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2026 Midterm Elections Analysis

November 4, 2026; Updated November 18, 2026

At A Glance

Balance of Power: Democrats will control both the Senate and the House, with margins of 12 votes in the Senate and at least 79 votes in the House.

- **Senate:** Democrats will hold **56** seats while Republicans hold **44.** Democrats flipped **nine** seats: Alaska, Iowa, Kansas, North Carolina, Maine, Mississippi, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas.
- **House:** At least **257** Democratic seats vs. **171** Republican seats. The largest Democratic majority since 2008.
- **States:** Democrats flipped governorships **6 states:** Alaska, Georgia, Iowa, Nevada, Ohio, and Texas, and now have at least 20 trifectas, up from 16. In total, there will be **30** Democratic governors and **20** Republican governors.

Races not yet called

- **House:** Approximately 7 races, including Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), senior Republican on the Rules Committee, who has requested a recall.

Executive Summary

In a stunning rebuke of President Trump's policies, the 2026 mid-term election results resoundingly place Democrats in control of both the House and Senate in the next Congress. The Senate will have 56 Democrats and 44 Republicans. Democrats flipped nine Senate seats including Alaska, Iowa, Kansas, North Carolina, Maine, Mississippi, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas, while keeping contested seats in Michigan, Minnesota and New Hampshire. While there are 7 House races still uncalled, the new Democratic House Majority will have over 257 seats, the largest Democratic majority since 2008. This equates to at least a 79-86 seat majority. Democratic wins were not contained to Congressional races, Democrats also won governor races in Alaska, Georgia, Iowa, Nevada, Ohio, and Texas, putting Democrats at the helm of the majority of states for the first time since 2010.

We explore below what the House and Senate leadership will look like in the wake of these Democratic victories, as well as what to expect in the lame duck and how Democrats will attempt to translate victories at the ballot box to meaningful policy changes on Capitol Hill. Congress is back in Washington with a full agenda including voting on party leadership and Committee assignments, addressing the upcoming December 11 Continuing Resolution expiration, and passing a handful of expiring health care extenders. Other legislation waiting in the wings includes extending the debt ceiling, passing the annual defense authorization legislation, hospital price transparency provisions, children's online safety, college-sports legislation, permitting reform and the expired Agriculture bill. With such an overwhelming electoral victory Democrats will be less inclined to compromise on big pieces of legislation and only pass the essentials. The Republicans, however, will be eager to accomplish as much as they can while still in the majority, definitively advancing a package of nominations including the Surgeon General and SAMHSA Director, and potentially attempting another reconciliation package.

Looking ahead to the next Congress, the electorate delivered a mandate for Congress to address the affordability crisis affecting Americans. The overwhelmingly decisive victory of the Democrats puts them in a position to pass meaningful reform out of the House, but without a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate and Donald Trump still in the White House, passing large pieces of legislation will require bipartisanship. In an interview with the New York Times on election night, President Trump stated that he was prepared to accept the election results and would work with the new Democratic Congress. However, few expect the President to welcome Congress dismantling his legislative achievements or accept the intense scrutiny his Administration will face by Congressional oversight committees. More likely, Democrats will spend much of the next two years passing what they can, laying the groundwork for legislation to be advanced during future Congresses, and clearly articulating why Democrats need to control the House, Senate, and White House in 2029. The 2028 presidential election cycle has also officially begun.

Congress

U.S. Senate

The Senate is poised to look very different in January, with 19 new Senators. In addition to the 9 new Democratic Senators from former red states, there will be new Democrats representing Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and New Hampshire while new Republicans will take over Senate seats in Alabama, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Montana, Wyoming, and Kentucky.

On a leadership level, Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has been expected to return to his position as Majority Leader but is being challenged by Senator Chris Van Hallen (D-MD). Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI) is expected to fill retiring Senator Dick Durbin's position of Majority Whip.

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Additionally, Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Cory Booker (D-NJ) have both expressed interest in filling the open position of Chair of Steering and Policy Committee following Senator Amy Klobuchar's election to be Governor of Minnesota. The Senate Democrats will hold their party leadership elections on December 1. As the Senate is a few seats shy of a filibuster-proof majority, and President Trump in the White House, the Majority Leader will need to keep the party unified and work across the aisle to achieve legislative victories. Senator John Fetterman (D-PA) has increasingly sided with Republicans on key votes and could continue to be a thorn in Senator Schumer's side as he tries to keep the caucus united.

On the Republican side, Senator John Thune (R-SD) was elected as the Minority Leader on November 10, with Senator John Barrasso (R-WY) as the minority whip. The smaller Republican caucus is poised to be more conservative, without key Senate moderates Susan Collins, Bill Cassidy, and Thom Tillis. Republican Senators known to work across the aisle such as Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), John Curtis (R-UT), and Josh Hawley (R-MO) will be heavily sought after by Democrats wanting to achieve bipartisan legislative victories.

House of Representatives

With at least 257 Democratic seats, the House of Representatives will see significant changes in the 120th Congress. House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) won the Democratic nomination for Speaker of the House on November 18, with Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA) set to be Majority Leader and Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-CA) set to take over as Majority Whip. Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO) is running for Assistant Speaker. With a 79-86 seat majority, the Democratic leadership has room to lose members on big votes, a luxury current Speaker Mike Johnson did not experience. Still, Leader Jeffries will be tested as he tries to keep the broad diversity of views across the Democratic party united.

On the Republican side, current House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan (R-OH) was elected as Minority Leader on November 10, beating out current Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-LA). .

The tables below capture likely leadership.

Table 1. Congressional Leadership

	Democrats	Republicans
Senate	Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) or Sen. Chris Van Hallen (D-MD), *Senate Majority Leader* Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI) *Senate Majority Whip*	Sen. John Thune (R-SD), *Senate Minority Leader* Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY) *Minority Whip*
House	Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), *House Speaker*	Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), *House Minority Leader*

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Key Health Committee Leadership Changes

On the Committee level in the Senate, little is expected to change in terms of the Democrats leading Committees, but there will be new Republican leadership on the HELP, Appropriations, Budget, Judiciary, and Rules Committees. Additionally, there will be significant changes to the makeup of the Committees, both with a large turnover of members and Democrats gaining an additional seat or two on each Committee.

Table 2. Key Senate Committees

Committee	Chair	Ranking Member
Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee	TBD. Watch Sens. Michael Bennet (D-CO), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and Cory Booker (D-NJ)	Sen. John Boozman (R-AR)
Appropriations Committee	Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA)	Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) or Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS). *Moran formally confirmed that he is challenging Murkowski on Nov. 12.*
Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee	Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)	Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)
Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs	Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)	Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC), *unless he serves as Ranking Member on the Senate HELP Committee*
Budget Committee	Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)	TBD (watch Sens. Mike Lee (R-UT), Ron Johnson (R-WI), and John Kennedy (R-LA))
Finance Committee	Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)	Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID)
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee	Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT)	Rand Paul (R-KY), Sens. Josh Hawley (R-MO), Tim Scott (R-SC), or Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
Judiciary Committee	Sen. Whitehouse (D-RI)	Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT), *but could not also serve as Ranking Member on the Budget Committee*

Table 3. Key House Committees

	Chair	Ranking Member
Agriculture Committee	Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA) or Rep. Shontel Brown (D-OH)	Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-PA) or Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA)
Appropriations Committee	Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)	Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK)
Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee	Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)	Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL)
Budget Committee	Rep. Brendan Boyle (D-PA)	Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R-PA) or Rep. Blake Moore (R-UT)[DJ1.1]

Education and Workforce Committee	Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-CT), or Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)	Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI)
Ed & Workforce HELP Subcommittee	Rep. Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA)	Rep. Rick Allen (R-GA)
Energy and Commerce Committee	Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ)	Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY)
E&C Health Subcommittee	Rep. Kathy Castor (D-FL) or Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA)[DJ2.1]	Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-VA)
Financial Services Committee	Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA), Rep. Sean Casten (D-IL) or Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL)	Rep. French Hill (R-AR)
Homeland Security Committee	Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS)	Rep. Andrew Garbarino (R-NY)[DJ4.1]
Judiciary Committee	Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD)	Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), *unless he is elected Minority Leader position*
Oversight and Government Reform Committee	Rep. Robert Garcia (D-CA)	Rep. James Comer (R-KY)
Rules Committee	Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA)	TBD. Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC) *had requested a recount as of November 17*
Ways & Means	Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA)	Rep. Jason Smith (R-MO)
Ways & Means Health Subcommittee	TBD. Possibly Rep. Terri Sewell (D-AL). *Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA) lost his reelection.*	TBD. Watch Reps. Adrian Smith (R-NE) and Mike Kelly (R-PA)

Key State Developments

The midterms also brought significant change at the state level, with Democratic gains in governorships, attorney general offices and legislatures that will shape Medicaid coverage, implementation of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1), and legal challenges to federal actions, including:

- **Governor's races**: Democrats flipped six governorships from Republicans, including Georgia (Keisha Lance Bottoms), Iowa (Rob Sand), Nevada (Aaron Ford), Ohio (Amy Acton), Texas (Gina Hinojosa) and Alaska (Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins).
- **Attorney General races**: Voters flipped **five** attorney general seats from Republican to Democrat in GA, IA, TX, OH and KS. This is likely to impact state-led legislation against certain components of regulations implementing H.R. 1 as well as other legal challenges to administrative actions.

- **Trifectas and Supermajorities**: Democrats entered election days with 16 trifectas (state governor + control of both the state House and state Senate) and now have 22 with the addition of AZ, MI, MN, NV, PA, and WI. In addition to increasing Democratic trifectas, votes broke or prevented Republican supermajorities in nine legislative chambers across IA, IN, FL, KS, MO, NC, and SC. Republicans hold trifectas in 17 states.
- **Medicaid expansion**: Election results in Georgia, Wisconsin, Kansas and Texas increase the chance that those states could adopt full Medicaid expansion. Georgia and Wisconsin have both partially expanded Medicaid but could adopt full expansion, a platform each of the newly elected governors ran on. In her victory speech, Governor elect Keisha Lance Bottoms reaffirmed her commitment, stating, "This win is for the caregiver who can't afford health care and needs Georgia to finally expand Medicaid." With Democratic control, Kansas and Texas may also pursue Medicaid expansion.
- **Medicaid work requirements implementation**: The election of Democratic governors in AZ, CA, CO, CT, GA, HI, IL, IA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, NV, NM, NY, OH, OR, PA, RI, and WI will shape Medicaid work requirements implementation as these leaders are likely to maximize the discretion available to them when implementing requirements thus minimizing coverage losses.

Looking Ahead

Lame Duck Session

With the Democrats overwhelming victories, they will be inclined to compromise as little as possible in the lame duck period, preferring to wait until January when they have more favorable margins and can set their own policy agendas. The Republicans, on the other hand, will have a bigger appetite for legislative action, including potentially attempting to move a third reconciliation package to address the debt ceiling and defense spending. But the reality is, time is short, and the Republicans could easily face attendance issues making their already slim majority even slimmer. Further, as newly elected Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown was elected to fill Vice President J.D. Vance's seat, he could be seated as soon as December 15, prior to the end of the 119th Congress, which would shrink the current Republican majority in the Senate. At a minimum, Congress will need to pass FY 2027 appropriations before the continuing resolution expires on December 11 to avoid a government shutdown. The outgoing majority may push to finish full-year appropriations while it still holds the gavels, particularly outgoing Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins and other retiring/defeated members who would like to see legacy items funded. There is still no agreement on top-line appropriations spending levels, however, making agreement difficult. The result could be an omnibus, another stopgap, a mix of the two, or even a potential shutdown.

Lawmakers will also need to act on several public health programs, including community health centers, and Medicare payment policies before they expire at the end of the year. A number of health care bills that have advanced out of committee with bipartisan support could also be attached

to a year-end funding package. Examples include transparency bills, such as the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act of 2026 (H.R. 9393) and the Patients Deserve Price Tags Act (S. 2355), as well as drug competition and pricing bills, such as the Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act (S. 1041) and INSULIN Act of 2026 (S. 4189). Other bills and policy areas may be considered as well.

The possibility has also been mentioned that the Senate could abandon attempts to move legislation and use the lame duck to confirm one, if not two, Supreme Court Justice seats. If Justices Alito and Thomas were to immediately retire, the Republican majority could use the remaining two months to confirm Trump appointees to the Supreme Court, thereby solidifying the conservative majority for years to come. Justices are confirmed with a 51-vote majority. This would be a huge effort and would dominate the Senate's agenda, but Senate Majority Leader Thune has stated it is possible.

2027-2028 Outlook

Incoming House Speaker Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) plans to hit the ground running with an ambitious affordability and oversight agenda for the first 100 hours, first 100 days, and first year of the 120th Congress. At the top of their healthcare affordability list will be votes to permanently restore enhanced premium tax credits for the ACA marketplace and reverse health care cuts in H.R. 1. What is less clear is how the Democratic leadership will go about advancing legislation towards universal coverage. The divisions between Democrats who prefer Medicare for All and those who prefer more incremental approaches set up a tricky balancing act for leadership. Neither Senator Schumer nor Leader Jeffries has stated a plan for universal coverage, though we can expect committees of jurisdiction, particularly incoming HELP Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders (I-VT), to address the issue. Momentum has definitively grown and 2027 is likely to include extensive work to pursue universal coverage.

Oversight of the Trump administration will also be a top priority for Democrats. Their oversight agenda will focus on HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s changes to vaccine policy, implementation of H.R. 1, such as Medicaid work requirements and Marketplace coverage, Medicare drug price negotiation, safeguarding appropriated funds for research, and other issues.

Beyond partisan priorities, Congress could also act on issues with bipartisan support, such as addressing the No Surprises Act, including concerns about the independent dispute resolution process, and reforming Medicare physician payment. There could also be an effort to restrict health care consolidation and limit private equity acquisitions of health care facilities, and an effort to make telehealth benefits permanent under Medicare. A key question will be how to pay for these policies. One potential offset is legislation to increase funding for the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program at HHS. The Senate version (S. 5326) has bipartisan support and estimated to save at least $45 billion, while the House bill (H.R. 9811) has only Republican backing. Other options include establishing site neutral payments to equalize reimbursement rates for identical outpatient services regardless of whether they are performed in a hospital outpatient department,

an ambulatory surgical center, or an independent physician office. Further reductions to hospital payments will be politically difficult, however.

Looking further ahead, Senate Finance Democrats will continue to lay the groundwork for longer-term action on their top priorities: prescription drug pricing, health coverage, and long-term care. Next steps could include release white papers and/or legislation. The path forward for that work will likely depend on the 2028 elections, particularly whether Democrats win the White House and retain control of Congress. We can also expect HELP Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders to continue to address high health care costs and pharmaceutical profits, as well as workforce policy. Finally, in a statement Wednesday, Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) promised a committee agenda for the Energy and Commerce Committee focused on lowering health care costs and holding Trump administration officials accountable for "widespread and blatant corruption that's ripping off the American people."

Milestones from Election Night 2026

Beyond partisan outcomes, the 2026 elections marked one of the most significant expansions of representation in modern U.S. political history, delivering the nation's first Black female governor, first Native American female governor, first openly gay male senator, first Native American female senator, first Muslim senator, record numbers of women governors, and more than 100 women serving in the House for the first time.

Historic milestones from the 2026 midterms include:

- **Keisha Lance Bottoms (Georgia)** became the **first Black woman ever elected governor of a U.S. state**, a historic breakthrough in a nation that had previously elected only Black male governors.
- **Deb Haaland (New Mexico)** became the **first Native American woman elected governor** in U.S. history, adding another first to a career that previously included being one of the first Native women elected to Congress and the first Native American Cabinet secretary.
- **Chris Pappas (New Hampshire)** became the **first openly gay man elected to the U.S. Senate**, marking a major milestone for LGBTQ+ representation at the federal level.
- **Peggy Flanagan (Minnesota)** became the **first Native American woman elected to the U.S. Senate**, a landmark moment for Indigenous representation in Congress.
- **Abdul El-Sayed (Michigan)** became the **first Muslim elected to the U.S. Senate**, expanding religious diversity in the chamber.
- **Gina Hinojosa (Texas)** became the **first Latina governor of Texas**, breaking a barrier in one of the nation's largest and most diverse states.

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- **Xavier Becerra (California)** became the **first elected Latino governor of California**, a milestone in a state where Latinos make up a large share of the population.
- **Byron Donalds (Florida)** became **Florida's first Black governor**.
- **David Crowley (Wisconsin)** became **Wisconsin's first Black governor**.
- The election produced a **record number of women governors**, with at least **17 women set to serve as governor in 2027**, breaking the previous national record.
- For the **first time in U.S. history, more than 100 Democratic women will serve simultaneously in the U.S. House of Representatives**, a milestone years in the making for women's political representation.
- At least **116 Democratic women will serve in Congress**, setting a new record for women's representation at the federal level.
- The 2026 election set a new record for **Black women serving in statewide executive offices**, with at least **18 Black women elected statewide** across the country.
- If Democrats formally organize the next House majority as expected, **Hakeem Jeffries** would become the **first Black Speaker of the House** in U.S. history.

Key Dates

The 120th Congress will be sworn in on January 3, 2027, the House and Senate will finalize committee assignments and leadership positions January 3-9, 2027, and President Trump will begin the final two year of the current presidential term alongside the new Democratic Congress on January 20, 2027.