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2020 cycle, Number 1

Overview – U.S. Senate 2020 Elections

Spring 2019

The 2020 Senate elections feature 33 seats and a special election in Arizona to fill the remainder of the late Sen. John McCain's term. The current lineup for the cycle is 22 GOP and 12 Dem. After gaining two seats in the 2018 cycle, the GOP maintains a 53-47 edge, and the Dems must net four seats or three seats *and* the presidency to re-take control of the Senate.

Despite the breadth of GOP seats up this cycle, the map shows few truly competitive races. The Dems are eyeing Sen. Susan Collins in Maine, Sen. Cory Gardner in Colorado, and Sen. Martha McSally in Arizona. For the Republicans, Doug Jones's seat in Alabama is the sole realistic target for a pick-up. Three Republicans, Sen. Lamar Alexander, Sen. Mike Enzi, and Sen. Pat Roberts, and one Democrat, Sen. Tom Udall, have already announced retirements, setting up open seats in Tennessee, Wyoming, Kansas, and New Mexico. But all of these are reliable wins for their party.

So if the Dems are dreaming of a majority in the 117th Congress, they will need to win in several red states. With President Trump once again on the ballot, his core supporters will help secure GOP Senate victories in red states barring any catastrophic candidate revelation (à la Roy Moore). Dem turnout in 2018 was strong, but will be it matched by Trump's base in 2020? How will the far-left trio of freshmen Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, and Rashida Tlaib impact the races, especially in swing states? In 2018, most Midwestern states reverted to their traditional blue, but if Trump can turn the Midwest red once more, several more Dem seats (MI, MN) might be reachable for the GOP. In this environment, the Dems may have to look ahead to 2022 for a realistic chance at a majority.

In word and deed, the Trump Administration has proven itself to be the most pro-Israel ever. During his first term, the President declared Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, moved the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, defunded the anti-Israel-inciting UNRWA, and closed the PLO Washington office. At the UN, under the leadership of Amb. Nikki Haley, the U.S. withdrew from UNESCO and the UN Human Rights Council, two bastions of anti-Israel hatred in Turtle Bay, and Haley was not afraid to consistently attack biased resolutions and statements against the Jewish state. The U.S. withdrew from the disastrous Iran deal, reestablishing crippling sanctions that have helped hamstring the Iranian economy and tank its currency, and waivers to Iranian oil importers will not be renewed. We eagerly await the parameters of the peace deal expected to be revealed in June, but are not optimistic the P.A. will accept any proposal, let alone one that satisfies Israel's red lines.

Congress must continue to play its vital role in shaping U.S. policy in the Middle East. The Senate overwhelmingly passed major security and anti-BDS legislation earlier this year on a bipartisan basis, 77-23. Aside from a vocal minority of new House members, the vast majority of Members of Congress continue to be strong advocates of the U.S.-Israel relationship—but that is never a long-term guarantee. It is thus essential that reliable pro-Israel incumbents from both parties are re-elected next year, especially those with seniority on key committees. Certainly much will change, and we will keep you informed. We also indicate where a candidate generally stands on our issues if he/she has a record in Congress.

During our PAC's 38 years here on Capitol Hill, we have been able to establish close relationships with key legislators of both parties who share our view that a secure Israel is in the best interests of the United States. As always, we welcome your own insights and suggestions.

Morrie Amitay
Alex Dubin, Editor
May 2019

**After four terrific years, my assistant and editor of this newsletter Alex is leaving in June to attend the Kennedy School at Harvard. I am seeking to replace him with a college grad interested in politics, Congress, Israel, and learning how Washington works. Please have interested parties send me a detailed resume.*

1. **ALABAMA DOUG JONES (D)** 2017 Election (Special), 50%. Armed Services **CLOSE RACE, DEM SEAT**
Very good record
 Jones narrowly edged Roy Moore in a 2017 special election to fill Jeff Sessions's seat, becoming the first AL Dem elected to the Senate since 1992. He'll have a tough time defending that seat next year as he runs for a full term representing the Heart of Dixie. Rep. Bradley Byrne (excellent record) and a former Auburn football coach already declared, and they will likely be followed by several other House Reps and state officials. The disgraced Moore might try again, and even Sessions could reverse his decision and jump in late to reclaim his seat. With Trump on the ballot in a state he carried by nearly 30 points in 2016, the eventual GOP nominee will likely unseat Jones.
2. **ALASKA DAN SULLIVAN (R)** 2014 Election, 48%. Armed Services
Perfect record of support
 Sullivan narrowly defeated Sen. Mark Begich (excellent record) in 2014, but should have no problem winning a second term (once he declares) as the incumbent representing the Last Frontier. No Dems have declared, but Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz could run.
3. **ARIZONA (SPECIAL) MARTHA MCSALLY (R)** Appointed 2018. Armed Services **CLOSE RACE, GOP SEAT**
Excellent record
 McSally lost her Senate race to Kyrsten Sinema (excellent record) in 2018, but was appointed to Arizona's other Senate seat, that of the late John McCain. She replaced Sen. Jon Kyl (very good record) in that role and now serves alongside Sinema. Retired astronaut Mark Kelly, husband of former Dem Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (good record) has already declared for 2020 for the Dems, and his high name recognition (he raised \$1.1m in the first 24 hours) makes him a formidable challenger. Rep. Ruben Gallego (good record) won't run, but another Rep and the AZ Secretary of State may still challenge Kelly. McSally may herself face a primary battle from the right. This Grand Canyon State race is a toss-up and a must-win for Dems dreaming of a majority. The winner of this bruising special election will serve the final two years of McCain's term and would have to run again in 2022 for a full term.
4. **ARKANSAS TOM COTTON (R)** 2014 Election, 57%. Armed Services, Intelligence
Perfect record of support
 Cotton will almost certainly win a second term for the Natural State. No Dems have declared, but AR State Sen. Joyce Elliott could run.
5. **COLORADO CORY GARDNER (R)** 2014 Election, 48%. Foreign Relations **CLOSE RACE, GOP SEAT**
Excellent record
 Gardner narrowly unseated former Sen. Mark Udall (good record) by fewer than two points, and his road to a second term should be even more difficult. The Dem field is unfolding—ten candidates have already announced, including former CO State Sen. Mike Johnston and former US Attorney John Walsh. CO Sec. of State Jena Griswold and former CO House leader Alice Madden and are both likely to announce. Even former Gov. John Hickenlooper could jump in late if his 2020 presidential bid fails. Gardner, chair of the NRSC, doesn't need a Trump win in Colorado in 2020, but he has little margin for error in an electoral environment less favorable to him than it was in 2014. This toss-up in the Centennial State is a must-win for Dems. Gardner is a terrific advocate on our issues.
6. **DELAWARE CHRIS COONS (D)** 2014 Election, 56%. Foreign Relations
Excellent record
 Coons, an outstanding Dem advocate of maintaining crucial bipartisan support for Israel, should cruise to a second term in the First State.
7. **GEORGIA DAVID PERDUE (R)** 2014 Election, 53%. Armed Services
Excellent record
 Perdue begins his campaign for a second term as the favorite. Former Columbus Mayor Teresa Tomlinson and Jon Ossoff, whose failed 2017 bid to win a House seat special election garnered national attention, are weighing runs for the Dems. Stacey Abrams, who became a household name during her 2018 campaign for Governor, could have given Perdue trouble—but without her, this seat should remain red.
8. **IDAHO JIM RISCH (R)** 2014 Election, 65%. Foreign Relations, *Chairman*; Intelligence
Very good record
 Risch, the new Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, should easily win a third term in the Gem State.
9. **ILLINOIS DICK DURBIN (D)** 2014 Election, 54%.
Disappointing record
 Durbin, the second-highest ranking Senate Dem, will likely cruise to a fifth term representing the deep blue Land of Lincoln.
10. **IOWA JONI ERNST (R)** 2014 Election, 52%. Armed Services
Perfect record of support
 Ernst, a combat veteran, will face a competitive race but one slightly less perilous than those of her other swing state GOP colleagues. Iowa voted for Trump in 2016 by nearly ten points, but tariffs have hurt Iowa farmers. For the Dems, former IA Gov. Tom Vilsack passed on the race, and a House Rep is pondering a campaign. Ernst, the fourth-ranking Republican in Senate leadership, has strong fundraising numbers and should win a second term barring a formidable Dem challenger *and* a broad-based 2020 GOP collapse.
11. **KANSAS PAT ROBERTS (R)—RETIRING**
 With Pat Roberts retiring after four terms, there's an open seat in the Sunflower State—and the list of potential candidates is long. KS State Tres. Jake LaTurner is in for the GOP, and former Gov. Jeff Colyer and Rep. Roger Marshall (excellent record) are also likely to run. ACU Chair Matt Schlapp and KS Sen. Pres. Susan Wagle are pondering bids, and even Sec. of State Mike Pompeo could still reverse course and jump in late. Former HHS Sec. Kathleen Sebelius and former US Atty Barry Grissom could run for the Dems, but deep red Kansas is unlikely to elect its first Dem in 88 years next year.

12. **KENTUCKY MITCH MCCONNELL (R)** 2014 Election, 56%.
Very good record
The Majority Leader is seeking his seventh term. The Dems may nominate unsuccessful 2018 House candidate Amy McGrath, sports radio host Matt Jones, or Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer. This seat is likely out of reach for Dems barring a catastrophic GOP collapse.
13. **LOUISIANA BILL CASSIDY (R)** 2014 Election, 56%.
Excellent record
Cassidy, in his bid for re-election, will likely secure a second term representing the Bayou State.
14. **MAINE SUSAN COLLINS (R)** 2014 Election, 69%. Intelligence **CLOSE RACE, GOP SEAT**
Perfect record of support
Should she run, Collins will be heavily targeted by Dems in a state that voted for Clinton in 2016. But her signature moderate and bipartisan streak will help her win crossover votes. Last month, she was endorsed by fellow centrist Sen. Manchin (outstanding record). It'll be an expensive race—Collins has \$4.4 million in the bank, but the Dem nominee for this potential pickup will easily attract considerable funds. Former National Security Advisor Susan Rice said she wouldn't challenge Collins, but ME House Speaker Sara Gideon may run. Collins's re-election is among our highest priorities.
15. **MASSACHUSETTS ED MARKEY (D)** 2014 Election, 62%. Foreign Relations
Fair to good record
Markey will have no trouble securing a second full term, especially after popular GOP Gov. Charlie Baker declined to run for the seat.
16. **MICHIGAN GARY PETERS (D)** 2014 Election, 55%. Armed Services; Homeland Security, *Ranking Member*
Excellent record
Peters won by 14 points in 2014, but will have a more difficult race this year. Businessman John James, who lost his 2018 Senate race to Sen. Stabenow (very good record) by 6.5 points, may run again, this time with higher name recognition—and if Trump is able to repeat his 2016 performance in the Wolverine State next year, Peters could be in trouble. But for now, this race leans blue.
17. **MINNESOTA TINA SMITH (D)** 2018 Election (Special), 53%.
Excellent record (so far!)
Smith will seek a full six year term. She handily won her special election last year over MN State Sen. Karin Housley by over 10 points, but could face a more challenging environment in 2020. In 2016, Trump nearly turned the Land of 10,000 Lakes red for the first time since 1972, and he's eyeing a victory here next year. No one has declared for the GOP, but Housley could challenge Smith again. "MyPillow" CEO Mike Lindell and former Rep. Jason Lewis (good record) might also run. This longer-shot GOP target leans blue.
18. **MISSISSIPPI CINDY HYDE-SMITH (R)** 2018 Election (Special), 54%.
Perfect record of support (so far!)
Hyde-Smith is seeking her first full term representing the Magnolia State, but next year may be déjà vu—a primary challenge from right-wing MS State Sen. Chris McDaniel and a general election fight against former Rep. Mike Espy (very good record). Hyde-Smith made some missteps during the 2018 race, but Trump should easily carry her to victory in 2020.
19. **MONTANA STEVE DAINES (R)** 2014 Election, 58%.
Perfect record of support
Daines is seeking a second term. Sen. Jon Tester's (fair to good record) 2018 win has given Dems hope, but Daines caught an early break when Dem Gov. Steve Bullock announced he wouldn't seek the Senate seat. Without Bullock, Daines will likely cruise to victory.
20. **NEBRASKA BEN SASSE (R)** 2014 Election, 64%. Intelligence
Perfect record of support
If Sasse doesn't resign to take the University of Nebraska presidency, he'll cruise to a second term in the solidly red Cornhusker State.
21. **NEW HAMPSHIRE JEANNE SHAHEEN (D)** 2014 Election, 52%. Armed Services, Foreign Relations
Fair to good record
Shaheen will seek a third term. No one has declared for the GOP, but Gov. Chris Sununu could run. Former Sen. Kelly Ayotte (excellent record) is a longer-shot candidate. New Hampshire is a perennial battleground state, and Shaheen could face a competitive race with Trump on the ballot in a state he lost by under one point, but the incumbent Shaheen begins her campaign the favorite.
22. **NEW JERSEY CORY BOOKER (D)** 2014 Election, 56%. Foreign Relations
Good record
New Jersey election law permits Booker to run for Senate and President simultaneously, but so far he's only said he's seeking one—the White House. Engineer Hirsh Singh has declared for the GOP. If Booker's presidential bid fails, he'll almost certainly be re-elected to a second term in the Senate. So the fate of this safe blue seat is in a holding pattern as the Dem presidential primary unfolds.
23. **NEW MEXICO TOM UDALL (D)—RETIRING**
Udall's retirement set up an open seat race. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (fair to good record) and NM Sec. of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver are already in for the Dems. Former Gov. Susana Martinez, former Albuquerque Mayor Rich Berry, and NM GOP Party Chair and former Rep. Steve Pearce (very good record) could run for the GOP. The Dems are likely to retain this seat in the Land of Enchantment.
24. **NORTH CAROLINA THOM TILLIS (R)** 2014 Election, 49%. Armed Services
Perfect record of support
Tillis, who is running for his second term, is vulnerable. The Dem field so far is unclear; a State Sen. and a county official are already in, and NC State Sen. Jeff Jackson and former Transportation Sec. and Charlotte Mayor Anthony Foxx could possibly run. This purple state has tilted red since Obama's 2008 victory, and without a top tier Dem opponent, Tillis path to re-election should be easier.

25. **OKLAHOMA JIM INHOFE (R)** 2014 Election, 68%. Armed Services, *Chairman*
Excellent record
Inhofe, 84, hasn't declared, but if he runs, deep red Oklahoma will send this outstanding supporter on our issues back for a fifth full term.
26. **OREGON JEFF MERKLEY (D)** 2014 Election, 56%. Foreign Relations
Fair to poor record
Merkley chose to return to the Senate over the presidency, and he should have little trouble securing a third term there.
27. **RHODE ISLAND JACK REED (D)** 2014 Election, 71%. Armed Services, *Ranking Member*
Fair record
Reed, the top ranking Dem on Armed Services, should win a fifth term representing the Ocean State with ease.
28. **SOUTH CAROLINA LINDSEY GRAHAM (R)** 2014 Election, 54%. *Foreign Relations*
Very good record
Graham's high profile in the Trump era squashed any serious primary challenge from the right. Former SC Dem Party Chair Jaime Harrison is in, but Graham shouldn't have much trouble securing a fourth term. Graham is a vocal and reliable advocate on our issues, and is a priority for re-election.
29. **SOUTH DAKOTA MIKE ROUNDS (R)** 2014 Election, 50%. Armed Services
Perfect record of support
Rounds hasn't declared, but if he's in, he should coast to victory over any Dem in the Mount Rushmore State.
30. **TENNESSEE LAMAR ALEXANDER (R)—RETIRING**
Alexander is retiring after three terms, setting up an open race next year, but the field is still unclear. Gov. Bill Haslam would be an instant frontrunner, but a host of current and former Reps, a current ambassador, and even Peyton Manning could also seek the seat. The Dems lack star power; 2018 Senate nominee and former Gov. Phil Bredesen won't run. The GOP nominee should win this race handily.
31. **TEXAS JOHN CORNYN (R)** 2014 Election, 62%. Intelligence
Excellent record
Former Rep. Beto O'Rourke (very poor record) gave Sen. Ted Cruz (excellent record) the fight of his life last year, but Cornyn's path to re-election will be slightly less difficult as Beto seeks the presidency. Air Force veteran MJ Hegar is in for the Dems, and several Reps could join her in an expensive race. Texas is becoming increasingly competitive, but it's not quite purple yet. Cornyn is a reliable and outspoken advocate on our issues and a priority for re-election.
32. **VIRGINIA MARK WARNER (D)** 2014 Election, 49%. Intelligence, *Vice Chairman*
Very good record
Warner won by only 0.8% over Ed Gillespie in 2014, but if he seeks a third term, it shouldn't be that close. Virginia has been trending blue, especially at the statewide level, and the Dem presidential nominee should carry him over the top barring a complete Dem collapse nationwide in 2020. Former Rep. Scott Taylor (excellent record) could run for the GOP.
33. **WEST VIRGINIA SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO (R)** 2014 Election, 62%.
Very good record
Capito should easily secure a second term representing the Mountain State, which voted for Trump by a margin of 42 points in 2016.
34. **WYOMING MIKE ENZI (R)—RETIRING**
With Enzi out, Rep. Liz Cheney (perfect record) could run, and would receive our support. Either way, this seat will remain red.

This newsletter is paid for and authorized by Washington Political Action Committee, Morris J. Amity, Treasurer