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25 DAYS TO ELECTION DAY
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THE 2026 MIDTERMS

State of the Races

Twenty-five days out, the model still points to a Democratic year. It projects Democrats to win the House comfortably and the Senate more likely than not. Georgia is split: Senator Ossoff is a strong favorite, and the governor's race is close to a coin flip. This week moved the headline numbers only slightly, and in the Democrats' direction.

U.S. HOUSE

258 D

99.0% chance Democrats win the majority (218)

+1 seat since last Friday

U.S. SENATE

58 D

94.0% chance Democrats win control (51)

no change · **+0.8 pts**

GOVERNORS

28 D

projected Democratic governors after 2026

GEORGIA · U.S. SENATE

Ossoff 97.4%

chance Ossoff wins a second term

+0.4 pts since last Friday

GEORGIA · GOVERNOR

Bottoms 50.9%

chance Bottoms wins · polls R+2.2

+0.4 pts since last Friday

GEORGIA · LEGISLATURE

House 95 · Senate 27

Democratic control: House 81.0%, Senate 29.0%

+0.6 pts House · **+0.5 pts** Senate

THIS WEEK

- **Small moves, all in one direction.** The House projection rose from 257 to 258 Democratic seats, with a 99.0% chance of a majority. The Senate held at 58 seats, and the chance of Democratic control rose from 93.2% to 94.0%.
- **Georgia.** A Wedgewood poll with Ossoff ahead by 10 lifted his polling average to 8.1 points, and his chance to 97.4%. The governor's race barely moved: Jackson leads by 2.2 points on average across five pollsters, and Bottoms's chance is 50.9%.
- **Senate.** Kansas moved most: the Democrat, Hamilton, now leads the polling average by 1.4 points, and the model's chance for Democrats rose from 75% to 82%. Minnesota rose from 85% to 88%. Three new Maine polls have Jackson ahead by 3 to 4 points. Arkansas (from 48% to 39%) and Florida (from 41% to 36%) moved toward Republicans.
- **Money.** Outside and party spending in the targeted Senate races passed $1 billion. On the latest tally, Republicans and their allies lead $709 million to $299 million, and $211 million of that Republican total is in Texas. The main Republican Senate super PAC paused North Carolina and is sending $5 million to defend South Carolina.
- **House.** The Democrats' House campaign committee added six seats President Trump carried by roughly 10 to 21 points to its target list, including Arkansas's 2nd and Tennessee's 9th. Its political director said, "Anywhere between 218 and 240 feels very viable."
- **Governors.** Nevada's polling average is now even, and the model gives Democrats 62% there. Democrats lead the polling in Republican-held Iowa, Alaska, and Ohio. Republicans lead by 3.9 points in Democratic-held Kansas, which the model rates a toss-up.

Changes are measured from last Friday evening, October 2. Chances are the model's probabilities. A 20% chance comes true one time in five, so treat none of these numbers as a certainty.

Georgia

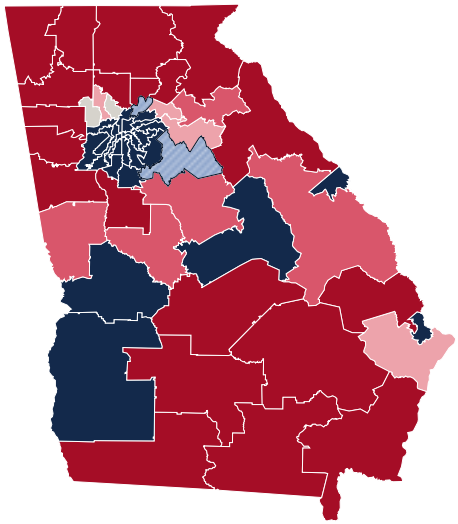
Georgia votes on a U.S. Senate seat, an open governorship, every statewide office, all 14 U.S. House seats, and both chambers of the General Assembly. The two top races are going in different directions. Senator Jon Ossoff leads Representative Mike Collins by 8.1 points on average, a 10.3-point swing toward Democrats from President Trump's 2.2-point win in Georgia in 2024. He also has a large money advantage: about $42.6 million in his own campaign account at midyear against about $2.1 million for Collins, and about $46 million in booked television against $1.6 million.

The governor's race is the closest major race in the state. All five pollsters in the average have Rick Jackson ahead of Keisha Lance Bottoms, by 1 to 3 points, for an average of Jackson +2.2. That is no swing at all from 2024, while Ossoff runs about 10 points ahead of the same baseline. The model still gives Bottoms 50.9% because it blends the polls with a national environment that favors Democrats. Polls this fall show many independents backing Ossoff for Senate and splitting on the governor's race.

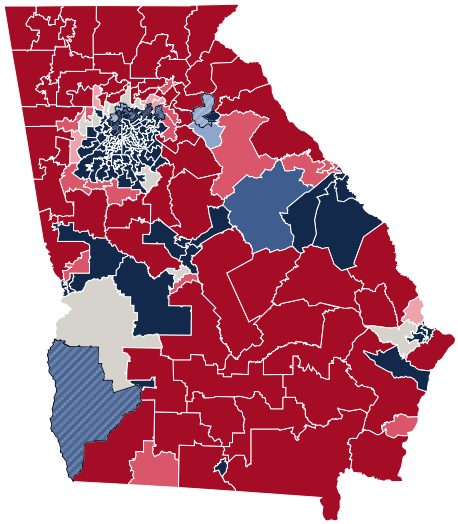
Down the ballot, Democrats need 10 more seats to control the state House and 6 more to control the state Senate. The model puts the House within reach and the Senate a longer shot. Last November, Democrats won both Public Service Commission races by about 26 points, but only about 1.56 million Georgians voted. A midterm electorate will be two to three times larger.

RACE	MATCHUP	RATING	CHANCE (D)	POLLING AND NOTES
U.S. Senate	Ossoff (D, incumbent) v. Collins (R)	Safe D	97.4%	Ossoff +8.1; swing of 10.3 toward Democrats since 2024
Governor (open)	Bottoms (D) v. Jackson (R)	Toss-up	50.9%	Tilts Jackson; Jackson +2.2 across five pollsters; no swing since 2024
Lieutenant Governor (open)	McLaurin (D) v. Dolezal (R)	Not rated	n/a	No public poll
Secretary of State (open)	Reynolds (D) v. Fleming (R)	Not rated	n/a	No public poll
Attorney General (open)	Miller (D) v. Strickland (R)	Not rated	n/a	No public poll
State House (180 seats)	Democrats hold 81; 91 for control	Likely D	81.0%	Median 95 Democratic seats (range 89 to 104)
State Senate (56 seats)	Democrats hold 23; 29 for control	Lean R	29.0%	Median 27 Democratic seats (range 24 to 31)

GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



State Senate, 56 districts. Median 27; 29 for control. 2 seats rated to change party.



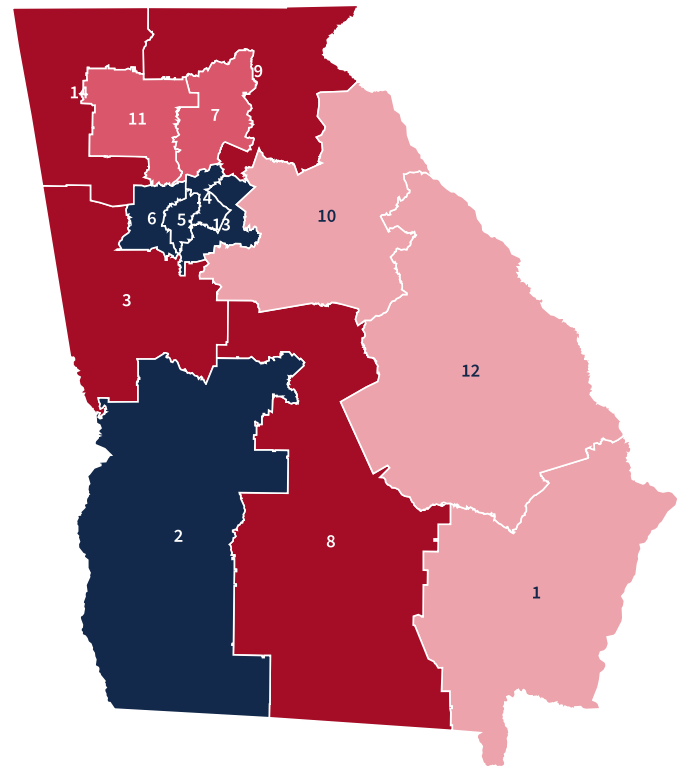
State House, 180 districts. Median 95; 91 for control. 8 seats rated to change party.

Safe D · Likely D · Lean D · Toss-up · Lean R · Likely R · Safe R · Hatched: rated Lean or stronger to change party

Georgia's U.S. House seats

Democrats hold 5 of Georgia's 14 U.S. House seats. Georgia did not redraw its map this cycle, so the 2024 results below are on current lines. The model's median is 6 Democratic seats (80% range 5 to 8), with a 69% chance that Democrats gain at least one seat and a 37% chance they gain two or more. All five Democratic seats are Safe, including the open 13th. No single Republican seat is favored to flip, but five of them sit between 13% and 38%, and the same national swing moves all of them together, so in most simulations at least one falls.

The best Democratic opportunities are two Lean Republican seats: the 12th, held by Rick Allen (Trump +14), at 38%, and the open 1st on the coast (Trump +16), at 37%. Next come the open 10th (Trump +21, 20%), the open 11th (Trump +23, 15%), and Rich McCormick's 7th (Trump +22, 13%). In last November's low-turnout Public Service Commission races, the Democrat carried the 1st, 10th, and 12th and came within 1.5 points in the 7th and 11th. Two Democratic candidates have released their own polls showing close races in deep-red seats: Chris Harden ahead by 2 in the open 11th and Maura Keller behind Brian Jack by 5 in the 3rd, swings of about 25 points from 2024. The tracker records district polls but never enters them in the model. No outside group had reported spending in any Georgia House race as of October 8.



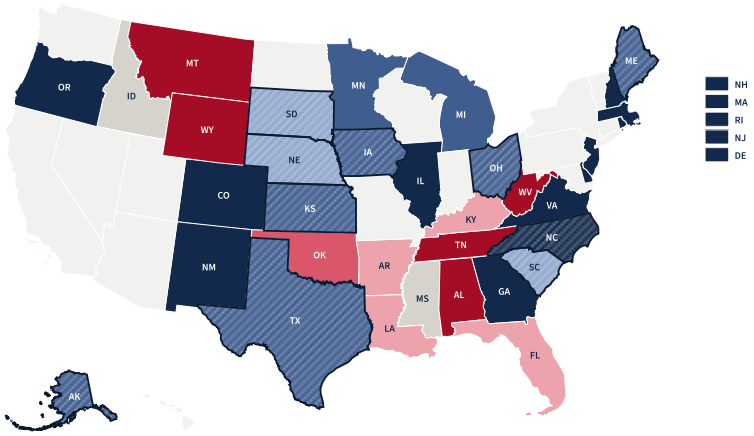
DISTRICT	HELD	2024	RATING	CHANCE (D)
GA-01	R open	R+16	Lean R	37%
GA-02	D	D+8	Safe D	>99%
GA-03	R	R+30	Safe R	3%
GA-04	D	D+52	Safe D	>99%
GA-05	D	D+72	Safe D	>99%
GA-06	D	D+50	Safe D	>99%
GA-07	R	R+22	Likely R	13%
GA-08	R	R+31	Safe R	2%
GA-09	R	R+34	Safe R	1%
GA-10	R open	R+21	Lean R	20%
GA-11	R open	R+23	Likely R	15%
GA-12	R	R+14	Lean R	38%
GA-13	D open	D+42	Safe D	>99%
GA-14	R	R+37	Safe R	<1%

Safe D · Likely D · Lean D · Toss-up · Lean R · Likely R · Safe R · Hatched: rated Lean or stronger to change party

The Senate

Democrats hold 47 seats and need 51 for control; a 50-50 Senate stays Republican because the vice president breaks ties. The model's median is 58 Democratic seats, with a range of 52 to 62. It rates ten Republican-held seats Lean Democratic or better, from North Carolina (98%) through Ohio, Texas, Alaska, Maine, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota to South Carolina (63%). Idaho and Mississippi are toss-ups. Every Democratic-held seat is rated Likely or Safe.

Republicans and their allies are outspending Democrats in outside and party money by more than two to one. Democratic candidates, however, hold more cash in their own campaigns in several of the biggest races, including North Carolina, Ohio, Georgia, and Texas, and candidates pay the lowest television rates by law in the final weeks, so a candidate dollar buys more airtime than an outside dollar.



Safe D · Likely D · Lean D · Toss-up · Lean R · Likely R · Safe R

Hatched: rated Lean or stronger to change party. Light gray: no race in 2026

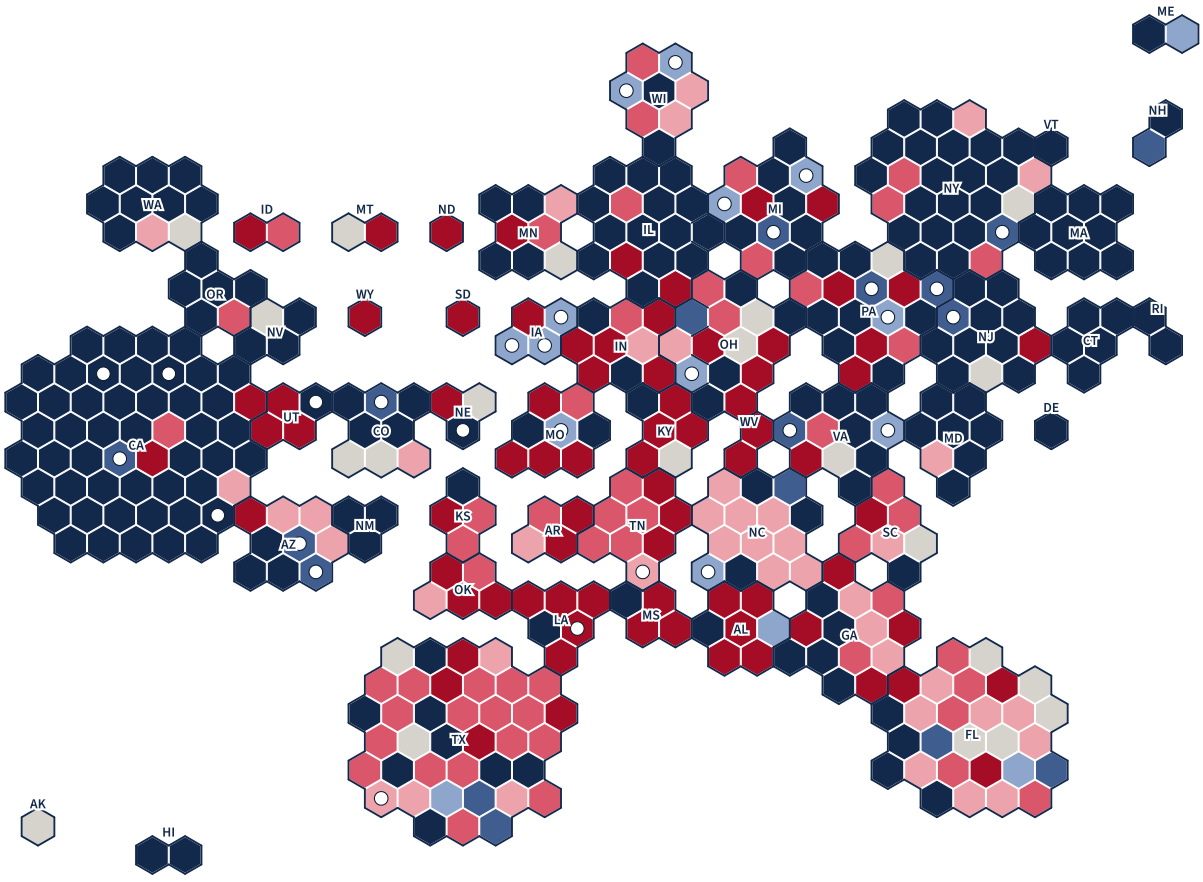
RACE	HELD	RATING	POLLING AVERAGE	WEEK	CHANCE (D)	WEEK (PTS)
North Carolina	R	Safe D flip	D+9.5	−0.1	98%	no change
Georgia (Ossoff)	D	Safe D	D+8.1	+0.3	97%	no change
New Hampshire (open)	D	Safe D	D+6.8	+0.3	96%	+1
Ohio (special)	R	Likely D flip	D+3.9	−0.4	90%	−1
Michigan (open)	D	Likely D	D+3.4	+0.2	89%	+1
Minnesota (open)	D	Likely D	D+3.2	+0.9	88%	+3
Texas	R	Likely D flip	D+2.7	+0.2	87%	+1
Alaska	R	Likely D flip	D+2.5	+0.4	86%	+2
Maine	R	Likely D flip	D+2.0	+0.3	84%	+2
Kansas	R	Likely D flip	D+1.4	+1.5	82%	+7
Iowa (open)	R	Likely D flip	D+1.0	+0.2	80%	+1
Nebraska	R	Lean D flip	D+0.5	+0.2	78%	+1
South Dakota	R	Lean D flip	R+1.0	no change	71%	no change
South Carolina	R	Lean D flip	R+2.4	no change	63%	+1
Idaho	R	Toss-up	R+5.0	no change	48%	+1
Mississippi	R	Toss-up	R+6.0	no change	42%	+1
Arkansas	R	Lean R	R+6.7	−1.7	39%	−9
Florida (special)	R	Lean R	R+7.1	−1.0	36%	−5
Louisiana	R	Lean R	R+7.5	no change	34%	no change
Kentucky	R	Lean R	R+9.0	no change	26%	no change

The model blends each race's polling with the national environment, and a national swing lifts every race at once. That is why South Dakota and South Carolina rate Lean Democratic even though Republicans lead their polls narrowly, and how the median reaches 58. Nebraska's Osborn is an independent, counted with Democrats. Week columns: change since October 2.

The House

Democrats need 218 seats. The model's median is 258, with a range of 233 to 293, and a 99.0% chance of a majority. The projection rests on a national environment of about 12 points in Democrats' favor. That figure blends three things: the likely-voter generic ballot average (Democrats +8.6), special elections this cycle (+14), and primary turnout (+13).

That median sits above the top of the range the Democrats' own House committee calls viable. Two cautions apply. Republicans have more cash in their House committee and their super PACs. And individual district polls have often run behind the model, which is why the tracker records them as a check rather than using them as an input.



205	17	16	23	42	55	77

Seats by rating, left to right Safe D to Safe R. Each hexagon is one district on 2026 lines, grouped by state; positions inside a state are approximate.

THE 23 CLOSEST SEATS (40% TO 60%)

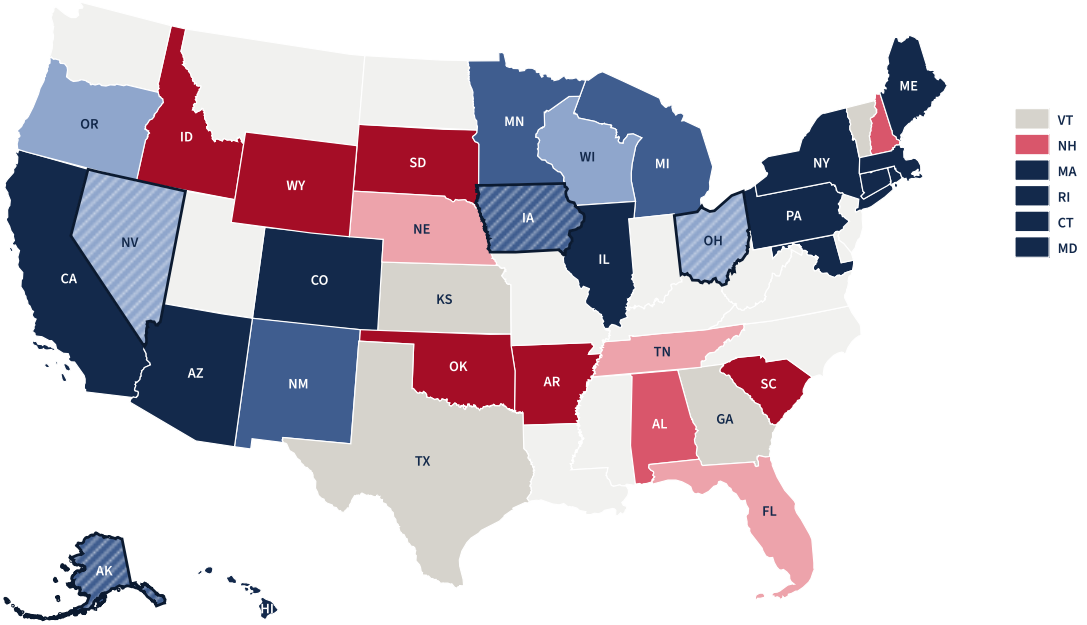
DISTRICT	HELD	2024	CHANCE (D)	WEEK (PTS)
FL-09	D	R+18	60%	+0.4
TX-32	D	R+18	60%	+0.4
CO-05	R	R+9	59%	+0.4
PA-08	R	R+9	59%	+0.4
CO-03	R	R+10	55%	+0.4
NY-01	R	R+10	55%	+0.4
OH-15	R	R+10	55%	+0.4
MT-01	R open	R+12	54%	+0.4
OH-07	R	R+11	51%	+0.4
WA-05	R	R+11	51%	+0.4
SC-01	R open	R+13	50%	+0.4
FL-04	R	R+12	47%	+0.4
FL-07	R	R+12	47%	+0.4
MN-01	R	R+12	47%	+0.4
VA-05	R	R+12	47%	+0.4
FL-16	R open	R+14	45%	+0.4
NV-02	R open	R+14	45%	+0.4
AK-AL	R	R+13	42%	+0.3
FL-13	R	R+13	42%	+0.3
NE-01	R	R+13	42%	+0.3
NJ-02	R	R+13	42%	+0.3
KY-06	R open	R+15	41%	+0.3
TX-23	R open	R+15	41%	+0.3

Week = change in the chance since October 2, in points. The model's wider set of competitive seats (20% to 80%) holds 80 districts.

Governors nationwide

Thirty-six states elect governors this year. The model projects 28 Democratic governors after the election, within a range of 25 to 31, up from 24 today. It rates four Republican-held governorships Lean Democratic or better: Iowa (92%), Alaska (89%), Ohio (79%), and Nevada (62%), where the polls are even. Vermont, Georgia, and Texas are toss-ups, as is Democratic-held Kansas, where the Republican leads the polling by 3.9 points.

Two races cut against their states' usual lean. Vermont's Republican governor, Phil Scott, leads by about 2 points in one of the most Democratic states in the country. And in Pennsylvania, Governor Josh Shapiro leads by more than 20 points in a state President Trump carried.



Safe D · Likely D · Lean D · Toss-up · Lean R · Likely R · Safe R

Hatched: rated Lean or stronger to change party. Light gray: no race in 2026

RACE	HELD BY	RATING	POLLS	2024	CHANCE (D)
Iowa	R, open	Likely D	D+8.8	R+13.2	92%
Michigan	D, open	Likely D	D+8.1	R+1.4	91%
Minnesota	D, open	Likely D	D+8.0	D+4.2	91%
Alaska	R, open	Likely D	D+7.1	R+13.1	89%
New Mexico	D, open	Likely D	D+6.0	D+6.0	86%
Wisconsin	D, open	Lean D	D+4.0	R+0.9	79%
Ohio	R, open	Lean D	D+3.9	R+11.2	79%
Oregon	D (Kotek)	Lean D	D+0.3	D+14.0	63%
Nevada	R (Lombardo)	Lean D	Even	R+3.1	62%

RACE	HELD BY	RATING	POLLS	2024	CHANCE (D)
Vermont	R (Scott)	Toss-up	R+2.1	D+31.5	51%
Georgia	R, open	Toss-up	R+2.2	R+2.2	51%
Texas	R (Abbott)	Toss-up	R+2.4	R+13.7	50%
Kansas	D, open	Toss-up	R+3.9	R+16.1	42%
Florida	R, open	Lean R	R+5.1	R+13.1	37%
Nebraska	R (Pillen)	Lean R	R+5.4	R+20.5	35%
Tennessee	R, open	Lean R	R+9.0	R+29.4	20%
New Hampshire	R (Ayotte)	Likely R	R+10.6	D+2.8	15%
Alabama	R, open	Likely R	R+13.0	R+30.5	9%

Governor chances apply the tracker's Georgia governor model to every state's polling average: the polls, plus half of the national environment's lean, with wide uncertainty. The eight races with no tracked polling (Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Wyoming) use the 2024 presidential margin in place of polls. Safe races are left out of the table.

What could change the picture

The headline rests on one estimate of the national environment. The scenarios below change that one assumption and hold everything else constant. Each is run through the same model.

SCENARIO	U.S. HOUSE	U.S. SENATE	OSSOFF	BOTTOMS	GA HOUSE	GA SENATE
Published model The national environment blends the polls, special elections, and primaries (Democrats by about 12).	258 99.0%	58 94.0%	97.4%	50.9% (Jackson +2.2)	95 81.0%	27 29.0%
Polls only The national environment set to the likely-voter polling average alone (Democrats by 8.6).	243 94.0%	55 79.4%	92.2%	43.8% (Jackson +2.2)	92 57.8%	26 16.5%
Softer national polls The tracker's pre-set fallback if national polling weakens: a blended environment of about Democrats +11, with more uncertainty.	254 97.3%	57 89.5%	95.7%	49.0% (Jackson +2.2)	94 73.8%	27 26.0%
Red seats swing harder Same environment, but Republican-leaning districts move further toward Democrats than Democratic ones do.	273 99.6%	58 94.0%	97.4%	50.9% (Jackson +2.2)	99 90.1%	28 49.8%

House, Senate, and Georgia legislature cells: median Democratic seats, then the chance of Democratic control. Ossoff and Bottoms: chance of winning, with the polling margin for Bottoms.

Even in the polls-only scenario, Democrats remain favored for both chambers of Congress. The race that moves most across the scenarios is Georgia's governor, from about 44% to 51% for Bottoms, followed by the Georgia state Senate, which ranges from a long shot to close to even.

HOW TO READ THIS MEMO

- The model simulates the election 20,000 times. Its inputs are 2024 presidential results in every district and state, incumbency, and an estimate of the national environment. It also allows for a wave larger than any in the historical record.
- Every rating in this memo comes from the model's chance of a Democratic win: Safe 95% or more, Likely 80% to 95%, Lean 60% to 80%, and Toss-up 40% to 60%, with the same bands on the Republican side. A seat is marked as changing party when the model rates it Lean or stronger toward the party that does not hold it.
- Polling averages use likely-voter results, including voters leaning toward a candidate, where pollsters publish them. Each pollster and sponsor counts once, at its newest poll. Polls paid for by a campaign or party are discounted 3 to 4 points. Polls of individual House districts are recorded but never enter the model.
- Spending is tracked from Federal Election Commission filings, but money never moves a rating.
- "Swing from 2024" compares a race's polling margin with President Trump's 2024 margin in the same place.
- This is a personal analysis for friends and family, not a forecast from any news organization, campaign, or party.

Des Dorsey · Atlanta, Georgia · des@desdorsey.com · Friday Wrap, October 9, 2026 · Figures as of 8:29 PM ET, October 9, 2026. Personal analysis; not affiliated with any campaign or party.