Trump by serving as his co-chair in the state. After the election, Laxalt led unsuccessful efforts to stop counting ballots and sought and led efforts to overturn the results by claiming large-scale voter fraud occurred in Las Vegas without evidence. While these two conflicting facts raise fundamental questions about where Laxalt would stand if elected to the Senate, he would likely be more inclined to fall into the illiberal camp.

Current State of the Race

The recent generic trending of the state in Democrats' favor bodes well for Cortez-Masto. However, the national generic realities make the race very competitive. As of April 2022, President Biden's net job approval in the state was underwater at -12% in a state which is evenly divided in terms of partisan advantage. Moreover, the death of former Nevada Senator Harry Reid has left a leadership void in the state.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Cortez-Masto needs to have massive turnout in Clark County and Las Vegas to offset Laxalt's advantages across the rest of the state. Efforts must be put into turnout efforts.
2. Linking Laxalt to Trump's efforts to undermine election results in the state need to be targeted at the small universe of Republican voters who do not believe the 2020 elections were fraudulent.
3. The key to undermining Laxalt resides in making him into someone who is willing to say or do anything to get elected, thereby calling into question his loyalty to either side of the Republican party.



Pennsylvania US House, District 8 General Election

Current Democracy Score

17 to 18

Ranking Top Fifteen

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

8

Pennsylvania's 8th Congressional District sits in the northeast corner of the state. The Republican-controlled legislature reconstructed the district after the 2010 census by combining parts of the 7th, 8th and 17th districts. The district's 2022 boundaries remain primarily intact after the 2010 changes and are represented by incumbent Democratic Congressman Mike Cartwright, seeking a 6th term.

The district comprises the Democratic stronghold of Scranton (Joe Biden's hometown) and the Republican-leaning areas along the New Jersey border. Donald Trump won the district by 10% in 2016 and 4% in 2020. However, Cartwright prevailed by 7% against an underfunded opponent in 2016 and carried the district in 2020 by increasing his margin to 8%. The 8th district matters in 2024 because it is the heart of a strip of the area north of Philadelphia, critical to determining statewide races. Thus, it will impact them in 2022 and the Presidential in 2024.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

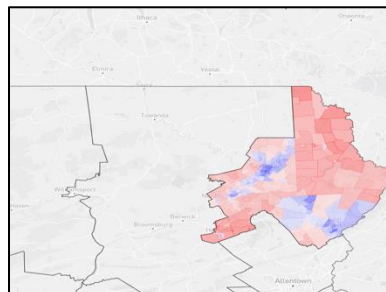
As one of the 13 congressional districts across the nation that were won by Donald Trump and a Democratic Member of Congress, the 8th district is essential to Democrats' efforts to retain their majority in the House. Beyond its implications for the Speaker's Gavel, the district will be critical in determining who wins statewide in both the Governor's race and the United States Senate election in the Keystone state. While a statewide Democratic candidate does not need to win in the 8th district, they do need the Cartwright campaign to be a driver of turnout among Democrats in Scranton and moderate swing voters in the other parts of the district to be competitive statewide.

Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

4 to 5

Former Trump Administration official Jim Bognet handily defeated self-described "Trump Conservative," Mike Marsicano in the Republican primary. Both candidates are relied heavily on Trumpism in the messaging of their campaigns. Bognet, who sought the seat in 2020 and lost in the GOP primary, talks extensively in his advertising about "the Democrats' witch-hunt to remove President Trump from office" and that "Democrats broke every rule they could to rig the 2020 elections." He would appear likely to fall into the Jim Jordan wing of the House Republican Conference rather than the Kevin McCarthy wing, if elected.



Current State of the Race

President Biden's statewide net job approval ratings in Pennsylvania stand at ~15% which translates to ~19% in the 8th district. Thus, while the national trend suggests the district leans Republican in 2022, Congressman Cartwright has demonstrated himself to be a survivor which makes the race a tossup. Either of the Republicans who will come out of the May 17th primary will be to the political right of most voters in the district.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Bognet must be defined quickly as too extremist for the district.
2. Increasing Democratic turnout in Scranton is critical for both the Cartwright and statewide Democratic campaigns to remain competitive.
3. The race for Congress specifically must be localized to one between Cartwright and Bognet.



Pennsylvania US Senate General Election

Current Democracy Score

16 to 18

Ranking Top Fifteen

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

10

The race for retiring Republican Senator Pat Toomey's seat offers the Democrats their best opportunity to pick up a seat controlled by the GOP. While national cameras pay attention to this race, the marquee race is the gubernatorial contest, which will drive turnout for the Senate contest and down ballot. In many ways the primaries represent a microcosm of the evolving national political dynamics. The GOP featured Trump-backed TV celebrity Dr. Mehmet Oz versus hedge fund billionaire David McCormick. McCormick was a Treasury Department official during the George W. Bush administration and is married to Dina Powell, a senior advisor to Donald Trump's White House. McCormick tried to thread the needle of being sufficiently Trumpy yet still signaling to the more traditional monied GOPers he knows how to eat with a fork. Oz, on the other hand, is all-in on Trump and the Big Lie.

A week after voting ended the race between Oz and McCormick remains too close to call. Oz has an unofficial narrow lead of 1,067 votes out of 1.34 million cast. Less than 0.1% separates the two and that narrow margin triggers an automatic statewide recount that is expected to delay the outcome for some weeks yet. The Democratic saw Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, a populist with a giant personality and physique, who checks progressive boxes but is not a favorite of traditional Democratic insiders win the primary with nearly 60-percent of the vote in a field that also included Congressman Connor Lamb, a moderate veteran who flipped a heavily red House district near Pittsburgh and a state legislator from Philadelphia.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

The winner of the Pennsylvania Senate contest will have the effect of marginally tipping the partisan scales down-ballot to the party that wins. That isn't to say Democrats will win all key Congressional and legislative districts, or vice versa, should they pick up the seat in the upper chamber. Instead, it will simply mean the party that loses the Senate seat will likely have to perform that much better in those competitive districts if they are to win. In addition, Pennsylvania's delegation in the U.S. House is narrowly divided. That could play a decisive role in determining which party controls a majority of the delegation in Congress should the 2024 POTUS race be decided on Capitol Hill.

Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

3 to 5

The race will potentially be fought by actors viewed as highly illiberal by the other side. Dr. Oz has cast his lot with the Mike Lindell-Big Lie kooks, and Republicans view Fetterman as a Bernie Sanders socialist. And while Oz would be an active threat to the foundations of democracy and Fetterman won't, they may still be perceived that way, leaving center-right and center-left moderates between choices they're uncomfortable with. Should McCormick prevail, the illiberal temperature of the November match goes down.

Current State of the Race

Oz and McCormick are headed for a protracted recount and litigation battle sure to keep the GOP divided and increase the prospect of lingering animosity from the camp that ultimately loses. Fetterman emerges from his primary with momentum and a largely united party. The potential matchups for the fall indicate a dead heat.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. The Democrats cannot allow either Oz or McCormick to emerge from the primary with any traction. To do that they must quickly unite behind either Fetterman while leveraging the discontent and sore wounds that are likely to be strong on the Republican side.
2. The Republican candidate must be defined as extremist and an embarrassment to Pennsylvania immediately after the primary.
3. The Democrat statewide campaigns must put efforts in place to run parallel among white, upper income, suburban voters. In addition, the messaging must reinforce across both races, one between known and steady (Shapiro & Fetterman) versus crazy (the eventual GOP nominees for both governor – Doug Mastriano - and senate).



Wisconsin US Senate General Election

Current Democracy Score

16 to 18
Ranking Top Fifteen

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

7 to 9

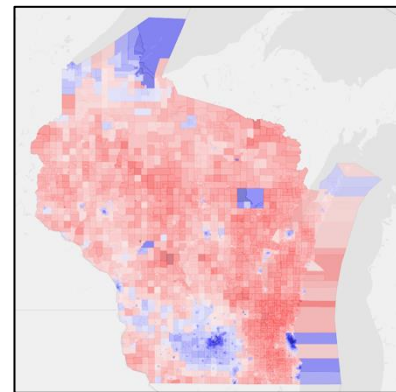
The US Senate election in Wisconsin will feature Ron Johnson running for a third term after initially pledging in 2010 that he would only serve two terms if elected. In some ways, Johnson has led a charmed political existence by being on the ballot during election cycles that favored Republicans nationally (2010 and 2016). While in the Senate, Johnson has been far to the right of the GOP's caucus and has trafficked extensively in conspiracy theories. He's also used Senate investigative powers to help push or defend Trump and Trumpism. While Johnson has consistently been one of the least popular (and known) statewide elected officials in the state, his defeat in November is far from assured. Given Wisconsin's importance in Presidential elections and the deep divides in the state, a Johnson win or loss will matter. The essential question is, "Who do Democrats choose to oppose him among a field of three candidates that each come from different parts of the state?" The two most prominent candidates in the August 9th primary are Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes and self-financing Milwaukee businessman Alex Lasry. The best candidate electorally might be the least well-known, Eau Claire homemaker and State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski.

Impact for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

4

Johnson's fate will likely be determined not by the opponent he faces on the election day but by whether Democratic Governor Tony Evers is re-elected. If this is the case, Johnson likely loses. On the other hand, if Evers fails, Johnson presumably survives due to forces outside his campaign. Democrats do not need to beat Johnson to control the Senate, although it would be helpful. If Godlewski prevails in the Democrat primary, it will help in the 3rd Congressional District, where Democrats are on defense with Ron Kind's retirement in a district that Trump carried by more than four percentage points.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

Ron Johnson falls entirely into the Hawley-Cruz faction of the Republican Senate conference. Throughout the Trump administration, he was an unabashed defender and particularly active in using the investigative powers of his committee to investigate for political advantage. There is little doubt that if he is re-elected to a Republican-led Senate, he would once again begin utilizing the committee gavel for partisan gain.

Current State of the Race

In the most recent polling, this race appears to be a classic case of ill-defined candidates competing, which for the most part, tells us little about how the actual election will turnout. Until the Democrats have made their choice, the state of the general election race will remain in flux.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Even before the August 9th primary, which will decide the Democratic standard-bearer, it is critical to begin defining Ron Johnson as an "embarrassment" to Wisconsin in the vein of Joseph McCarthy.
2. Turnout in Milwaukee County among Black voters and students in Dane County will be critical to keeping the race close enough for a Democrat to win both it and the Governor's race.
3. A Godlewski victory in the Democratic primary would make the Senate race higher profile and decouple it to a greater degree from the Governor's election, making Johnson more vulnerable.



Pennsylvania US House, District 7 General Election

Current Democracy Score

18

Ranking Top Fifteen

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

8

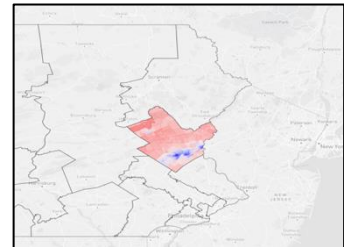
Situated north of Philadelphia along the New Jersey border with Allentown as the hub, Pennsylvania's 7th Congressional District sits smack dab on the Bannan-line in the Lehigh Valley. Its Member of Congress, Democrat Susan Wild, was first elected in 2018 under odd circumstances. She ran simultaneously in both a general election for the 7th district and a Special Election in the 15th for the remainder of the unexpired term of former Republican Congressman Charlie Dent. The Dent seat was under an old map that had been in effect when he was first elected. In 2020, Wild was re-elected by just over 14,000 votes. Wild will be opposed in the 2022 race by businesswoman and 2020 candidate Lisa Scheller, who narrowly bested military veteran Kevin Dellicker in the GOP primary. The outcome in the 7th, and the make-up of turnout in the district, will have implications not only in this House race but also have the potential to impact up the ballot into the US Senate and Governor's races.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

This race will be close. Perhaps the closest of the congressional contests in Pennsylvania. Biden bested Trump in the seat, but only by 0.6%. Democrats enjoyed a 13% party registration advantage in the old 7th when Susan Wild first won the election to succeed never-Trump GOPer Charlie Dent in 2018. Redistricting lowers that margin to an 8.5% Democratic advantage. The racial demographics of the newly configured district grows whiter - meaning fewer minority voters - than Wild's former district. Lisa Scheller lost narrowly to Wild in 2020 but faces a divided GOP electorate following the primary. She is backed by Kevin McCarthy and other national GOP figures close to Donald Trump, but Trump has not yet endorsed her (though he did tap Scheller in the 2020 primary). This district could be a micro-driver in the outcome of the statewide race for Governor in November. If AG Josh Shapiro is successful in his bid for Governor, it will be because he held his own in areas like PA07. Whether or not Wild is re-elected could be decisive in determining control of the majority of Pennsylvania's delegation in the U.S. House.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

Scheller has been calling into question, to varying degrees, the outcome of the 2020 election and making liberal use of umbrella terms like 'election integrity'. Her campaign has been more stridently aligned with the MAGA rhetoric, and we rate her a five on the illiberal scale.

Current State of the Race

Scheller has consistently buried Dellicker in the campaign cash race. She enters the final month with a 12:1 cash-on-hand ratio and should win a rematch against Susan Wild. Wild won in 2020 by less than a 4% margin, and the new district is much closer in its partisan divide. The race is a "toss-up," and it is hard to imagine it won't be a nail-biter.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. The Wild campaign must claim the centrist position and broaden her appeal and support among college-educated whites and higher-income white women in general.
2. Scheller must be defined as an extremist and risky immediately after the primary.
3. Substantial efforts must be put in place to make the race among white, upper income, suburban voters one between stability and normalcy (Wild) and unpredictable and risky (the GOP nominee Scheller).



Pennsylvania US House, District 17 General Election

Current Democracy Score

17

Ranking Top Twenty-Two

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

8

The 17th district is represented by Connor Lamb, a moderate Democrat, who initially won in the Pittsburgh-based district in a special election in 2018. The seat is currently an open seat because Lamb is running for the Senate. It has been redrawn and changed substantially during the reapportionment process (it was also altered and renumbered in 2018). The swing nature of the area, the changes in the district's makeup, and the importance of retaining the seat for Democrats make this a marquee house race in 2022 in Pennsylvania and nationally. Generically, the redrawn district favors Democrats by less than 2%, making it one of the most organically competitive seats in the nation and the most in the state. Democrat military veteran and voting rights attorney Chris Deluzio, easily prevailed in the Democratic primary. As did small businessman Jeremy Shaffer on the GOP side who positioned himself as a Trump/MAGA candidate.

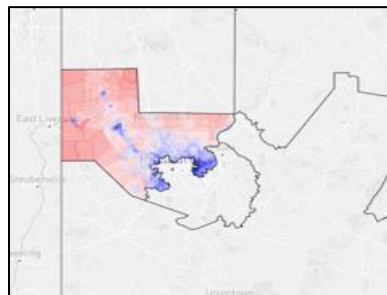


Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

For Democrats to keep their majority in the House, this race is a must-win seat. A loss in this district would cost them a seat they currently hold. In addition, given its demographic makeup, it would portend an election cycle moving towards the GOP in other vital districts scattered across the mid-Atlantic and Midwest. The swing nature of this district also has the potential to impact both the high profile, statewide races for Governor and the United States Senate in the state. If these statewide races are close, the 17th Congressional District is one of a handful where the eventual winners earn their victories.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

3 to 5

Shaffer has built his campaign messaging around being a business oriented Republican and doesn't mention the 2020 elections much in his messaging. However, he does check all the MAGA policy/messaging boxes with rhetoric about CRT, complete abortion ban, immigration, and distrust in election outcomes.

Current State of the Race

Deluzio is a more moderate military veteran and mirrors outgoing Cong. Connor Lamb in many ways. The GOP got their most formidable of the candidate in Jeremy Shaffer. The race is expected to be close throughout the remainder of the year.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. It will be critically important for outside groups to define both the Shaffer and Deluzio over the course of the summer, after the May 10th primaries.
2. Bannon Line voters will be critical and forcing Shaffer to the right is a strategic must.
3. Given the Governor's race will be a turnout drive it is essential to link the democrat nominee to the themes and messaging in the race from the Shapiro camp as much as possible.



Georgia Governor Republican Primary

Current Democracy Score

17

Ranking Top Twenty-Two

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

9

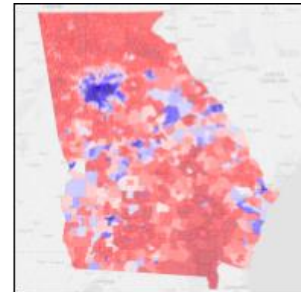
Gov. Brian Kemp is expected to coast to a primary victory over former U.S. Senator David Perdue in one of the most acrimonious instances of Donald Trump's personal involvement in a GOP primary. This sets the stage for the repeat of the 2018 matchup between Kemp and Stacey Abrams. It also dials down the threat of having a genuinely anti-democratic actor as governor as would have been the case had Perdue won the Republican nod. Regardless of any of Kemp's other election policy transgressions, he demonstrated that he was willing to withstand enormous pressure from Trump following the 2020 election and given that, can reasonably be respected to display the same backbone in 2024 should similar circumstances arise and *IF* he were to be re-elected this year. Coupled with the expected primary victory of Sec. of State Brad Raffensperger, Georgia is unlikely to face the danger of having a governor and statewide election administrator who threatens democracy in 2024-2025.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

Stacey Abrams's profile and prominence has grown exponentially since her narrow loss to Kemp in 2018. A win by her in 2022 is almost certain to also result in Raphael Warnock's defeat of Herschel Walker and could well mean the Democrats are able to maintain a majority in the United States Senate. Despite Gov. Kemp standing up to Trump in the aftermath of 2020, jettisoning him from the governor's mansion would also provide momentum and adrenaline to Georgia Democrats heading into 2024 as they attempt to replicate Joe Biden's razor-thin victory in the Peach State. An Abrams victory will impact the political psychology in this key 2024 battleground state.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

3

Kemp's expected trouncing of the Trump-backed Perdue will be one of the most significant blows to Trumpism to date. Trump had made Kemp's ouster a symbolic test of his political power and the utter failure of his revenge campaign has potential to instill courage in some small number of Republican office holders across the country. Despite defying Trump and certifying Georgia's 2020 votes for Joe Biden, Kemp has taken steps to limit voting rights in Georgia. This still rates him as a moderately illiberal actor and not the hostile threat to the 2024 vote the potential of a Gov. Perdue would have posed. Without question, a Gov. Stacey Abrams would be a vigorous supporting of voting rights and the preservation of democracy in 2024.

Current State of the Race

The Real Clear Politics polling average shows Kemp with a 5.2% lead over Abrams and hovering right at 50-percent of likely voters. All Kemp-Abrams public polling to date has occurred prior to the Roe decision leak and well before the May 24 primary election. It is expected that this race will be tight throughout the May-Nov stretch and polling is likely to remain within the margin of error

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. There will be a strategic imperative to force a wedge between Gov. Kemp and Herschel Walker at the top of the GOP ticket OR force a Kemp-Walker embrace that potentially alienates Donald Trump and even incites him to take retributive and vote-depressing actions among Georgia Republicans.
2. It will be critically important for Abrams and the Georgia Democrats to generate Black turnout equal to or exceeding what was seen in the fateful January 5, 2021 runoff election for the two US Senate seats. This will benefit Warnock, as well as Abrams and Democrats down-ballot
3. The Bannon line college-educated white voters, especially those new to the Atlanta suburbs and exurbs during the past decade, will perhaps decide if Kemp earns another term or if Abrams takes the helm of a changing Georgia.



Michigan

Michigan Attorney General - General Election

Current Democracy Score

17

Ranking Top Twenty-Two

2024 Implication of the Election

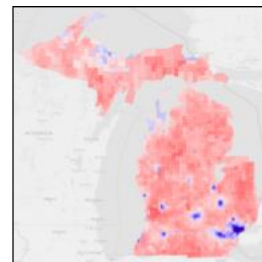
**2024
Score**

8

Michigan has become the proving ground for the Trump/MAGA Big Lie insanity. Donald Trump has been paying unprecedented attention to down-ballot races, GOP primaries for legislative seats, and party appointments for county canvassing boards. The myopic attention to positions at the varying levels of election certification telegraph a strategic focus on instilling MAGA personnel in key roles ahead of the 2024 election. The Attorney General does not necessarily have a prescribed role in the conduct or certification of elections in the state. However, the AG has latitude to play an important part in both defending voting rights and procedures and in the certification process, especially if there are either competing claims of validity, deadlock/differing positions between the governor or secretary of state, or if the governor and secretary of state were to join forces to bastardize the election/certification process.

The race for governor will be the turnout driver. Incumbent AG Dana Nessel is seeking her second term and will be opposed by the Trump-endorsed Matt DePerno. Should Gov. Gretchen Whitmer be re-elected it likely means that both Nessel and Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson will also return to their posts. There is also plenty of historical precedence for both the AG and Sec. of State to be re-elected regardless of the forces at work in the gubernatorial contest.

The best scenario for democracy will be the re-election of all three statewide Democrats. However, engaging in the weeds of the AG and Sec. of State contests independently will increase the odds of returning at least one of these quality candidates to office ahead of the 2024 election.



Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

Michigan's Attorney General has the potential to play a critical, even decisive, role in both the conduct of the 2024 election and the certification and aftermath of the voting results. Incumbent Democrat Dana Nessel has been an aggressive defender of voting rights and free and fair elections. Her opponent, Matt DePerno, has called for a reversal of the 2020 election results in the Mitten State and one of the nation's leading Big Lie conspiracy theorists. The contrast is stark.

Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

There are others who are his equal, but no one in the Trump/MAGA orbit is a more vociferous perpetrator of the Big Lie than GOP candidate Matt DePerno is. He has been involved in frivolous lawsuits and engaged with the likes of Sidney Powell, Mike Flynn, and Mike Lindell to fuel discontent about the validity of Michigan's elections. He is every bit a threat to free and fair elections as is a Doug Mastriano in Pennsylvania or Kari Lake in Arizona.

Current State of the Race

Nessel's victory in 2018 was much closer than those of Gov. Whitmer and Sec. Benson. DePerno has staked out radical positions on elections, abortion, and even the legality of contraception. The Republicans are hopeful they can keep pace with her and topple her in 2022, though there are many in the historic major GOP donor class who have indicated they do not believe DePerno should or can win. Polling has shown Nessel with a slight lead as DePerno seeks to consolidate support on the Republican side.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. DePerno needs to be defined and branded as dangerous and radical.
2. Strategic efforts must be undertaken to leverage the divide that already exists between DePerno and the major donor/business class on the Republican side.
3. Gaining the economies of scale that can be attained by linking Whitmer, Nessel, and Benson must be aggressively pursued.



Florida Governor General Election

Current Democracy Score

17

Ranking Top Twenty-Two

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

10

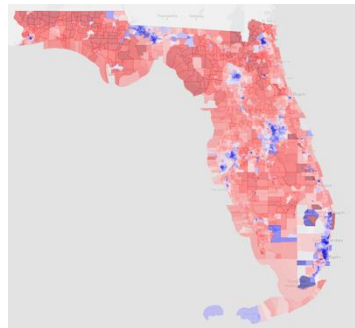
Governor Ron DeSantis is not only seeking a second term as Governor of the Sunshine State, but also laying the groundwork for his impending Presidential campaign in 2024. The latter in many ways has been the driver of much of the illiberalism witnessed in the state. In the past year, DeSantis has pushed a slew of culture war battles into the state's political matrix, while building his national profile by leveraging them into fund-raising, media appearances, and visits to early primary states. As the leading alternative at the moment to Donald Trump on the GOP side, and given his decent into super MAGA mode, his elections (or defeat) matters greatly in the context of 2024.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

2

In Presidential politics Florida is no longer the ground zero swing state it was in elections back in the late 1990's and early 2000's. While the state is always close, Republican now typically outperform their national percentage in the state. For a Democrat running for President, a win in Florida is now a luxury rather than a requirement. As such, the Governor's race in the state is less important for control than others such as Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, or Michigan. Moreover, redistricting of the state's House districts has rendered the Governor's race less important for pulling along other down ballot candidates. That said, a strong performance by the democrat candidate could also derail Marco Rubio's reelection prospect which would impact a second potential 2024 Republican Presidential candidate.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

DeSantis was propelled to his initial victory in the 2018 GOP Governor's primary by Donald Trump's endorsement of his campaign. More recently, that relationship has been strained as DeSantis has expanded his efforts to position himself for his own run for President in 2024, potentially even as a challenger to Trump if he runs again. This dynamic has pushed DeSantis to double down on MAGA and cultural issues to position himself regardless of what Trump chooses to do.

Current State of the Race

The democrat side includes three candidates vying in the August 23rd, primary. The first is former Republican Governor and current Democrat member of the US House of Representatives, Charlie Crist. Crist is considered the co-frontrunner in the race along with current Agricultural Commissioner, Nikki Fried. Fried has focused much of her campaign on her opposition to DeSantis' successful push for a ban on abortions in the state after fifteen weeks. The recent leak from the Federal Supreme Court that Row v Wade maybe overturned may be an opportunity for Fried given Crist's past statement on the issue. The other candidate, State Senator Annette Tadeo, has struggled to gain traction and attention and there are rumors she might drop out (which she denies) which would likely help Fried.

Regardless of which candidate makes it through the primary on the democrat side, DeSantis is slightly favored in the general election. Recent polling has consistently show him with a lead, but he is also hovering in this polling at, or just below, 50% support.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Create a sustained and consistent drumbeat that DeSantis is pushing extremist policies.
2. Highlight the truth that DeSantis is interest in being President even if that is at the expense of Floridians.
3. Push to quickly to define the eventual nominee as a Governor focused on Floridians, not personal national ambitions, to blunt the inevitable barrage of attacks which will come from the DeSantis campaign as soon as the primary is completed.



New Hampshire Senate General Election

Current Democracy Score

17

Ranking Top Twenty-Two

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

10

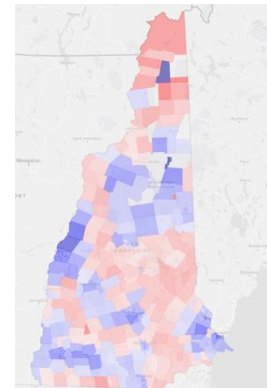
New Hampshire's politics are quirky. The state is small enough that even statewide races take on the flavor of a local race. Everybody knows everybody. They're notorious for splitting their tickets. And of course, there is the role New Hampshire has long played with the first-in-the-nation presidential primary. The 2024 nominating contests for both parties may be yawners with Joe Biden and Donald Trump enroute to a rematch of their 2020 race. We might see either Trump or Biden running again, but not the other, opening the NH primary to key status once again for whichever party has more of an open field. Even though New Hampshire voted against Donald Trump in both 2016 and 2020, and for the Democratic nominee in every election since 1992 except for 2000. It still has 2-year terms for the governor, so the 2022 contest will feature incumbent GOPer Chris Sununu expected to coast to a 4th term. Former Democratic Gov. Maggie Hassan is looking to be re-elected to her U.S. Senate seat. No Senate contest will be on the ballot in 2024 and it is too early to predict whether Sununu will vacate the governor's mansion or seek a fifth term. In any regard, it should be assumed that New Hampshire's 4 electoral votes will be at play in 2024.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

2

With Gov. Sununu expected to run up a big vote total and that will create a headwind that Sen. Hassan has to run against. Simply put, the odds of the Democrats holding majority in the Senate evaporate if Hassan were to lose. Though Hassan will have no direct role in 2024, it would certainly be helpful to the pro-democracy coalition if she and senior Sen. Jean Shaheen were both in office and could combine their statewide operations for the benefit of President Biden or the eventual Democratic nominee. Especially, since Chris Sununu is no fan of Donald Trump and would be unlikely to energize his forces to aid another Trump run for the White House.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

All three of the leading Republican candidates have been proponents of the Big Lie and sown the seeds of discontent about the validity of our elections. A Hassan loss will likely make Mitch McConnell the Senate Majority Leader once again and replace a defender of democracy with an illiberal actor.

Current State of the Race

Sununu won by a 30-point margin in 2020 while Jean Shaheen was coasting to a 17-point victory. The Democrats will be looking to recreate this dynamic once again, while the GOP concentrates on flipping what they see as one of the few offense opportunities to gain control of the Senate. Three high profile candidates running for the Republican nomination are General Don Bolduc, NH Senate President Chuck Morse, and Londonderry Town Manager Kevin Smith. There has been maddeningly little polling in the GOP primary and early polls have shown Bolduc with a lead. However, his victory is far from certain at this point and all three top candidates trail Hassan within the margin of error.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Hassan is a known quantity to NH voters after her terms as governor and now in the Senate. It will be critically important for outside groups to define the GOP nominee as a dangerous and reckless risk against the proven brand of Hassan.
2. The crux of Hassan's chances lies with running as much alongside Gov. Sununu as is humanly possible for a Democrat to cozy up to a GOPer. Mitigating straight ticket voting is essential.
3. White college-educated voters make up a greater share of the electorate than in most states and running up numbers with this segment will be critical for a Shaheen victory.



Virginia House 7 General Election

Current Democracy Score

17

Ranking Top Twenty-Two

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

7

In Virginia 7th Congressional District, incumbent democrat Abigail Spanberger is seeking a third term in a district which underwent a massive transformation during the redistricting process. Nearly half Spanberger's constituency was moved into new territory where she has never been on the ballot. Nevertheless, the district still holds a slight lean of 1%

for the Democratic candidate in a district President Biden carried by just under seven percentage points, but which was carried by the Republican

Gubernatorial candidate Glenn Youngkin in 2019. The 7th Congressional district, running from just outside of the Washington suburbs down towards Richmond, is where statewide races are won or lost by both political parties.



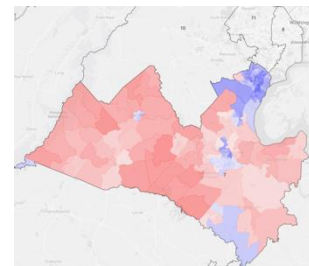
In Congress, Spanberger, a former CIA Intel Officer, has been a leading moderate voice in the democrat's caucus fitting the swing nature of her former and reconfigured district. In her previous two victories, in a seat which was Republican leaning, she demonstrated herself to be tenacious on the campaign trail and proved her ability to win the voters of ticket splitting Republicans. While in Congress she has gained national attention given the national security credentials she holds and her centrist positions. She is the exemplification of the kind of candidate Democrats need to win in seats which run from the suburbs into the rural areas across the country.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

Winning in the 7th is a must-win for Democrats to hold their majority in the house. A loss by Spanberger would not only eliminate a rising centrist star, but also endanger the Democrats hold on the Virginia Congressional delegation going into the 2024 election cycle.



Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

Spanberger will face the winner of a five-way GOP Primary. Her potential opponents include Derrick Anderson, a lawyer, former Green Beret, and staffer in the Trump White House. Bryce Reeves who is a former Army Ranger, current member of the Virginia State Senate, and one time narcotics detective who is also running as a MAGA candidate. The third candidate is Yesli Vega who is making Defund the Police and strong immigration policies cornerstones of her campaign, which fits well with her biography as a deputy sheriff and first-generation immigrant from El Salvador. Also running is, Crystal Vanuch, a local Stafford County business owner and the current chair of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors. The final Republican candidate is David Ross who is positioning himself as the libertarian candidate in the race. All five have large elements of America First in their campaigns both in terms of core messaging and advertising.

Current State of the Race

Early voting began in Virginia on May 11th, with the primary slated for June 21st. There has been no public polling of the Republican side for the primaries. Regardless of which candidate ultimately prevails, Spanberger will be facing a strong challenge from a MAGA candidate with a decent biographical background.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Turnout in the northern portion of the district, near Washington, will be critical for Spanberger to offset the rural Republican parts of the district.
2. In those Prince William County suburbs, it will be important to define the Republican nominee before they can define themselves.
3. It is critical for national Democrats and activists to recognize that Spanberger will be running as a strong on national security moderate and if they force her to move to the left, she will be replaced by a MAGA Republican in the next Congress.



Virginia

House 2 General Election

Current Democracy Score

17

Ranking Top Twenty-Two

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

10

Virginia-02 will be a marquee race in the battle for control of the U.S. House. Former Navy officer Elaine Luria was elected to Congress in 2018 by defeating GOP incumbent Scott Taylor and re-elected in 2020, again besting Taylor.

Redistricting did no favors for the Democrat Luria, separating her from Norfolk proper and while giving her a district Biden won by 2-points it also yielded nearly an 11-point margin for now Gov. Glenn Youngkin in 2021.



Still, Luria is a proven vote getter who has won tough races. Her Navy service and her moderate record in Congress position her strongly to fend off what is expected to be a full-court effort by the NRCC to oust her. The GOP field consists of four military veterans, the most prominent of whom is State Senator Jen Kiggans, who is also a former Navy helicopter pilot and a nurse.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

2

Winning in the 2nd is a must if the Democrats are to hold their majority in the House. A loss by Luria will endanger the Democrats hold on the Virginia Congressional delegation going into the 2024 election cycle.

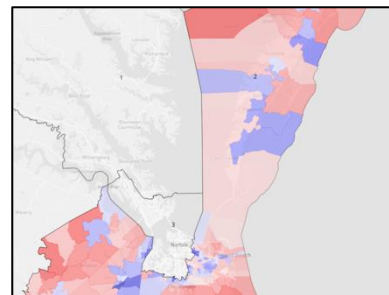
Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

The four Republican candidates are all running on some version of MAGA. Candidates Bell and Altman are supported by the likes of Mike Flynn and Madison Cawthorn. Kiggans is the favorite, but she is being forced to adopt more strident Trump-like positions on policy and on relitigating the 2020

election, setting up a clear and stark contrast between Luria and the eventual nominee.



Current State of the Race

The new 2nd is the quintessential toss-up district. If Kiggans is to emerge from the spirited primary, she will have had to tack hard to the right in order to prevail. This hurts her positioning against the moderate Luria in a district where voters do not love Donald Trump and have no interest in perpetuating the Big Lie about the 2020 election. Still, it is hard to ignore the volatility of the district voters who swung from voting solidly for Joe Biden and then delivering a double-digit victory for Glenn Youngkin just one year later. If the Republicans are unable to win Virginia's 2nd it could be a big blow to their odds of gaining majority in the U.S. House.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. It will be critically important to maximize Black turnout in this district that is comprised of 25% African American voters.
2. If Sen. Kiggans does win the GOP primary, she cannot be allowed to pivot back to more centrist positions than she was forced to adopt during the intra-party contest. She must be made to own positions that put her out of the mainstream. If one of the others wins, it will be that much easier to tattoo them as too extreme for the district.
3. The Democrats must embrace the centrist positions of Luria and work on her behalf with intensity. Any half-hearted or divided support because she might not be sufficiently progressive will doom her to defeat.



Michigan

House 7 General Election

Current Democracy Score

17

Ranking Top Twenty-Two

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

7

Former CIA case officer Elissa Slotkin defeated GOP incumbent Mike Bishop in 2018 and fended off a spirited close challenge by a self-funding Republican in 2020 in the old 8th district that was slightly tougher for a Democrat to win. Michigan's new independent redistricting commission marginally improved the Democratic base of Slotkin's new 7th district. Slotkin has been one of the more prolific fundraisers in Congress, but the 2018 and 2020 races saw tens of millions of dollars pumped into the district from independent committees and the same must be anticipated in 2022.

The Republicans have their dream candidate in State Sen. Tom Barrett, a recently retired Army helicopter pilot and combat veteran who also served in the Michigan House of Representatives. One hundred percent of Barrett's legislative district lies within the new congressional seat and the Michigan GOP was able to clear the field of any potential primary opposition to him.

Slotkin has a non-traditional (at least in Michigan) profile for a Democrat being a national security expert who has staked out firmly moderate non-progressive and/or bipartisan positions. Barrett, on the other hand, is a strident MAGA anti-masker/anti-vaxer, and 2020 election denier.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

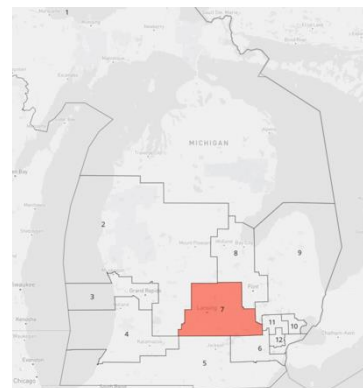
If Slotkin wins, the Democrats should maintain their majority of the state's congressional delegation. If Barrett wins, the GOP could gain control of the delegation. That could prove pivotal in the event the 2024 Presidential contest ends up being decided in the U.S. House.

Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

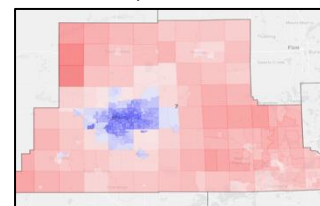
5

Barrett was a signatory on the Texas lawsuit to block certification of Joe Biden's electoral vote victory. He was also a signatory on a letter urging the U.S. House to nullify Michigan's 5.5 million votes and decertify Joe Biden's decisive victory in the Mitten State.



Current State of the Race

Slotkin has been polling consistently ahead of Barrett, but not outside the margin of error. Also, President Biden's job approval is deeply underwater in this mid-Michigan Lansing-centered district.



Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Slotkin and the pro-democracy coalition needs to maximize turnout among State of Michigan employees and faculty, students, and staff at Michigan State University.
2. Bannon Line white college-educated behavioral Republicans – especially in Eaton and Clinton counties (Barrett's base) will be pivotal in deciding the outcome of this race.
3. Given the Governor's race will be a turnout drive it is essential to link Slotkin to the themes and messaging of the Whitmer campaign as much as possible.



North Carolina Senate General Election

Current Democracy Score

17

Ranking Top Twenty-Two

2024 Implication of the Election

**2024
Score**

6

Republican Congressman Ted Budd and Democrat former chief justice of the state supreme court Cheri Beasley will be the candidates in this pivotal contest. The GOP must win if they are to hope to gain majority in the Senate, while the Democrats flipping the seat could deal a fatal blow to Mitch McConnell's dream of regaining control of the upper chamber.

Budd handily won the primary against former Republican governor Pat McCrory, largely on the strength of Donald Trump's endorsement, but also the consolidation of much of NC's Republican establishment.

Beasley is a proven vote getter who barely lost her seat on the supreme court in 2020, losing by only 400 votes to a Republican challenger while Donald Trump and Sen. Thom Tillis were en route to 100k margins in their NC victories.

Implications for Control of State and Congress

**Control
Score**

5

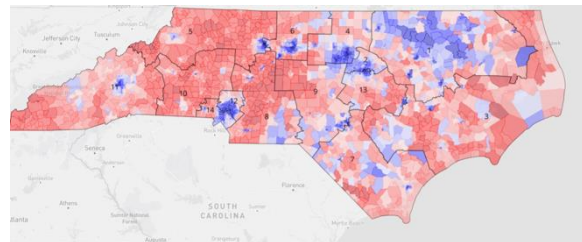
The contest is a must-win for the Republicans. Beasley does not need to win for Chuck Schumer to remain Majority Leader, but her election might all but guarantee the Democrats retain the Senate.

Illiberalism in the Election

Illiberal

5

Budd voted against certification of the 2020 vote and against both impeachments of Donald Trump. But he has been on record saying Joe Biden is the legitimate President. Still, he can be expected to be an obstacle against certifying the 2024 election in the Senate the same as he was in the House after the 2020 election.



Current State of the Race

Budd emerges from last week's primary with a solid lead in the fall contest. The RealClearPolitics average shows Budd with a 7.5% lead over Beasley, though shy of 50%. Most national election observers view this race as a toss-up with perhaps a slight advantage going to Budd given the recent GOP trends in the Tarheel State.

Three Keys to Winning the Race

1. Beasley must solidly claim and embrace the center and force Budd to the right.
2. Every effort must be taken to drive a wedge between Budd and the hardcore 2020 election deniers in the electorate in hope of deflating their enthusiasm even marginally.
3. Black voter enthusiasm and turnout must be maximized.