



2026 Midterms Election Insight

Updated: September 10, 2026

Control of Congress is on the line as Republicans work to preserve their governing trifecta and Democrats seek a path back to the majority. Democratic success will depend on expanding the map and flipping seats in Republican-leaning districts and states, while both parties increasingly focus their resources on a narrow set of battleground races that will ultimately determine control of Congress.

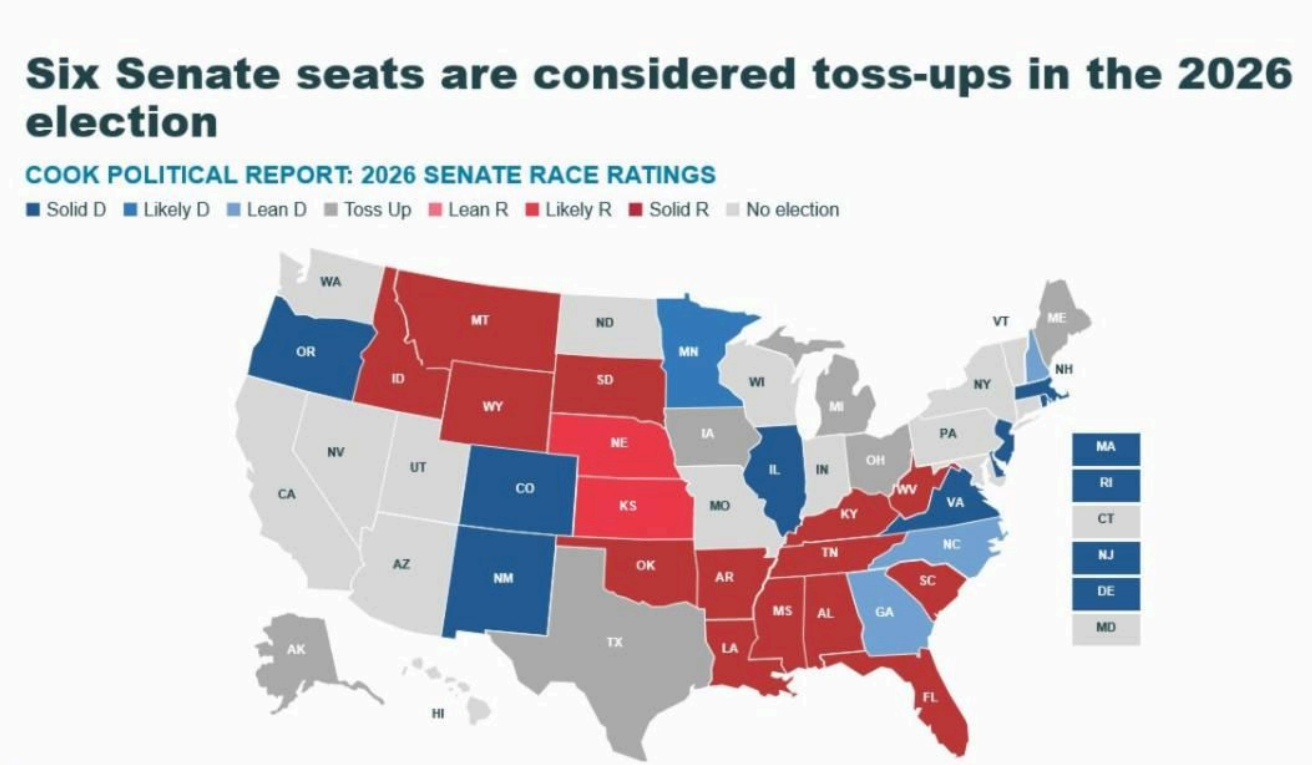


"Across the country, organizations aren't looking for partisan answers; they're looking for honest analysis, thoughtful guidance, and a clear understanding of how political and policy developments may impact their business. At Michael Best Strategies, our bipartisan team provides the balanced perspective and strategic insight clients need to navigate a rapidly changing political landscape and move forward with confidence."

Alison Prange, Managing Director of Michael Best Strategies

National Electoral Landscape

2026 Senate Seats

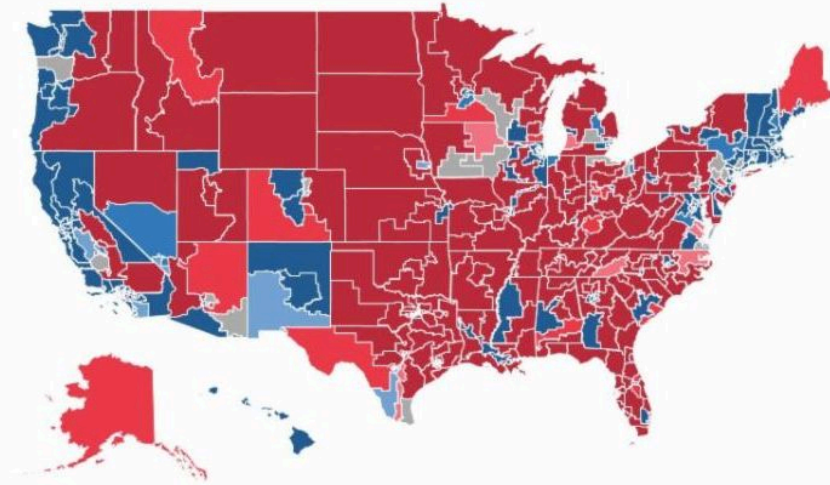


2026 House Seats

Twenty-one House seats are rated Toss Up in the 2026 elections

COOK POLITICAL REPORT: 2026 HOUSE RACE RATINGS

■ Solid D ■ Likely D ■ Lean D ■ Toss Up ■ Lean R ■ Likely R ■ Solid R



Hear From the Michael Best Strategies Team



Reince Priebus
Chairman, Board of Advisors



Steve Israel
Senior Counselor, Board of Advisors

"The battle for control of Congress will come down to a dozen or so highly competitive races where every vote matters. In many districts and states, the difference between victory and defeat could be measured in hundreds, not tens of thousands, of votes. With so much uncertainty remaining, organizations should avoid assuming any outcome and instead prepare for multiple scenarios heading into Election Day."

"While the political environment continues to evolve, it's important to remember that there is still significant time between now and Election Day. Both parties have opportunities to make their case to voters, and events at the national, state, and local levels will continue to shape the electoral landscape. History has shown that campaigns are rarely decided months in advance, which is why organizations should pay close attention to dynamics that will emerge in the final stretch."

Key Senate Races

State	Rating*	Why It Matters
Georgia Jon Ossoff (D) vs Mike Collins (R)	Lean D	Incumbent Sen. Jon Ossoff (D-GA) is defending one of Democrats' most vulnerable seats. Georgia remains a closely divided battleground and is likely to be one of the most expensive Senate races in the nation.
Michigan Mike Rodgers (R) vs Abdul El-Sayed (D)	Toss Up	The retirement of Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI) creates a highly competitive open seat in a true swing state. Both parties view Michigan as a top-tier race critical to Senate control.
North Carolina Roy Cooper (D) vs Michael Whatley (R)	Lean D	The retirement of Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC) creates one of the premier open-seat races of the cycle. This race is widely viewed as Democrats' best pickup opportunity.
Maine Susan Collins (R) vs Troy Jackson (D)	Toss Up	Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) seeks reelection in a state that often votes differently from the national political environment. Democrats continue to view Maine as a top pickup opportunity.
Texas James Talarico (D) vs Ken Paxton (R)	Toss Up	Ken Paxton must defend a seat in a state Republicans still strongly favor, but Democrats see an opportunity to force Republicans to spend resources in a traditionally safe state.
Iowa Ashley Hinson (R) vs Josh Turek (D)	Toss Up	Sen. Joni Ernst's retirement has transformed Iowa into a potential battleground. Open-seat dynamics and competitive candidates on both sides have elevated the race's national profile.

New Hampshire Chris Pappas (D) vs John Sununu (R)	Lean D	Sen. Jeanne Shaheen's retirement creates a competitive open-seat contest in a state that continues to play an outsized role in Senate majority calculations.
--	--------	--

*Rating is generated by Cook Political Report

SOLID D 9 DEM • 0 GOP	LIKELY D 1 DEM • 0 GOP	LEAN D 2 DEM • 1 GOP	TOSS UP 1 DEM • 5 GOP	LEAN R 0 DEM • 0 GOP	LIKELY R 0 DEM • 2 GOP	SOLID R 0 DEM • 14 GOP
Hickenlooper (CO) Coons (DE) Durbin (IL) Markey (MA) Booker (NJ) Luján (NM) Merkley (OR) Reed (RI) Warner (VA)	Smith (MN)	Ossoff (GA) Shaheen (NH) Tillis (NC)	Peters (MI) Sullivan (AK) Collins (ME) Husted (OH) Cornyn (TX) Ernst (IA)		Ricketts (NE) Marshall (KS)	Tuberville (AL) Cotton (AR) Moody (FL) Risch (ID) McConnell (KY) Cassidy (LA) Hyde-Smith (MS) Daines (MT) Mullin (OK) Graham (SC) Rounds (SD) Hagerty (TN) Capito (WV) Lummis (WY)
Democratic-held seat Republican-held seat Incumbent not seeking reelection						

Source: National Journal Presentation Center

Michael Best Strategies Analysis

The path to Senate control runs through a narrow set of battleground states. Democrats must protect key seats in Georgia and Michigan while capitalizing on pickup opportunities in North Carolina and Maine. At the same time, competitive contests in Texas, Ohio, Iowa, and New Hampshire will test each party's ability to expand the map and could prove decisive in determining the Senate majority.



Key House Races

District	Rating*	Why It Matters
MI-07 Tom Barrett (R) vs William Lawrence (D)	Toss Up	Given the district's history of narrow margins and its overlap with the Michigan Senate battleground, both parties are expected to heavily invest in the race.
PA-07 Ryan Mackenzie (R) vs Robert Brooks (D)	Toss Up	The suburban district has frequently been targeted by both parties and is likely to serve as a bellwether for broader voter sentiment in the Northeast.

CA-13 Adam Gray (D) vs Kevin Lincoln (R)	Lean D	Located in California's Central Valley, the 13th District remains highly competitive and is viewed as a critical component of Democrats' path to regaining House seats.
AZ-01 Amish Shah (D) vs Thomas Feely (R)	Toss Up	Arizona's 1st District remains one of the most competitive districts in the Southwest. With Arizona continuing to be a key political battleground, both parties view this seat as essential to their House majority strategy.
NC-01 Don Davis (D) vs Laurie Buckhout (R)	Lean R	North Carolina's 1st District is expected to remain competitive despite recent redistricting and demographic changes. National party committees are likely to devote substantial resources to the race given its importance to the overall House map.
NE-02 Denise Powell (D) vs Brinker Harding (R)	Lean D	Nebraska's 2nd District continues to be one of the most politically competitive districts in the Midwest. As a district that routinely draws national attention in both congressional and presidential elections, it remains a high-priority target for both parties.

*Rating is generated by Cook Political Report

LIKELY D 12 DEM • 0 GOP	LEAN D 7 DEM • 2 GOP	TOSS UP 5 DEM • 16 GOP	LEAN R 2 DEM • 5 GOP	LIKELY R 4 DEM • 16 GOP
CA-45 Tran	CA-13 Gray	AZ-01 OPEN (Schweikert)	FL-22 OPEN (Frankel)	AK-AL Begich III
CA-21 Costa	CA-48 OPEN (Issa)	AZ-06 Ciscomani	IA-02 OPEN (Hinson)	AL-02 Figures
IN-01 Mrvan	NE-02 OPEN (Bacon)	CA-22 Valadao	MI-04 Huizenga	AZ-02 Crane
MI-08 McDonald Rivet	NM-02 Vasquez	CO-08 Evans	NC-01 Davis	CO-03 Hurd
MN-02 OPEN (Craig)	NV-03 Lee	FL-14 Castor	NC-11 Edwards	CO-05 Crank
NH-01 OPEN (Pappas)	NY-03 Suozzi	FL-25 Moskowit	TX-15 De La Cruz	FL-07 Mills
NJ-09 Pou	NY-04 Gillen	IA-01 Miller-Meeks	VA-01 Wittman	FL-09 Soto
NV-01 Titus	OH-01 Landsman	IA-03 Nunn		FL-13 Luna
NV-04 Horsford	TX-28 Cuellar	MI-07 Barrett		FL-27 Salazar
NY-19 Riley		MI-10 OPEN (James)		KY-06 OPEN (Barr)
OH-13 Sykes		NJ-07 Kean Jr.		ME-02 OPEN (Golden)
VA-07 Vindman		NY-17 Lawler		MN-01 Finstad
		OH-07 Miller		MT-01 OPEN (Zinke)
		OH-09 Kaptur		OH-10 Turner
		PA-07 Mackenzie		OH-15 Carey
		PA-08 Bresnahan		PA-01 Fitzpatrick
		PA-10 Perry		SC-01 OPEN (Mace)
		TX-34 Gonzalez		TX-23 VACANT
		VA-02 Kiggans		TX-35 OPEN (Casar)
		WA-03 Perez		WI-01 Steil
		WI-03 Van Orden		

Democratic-held seat
Republican-held seat
Freshman member

Source: National Journal Presentation Center

Michael Best Strategies Analysis

Control of the House is likely to be decided in a relatively small number of highly competitive districts concentrated in suburban and exurban communities. Michigan, Pennsylvania, Arizona, North Carolina, California, and Nebraska will serve as key testing grounds for voter attitudes on economic conditions, immigration, healthcare, and the Trump Administration. While dozens of districts will be contested, a handful of seats such as MI-07, PA-07, CA-13, and AZ-01 are likely to emerge as the true tipping-point races that determine House control.



Policy and Industry Impacts

Across all sectors, the most significant impact of the 2026 midterm elections may not be the passage of major new legislation, but rather shifts in committee leadership, oversight priorities, federal funding decisions, and the broader policy agenda heading into the second half of the presidential term. For many industries, congressional investigations and regulatory oversight could prove as consequential as legislative action itself.

Trade

Trade policy will remain a major focus regardless of which party controls Congress, though priorities and approaches could diverge significantly. Republicans are likely to emphasize trade enforcement, tariff authorities, supply chain security, and efforts to counter China's economic influence through measures such as Section 301 tariffs, investment screening, and reshoring incentives. Democrats are expected to emphasize labor standards, supply chain resiliency, and the affordability implications of trade policy, while raising concerns about the economic impact of unilateral tariffs on U.S. consumers and businesses. Despite these differences, bipartisan support for domestic manufacturing, economic security, and strengthening critical supply chains is likely to keep trade at the forefront of the congressional agenda following the 2026 midterms.



[See the Michael Best Strategies Trade Alert](#)



Energy

Election outcomes could significantly influence congressional oversight of energy and environmental policy. Republicans are expected to prioritize domestic energy production, permitting reform, grid reliability, and energy security, while continuing efforts to streamline project development and strengthen U.S. energy independence. Democrats are expected to emphasize restoring clean energy incentives reduced by recent legislation, supporting renewable energy deployment, and scrutinizing administration actions that have affected wind, solar, and other energy infrastructure projects. Despite differing approaches, both parties are likely to remain focused on meeting rising electricity demand, modernizing energy infrastructure, and strengthening domestic supply chains critical to long-term energy security.

Defense

Defense policy is likely to remain a bipartisan priority following the 2026 midterms, though debates over spending levels and oversight could become more pronounced. Republicans are expected to advocate for increased investments in military readiness, shipbuilding, munitions production, and strategic competition with China, while supporting efforts to strengthen the defense industrial base. Democrats are likely to emphasize defense modernization, emerging technologies, cybersecurity, and increased oversight of defense procurement and contracting practices, while scrutinizing military engagements abroad and broader national security strategy. Congressional leadership and Armed Services Committee priorities will play a key role in shaping future authorization, appropriations, and oversight activities.



Manufacturing

Manufacturing policy will remain closely tied to supply chain resilience, trade policy, workforce development, and domestic production incentives. Republicans are likely to continue emphasizing reshoring efforts, regulatory relief, and trade enforcement measures, particularly concerning China. Democrats may focus on strengthening domestic manufacturing through targeted federal investments, workforce initiatives, and clean-energy supply chain programs. Both parties are expected to support efforts that enhance U.S. competitiveness, strengthen critical supply chains, and expand domestic production capacity.

Healthcare

Healthcare policy will continue to be shaped by committee leadership, congressional oversight, and broader fiscal debates following the 2026 midterms. Republicans are likely to focus on reducing regulatory burdens, increasing scrutiny of federal healthcare spending, and advancing targeted reforms related to drug pricing, insurance markets, and healthcare transparency. Democrats are expected to prioritize protecting and strengthening the Affordable Care Act, restoring enhanced premium subsidies, lowering prescription drug costs, and expanding access to affordable healthcare coverage. Regardless of the outcome, policymakers in both parties are likely to remain focused on PBM reform, healthcare workforce shortages, and improving patient access to care, although significant differences will persist regarding the federal government's role in the healthcare system.



State-Level Insights

Michael Best Strategies publishes weekly Wisconsin Capitol Insights and Illinois Capitol Insights reports to help clients stay informed on emerging legislative priorities, regulatory developments, and political trends at the state level.

[View State Insights](#)



Michael Best Strategies | 1000 Maine Avenue SW Suite 400 | Washington, DC 20024 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!