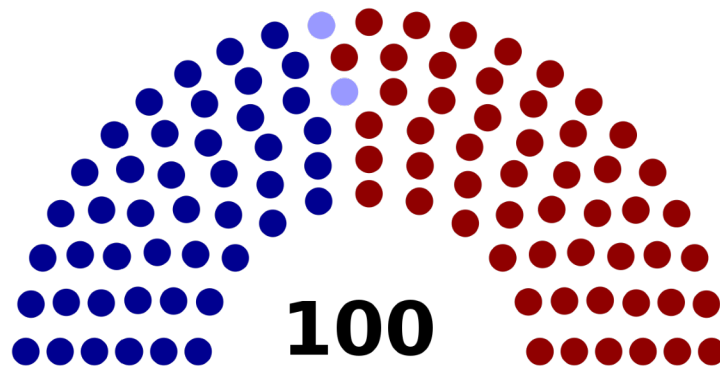


Down Ballot 2020:

Flip the Senate



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

04 October 2020

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide readers with sufficient information to make informed decisions about which Democratic Senate candidates to support, either financially or otherwise.

Pages 4 – 8 are for *casual readers*. They provide relevant information quickly and in its most abbreviated form.

Pages 9 – 44 are for *political junkies*. They provide detailed, integrated descriptions of individual competitive – and potentially competitive – state races.

Pages 45 – 62 are for true *data geeks*.

This report is produced and distributed free of charge. Please feel free to forward it far and wide.

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DownBallot2020@gmail.com

If you have suggestions to improve content or the presentation, feel free to send them to the same address.

Executive Summary

- *There is reason to be ~~mildly~~ optimistic that Democrats can win the Senate this year.*
- Although Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's tragic death and the Republican Party's recent embrace of COVID have added new dynamics to the national American political scene, at this point there are few substantial changes in the Senate outlook.
- Based on current polls, the most likely November scenario is that Joe Biden wins the White House and Senator Doug Jones (D) loses Alabama. In this case ***Democrats will need a net gain four seats*** to win the Senate.
- If both Joe Biden and Doug Jones lose, Democrats will need five seats. Hence, ***the target should be five seats.***
- Of the ***six competitive Republican seats***:
 - Arizona and Colorado are very competitive at this point
 - Maine and North Carolina are moderately competitive
 - Iowa and Montana are borderline competitive (but moving in the right direction)
- There are additional GOP seats that bear watching: Alaska, two Georgia races, Kansas, and South Carolina. These states may come into play and are currently on the Watch List.
- There is a potential dark cloud for Democrats in Michigan, and that state has been placed on a Watch List.
- Again, there is reason to be optimistic, but it's not a given.

There is much to be done between now and November.

Recommendations for Donations and Support

Flip a Seat

Iowa

Democratic challenger Theresa Greenfield, in Iowa, is polling competitively with incumbent Senator Joni Ernst (R) and has a serious shot at winning. But she has been lagging financially. Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer arguably see this as their top race to win. Greenfield is the best bet for effective donations.



See next page and page 18 for more details.

Save a Seat

Michigan

Incumbent Garry Peters (D) is suddenly in a tight race with GOP challenger John James. At the same time, the Biden-Trump gap is relatively stable. This seat could be in trouble.



See next page and page 35 for more details.

Play a Seat

South Carolina

Longshot Jaime Harrison (D) is giving incumbent Senator Lindsey Graham (R) a serious run for his money. Harrison could conceivably go the distance. A longshot, but not impossible.



See next page and page 43 for more details.

Commentary on Recommendations

Flip a Seat

Why Theresa Greenfield? Why Iowa?

Arizona and Colorado are almost givens at this point. Polling and fundraising show both Democratic candidates well ahead of their Republican opponents, and an analysis of outside spending shows these races to be low priority (i.e., Schumer and McConnell both appear to think the two seats will flip).

Maine and North Carolina are not as strong as the first two, but they are strong. Sara Gideon (D) is slowly widening the gap with Senator Susan Collins (R) in Maine, and Maine's recently-approved ranked choice voting is seen as a benefit to Gideon. Cal Cunningham (D) took a brief dip in polling, but this week he bounced back (and Senator Thom Tillis (R) has COVID).

Iowa and Montana are the two competitive states that are trailing.

In Montana Governor Steve Bullock has several qualitative factors going for him that are starting to kick in. First and foremost, he is a two-term, well-liked Governor. Second, Montana has a long history of electing Democratic Senators.

Although Theresa Greenfield (D) and Senator Joni Ernst (R) can technically be considered in Toss Up territory, Greenfield's small lead has been persistent and consistent. An analysis of outside funding (Appendix C) suggests Chuck Schumer and Mitch McConnell see this as the most important race.

Thus, for flipping the Senate, Theresa Greenfield remains the #1 recommendation for support.

Save a Seat

The situation in Michigan snuck up quickly. Until very recently Nate Silver at 538 gave Gary Peters (D) a more than 80% chance of retaining the seat. It has recently dropped below 80%.

Although Peters has maintained a consistent lead in polling in the 47% - 48% range, his GOP challenger, John James, has been gaining and has reduced the polling gap by 1.5%, from 6.7% to 5.1%. None of the pundits has downgraded Michigan's rating, but the GOP can smell blood and recently committed \$9 million to the race.

Thus, for maintaining current Blue Senate seats, Gary Peters in Michigan is the one and only recommendation.

Play a Seat

Although this has been seen as a longshot, there is no denying a certain satisfaction in trying to unseat incumbent Senator Lindsey Graham (R) despite the long odds.

But are the odds that long?

- In two recent polls Jaime Harrison (D) broke the historic Democratic ceiling of 44% and tied Graham at 48%.
- Graham has been characterized as literally begging for financial donations.
- South Carolina's Constitutional candidate endorsed Graham.
- Initial reports on the 03 October Harrison – Graham debate are favorable for Harrison.

Yes, the odds may be long, but they are far from impossible, and they are getting less impossible every day.

Thus, for playing a longshot that actually has a chance – and will at least keep Lindsey Graham and Mitch McConnell sweating for the next 30 days – Jaime Harrison is the recommendation.

Noteworthy Items Since Last Report

State	Item
AZ p. 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Kelly (D) and Martha McSally (R) to debate on 06 Oct • Three new 538-rated Arizona Senate polls this week
CO p. 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook shifts Colorado from Toss Up to Leans Blue • Sabato shifts Colorado from Leans Blue to Likely Blue • Hickenlooper (D) and Gardner (R) to debate on 13 October
IA p. 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three new 538-rated Iowa Senate polls this week • Theresa Greenfield (D) and Sen. Joni Ernst (R) hold first debate
ME p. 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathan Gonzales shifts Maine from Toss Up to Tilt Blue • Sara Gideon (D) and Sen Susan Collins (R) hold second debate
MT p. 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gov. Steve Bullock (D) and Sen. Steve Daines (R) hold second debate • Judge rejects Trump challenge to Montana's mailed ballots
NC p. 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathan Gonzales shifts NC from Toss Up to Tilt Blue • Three new 538-rated NC Senate polls this week • Cunningham and Tillis held third debate on 01 October • Sen. Thom Tillis (R) tested positive for COVID • GOP members of NC election board quit in protest of rules they approved • Challenger Cal Cunningham (D) admits to sexting with consultant

Competitive Red Seats

Arizona

Candidates

Dem Challenger: Mark Kelly - Former Naval aviator, with combat experience in the first Gulf War. Retired as a Captain (O-6). Former astronaut. Married to former-U.S. Representative Gabby Giffords. No political experience.

Website: <https://markkelly.com/>

Wikipedia Page: [Mark Kelly](#)

GOP Incumbent: Martha McSally - Former U.S. Air Force officer. Flew combat missions and commanded a fighter squadron. Retired as a Colonel (O-6). Served as U.S. representative from 2015 – 2019. Ran for Senate and lost. Was appointed to this seat when John McCain died.

Recent News

- [Vox: Mark Kelly is using the Kyrsten Sinema playbook against Martha McSally](#)
- [Kelly and McSally to debate 06 October](#)

Polling

Appendix A contains a description of how weighted averages are computed using 538 ratings. Appendix B discusses how weighted averages are analyzed to identify strong and weak candidates.

There were three new 538-rated Senate polls in Arizona this week (note: LV = Likely Voters):

Pollster	Type	538 Rating	Kelly	McSally
Suffolk University	LV	A	49	40
Susquehanna Polling	LV	C-	48	44
Data for Progress	LV	B-	47	38

The weighted averages of the last 10 538-rated Arizona Senate polls, going back to 15 September, are:

- Kelly: 49.7
- McSally: 42.7

Presidential Coattails

There were three new Presidential polls in Arizona this week:

Pollster	Type	538 Rating	Biden	Trump
Suffolk University	LV	A	50	46
Survey Monkey	LV	D-	52	46
Redfield & Wilton	LV	Not rated	47	44

The weighted average of the last 10 538-rated Arizona Presidential polls, going back to 15 September, are:

- Biden: 48.7
- Trump: 45.2

Candidate Fundraising:

Candidate fundraising numbers – generally from the 30 June cycle – are too stale to be meaningful at this point. They will be resumed when 30 September data is reported.

Outside Spending

A detailed analysis of outside spending is found in Appendix C.

Individual candidate fundraising numbers are only confirmed quarterly, and can get stale. Outside funding can be tracked in closer to real time, and suggests how seriously Chuck Schumer, Mitch McConnell, and their major allies are taking the race.

	This Week	Last Week	\$ Change	% Change
Supporting Kelly	\$ 3,395,946	\$ 2,973,144	\$ 422,802	14.2
Opposing Kelly	\$17,232,465	\$13,391,781	\$3,840,684	28.7
Supporting McSally	\$ 406,377	\$ 305,404	\$ 100,973	33.1
Opposing McSally	\$15,229,003	\$12,023,812	\$3,205,191	26.7

Pundit Forecasts:

A description of pundits is found in Appendix D.

Date	Cook	Sabato	Gonzales	538
01 Oct	Leans	Leans	Tilts	77%
21 Sep	Leans	Leans	Tilts	78%
05 Sep	Leans	Leans	Tilts	78%

Political Climate

Although Arizona appears red from the outside – think: Barry Goldwater, Sheriff Joe Arpaio, Kelli Ward -- it actually has quite a bit of blue on the inside:

- Five of its nine federal House members are Democrats;
- 29 of its 60 state Legislators are Democrats;
- 13 of its 30 state Senate members are Democrats; and

- The currently *elected* Senator, Kyrsten Sinema, is a Democrat (and openly bisexual, to boot).

That said, the state does have a GOP trifecta: Republican Governor, Republican-controlled state Senate, and a Republican-controlled state House of Representatives.

The Daily Kos ran an interesting article last week -- [Together we can destroy Republican trifectas in these two battleground states](#) – pointing out that, beginning in 2016, Democrats have been steadily making inroads into the state’s political infrastructure.

Starting with Sheriff Joe Arpaio being voted out of office that year, and picking up steam in 2018 when the GOP lost four seats in the statehouse they had controlled for 50 years. They are now hanging on to the statehouse by a thread, and a handful of strong Democratic candidates stand a decent chance of flipping at least one chamber this year.

And even though Trump beat Clinton by five points in 2016, and Romney beat Obama by 10 points in 2012, the weighted averages of the last 13 Arizona Presidential polls since 02 August (based on 538 rankings) are Biden: 49.0%, Trump: 45.4%.

Voting Issues

Arizona has a rich history of voter suppression, including:

- Dropping voters from the Permanent Early Voter List if they fail to vote in two consecutive elections
- Making it a crime for a person other than a family member or caregiver to deliver an early ballot
- Prohibiting early voters from dropping off ballots on election day
- Restricting early emergency voting
- Making it a crime to pay people to register voters unless they work for political parties

Some of these have been successfully challenged in courts, others not.

The Elections Division of the Secretary of State is responsible for administering all elections in the state, and certifying their results.

Kathleen M. Hobbs has been the current Secretary of State since 2019. She is a Democrat, and prior to this she represented Arizona's 24th district in the State Senate for six years, and the 15th district as a state representative for two years.

Colorado

Candidates

Dem Challenger: John Hickenlooper - Former Colorado Governor (2011 – 2019), geologist, and business owner. Entered 2020 Democratic Presidential primaries, but dropped out.

Website: <https://hickenlooper.com/>

Wikipedia Page: [John Hickenlooper](#)

GOP Incumbent: Cory Gardner – First-term Senator. Member of Colorado House of Representatives (2005 – 2011) and then U.S. Representative (2011 – 2015).

Recent News

- [Cook shifts Colorado from Toss Up to Leans Blue](#)
- Larry Sabato shifts Colorado from Leans Blue to Likely Blue
- [Hickenlooper and Gardner have agreed to debate on 13 October](#)
- [Gardner shifts rationale on supporting Supreme Court nominees](#)

Polling

Appendix A contains a description of how weighted averages are computed using 538 ratings. Appendix B discusses how weighted averages are analyzed to identify strong and weak candidates.

Colorado has extremely sparse voting. There have only been six 538-rated Senate polls since 20 Jun, and only two 538-rated Senate polls in September. There have been no new polls in the past week.

The latest 538-rated Colorado Senate poll of likely voters (Morning Consult, rated B/C, 20 Sep) shows:

- Hickenlooper: 49%
- Gardner: 42%

The weighted averages of the last six 538-rated Colorado Senate polls going back to 30 Jun are:

- Hickenlooper: 49.9%
- Gardner: 41.2%

Presidential Coattails

There have only been six 538-rated Presidential polls since 20 Jun, and only two 538-rated Presidential polls in September. There have been no new polls in the past week.

The latest 538-rated Colorado Presidential poll (Morning Consult, rated B/C, 20 September) shows:

- Biden: 49%
- Trump: 43%

The weighted averages of the last six 538-rated Colorado Presidential polls going back to 30 Jun are:

- Biden: 52.7%
- Trump: 40.6%

Candidate Fundraising:

Candidate fundraising numbers – generally from the 30 June cycle – are too stale to be meaningful at this point. They will be resumed when 30 September data is reported.

Outside Spending

A detailed analysis of outside spending is found in Appendix C.

Individual candidate fundraising numbers are only confirmed quarterly, and can get stale. Outside funding can be tracked in closer to real time, and suggests how seriously Chuck Schumer, Mitch McConnell, and their major allies are taking the race.

	This Week	Last Week	\$ Change	% Change
Supporting Hick.	\$ 4,609,470	\$ 4,262,795	\$ 346,675	08.1
Opposing Hick.	\$11,534,130	\$10,467,729	\$1,066,401	10.2
Supporting Gardner	\$1,153,178	\$1,143,444	\$ 9,734	00.9
Opposing Gardner	\$5,894,799	\$4,996,311	\$3,205,191	18.0

Pundit Forecasts for Colorado Senate

See Appendix D for a description of the pundits.

Both Cook and Sabato changed their ratings since the last report.

Date	Cook	Sabato	Gonzales	538
01 Oct	Leans	Likely	Tilts	73%
21 Sep	Toss Up	Leans	Tilts	71%
05 Sep	Toss Up	Leans	Tilts	72%

Political Climate

Colorado is pretty blue at this point:

- Five of the last six Governors have been Democrats
- 41 of 65 State Representatives are Democrats
- 19 of 35 State Senators are Democrats

- Four of seven federal Representatives are Democrats
- One federal Senator is a Democrat
- In 2016, Hilary Clinton beat Donald Trump by two points, 47% to 45%

Within that context, Cory Gardner is solidly in the Democrats' crosshairs.

Although Hickenlooper has some ethical issues plaguing him that might come up during the election season, and although he lags Gardener right now in fundraising, the polls and his history as a popular Governor are generally considered strengths.

Morning Consult [ran a story](#) on 03 September stating that 42% of polled Colorado voters do not identify with either major party, and of that population Hickenlooper leads Gardner by 29 points, 54% to 25%.

Voting Issues

Colorado does not have a deep or lengthy history of voter suppression. There was an effort circa 2011 by the then-Secretary of State Scott Gesler (R) to limit mailed ballots to only those voters who had been active in the previous election. This was challenged, and a judge subsequently ruled against it.

The current Colorado Secretary of State is Jens Griswold, a Democrat.

Iowa

Candidates

Dem Challenger: Teresa Greenfield - President of a Des Moines-based commercial real-estate firm. Ran for Iowa 3rd Congressional district in 2018, but was disqualified before the primary for not having a sufficient number of signatures on the ballot petition.

Website: <https://greenfieldforiowa.com/>
Wikipedia Page: None

GOP Incumbent: Joni Ernst – First-term Senator. Served in Iowa National Guard (1993 – 2015), and retired at a Lieutenant Colonel (0-5). Served in Iowa State Senate from 2011 – 2014.

Recent News

- [Theresa Greenfield \(D\) and Sen. Joni Ernst \(R\) hold first debate](#)

Polling

Appendix A contains a description of how weighted averages are computed using 538 ratings. Appendix B discusses how weighted averages are analyzed to identify strong and weak candidates.

There were three 538-rated Iowa Senate polls released in the past week (note: LV = Likely Voters):

:

Pollster	Type	538 Rating	Greenfield	Ernst
Data for Progress	LV	B-	44	42
Hart Research	LV	B/C	48	48
RABA Research	LV	B/C	51	39

Note: Iowa polling has been relatively sparse compared to, say, Arizona and North Carolina. Nonetheless, there have been enough polls to say that the RABA Research poll is somewhat of an outlier from all other Iowa polls, and should be taken with a grain of salt.

The weighted averages over the five 538-rated Iowa Senate polls in September are:

- Greenfield: 46.2%
- Ernst: 42.8%

Presidential Coattails

There were three 538-rated Iowa Presidential polls released in the past week:

Pollster	Type	538 Rating	Biden	Trump
Data for Progress	LV	B-	45	50
Hart Research	LV	B/C	48	48
RABA Research	LV	B/C	48	46

Note: As with the Senate poll, above, the RABA Research result is somewhat of an outlier from all other Iowa Presidential polls, and should be taken with a grain of salt.

The weighted averages over the five 538-rated Iowa Presidential polls in September are:

- Biden: 46.2%
- Trump: 47.0%

Candidate Fundraising

Candidate fundraising numbers – generally from the 30 June cycle – are too stale to be meaningful at this point. They will be resumed when 30 September data is reported.

Outside Spending

A detailed analysis of outside spending is found in Appendix C.

Individual candidate fundraising numbers are only confirmed quarterly, and can get stale. Outside funding can be tracked in closer to real time, and suggests how seriously Chuck Schumer, Mitch McConnell, and their major allies are taking the race. *Notice the change in support for supporting Joni Ernst.*

	This Week	Last Week	\$ Change	% Change
Supporting Greenfield	\$ 9,714,635	\$8,297,751	\$1,416,884	17.1
Opposing Greenfield	\$29,706,015	\$23,948,438	\$5,757,577	24.0
Supporting Ernst	\$ 2,997,341	\$1,054,507	\$1,942,834	184.2
Opposing Ernst	\$32,251,539	\$24,935,794	\$7,315,745	29.3

Pundit Forecasts for Iowa Senate

See Appendix D for a description of the pundits.

Date	Cook	Sabato	Gonzales	538
01 Oct	Toss Up	Toss Up	Toss Up	49%
21 Sep	Toss Up	Toss Up	Toss Up	44%
05 Sep	Toss Up	Toss Up	Toss Up	48%

Political Climate

Although Iowa may seem like a Red state to the casual observer, that is actually not quite the case. The Red Wave of 2010 did color Iowa a bit -- just as it colored several other previously-purplish states -- but there have been several indicators recently that the state is moving smartly back towards the middle:

- Three of its four U.S. House representatives are Democrats (two of those seats having been flipped in 2018)

- 47 of 100 state legislators are Democrats
- 40% of the state Senate is Democrats
- Three of the seven statewide, state-level official seats are held by Democrats (Attorney General, State Treasurer, and State Auditor)
- In party identification of Democrat-Republican, Iowa is one of the most evenly split states in the country

It is worth pointing out that although Trump won Iowa by 9% in 2016 with 52% of the vote, Obama carried Iowa with 54% and 52%, respectively, in 2008 and 2012.

And although Trump thumped Clinton in 2016, his trade policies have hurt farmers in Iowa, and he is only leading Biden by a very slim margin – two points – in the most recent poll.

There was a good article about this race in the July issue of The Atlantic Monthly: [Why the Iowa Senate Race Is Suddenly Competitive](#)

Voting Issues

Despite the Blue stirrings mentioned above, the fact is the GOP has a trifecta in Iowa: Republican Governor, Republican-controlled State Senate, and Republican-controlled State House of Representatives. Plus a GOP Secretary of State (Paul Pate). This gives the GOP a pretty strong hand in passing voting laws.

And the Iowa GOP has been pushing a number of initiatives that could have an impact of voting. These range from implementing strict voter ID laws to forbidding the Secretary of State from mailing absentee ballots without a written request to forbidding drop boxes for accepting early ballots.

It remains to be seen how these things will play out between now and November.

Maine

Candidates

Dem Challenger: Sara Gideon - State of Maine Speaker of the House. First elected in 2012 to represent Maine's District 48. Elected Speaker of the House in 2018.

Website: <https://saragideon.com/>

Wikipedia Page: [Sarah Gideon](#)

GOP Incumbent: Susan Collins – Four-term incumbent. First elected to Senate in 1996.

Recent News

- [Nathan Gonzales moves Maine from Toss Up to Tilts Blue](#)
- [Sara Gideon \(D\) and Sen. Susan Collins \(R\) hold second debate](#)

Polls

Appendix A contains a description of how weighted averages are computed using 538 ratings. Appendix B discusses how weighted averages are analyzed to identify strong and weak candidates.

There was only one 538-rated Maine Senate poll released in the past week (note: LV = Likely Voters):

Pollster	Type	538 Rating	Gideon	Collins
Data for Progress	LV	B-	46	41

The weighted averages over the five 538-rated Maine Senate polls in September are:

- Gideon: 46.9%
- Collins: 41.3%

Presidential Coattails

There were two 538-rated Presidential polls in Maine in the past week:

Pollster	Type	538 Rating	Biden	Trup
Survey Monkey	LV	D-	60	38
Data for Progress	LV	B-	53	39

The weighted averages over the five 538-rated Maine Presidential polls in September are:

- Biden: 54.67%
- Trump: 38.5%

Candidate Fundraising

Candidate fundraising numbers – generally from the 30 June cycle – are too stale to be meaningful at this point. They will be resumed when 30 September data is reported.

Outside Spending

A detailed analysis of outside spending is found in Appendix C.

Individual candidate fundraising numbers are only confirmed quarterly, and can get stale. Outside funding can be tracked in closer to real time, and suggests how seriously Chuck Schumer, Mitch McConnell, and their major allies are taking the race.

	This Week	Last Week	\$ Change	% Change
Supporting Gideon	\$ 2,051,338	\$ 1,702,852	\$ 348,486	20.5
Opposing Gideon	\$19,675,500	\$16,976,573	\$2,698,927	15.9
Supporting Collins	\$ 7,055,844	\$ 5,024,400	\$2,031,444	40.4
Opposing Collins	\$21,961,315	\$19,896,155	\$2,065,160	10.4

Pundit Forecasts for the Maine Senate Race

See Appendix D for a description of the pundits.

September began with Maine being a Toss Up across the board. It has steadily been rated bluer and bluer.

Date	Cook	Sabato	Gonzales	538
01 Oct	Toss Up	Leans	Tilts	61%
21 Sep	Toss Up	Leans	Toss Up	57%
05 Sep	Toss Up	Toss Up	Toss Up	44%

Political Climate

Maine is essentially a blue state, despite the recent Governorship of Paul LePage (R):

- The current Governor is a Democrat
- Since 1967 all but two of eight Governors have been Democrats or Independents
- 89 of its 154 state Legislators are Democrats (along with six Independents)
- 21 of its 35 state Senators are Democrats
- Both U.S. House Representatives are Democrats
- The other U.S. Senator, Angus King, is Independent, but he caucuses with the Democrats
- In 2016, Clinton beat Trump by three points, 48% to 45%.

Within that context, Susan Collins is the last of the basically extinct breed of moderate New England Republican. Although she has been popular in the past, she currently has several strikes against her: (1) her Kavanaugh vote, and (2) her vote against impeachment.

Supposedly there was also some recent hoopla about her voting against pandemic support earlier in her career (although it's not clear how much that's hurt her). But she did sponsored the 2006 bill that caused the USPS's current financial troubles, and some of those trouble appear to be hurting Maine.

There was an interesting article in Slate Magazine on 01 September about this race: [How Maine Turned on Susan Collins](#)

Voting Issues

Appendix E contains a description and small example of ranked choice voting (RCV).

This November, [Maine will be the first state to use ranked choice voting](#). Voters will be able to rank all listed candidates that appear on the ballot there in terms of preference. The system is also called “instant run-off voting,” because it only goes into effect if one candidate isn't the top pick on more than 50% of ballots. If no candidate receives more than 50%, then the lowest-ranking candidate in the first round is eliminated and voters' second choices are then counted as votes on later rounds of ballots, and the process repeats itself until one candidate has more than 50% of the vote.

There does not appear to be much of a history of voter suppression in Maine. In 2011 the Republican legislature narrowly passed the ban on Election Day Registration and tried to implement a voter ID requirement as well. In November 2011 sixty percent of Maine voters endorsed Election Day Registration, and the matter seems to have died.

During his tenure (2011 - 2019), Governor Paul LePage (R) introduced several voter ID laws, they were rejected by the legislature.

The Elections Division of the Maine Secretary of State Bureau of Corporations, Elections & Commissions supervises and administers all elections of federal, state

and county offices and referenda. The current Secretary of State (since 2013) is Matthew Dunlap, a Democrat.

Montana

Candidates

Dem Challenger: Steve Bullock - Currently serving second term as Governor, but is term-limited. Former state Attorney General. Chaired the National Governor's Association.

Website: <https://stevebullock.com/>

Wikipedia Page: [Steve Bullock](#)

GOP Incumbent: Steve Daines – First-term Senator. U.S. Representative for one term.

Recent News

- [Judge rejects Trump challenge to Montana's mailed ballots](#)
- [Bullock and Daines hold 2nd of three debates - spar over Supreme Court nominee and health care](#)

Polling

Appendix A contains a description of how weighted averages are computed using 538 ratings. Appendix B discusses how weighted averages are analyzed to identify strong and weak candidates.

Polling has been very sparse in Montana, with only seven polls since the end of June, and no new polls since last week.

The most recent 538-rated Montana Senate poll of likely voters (Sienna College/NY Times, rated A+, 16 Sep) shows:

- Bullock: 44%
- Daines: 45%

Note: This 16 Sep poll inadvertently included a Green Party candidate, Wendie Fredrickson, who had recently been legally removed from the race. Fredrickson

received 4% of the vote. The conventional wisdom is that most of that 4% would have gone to Bullock had she not been inadvertently included.

The weighted averages over the last five 538-rated Montana Senate polls going back to 10 July are:

- Bullock: 44.8%
- Daines: 46.9%

Presidential Coattails

The most recent 538-rated Montana Presidential poll of likely voters (Sienna College/NY Times, rated A+, 16 September) shows:

- Biden: 42%
- Trump: 49%

Note: This poll contains the same flawed inclusion of a Green Party candidate, although that candidate only received 1% of the poll.

The weighted averages over the last six 538-rated Montana Presidential polls going back to 10 July (based on 538 ratings) are:

- Biden: 44.1%
- Trump: 50.9%

Candidate Fundraising

Candidate fundraising numbers – generally from the 30 June cycle – are too stale to be meaningful at this point. They will be resumed when 30 September data is reported.

Outside Spending

A detailed analysis of outside spending is found in Appendix C.

Individual candidate fundraising numbers are only confirmed quarterly, and can get stale. Outside funding can be tracked in closer to real time, and suggests how

seriously Chuck Schumer, Mitch McConnell, and their major allies are taking the race.

	This Week	Last Week	\$ Change	% Change
Supporting Bullock	\$ 3,384,545	\$ 2,563,604	\$ 820,941	32.0
Opposing Bullock	\$23,794,955	\$20,285,215	\$3,509,740	17.3
Supporting Daines	\$ 4,564,519	\$ 3,342,393	\$1,222,126	36.6
Opposing Daines	\$25,600,119	\$21,854,614	\$3,745,505	17.1

Pundit Forecasts for the Montana Senate Race

See Appendix D for a description of the pundits.

Date	Cook	Sabato	Gonzales	538
01 Oct	Toss Up	Leans	Toss Up	33%
21 Sep	Toss Up	Leans	Toss Up	33%
05 Sep	Toss Up	Leans	Toss Up	34%

Political Climate

At the Presidential level, Montana is a very red state: Republicans have won the Presidency there in the past six elections. In 1992, Bill Clinton was the last Democrat to win in Montana, and he only won by three points. Furthermore:

- The Montana House of Representatives has 58 Republicans and 42 Democrats
- The Montana Senate has 30 Republicans and 20 Democrats

But it is not rabidly red:

- In the 24 Senate races since WWII, it has elected 20 Democratic Senators
- Montana's other Senator, Jon Tester, is a third-term Democrat
- Five of the last eight Governors have been Democrats
- Five of the last eight Attorneys General have been Democrats

- In the most recent Presidential polls, Donald Trump is only leading Joe Biden by 12 points, 54% to 42%, despite having beaten Hillary Clinton in Montana by 24 points, 58% to 34%.

Voting Issues

Montana has a history of voter suppression, particularly regarding Native Americans. For example, the recent Montana Ballot Interference Prevention Act would prevent large group collections of ballots on reservations. This law is being challenged in court, and a recent ruling is promising. This is just the most recent of many attempts over the years to suppress the Native American vote in Montana, which is estimated to be approximately 70,000 in number.

The Elections and Government Services division of the Secretary of State administers elections and voter registration. The Secretary of State is an elective office.

The current Secretary of State is Corey Stapleton, a Republican.

- In February 2019, Stapleton was fined \$4,000 by Montana's Commissioner of Political Practices using resources from his State of State office to announce his gubernatorial campaign, in violation of state law.
- In July 2017, Stapleton claimed that there had been 360 cases of voter fraud in the Montana 2017 special congressional election. He later said that he had been incorrectly quoted by the Associated Press and Lee Newspapers.

North Carolina

Candidates

Dem Challenger: Cal Cunningham - Army Reserve JAG officer (Bronze Star recipient). North Carolina State Senator from the 23rd district from 2001 to 2003. Ran for U.S. Senate seat in 2010 but was defeated in a runoff.

Website: <https://www.calfornnc.com/>

Wikipedia Page: [Cal Cunningham](#)

11 Sep: [Candidate Profile - WAVY](#)

GOP Incumbent: Thom Tillis – First-term Senator. Served in the North Carolina House of Representatives from 2006 – 2014. Was elected Speaker in 2011.

Recent News

- Nathan Gonzales changes NC from Toss Up to Tilt Blue
- Sen. Thom Tillis (R) tests positive for COVID
[Third Cunningham / Tillis debate on 01 October](#)
- [Cal Cunningham admits to sexting with woman not his wife](#)

Polls

Appendix A contains a description of how weighted averages are computed using 538 ratings. Appendix B discusses how weighted averages are analyzed to identify strong and weak candidates.

There were four 538-rated North Carolina Senate polls released in the past week (note: V = Voters, LV = Likely Voters, RV = Registered Voters):

Pollster	Type	538 Rating	Cunningham	Tillis
ALG	V	B/C	53	41
University of Mass	LV	A/B	49	43
Meredith College	RV	B/C	43	42
YouGov	LV	B	48	38

The weighted averages over the last 10 538-rated North Carolina Senate polls going back to 14 Sep are:

- Cunningham: 46.9%
- Tillis: 40.5%

Presidential Coattails

There were four 538-rated North Carolina Presidential polls released in the past week:

Pollster	Type	538 Rating	Biden	Trump
ALG	V	B/C	50	47
University of Mass	LV	A/B	48	49
Meredith College	RV	B/C	46	45
YouGov	LV	B	48	46

The weighted averages over the last 10 538-rated North Carolina Presidential polls going back to 14 Sep are:

- Biden: 47.4%
- Trump: 46.0%

Fundraising

Candidate fundraising numbers – generally from the 30 June cycle – are too stale to be meaningful at this point. They will be resumed when 30 September data is reported.

Outside Spending

A detailed analysis of outside spending is found in Appendix C.

Individual candidate fundraising numbers are only confirmed quarterly, and can get stale. Outside funding can be tracked in closer to real time, and suggests how seriously Chuck Schumer, Mitch McConnell, and their major allies are taking the race.

	This Week	Last Week	\$ Change	% Change
Supporting Cunningham	\$ 16,004,210	\$15,669,918	\$334,292	2.1
Opposing Cunningham	\$40,279,889	\$31,608,912	\$8,670,977	27.4
Supporting Tillis	\$ 5,323,769	\$ 4,743,247	\$580,522	12.2
Opposing Tillis	\$32,954,245	\$26,658,978	\$6,295,267	23.6

Pundit Forecasts for the North Carolina Senate race

See Appendix D for a description of the pundits.

Date	Cook	Sabato	Gonzales	538
01 Oct	Toss Up	Toss Up	Tilt Blue	66%
21 Sep	Toss Up	Toss Up	Toss Up	63%
05 Sep	Toss Up	Toss Up	Toss Up	63%

Political Climate

[North Carolina's all-important Senate race explained](#)

North Carolina has been trending purple as more out-of-state people move to the Research Triangle area:

- The current Governor is a Democrat
- The current Attorney General is a Democrat
- In 2008, Obama beat McCain by one point, 50% to 49%

That said:

- In 2012, Romney beat Obama by three points, 51% to 48%
- In 2016, Trump beat Clinton by three points, 50% to 47%.

Republicans hold strong majorities in the state Senate, 29 to 21, and House, 65 to 55, but they have not been able to override Democratic Governor Cooper's vetoes on most recent legislation.

[There is an interesting 27 August article on Center for Politics about North Carolina's states of play.](#)

Voting Issues

North Carolina has a rich history of gerrymandering and voter suppression. Future reports will go into more detail on that.

The North Carolina State Board of Elections (NCSBE) is the agency of the North Carolina state government charged with the administration of the elections process. It works in conjunction with the state's 100 County Boards of Elections. The NCSBE is overseen by five persons, three from the Governor's party, and two from the other party. The current Governor, Roy Cooper, is a Democrat.

That said, [the recent history of the NCSBE](#) is a tangle, and it's not clear if it is functioning in the way it is meant to function, or if it will be functioning properly in November. In the past week, the two GOP members of the board quit in protest to a rule they had previously approved.

Blue Seat Watch List

Michigan

Candidates

Dem Incumbent: Gary Peters – First-term Senator – Former U.S. Representative (2009 – 2013) – 10 years as Naval Reserve officer – 22 years as an investment adviser.

Campaign website: <https://petersformichigan.com/>
Wikipedia Page: [Gary Peters](#)

GOP Challenger: John James – West Point graduate – Eight years of Army service – Businessman – no prior political experience, but *considered a rising Republican star*.

Political Climate:

Michigan is mixed state politically:

- Governor Gretchen Whitmer is a Democrat
- Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson is a Democrat

Furthermore, with the exception of Donald Trump beating Hilary Clinton by 1% of the vote, Michigan has elected Democratic Presidents for years.

But both chambers of the state legislature are controlled by Republicans: the state House of Representatives slightly (58/52), the state Senate solidly (22/16).

Current Situation

Although incumbent Democratic Senator Gary Peters and Joe Biden have been the favorites to win, the poll numbers of Peters – as reflected by weighted averages – have been tightening.

The weighted averages of all 538-rated Michigan Senate races, going back to 12 Jul, are:

Peters:	47.8%
James:	41.1%

The weighted averages of the last 10 538-rated Michigan Senate races, going back to 19 Sep, are:

Peters:	47.5%
James:	42.6%

Although Peters had remained relatively steady, James has gained, thereby reducing the Democratic lead 1.5%, from 6.7% to 5.1%.

The story in the Presidential races is a little different.

The weighted averages of all 538-rated Michigan Presidential races, going back to 26 Jul, are:

Biden:	49.9%
Trump:	43.1%

The weighted averages of the last 10 538-rated Michigan Presidential races, going back to 22 Sep, are:

Biden:	50.4%
Trump:	44.1%

In this case Biden has gained a bit, and Trump has gained a slight bit more than Biden has. The Democratic lead has been only mildly reduced by 0.5%, from 6.8% to 6.3%.

This suggests Democratic Senator Gary Peters may be having an issue.

Red Seat Watch List

The following Red states all have the potential to become competitive. At this time, however, the combination of polling data, fundraising, and other factors leave them shy of the mark. Should the situation in any of them change, they will be added to the “Competitive” category and appropriate data sheets will be created.

Alaska

Candidates

Independent Challenger: Al Gros – Orthopedic surgeon and commercial fisherman – Native-born Alaskan – First-time politician.

Website: <https://dralgrossak.com>

Wikipedia Page: None

GOP Incumbent: Dan Sullivan – Native of Ohio – First-term Senator. Served as Alaska Attorney General for several years.

Alaska is notoriously difficult to poll due to the vast distances and dispersed population. And with only three electoral votes, Alaska is not being followed too closely in general, and the Senate race even less so.

There have been two 538-rated polls had Gros and Sullivan since late August:

Date	Poll	Rating	Gros	Sullivan
23 Sep	Harstad Research	B/C	45%	46%
28 Aug	PPP	B	43%	43%

Although Alaska has been reliably Republican on almost all levels – think: Sarah Palin – Alaskans pride themselves on being independent. Global warming is starting to take a toll in Alaska, and the environment is of particular concern. A recently-revealed secret recording of mining executives discussing complicity with Senator Dan Sullivan (R) is apparently causing significant ripples:

[A Secret Recording of Mine Executives is Shaking Up the Alaska Senate Race](#)

In short, this is a race that could be a contender, but the shortage of media attention and the sparsity of polls will continue to make it hard to follow and forecast.

Georgia

Georgia is a difficult race to track because there are actually two elections, and one will almost certainly influence the other. Georgia's peculiar election process makes this even more difficult to track.

Georgia's election process stipulates that if no candidate wins more than 50% of the vote on election day, the top two candidates will have a runoff in January. This is particularly important in the special election.

Georgia Regular

This is a regular election between Democratic challenger Jon Ossoff and one-term Republican incumbent David Perdue.

The polls have been more or less competitive, although on balance Ossoff has been slightly trailing. Georgia is relatively red, and under normal circumstances Perdue might have relatively strong odds of winning. What can help Ossoff is a strong Democratic voter turnout, and that points to the second election, the special election.

Georgia Special

The special election is to fill the seat of Johnny Isakson (R), who retired in January. The Governor appointed business woman Kelly Loeffler to fill the seat in the interim, and now a real election must occur.

The problem is there are 21 candidates running, eight of them Democrats. The strong Democrat is the Reverend Raphael Warnock, who occupies the Reverend Martin Luther King's former position at Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church. He is extremely popular and well-known, and in theory should energize the black vote in Georgia. Warnock is currently polling upward to 49% when matched against specific GOP candidates.

Unfortunately Matt Lieberman (D) – son of former Senator Joe Lieberman – is running, along with former U.S. attorney Ed Tarvar. Lieberman is pulling 5% - 8% in polling, and Tarver is pulling 2% - 4%.

On the Republican side, there are two strong Republicans: incumbent Kelly Loeffler and Tea Party candidate Doug Collins. Loeffler and Collins are polling on average between 15% and 25%.

If Democrats could consolidate around Warnock, he could conceivably win in November. But neither Liberman nor Tarver are publicly entertaining the idea of dropping out and putting their support behind Warnock.

And if Lieberman and Tarver were to fall in behind Warnock, it is also conceivable the black community turnout would be high, and enough to push Ossoff over the edge in the regular election.

In any case, this is a challenging set of races to track, and the both bear watching.

Kansas

Candidates

Democratic Candidate: Barbara Bollier – Surgeon – Former Republican – Kansas state politician

Website: <https://bollierforkansas.com>

Wikipedia Page: [Barbara Bollier](#)

GOP Candidate: Roger Marshall – Obstetrician – U.S. representative (one term)

Recent News

[Former GOP Senator Nancy Kassebaum endorses Bollier](#)

[The GOP is devoting millions more to defend a Kansas Senate seat it hasn't lost since 1932](#)

Commentary

As this race is filling a vacant seat, both Bollier and Marshall are candidates, and neither is an incumbent.

Kansas has not elected a Democratic Senator since 1932. Roger Marshall (R) won the 04 August GOP Senate primary, in which 328,000 Republican voters turned out, and only 177,000 Democratic voters turned out. On the surface, this should be Marshall's election.

That said, on the Democratic side Barbara Bollier is a former Republican state Senator and a physician. She is a staunch education advocate who left the Republican party because of the party's continual cuts in education (among other things). In Q2, she raised more money than any candidate for any federal, state, or local office has ever raised in any quarter in the entire history of Kansas. And in three of the last four polls, she held her own with Marshall.

Polling has picked up recently, with three 538-rated polls in September:

Date	Poll	Rating	Bollier	Marshal
23 Sep	Civiqs	B/C	43%	50%
27 Sep	GBAO	B/C	45%	43%
19 Sep	Data for Progress	B-	42%	43%
09 Aug	Survey USA	A	44%	46%

Another good poll or two could put this race in the competitive category.

South Carolina

Candidates

Democratic Challenger: Jaime Harrison – South Carolina politician

Website: <https://jaimeharrison.com/>

Wikipedia Page: [Jaime Harrison](#)

GOP Incumbent: Lindsey Graham – Three-term Senator – Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Recent News:

- [Major GOP Super PAC diverts \\$10 million to help Graham](#)
- [Constitutional candidate endorses Graham](#)
- Nathan Gonzales changes SC from Tilt Red to Lean Red

This is a perhaps the most interesting race of 2020.

Lindsey Graham is the well-known former running mate of John McCain. He is well-known for having abandoned almost all of his principles when Donald Trump got elected, and for having abandoned his remaining principles when Ruth Bader Ginsburg died. Even in deeply red South Carolina this has proven too much for some people, and Graham's principal financial backer has not only refused more financial backing, but has taken out ads disparaging Graham.

Jaime Harrison is an extremely charismatic politician with a great personal success story. He was chair of the South Carolina Democratic Party, and is currently an associate chair for the Democratic National Committee.

Harrison has seriously outraised Graham, and he has been very competitive in polling.

Date	Poll	Rating	Harrison	Graham
28 Sep	Data for Progress	B-	46%	47%
27 Sep	Quinnipiac	B+	48%	48%
25 Sep	YouGov	B	44%	45%
20 Sep	Morning Consult	B/C	45%	46%
14 Sep	Quinnipiac	B+	48%	48%

According to one analysis, Democrats have a strong floor of about 40% in South Carolina, but no Democratic candidate has ever broken above the 44% ceiling. One of the things that makes this race interesting is that in recent polling Harrison broke that ceiling when he tied Graham, 48% to 48%.

Jaime Harrison is a longshot candidate, but stranger things have happened.

Appendix A: Outside Spending Analysis¹

By way of background, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) is essentially the campaign arm of the Senate Democrats. According to Wikipedia, it is the only organization solely dedicated to electing Democrats to the Senate. The Chair, a Senator, is considered to be a leadership position, along with Majority or Minority Leader, Whip, etc. The DSCC is currently chaired by Chris van Holden, of Maryland, and was formerly chaired by Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer from 2005 - 2009.

The National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) is the analogous organization for the Senate Republicans. The current chair is Todd Young, of Indiana, and Mitch McConnell chaired it from 1997 - 2001.

In 2010, the Democrats founded what is now the Senate Majority Super PAC. It was founded by then-Senate leader Harry Reid's former aides and advisers Rebecca Lambe and Susan McCue, as well as several other Democrats who had had prominent positions in Senate affairs. The intent was to prepare to defend 23 Democratic Senate seats in the 2012 elections.

In 2015, the Republicans established the Senate Leadership Fund, also a Super PAC. It was founded by supporters of Mitch McConnell, and is currently run by McConnell's former chief of staff, Steven Law.

A big difference in the first two organizations and the second two is that the two Committees can contribute directly to individual politicians, while the second two, as PACs, cannot. The second two can, however, make expenditures to support or oppose individual candidates. By law they are not supposed to coordinate such expenditures with candidates.

So the first two organizations are directly linked to Senators Schumer and McConnell, and the latter two have strong ties. It seems reasonable to assume there is at least some informal communication between the two Senators and the two supporting PACs, and that the PAC spending reflects their respective world views.

¹ There will be small discrepancies between the figures in this appendix and the figures in the individual states. The figures for the two committees -- DSCC and NRSC -- are reported in near-real time, and thus change relatively frequently. This report is constructed slowly over the period of a week, and some of the data collected earlier in the week and listed with individual races may have changed slightly by the time aggregate data is collected and reported at the end of the week.

Tables 1-A and 1-B show the current funding postures of all four organizations: amount raised, amount spent, and cash on hand. Of note, because the Committees and PACs fall under different spending and reporting rules, the amounts are not exactly comparable. But they are generally in the same vicinity. For the purposes of this appendix, the key figures are the amounts spent.

DSCC		Senate Majority PAC	
Raised:	\$165,204,637	Raised:	\$183,960,690
Spent:	\$130,399,035	Spent:	\$99,499,926
Cash on Hand:	\$40,990,760	Cash on Hand:	\$84,863,935

Table 1-A: Funding Positions of Key Senate Democratic Organizations

NRSC		Senate Leadership Fund	
Raised:	\$167,671,247	Raised:	\$166,571,953
Spent:	\$161,579,521	Spent:	\$46,592,264
Cash on Hand:	\$13,589,662	Cash on Hand:	\$126,147,966

Table 1-B: Funding Positions of Key Senate Republican Organizations

Tables 2-A through 2-D, on the following pages, show how each organization is spending money on the six competitive Senate races. Where applicable each table shows how much each organization spent supporting and opposing various candidates.

Recipient	State	For	Against
Steven Daines	MT	\$0	\$11,448,598
Joni Ernst	IA	\$0	\$9,891,546
Thom Tillis	NC	\$0	\$6,153,906
Martha McSally	AZ	\$0	\$2,083,500
Susan Collins	ME	\$0	\$0
Cory Gardner	CO	\$0	\$0
John Hickenlooper	CO	\$0	\$0
Cal Cunningham	NC	\$0	\$0
Theresa Greenfield	IA	\$0	\$0
Sara Gideon	ME	\$0	\$0
Mark Kelly	AZ	\$0	\$0
Steve Bullock	MT	\$0	\$0

Table 2-A: DSCC Spending

Candidate	State	For	Against
Collins, Susan	ME	\$0	\$10,173,629
Daines, Steven	MT	\$0	\$7,891,564
Ernst, Joni	IA	\$0	\$11,063,030
Gardner, Cory	CO	\$0	\$4,031,587
McSally, Martha	AZ	\$0	\$4,520,427
Tillis, Thom	NC	\$0	\$12,412,810
Bullock, Steve	MT	\$8,500	\$0
Cunningham, Cal	NC	\$94,720	\$0
Gideon, Sara	ME	\$491,914	\$0
Greenfield, Theresa	IA	\$7,073,143	\$0
Hickenlooper, John	CO	\$2,704,935	\$0
Kelly, Mark	AZ	\$624,275	\$0

Table 2-B: (Democratic) Senate Majority PAC Spending

Candidate	State	For	Against
Theresa Greenfield	IA	\$0	\$10,560,136
Sara Gideon	ME	\$0	\$9,809,802
Cal Cunningham	NC	\$0	\$9,661,763
John Hickenlooper	CO	\$0	\$8,138,533
Steve Bullock	MT	\$0	\$7,328,171
Mark Kelly	AZ	\$0	\$7,051,075
Susan Collins	ME	\$1,350,902	\$0
Cory Gardner	CO	\$0	\$0

Table 2-C: NRSC Spending

Candidate	State	For	Against
Bullock, Steve	MT	\$0	\$11,569,121
Cunningham, Cal	NC	\$0	\$15,404,495
Gideon, Sara	ME	\$0	\$5,277,440
Greenfield, Theresa	IA	\$0	\$10,904,156
Hickenlooper, John	CO	\$0	\$3,047,878
Kelly, Mark	AZ	\$0	\$4,900,306
Collins, Susan M	ME	\$38,700	\$0
Daines, Steven	MT	\$23,700	\$0
Ernst, Joni	IA	\$308,312	\$0
Gardner, Cory	CO	\$76,982	\$0
McSally, Martha	AZ	\$187,416	\$0
Tillis, Thom	NC	\$75,335	\$0

Table 2-D: (Republican) Senate Leadership Fund PAC Spending

Tables 3-A through 3-E, on the following pages, suggest a story.

Tables 3A and 3B show the aggregate spending (supporting and opposing) for each race. They also show that aggregate as a percentage of total spent, and they show the ranking in the far right columns. A “1” indicates this race received the most spending; a “6” indicates the least.

DSCC				Senate Majority PAC			
	Spent	Percent	Rank		Spent	Percent	Rank
AZ	\$2,083,500	0.02	4	AZ	\$5,144,702	0.05	6
CO	\$0	0.00	5	CO	\$6,736,522	0.07	5
IA	\$9,891,546	0.08	2	IA	\$18,136,173	0.18	1
ME	\$0	0.00	5	ME	\$10,665,543	0.11	3
MT	\$11,448,598	0.09	1	MT	\$7,900,064	0.08	4
NC	\$6,153,906	0.05	3	NC	\$12,507,530	0.13	2

Table 3-A: Senate Democratic Spending Ranked

The DSCC appears to rate Montana #1 in priorities. The DSCC's #2 priority is Iowa, followed by North Carolina.

The Senate Majority PAC has Iowa as #1, followed by North Carolina, followed by Maine.

On the Republican side...

NRSC				Senate Leadership Fund PAC			
	Spent	Percent	Rank		Spent	Percent	Rank
AZ	\$7,051,075	0.04	6	AZ	\$5,087,722	0.11	5
CO	\$8,138,533	0.05	4	CO	\$3,124,860	0.07	6
IA	\$10,560,136	0.07	2	IA	\$11,212,468	0.24	3
ME	\$11,160,704	0.07	1	ME	\$5,316,140	0.11	4
MT	\$7,328,171	0.05	5	MT	\$11,592,821	0.25	2
NC	\$9,661,763	0.06	3	NC	\$15,479,830	0.33	1

Table 3-B: Senate Republican Spending Ranked

The NRSC rates Maine #1, followed by Iowa, followed by North Carolina.

The Senate Leadership Fund PAC puts North Carolina #1, followed by Montana, followed by Iowa.

Table 3-C, below, orders the states by rank for each of the four organizations.

Rank	DSCC	SM PAC	NRSC	SLF PAC
1	Montana	Iowa	Maine	North Car.
2	Iowa	North Car.	Iowa	Montana
3	North Car.	Maine	North Car.	Iowa
4	Arizona	Montana	Colorado	Maine
5	Maine	Colorado	Montana	Arizona
6	Colorado	Arizona	Arizona	Colorado

Table 3-C: Rank Order by Organization

Table 3-D adds up the ranks each organization assigns to each state. For example, the DSCC assigns a rank of “4” to Arizona, the SM PAC assigns a rank of “6”, the NRSC assigns a rank of “6”, and the SLF PAC assigns a rank of “5”. These add up to “21” for Arizona.

State	Rank Sums
Arizona	21
Colorado	20
Iowa	8
Maine	13
Montana	12
North Carolina	9

Table 3-D: Sums of Ranks by State

It is now possible to order the states by rank sums (Table 3-E, below).

Ordered Rank Sums	
Iowa	8
North Carolina	9
Montana	12
Maine	13
Colorado	20
Arizona	21

In this scheme, the lower the number, the higher the state is in priority across the four Senate organizations (in aggregate and on average).

This suggests that – to the extent spending by the two committees and two PACs reflects how Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer are prioritizing resources – Iowa is the #1 priority, followed closely by North Carolina, and Arizona and Colorado are last.

Appendix B: 538 Poll Rating and Weighted Averages

This section describes how Nate Silver's poll ratings are used to compute weighted averages.

Nate Silver is a fairly highly-regarded data analytics person, and he maintains a website called 538.

538 has a wealth of data and analysis on politics (as well as sports and a few other topics). Among other things, 538 keep a running track of Senate polls. Here is a link to the Arizona Senate polls:

[538 Arizona Senate Polls](#)

For each poll, 538 lists the dates of the poll, the pollster, and the type of polls (e.g., registered voters (RV) vs likely voters (LV)). It also assigns a letter grade ranging from A+ at the upper end to D- at the lower end.

Seven recent Arizona polls look like this:

Dates	Grade	Pollster	Size	Type	Kelly	McSally
15-22 Sep	B-	Data for Progress	481	LV	47	38
17-19 Sep	B/C	Hart Research	400	LV	55	43
18-20 Sep	C-	Change Research	262	LV	51	43
15-20 Sep	A+	ABC News/WaPo	579	LV	49	48
15-20 Sep	A+	ABC News/WaPo	701	RV	50	45
11-17 Sep	B-	Ipsos	565	LV	50	41
11-20 Sep	B/C	Morning Consult	907	LV	49	40
14-16 Sep		Fabrizio, Lee & Assoc.	800	LV	48	46

To compute weighted averages, college-type grade numbers are assigned to the various letter grades to get weights:

A+	A	A-	A/B	B+	B	B-	B/C	C+	C	C-	C/D	D+	D	D-	
4.25	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	2.75	2.50	2.25	2.00	1.75	1.50	1.25	1.00	0.75	0.00

Notice that in the case of no letter grade, a 0.00 weight is given.

1. The list is reduced to just likely voters, and then each poll result (gray columns) is multiplied by its associated poll weight (blue column) to get weighted products (yellow columns):

Dates	Grade	Weight	Pollster	Size	Type	Kelly		McSally	
15-22 Sep	B-	2.75	Data for Progress	481	LV	47	129.25	38	104.50
17-19 Sep	B/C	2.50	Hart Research	400	LV	55	137.50	43	107.50
18-20 Sep	C-	1.75	Change Research	262	LV	51	89.25	43	75.25
15-20 Sep	A+	4.25	ABC News/WaPo	579	LV	49	208.25	48	204.00
11-17 Sep	B-	2.75	Ipsos	565	LV	50	137.50	41	112.75
11-20 Sep	B/C	2.50	Morning Consult	907	LV	49	122.50	40	100.00
14-16 Sep		0.00	Fabrizio, Lee & Assoc.	800	LV	48	0.00	46	0.00

2. The weights and the weighted products are added (sums in blue and yellow, respectively):

Dates	Grade	Weight	Pollster	Size	Type	Kelly		McSally	
15-22 Sep	B-	2.75	Data for Progress	481	LV	47	129.25	38	104.50
17-19 Sep	B/C	2.50	Hart Research	400	LV	55	137.50	43	107.50
18-20 Sep	C-	1.75	Change Research	262	LV	51	89.25	43	75.25
15-20 Sep	A+	4.25	ABC News/WaPo	579	LV	49	208.25	48	204.00
11-17 Sep	B-	2.75	Ipsos	565	LV	50	137.50	41	112.75
11-20 Sep	B/C	2.50	Morning Consult	907	LV	49	122.50	40	100.00
14-16 Sep		0.00	Fabrizio, Lee & Assoc.	800	LV	48	0.00	46	0.00
		16.5					824.25		704.00

3. The sums of the weighted products are divided by the sum of the weights to get the weighted averages (in green):

Dates	Grade	Weight	Pollster	Size	Type	Kelly		McSally	
15-22 Sep	B-	2.75	Data for Progress	481	LV	47	129.25	38	104.50
17-19 Sep	B/C	2.50	Hart Research	400	LV	55	137.50	43	107.50
18-20 Sep	C-	1.75	Change Research	262	LV	51	89.25	43	75.25
15-20 Sep	A+	4.25	ABC News/WaPo	579	LV	49	208.25	48	204.00
11-17 Sep	B-	2.75	Ipsos	565	LV	50	137.50	41	112.75
11-20 Sep	B/C	2.50	Morning Consult	907	LV	49	122.50	40	100.00
14-16 Sep		0.00	Fabrizio, Lee & Assoc.	800	LV	48	0.00	46	0.00
		16.5					824.25		704.00
							49.9		42.7

As you can see, the poll of 14-16 September has no bearing on the weighted averages because 538 did not rate the poll.

So the weighted averages of the these six 538-rated polls in Arizona are:

- Kelly: 49.9
- McCally: 42.7

Appendix C: Polling Analysis Primer

At this point, polling is a primary metric being used for assessing the races. This section discusses how polling is used to make support recommendations.

Table 1, below, shows the weighted averages of all 538-rated polls in the six competitive races been followed going back to the beginning of June. As seen in column 4, Arizona and North Carolina have been polled extensively; Colorado and Montana, not so much; and Iowa and Maine are in the middle.

The column of interest is the third column, “Average Difference.” This is the difference in weighted averages between the Democratic challenger and the GOP incumbent based on the polls that were used. For example, in Arizona the Democratic challenger leads the GOP incumbent by 8.2% in the weighted averages of 28 polls going back to 16 July.

Using the methodology, Arizona and Colorado appear strong, Maine and North Carolina appear moderately strong, and Iowa and Montana appear borderline.

	Dem	GOP	Average Difference	No. of Polls	Earliest Poll Date
Arizona	50.3	42.1	8.2	30	16-Jul
Colorado	49.9	41.2	8.8	7	30-Jun
Iowa	45.6	42.7	2.9	14	10-Jun
Maine	47.0	41.9	5.1	16	3-Jul
Montana	44.8	46.9	-2.1	6	10-Jul
North Carolina	46.9	41.1	5.8	37	23-Jul

Table 1: Weighted Averages of All Polls Since June

As the election season enters the final stretch, however, it is not necessarily helpful to use polls from June, July, and August for assessing the races as they stand today.

Table 2, below, is based on just recent polls. “Recent polls” are considered to be the 10 most recent 538-rated polls, or all the 538-rated polls since the beginning of September, whichever is larger.

In some cases, like Arizona and North Carolina (both of which have been polled extensively) the 10 most recent polls were in September and they were used. Montana and Colorado have been polled much less frequently. In the month of September they had 1 and 2 polls, respectively. So those are what were used. Maine and Iowa were in the middle.

	Dem	GOP	Average Difference	No. of Polls	Earliest Poll Date
Arizona	49.7	42.5	7.2	10	11-Sep
Colorado	50.5	42.0	8.5	2	1-Sep
Iowa	46.2	42.8	3.4	6	17-Sep
Maine	46.9	41.3	5.6	7	5-Sep
Montana	44.0	45.0	-1.0	1	5-Sep
North Carolina	46.9	40.5	6.3	10	11-Sep

Table 2: Weighted Averages of Recent Polls

If we were to compare the average differences from recent polls to the average differences in all polls, we would get something like a trend. “Trend” should not be taken too literally, because the variance in the numbers of polls probably weakens that notion. But we can get a sense of which direction things are heading in.

Table 3, on the next page, makes that comparison. Table 3 compares the third columns of Tables 1 and 2, and shows the differences. The differences are shown in the column labeled “Change,” and again, they can be thought of as something like the trends in each race.

	Average Difference (All)	Average Difference (Recent)	Change
Arizona	8.2	7.2	-0.9
Colorado	8.8	8.5	-0.3
Iowa	2.9	3.4	0.5
Maine	5.1	5.6	0.5
Montana	-2.1	-1.0	1.1
North Carolina	5.8	6.3	0.6

Table 3: The Difference in Differences

As seen, the differences in the weighted averages in Arizona and Colorado have decreased. This suggests those races are tightening.

The differences in weighted averages in the rest have increased. This suggests those races are improving for Democrats.

For the purpose of assessing races with this data, consider the following:

Arizona: Although this race appears to have tightened, the Democratic lead is still a solid 7.2%.

Colorado: This race also appears to have tightened, but again the Democratic lead still remains strong at 8.5%.

Iowa: The Democratic lead here has increased by a small amount, but the weighted average difference is in toss-up territory at 3.4%.

Maine: The Democratic lead in Maine is also relatively strong at 5.6%, and it is moving in the right direction.

Montana: The change here, although small, is heading in the right direction.²

² Montana's current lead is misleading (pardon the pun). The sole Montana poll in September inadvertently included the Green Party candidate, Wendie Fredrickson, when in fact the Green Party had been taken out of the race. Ms. Fredrickson received 4% of the vote, and the conventional wisdom is that the Democratic candidate would have otherwise received all or most of this.

North Carolina: The Democratic lead here is relatively strong at 6.3%. Although last week it had diminished, this week it bounced back.

So based on this analysis, the current #1 and #2 recommendations for support are:

- Theresa Greenfield, in Iowa
- Governor Steve Bullock, in Montana

To be clear, the analysis of polling like this, in particular with such the wide range of polls taken, is not what anyone would consider scientific. But it seems to be a reasonable thing at this point.

Appendix D: Pundit Backgrounds and Descriptions

This information was mainly pulled from the organizations' web sites and Wikipedia.

Cook Political Report

The Cook Political Report is a Washington DC-based political newsletter founded by Charlie Cook in 1984. The publication is billed as "an independent, nonpartisan newsletter that analyzes elections and campaigns for the US House of Representatives, US Senate, Governors and President as well as American political trends."

According to *The Cook Political Report's* website, subscribers include "lobbyists, trade associations, corporations, labor unions, Members of Congress, political action committees and interest groups across the political spectrum." The newsletter also provides a limited amount of free information on its website for non-subscribers.

All Senate contests are rated, regardless of competitiveness on a seven-point scale; Solid Democrat, Likely Democrat, Lean Democrat, Toss-Up, Lean Republican, Likely Republican, and Solid Republican.

Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball

Sabato's Crystal Ball is a Charlottesville-based political newsletter run by the University of Virginia Center for Politics. The publication describes itself as "a comprehensive, nonpartisan political analysis and handicapping newsletter" that reports on presidential elections and every congressional and gubernatorial election. The *Crystal Ball's* race ratings are based on electoral history, polling, candidate quality, modeling, and reporting.

Sabato's Crystal Ball was established in 2002. Larry J. Sabato is the founder and director of the University of Virginia Center for Politics. He has been a guest on TV programs on Fox, CNN, and MSNBC, among others. He is the author and editor of over 24 books on U.S. politics.

Nathan Gonzales – Inside Elections

Inside Elections is a Washington DC-based political newsletter. The publication describes itself as providing "nonpartisan analysis of campaigns for Senate, House, governor and president" using quantitative and qualitative data and without endorsing candidates.

Nathan Gonzales is Editor & Publisher of Inside Elections, which provides nonpartisan analysis of campaigns for Senate, House, governor and president. He was an editor, analyst, and writer for The Rothenberg Political Report for more than 13 years before taking over the company in 2015.

Appendix E: Ranked Choice Voting Primer

Ballotpedia describes rank choice voting as follows:

1. Voters rank the candidates for a given office by preference on their ballots.
2. If a candidate wins an outright majority of first-preference votes (i.e., 50 percent plus one), he or she will be declared the winner.
3. If, on the other hand, no candidates win an outright majority of first-preference votes, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated.
4. All first-preference votes for the failed candidate are eliminated, lifting the second-preference choices indicated on those ballots.
5. A new tally is conducted to determine whether any candidate has won an outright majority of the adjusted voters.
6. The process is repeated until a candidate wins a majority of votes cast.

Imagine that five ballots were cast for three parties: Democrats, Republicans, and Greens.

Rank	Ballot 1	Ballot 2	Ballot 3	Ballot 4	Ballot 5
1	Democrat	Democrat	Republican	Republican	Green
2	Republican	Green	Green	Green	Democrat
3	Green	Republican	Democrat	Democrat	Republican

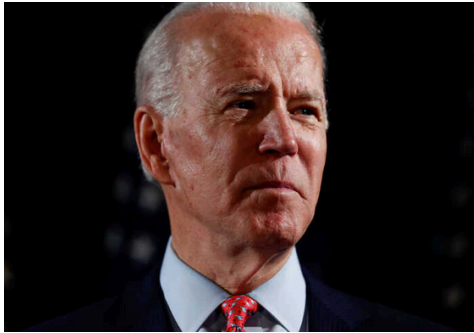
In the first round, Democrats and Republicans are tied with two first-preference votes each, and the Green Party has the fewest – i.e., one – first preference votes. So it is eliminated, and the second-preference vote on that ballot moves up.

Rank	Ballot 1	Ballot 2	Ballot 3	Ballot 4	Ballot 5
1	Democrat	Democrat	Republican	Republican	Democrat
2	Republican	Green	Green	Green	Republican
3	Green	Republican	Democrat	Democrat	

Now the Democratic candidate has three votes, and the Republican candidate has two votes. So the Democratic candidate wins.

Closing Thoughts

The country is breaking,
and I – alone – can't fix it...



Theresa Greenfield
Iowa



Gov. Steve Bullock
Montana

...I need a Democratic
Senate to help me.

Please support a swing
state Senate candidate.

This graphic was not approved by Joe Biden or the Biden campaign