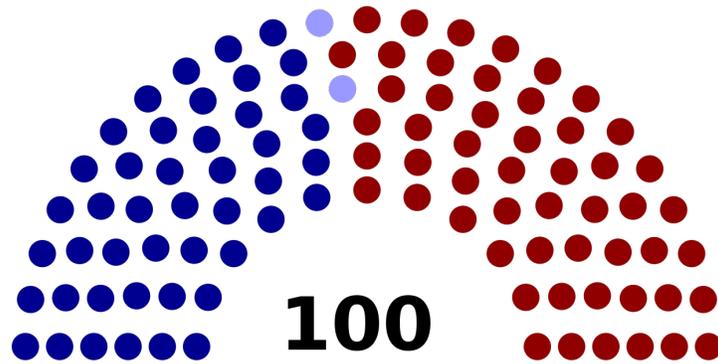


Downstream Ballots 2020: Competitive Senate Races (Abbreviated Report)



*Because regardless of who wins the White House,
the Senate will be key to enabling or checking
what that person can and cannot do*

22 March 2020

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Purpose

- The purpose of this report is to provide individuals with enough timely and accurate information to help them make informed decisions about which candidates to support with donations or other resources.
- The report currently lists the status of each Senate race deemed potentially or actually competitive.
- As the election season progresses – and as races narrow down to only two candidates and accompanying polling and financial data – the report will start focusing on races that are *actually* competitive.
- In the early stages of the season, the full report will only be issued at the beginning of the month. An abbreviated showing recent significant activities and updates will be issued throughout the month.

Contact Information

This report is a work in progress. It will change in both format and content as the election season progresses and races narrow down.

If you have any suggestions or requests for changes in formatting or additional information, please feel free to submit them to:

DownstreamBallots2020@gmail.com

Please put SENATE in the subject line, all caps.

Executive Summary

- *There is reason to be cautiously optimistic that Democrats can win the Senate this year.*
- In the worst case, Democrats need a net gain of five seats to win the Senate.
- In the best case, Democrats need a net gain of three seats – along with the Presidency – to win the Senate. Without the Presidency they need a net gain of four seats.
- Democrats have 12 seats to hold, all but one of which are considered safe.
- The only Democratic seat at real risk is Doug Jones in AL. If that seat is lost, Democrats need to pick up an additional seat to make up for it.
- Losing the White House and Alabama is the five-seat worst case scenario.
- The GOP has 23 seats to hold, and 10 are potentially competitive (some more so than others).
- Of the 10 potentially competitive seats the GOP has to hold:
 - Arizona and Colorado are competitive at this point
 - North Carolina is on the verge of being competitive
 - Maine is getting close to the verge of being competitive
 - Montana and Georgia (Special) have a lot of potential for moving there
- Iowa and Kansas each offer a small glimmer of hope.
- And unbelievably, Mitch McConnell is having some real problems in Kentucky that could benefit Democrats in other Senate races (by depriving other GOP candidates of McConnell's PAC money and fundraising visits).
- To date, with the exception of Alabama, all polling and forecasting trends – however small – have been in favor of the Democrats
- To summarize:
 - Democrats need a net gain of five seats in a worst case scenario
 - There are six GOP seats either in play or with a reasonable potential to be in play, and the trends have generally been in favor of the Democrats.
- So again, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic, but it's not a given. There is a lot of work to be done between now and November.

Noteworthy Items This Past Week

State	Item
AL	The GOP runoff has been delayed from 31 March to 14 July due to Coronavirus. This is good news for Doug Jones as it forces his two GOP opponents to continue aiming at each other for a while longer.
AZ – Special	Martha McSally (R) paused her Senate race for the next month to focus on the Coronavirus.
CO	The filing deadline has passed and all candidates are known. Cory Gardner (R) self-quarantined due to Coronavirus.
IA	Cook changed Iowa from Likely Red to Leaning Red because Joni Ernst (R) is now the third most unpopular Senator among her constituents.
KA	Kris Kobach has taken over the lead in polling among GOP contestants. This is good news for Democrats as Mr. Kolbach has shown himself to be toxic among the general population of Kansas.
KY	The primary has been rescheduled from 19 May to 23 June.
ME	The filing deadline passed and all candidates are known.
MT	In first poll since Governor Steve Bullock (D) declared himself a candidate, he and Senator Steve Daines (R) are tied 47-47, with 6% of voters undecided.

Critical Seat Summary and Recommendations

These are personal assessments of several critical states that seem flippable. They are arranged in a subjective priority, from most important to least in terms of needing immediate support.

State	Assessment
North Carolina	<p>The primary is over and this race has begun.</p> <p>There is no path to the Senate without North Carolina. Cal Cunningham (D) is a very strong candidate, and his opponent – Thom Tillis (R) – not so much. Nonetheless, Cunningham spent a lot on the primary, and the two coffers are very unbalanced at this point in Tillis’s favor.</p> <p><i>Cunningham needs money now.</i></p>
Montana	<p>Term-limited Governor Steve Bullock (D) is a brand new entrant into this race and he will almost certainly be the Democratic candidate. He probably has enough name recognition in the state, and outside interest, to raise a decent war chest. Indeed, the first poll after his entrance into the race shows him tied with his Republican opponent, Steve Daines, at 47 – 47. But Daines has slightly over \$5 million on hand, and in the absence of FEC data until after 31 March, <i>it should be assumed Bullock could use money.</i></p>