

2020 Election Highlights

House Democratic Majority Narrows, Republicans Hold the Senate (for now), Presidency Still Unknown

November 2020

Topline Observations

- ◆ 2020 voter turnout is expected to hit a historic high. Between 157 to 165 million people (roughly 2/3 of eligible voters) are projected to have cast ballots. Already, over 145 million votes have been counted and turnout has exceeded 2016 levels in 42 states.
- ◆ With a potential Biden White House, GOP-controlled Senate and narrower House Democratic majority, legislation will necessarily have to reflect a centrist agenda from each party.
- ◆ Any serious consideration of a progressive agenda ending the Senate filibuster or expanding the number of seats on the Supreme Court is unlikely.
- ◆ Additional COVID relief in addition to completion of the fiscal year 2021 appropriations bills could be high on the priority list when Congress returns for a lame duck session next week.
- ◆ The prospects for an infrastructure bill next Congress are good given bipartisan interest and action already taken in both Houses of Congress; however, paying for it remains the single biggest hurdle.

Senate

While several races have yet to be called, it appears the U.S. Senate will remain in Republican hands. The final margin is yet to be determined, but Democrats currently have a net gain of one seat – John Hickenlooper defeated Cory Gardner in Colorado and Mark Kelly defeated Martha McSally in Arizona; however, Doug Jones lost to Tommy Tuberville in Alabama. The Alaska race is still close, but it appears there will be two runoffs in Georgia on January 5 to that could determine control of the chamber, with Kelly Loeffler facing Raphael Warnock and David Perdue facing Jon Ossoff. Notably, former House Agriculture Committee member Roger Marshall defeated Barbara Bollier for the open Kansas seat and Joni Ernst and Steve Daines held onto their seats in Iowa and Montana, respectively.

- ◆ Senate organization is unlikely until mid-January due in part to the Georgia runoff elections.
- ◆ With a narrower divide, potential cabinet members are unlikely to be drawn from the Senate.
- ◆ Potential Biden Administration cabinet appointments with extreme views are unlikely to be confirmed by a GOP-controlled Senate.
- ◆ Significant changes to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act are unlikely with the GOP remaining in control.
- ◆ Given the mutual respect and working relationship between Senator John Boozman (R-AR) and Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), prospects for Child Nutrition Reauthorization have improved (Senator Boozman co-chairs the Senate Hunger Caucus).

House

Despite predictions saying Democrats would pick up between 15 and 20 seats in the House, Republicans are actually poised to gain at least six seats. The House Democratic Caucus will hold its leadership elections on November 18 and 19 while the House Republican Conference will hold its leadership elections on November 17.

- ◆ On the House Agriculture Committee, four Democrats have either lost or are behind: Collin Peterson (MN-7), Anthony Brindisi (NY-22) and Xochitl Torres Small (NM-2) have lost and TJ Cox (CA-21) is still behind.
- ◆ The new House Agriculture Committee Chairman will set the agenda as a new age dawns after the departure of Collin Peterson. Peterson, Ranking Member Mike Conaway and Senate Chairman Pat Roberts had a combined 18 years of chairmanship experience.
- ◆ House Agriculture Committee Democrats Abigail Spanberger (VA-7), Kim Schrier (WA-8), Antonio Delgado (NY-19), Tom O'Halleran (AZ-1) and Sean Patrick Maloney (NY-18) all appear to be on their way to re-election but the races have not been officially called.
- ◆ Other notable results show Republican Ashley Hinson defeated incumbent Abby Finkenauer (IA-1) and Republican Randy Feenstra defeated J.S. Scholten to win the seat formerly held by Rep. Steve King (IA-4). Democrat Rita Hart and Republi-

can Miller-Meeks are dead even in the race to replace Dave Loebsack (IA-2).

- ◆ House Democrats are holding Committee Chair elections the week of November 30. Republicans have not yet announced a date.

Competitive Agriculture Committee Races

District	Incumbent	Challenger/ Replacement	Status
MN-07	Collin Peterson	Michelle Fischbach	Flip
NY-22	Anthony Brindisi	Claudia Tenny	Flip
NM-02	Xochitl Torres Small	Yvette Herrell	Flip
CA-21	TJ Cox	David Valadao	Potential Flip
VA-07	Abigail Spanberger	Nick Freitas	Spanberger Ahead
WA-08	Kim Schrier	Jesse Jensen	Schrier Ahead
NY-19	Antonio Delgado	Kyle Van De Water	Delgado Ahead
AZ-01	Tom O'Halleran	Tiffany Shedd	O'Halleran Ahead
NY-18	Sean Patrick Maloney	Chele Farley	Maloney Ahead
MN-02	Angie Craig	Tyler Kistner	Held
IA-03	Cindy Axne	David Young	Held
IL-17	Cheri Bustos	Esther Joy King	Held
ME-01	Chellie Pingree	Jay Allen	Held
IL-13	Rodney Davis	Betsy Dirksen Londrigan	Held
MN-01	Jim Hagedorn	Dan Feehan	Held
TX-11	Mike Conaway (Retiring)	August Pfluger	Replaced/Same Party
FL-03	Ted Yoho (Retiring)	Kat Cammack	Replaced/Same Party
KS-01	Roger Marshall (Senate)	Tracey Mann	Replaced/Same Party
LA-05	Ralph Abraham (Retiring)	Luke Letlow v Lance Harris	Runoff on Dec. 5

Impact on Redistricting

Following large gains in state legislatures during the 2010 election, Republicans across the country were positioned to control the redrawing of congressional districts. This led Democrats to place emphasis this election on flipping Republican-held state legislative chambers ahead of the next round of redistricting.

- ◆ Arizona, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin were among the top priorities for Democrats as well as the Sun Belt states of Florida, Georgia, and Texas.
- ◆ Independent commissions or nonpartisan legislative staffs redraw districts: Arizona (9 seats, likely gain 1), Iowa (4 seats), and Michigan (14, likely lose 1).

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- ◆ State legislatures redraw districts: Minnesota (8, likely lose 1), North Carolina (13, likely gain 1), Pennsylvania (18, likely lose 1), Wisconsin (8 seats), Florida (27, likely gain 2), Georgia (14 seats), and Texas (36, likely gain 3).
 - ◆ While some races remain to be called, it looks like Michigan, Iowa, and Texas Houses will stay in Republican hands.
 - ◆ The only two state legislatures that changed balance of power flipped to the GOP. Specifically, the New Hampshire state Senate and the Alaska state House.
 - ◆ Republicans will control both chambers in 24 of the 36 states that draw US Congressional districts. Overall, the GOP will control at least 59 of 98 state chambers.
 - ◆ 124 congressional seats in 10 states are drawn by a commission, whereas Republican legislatures will control redistricting for 181 congressional districts and Democratic legislatures will oversee redistricting of 76 districts.