

ELECTION 2024 FORECAST

SUMMER EDITION

HBS

HUSCH BLACKWELL STRATEGIES



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The 2024 national campaign has already been one for the political record books and most observers believe the presidential debate aftermath, the failed attempt on Donald Trump's life, and President Biden's withdrawal from the race has launched the national election onto a different course, but is the contest fundamentally changed?

While Democrats appear united behind Vice President Kamala Harris, and the polls are at least giving their new presumptive nominee and early bump, it is still a bit too early to see what effect all of the directional changes will have over the election campaign's trajectory. We do know, however, that the battleground map has grown to the point of seeing several unlikely states venturing into the cusp of competitiveness.

In addition to the presidency, the Senate and House majorities are in play and the razor thin margins we see in both national legislative chambers may well remain, but which party claims control of each body remains a question mark.

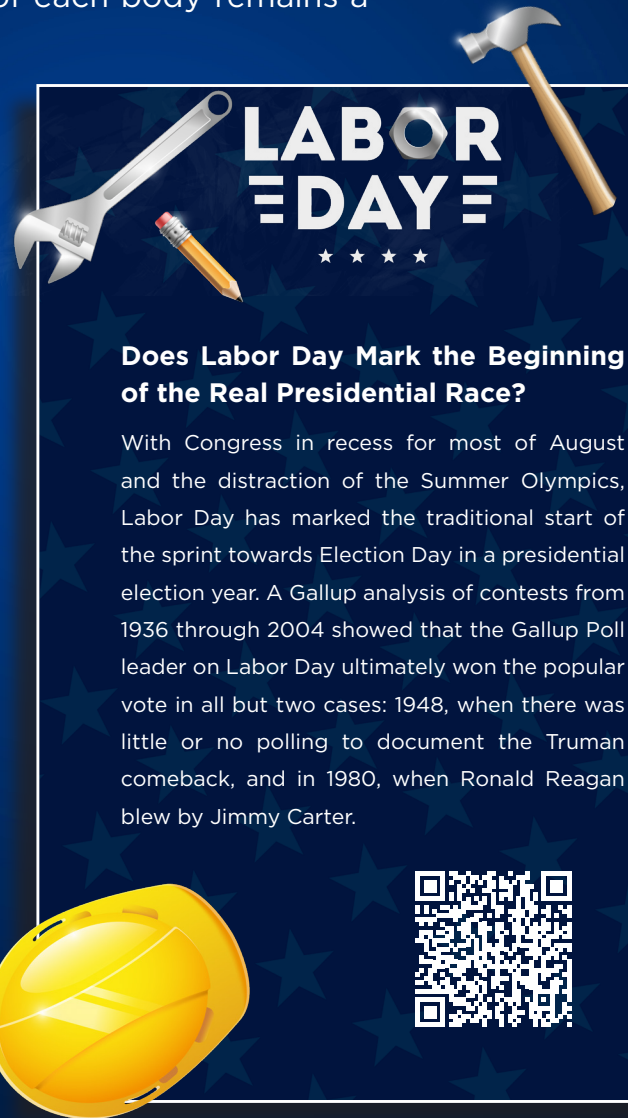
In a partisan context, it is very possible that we could see all three legs of the legislative stool: the U.S. Presidency, Senate, and House flip, yet remain divided government.

PRESIDENT

Former President Trump has now established definitive leads in the battleground states of Arizona, Georgia, and Nevada and the numbers are so far holding even with a new Democratic nominee. In all three places since the beginning of this year, Mr. Trump has not trailed in any of the cumulative 70 polls from 19 different pollsters conducted in the three entities.

Assuming this trend holds for the general election, Mr. Trump would only have to win one other state to claim a national victory.


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LABOR DAY
★ ★ ★ ★

Does Labor Day Mark the Beginning of the Real Presidential Race?

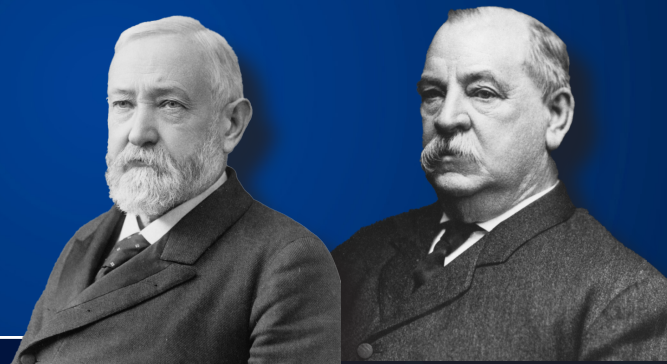
With Congress in recess for most of August and the distraction of the Summer Olympics, Labor Day has marked the traditional start of the sprint towards Election Day in a presidential election year. A Gallup analysis of contests from 1936 through 2004 showed that the Gallup Poll leader on Labor Day ultimately won the popular vote in all but two cases: 1948, when there was little or no polling to document the Truman comeback, and in 1980, when Ronald Reagan blew by Jimmy Carter.



Obviously, the three commonly discussed Great Lakes states are clear battleground regions: Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Before President Biden withdrew, states such as Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Virginia were becoming competitive. The early polling pairing Vice President Harris and former President Trump suggest that some of those states, Minnesota and New Hampshire for example, are returning to their previous Democratic predisposition. Yet, the race is fluid and after the Democratic National Convention when the race normalizes, we could again see these and other states expanding the political map.

Regardless of how many states are competitive, Trump securing Arizona, Georgia, and Nevada means that any one victory in another state or converting the 2nd Congressional District of Nebraska (via an Electoral College tie) would award the election to Mr. Trump assuming all 25 states that he twice carried return to his column.

This is the first time since 1892 when Grover Cleveland successfully won the White House after losing his re-election bid four years earlier, that a former President has returned to again run for the White House.



In 1892, Grover Cleveland ran for his second non-consecutive term as President of the United States, making him the only president to serve two non-consecutive terms. Cleveland, a Democrat, faced off against the Republican incumbent Benjamin Harrison, whom he had previously lost to in the 1888 election. Cleveland won the election with 277 electoral votes, becoming the 24th President of the United States.



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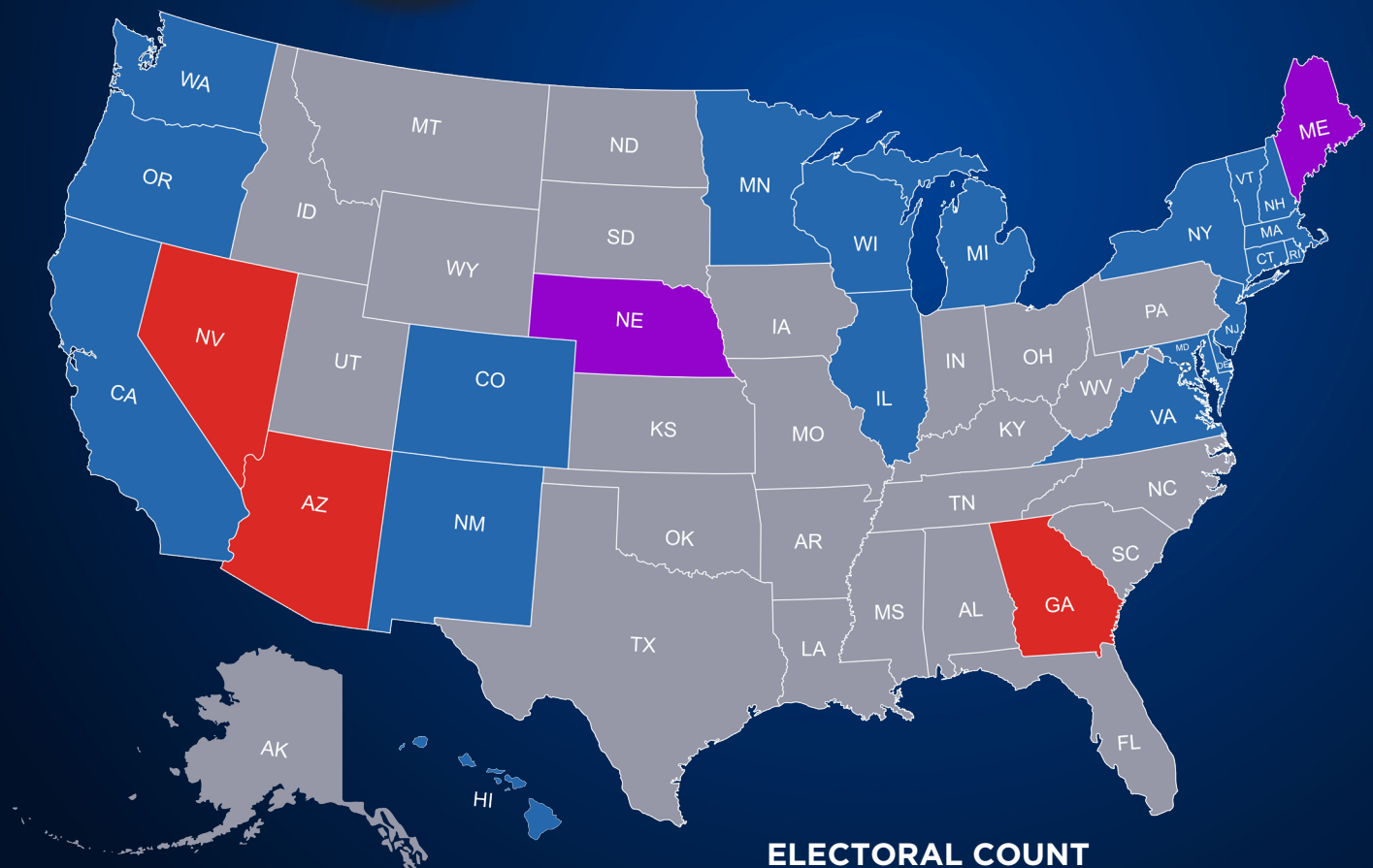
With the Vice President now as the presumptive Democratic nominee, she again has the easier victory path. She needs to keep only 90% of the electoral vote total that President Biden received in 2020, but her margin is thinning. Converting the 2020 political map into 2024, we see the states that Biden won four years ago producing three less electoral votes because national reapportionment changed Electoral College values. Those three votes going to Trump states may well prove definitive.

Today, the 26 entities that previously voted for Biden would produce 303 electoral votes. This means, the Vice President can yield the aforementioned three swing states to Trump: Arizona, Georgia, and Nevada, yet still win the election (270-268 electoral votes); but she can't give up anymore.



STRAIGHTFORWARD WIN FOR HARRIS

The purple states, Nebraska and Maine, are the states that allow their congressional districts to carry their own electoral votes. The red states are the places the Vice President can lose and still win the election based upon the Biden/Harris 2020 performance.



ELECTORAL COUNT	
HARRIS	270
TRUMP	268

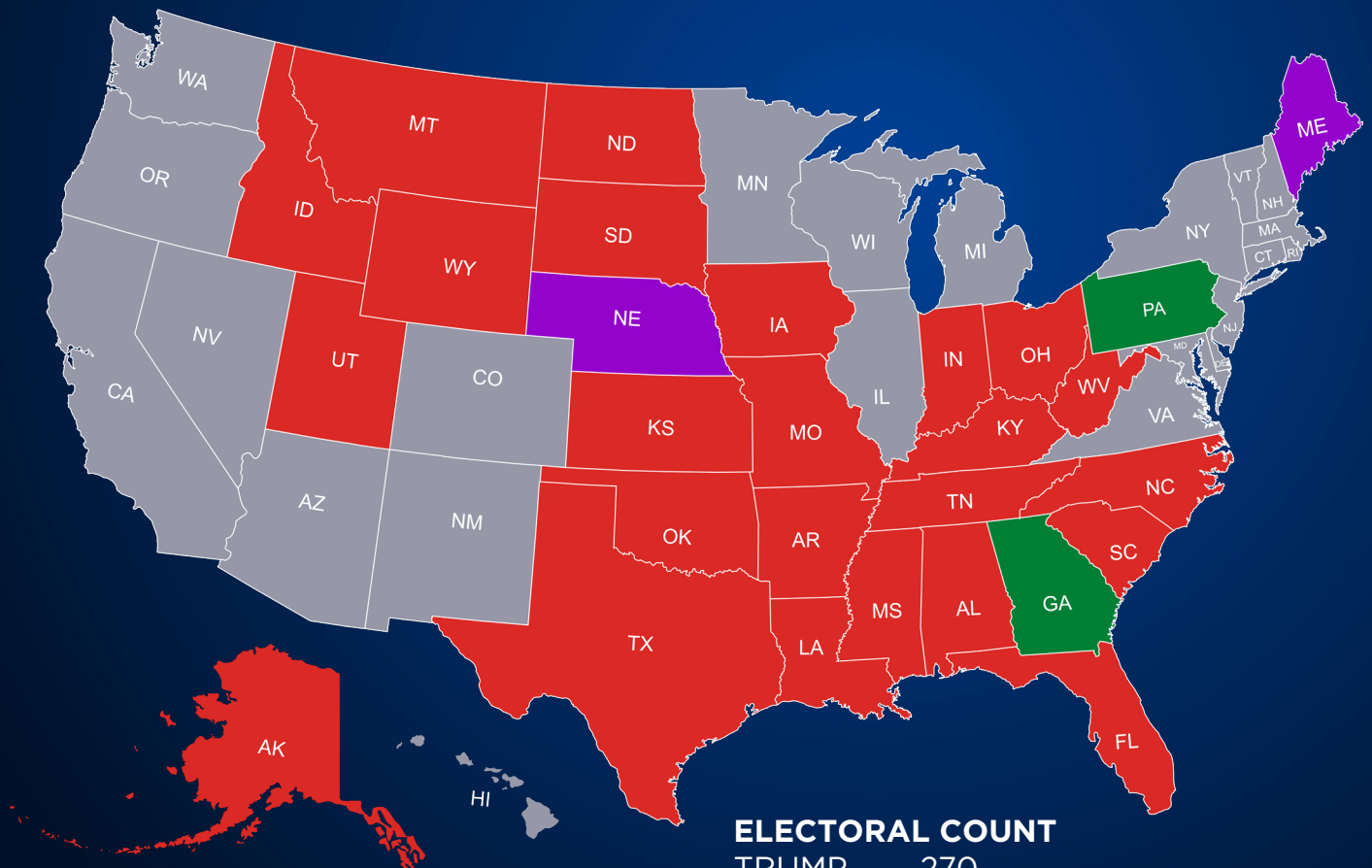
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For Trump to win, he must convert some combination of states that equal a net 35 electoral votes while maintaining all 25 states that voted for him twice. Of that contingent, North Carolina is the former President's weakest entity and will certainly become an offensive target for the Vice President, but the Trump Tar Heel State numbers look stronger than before. For him to win, however, all 25 states must again reside in the former President's column.

TRUMP CARDS FOR THE WIN

Trump's easiest path is to convert Georgia and Pennsylvania. Doing so, along with the places he previously won twice, would give him exactly 270 electoral votes to clinch the election.



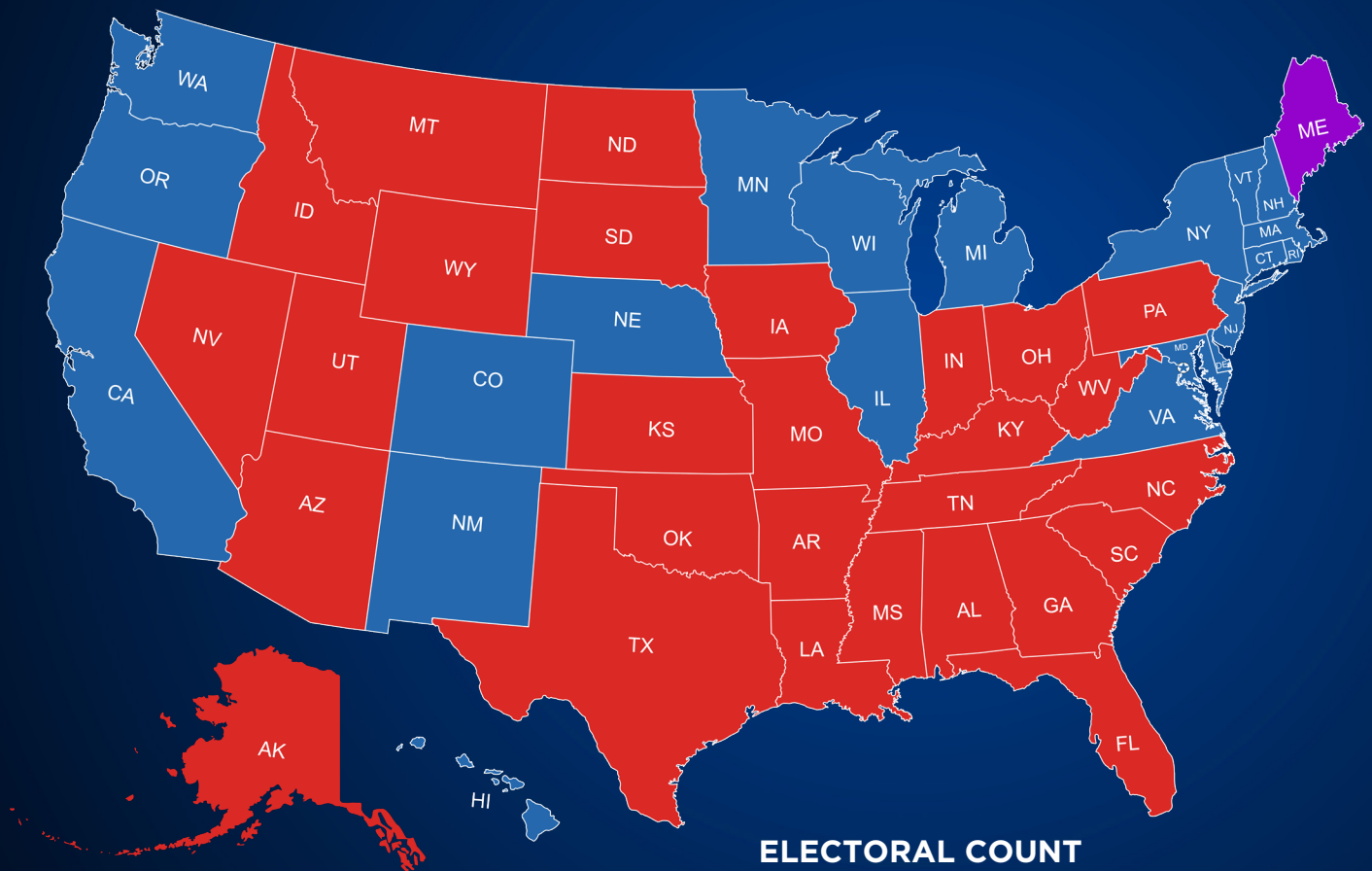
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The bottom line for November is that some combination of a now wider range of states will largely determine the 2024 presidential outcome. Today, based upon swing state polling, Mr. Trump still enjoys a small edge over the Vice President, but the election is not today, and much time remains for margins to change.

TODAY'S STATE OF THE RACE



ELECTORAL COUNT

TRUMP	287
HARRIS	251

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SENATE

Legislatively, the US Senate partisan division favors the Democrats with their caucusing Independents in a 51-49 margin, but the electoral break is already effectively 50-50. West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, now an Independent after recently exiting the Democratic Party, leaves his former colleagues with little chance of defeating his state's new Republican Senate nominee, Governor Jim Justice.

This cycle is the Senate Republicans' to lose. It is probable that they will obtain at least a 51-49 majority, but with the coming electoral maps the GOP must reach a majority level of 53 or even 54 Republican Senators to obtain a longer term majority. For the Democrats, if they can hold the GOP to 50 or 51, their prospects will brighten as the political calendar turns past 2024.

As we know, Senators have six-year terms and one-third of the Senate comes before the voters every two years. In 2024, the map greatly favors the Republicans and is a political playing field the GOP must maximize because the next two election cycles, in 2026 and 2028, are advantageous for the Democrats. In our current election year, Democrats must defend 23 of the 34 in-cycle seats and Republicans only eleven. The most important advantage the Republicans have in 2024 is that none of their 11 defensive seats are particularly vulnerable.



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2024 SENATE DEMOCRATIC SEATS



CA
OPEN



CT
MURPHY



DE
OPEN



HI
HIRONO



MA
WARREN



ME
KING



MN
KLOBUCHAR



NJ
OPEN



NM
HEINRICH



NY
GILLIBRAND



RI
WHITEHOUSE



VA
KAINE



VT
SANDERS



WA
CANTWELL



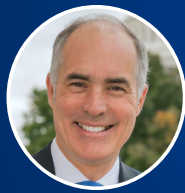
MD
OPEN



AZ
OPEN



MI
OPEN



PA
CASEY



WI
BALDWIN



MT
TESTER



NV
ROSEN



OH
BROWN



WV
OPEN

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2024 SENATE REPUBLICAN SEATS



FL
SCOTT



IN
OPEN



MO
HAWLEY



MS
WICKER



ND
CRAMER



NE
FISCHER



NE
RICKETTS



TN
BLACKBRUN



TX
CRUZ



UT
OPEN



WY
BARRASSO

Democrats and the media will point to Texas and Florida. The Lone Star State Democrats haven't won a major statewide office since 1994. And, with the Biden energy and border policies, 2024 is not the year they will reverse that trend. Sen. Ted Cruz (R) will win re-election despite the Democrats having a good candidate in US Rep. Colin Allred (D-Dallas).

In 2018, when Sen. Rick Scott (R-FL) won his seat by just over 10,000 votes, more voters were registered as Democrats than Republicans. According to the Secretary of State's official June 30th report, the Florida Republican registration advantage now exceeds 956,000 voters. Therefore, upsetting Sen. Scott in a presidential election year will be very difficult especially for a likely Democratic nominee, ex-Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, who failed to hold her congressional seat for more than one term.

The most vulnerable Democratic seats are Montana and Ohio, where, for the first time, Sens. Jon Tester (D-MT) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH) face strong political wins. The last time they were on the ballot, in 2018, we saw a wave Democratic year, and the time before, President Obama was running for re-election. This year, both face an electorate that will strongly favor Mr. Trump. This enhances the odds for GOP challengers Tim Sheehy (MT) and Bernie Moreno (OH).

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Such is especially true for Sen. Tester. With former President Trump running 18-20 points ahead in recent polling and GOP challenger Sheehy now forging ahead of Sen. Tester, the strong Republican turnout model makes winning again very difficult for the three-term incumbent. If there is another Republican winner in addition to West Virginia, it is the Montana race.

Other states that will likely be considered top tier challenge opportunities are Michigan, Wisconsin and Nevada, though the Democrats hold early polling advantages in all three.

Other states that are competitive but likewise currently favor the Democrats are Arizona and Pennsylvania. A great deal of money will be spent in these states, as is the case in Florida and Texas, but the realistic odds are strong that the current incumbent party will retain all of these second-tier contests.

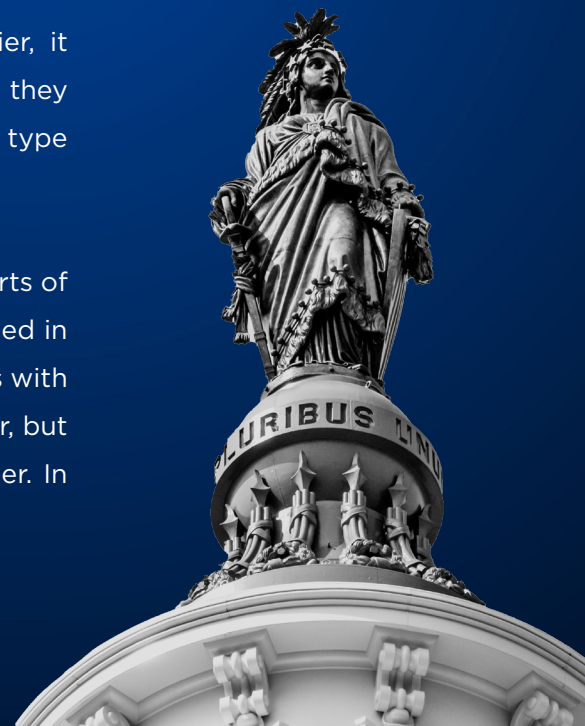
Interestingly, Maryland Republican Larry Hogan has the same problem as Montana Democrat Jon Tester. While Trump will win big in Montana and set the turnout model there, Vice President Harris could take Maryland with a 30-percentage point cushion. Doing so would set an unfavorable turnout model for Republican Hogan, just as the GOP turnout model that Sen. Tester faces could make winning another re-election unattainable. Due to presidential politics, it is possible that both Tester and Hogan will also fall even though the situation could be different if they were running in a non-presidential year.

HOUSE

The House outlook has changed the most in recent weeks. Earlier, it appeared Democrats had the inside track to reclaiming the majority they lost in 2022, but the second round of redistricting did not result in the type of projected gains that most observers believed would occur.

Eight states were under some type of court order to redraw all or parts of their congressional maps. A ninth, North Carolina, had been embroiled in a decade long feud over the congressional and state legislative maps with the legislators on one side and the state Supreme Court on the other, but a 2022 electoral change at the court level brought the pair together. In North Carolina, the Governor has no role in redistricting.

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With Republicans gaining a majority on the state Supreme Court, a perspective agreement has now formed between the legislature and court. This means Republicans will assuredly gain three seats in the Tar Heel State delegation, a huge development for 2024 GOP majority prospects.

The Florida and South Carolina maps ended without being redrawn. A partisan gerrymandering claim was rejected in New Mexico, and another not heard in Wisconsin. Cumulatively, these results likely save the Republicans as many as seven seats. The New Mexico situation preserves the Democrats' 3D-OR map, but the state's 2nd District remains politically marginal. Alabama and Louisiana have been redrawn, and Democrats will gain one seat in each state. The Georgia map was also redrawn, but it will result in no net gain for either party.

The New York circumstances ended with the Republicans getting their best case scenario map, but it is still possible for Democrats to regain three seats they lost in the 2022 election. A fourth has already been won. When the House expelled Rep. George Santos (R), Democratic former Congressman Tom Suozzi reclaimed the seat for his party.

Another key place that will help determine the House majority is California. There, similarly to New York, Republicans hold four seats in districts where the electorate typically favors Democrats. How many of these seven Democratic leaning seats that Republicans will hold in New York and California will go a long way toward determining majority control in the next Congress.

Additionally, in Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Michigan, and Nevada, multiple districts could potentially change hands, and along with California and New York, these are the House race states to watch on election night. At this writing, it is unclear which party will control the House in the 119th Congress, but we can be assured that the end result will yield another close partisan division.

*We offer this political insights report for your information.
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- ★ *After months of legal and legislative skirmishes around the country,*
- ★ *much of the redistricting drama of the 2024 election cycle is behind*
- ★ *us. And it has ended pretty close to where it began: Just a handful*
- ★ *of seats could determine which party controls the US House of*
- ★ *Representatives, where Republicans now hold a threadbare majority.*



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ANDY BLUNT

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As a founding partner, Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Husch Blackwell Strategies, Andy has helped build a trusted national brand for federal and state lobbying with revenues and a client base to match. While Andy is leading the firm with its remarkable growth trajectory, clients continue to turn to him for help managing a crisis, polishing a brand, and understanding how government works and how to make it work for them.

Andy's political success has earned him a national reputation as a trusted strategist. He has served as an advisor to two Presidential campaigns, managed multiple winning statewide campaigns, as well as several state House and Senate campaigns. Andy also maintains an active ownership role with the polling firm American Viewpoint.

Andy advises top executives in boardrooms across the country and political candidates and elected leaders at all levels of government. He is a trusted advisor nationally whose extensive network of personal relationships is built on his lifelong immersion in politics and public policy.

A tireless advocate, Andy has helped companies of all sizes successfully navigate complex legislative and regulatory environments and is consistently recognized as one of Washington's "Top Lobbyists" by national media. Andy earlier served as Chief Operating Officer of HBS and established one of the largest networks of state lobbyists in the country from the ground up - effectively opening new policy fronts and opportunities for the firm's clients in each of its offices in nine state capitals.

Andy and HBS COO Gregg Hartley founded the firm in 2018 with Bloomberg recognizing their success as it named HBS its Top New Startup. Nationwide, the firm employs more than seventy government affairs professionals today who represent over 300 clients.

Andy is a Missouri native and earned a Juris Doctor from the University of Missouri - Columbia and dual-bachelors from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri.

Andy is a member of the U.S. Supreme Court Bar and The Missouri Bar. He is a member of The Economic Club of Washington, D.C. and a member of the Board of Directors for the Missouri Governor's Mansion Preservation Society.



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