

# THE CORRESPONDENT BY DISPATCH

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2. JOHN HERSEY HIGH SCHOOL, NOV. 6, 2018

# MID TERMS

## DEAR FELLOW HUSKIES,

**W**elcome to the Dispatch's special edition of The Correspondent which covers the 2018 midterm elections! Tomorrow, Nov. 6, 2018, is an important day in our nation's history as tens of millions of Americans are expected to head to their local polling places in droves. At a minimum, these midterms have great implications for the next two, four, and six years, as citizens across the country will elect officials to positions ranging from county sheriffs and circuit judges to U.S. senators and governors. While I personally cannot yet vote, I will be doing my small part as well, serving as an election judge in our community and assisting in our nation's democratic mission.

When I joined the staff of our school's publication this year, one of my goals was to establish an accessible platform for our students and other members of the Hersey community to read about the latest happenings in the local, state, national, and global political realms. In a time of increased polarization and discord, it's hard for many to stay motivated and continue to be aware of current political events. However, with the monthly issues of The Correspondent - which have included a new Politics section - our factual, objective, comprehensive, understandable, and significant (or "FOCUS") presentations have kept, and will continue to keep, many informed about the latest news in government.

In today's supplemental special edition, you'll find articles written by members of The Dispatch which detail our area's most important elections - races for our representation in Springfield and Washington, D.C. - and other issues on the ballot, as

well as articles written about some of the most important elections outside of our state. Tomorrow's midterms will determine governors, state attorneys general, members of state governments, members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, local mayors, and the resulting party control of all these entities, along with so many more races and issues in some or all of our country's 50 states; the races in Illinois are only a small part of a larger picture.

As Americans, we are afforded the opportunity to make our voices in the political process heard. While exercising our right to vote is beyond-strongly encouraged, take some time out of your day today or tomorrow to ensure that your vote, if you're old enough to do so, is cast in a knowledgeable and responsible way. We encourage each of you to fully read this publication to better acquaint yourself with the state of each of the following elections and candidates, but while all of the contributors worked tirelessly over the last 72 hours to put this FOCUS presentation together, I also encourage each of you to further research, at a minimum, the candidates on your ballots before heading out to the polls tomorrow; the always-expanding wide range of available information simply couldn't be captured in a publication just a few pages long.

Thank you for deciding to read our in-depth venture into tomorrow's midterms. To say that they're important would be an understatement, and by glancing through these short articles, you're choosing to be informed about the condition of our state's and our nation's politics and not turn a blind eye to what will have untold lasting effects on our local community, country and world.

## REGARDS,



**Carter Zagorski**

John Hersey High School Class of 2019

Managing Political Editor of The Correspondent by Dispatch



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WEEKLY STANDARD

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## Introduction

BY JOSH HO

This Tuesday, residents of certain townships within Cook County will have the chance to vote on numerous referendums in addition to the more highly publicized races for public office. Although these referendums receive less press than elections for office, voters should still make informed decisions on the referendums as they can have a significant impact on the state.

## Countywide Referendums

BY SUSAN SCHMIDT

On November 6th, residents of Cook County will be voting on three referendums at the polls concerning firearms, minimum wage, and earned sick time.

The county wide referendum relating to firearms reads, "Should the State of Illinois strengthen penalties for the illegal trafficking of firearms and require all gun dealers to be certified by the State?" according to Cook County Clerk's website. With gun control laws being a hot topic of debate in recent times, the outcome of this vote will give government officials a good idea of what most citizens believe on the subject.

In regards to the raising of minimum wage, the referendum states, "Shall the minimum wage in your municipality match the \$13 per hour Cook County minimum wage law for adults over the age of 18 by July 1, 2020, and be indexed to the consumer price index after that?" Cook County did raise the minimum wage to \$11, which became effective on July 1, 2018. However, more than 80 percent of the county's municipalities chose to opt out of it, keeping minimum wage at \$8.25 for many workers. Many contend that passing legislation related to the referendum could be a chance for many to start earning a greater salary, but others would argue that it would slow business growth and has a chance of causing inflation.

The third countywide referendum states, "Shall your municipality match the Cook County earned sick time law which allows for workers to earn up to 40 hours (5 days) of sick time a year to take care of their own health or a family member's health?" The current Cook County law mandates participating municipalities allow for up to 5 days of sick leave, but once again, more than 80 percent of the municipalities opted out of it due to concern over the financial risks to many businesses.

The levels of support for these referendums will demonstrate to lawmakers how residents across the northwest suburbs feel about future related laws. Make your way to your local polling place tomorrow to ensure your opinion is heard on these matters.

## Background Info

**FIREARMS:** strengthens penalties for illegal firearm trafficking; requires certification of gun dealers  
**MIN. WAGE:** raises municipality min. wage to county's

**EARNED SICK LEAVE:** raises minimum earned sick leave to 40 hours annually  
**HOME RULE:** Allows local governments to have more control over budgeting, re-

## Beverage Tax

BY JOSH HO

A referendum regarding Cook County "Beverage Tax" will be presented on the ballot to voters in these townships: Elk Grove, Hanover, Lemont, Maine, Palatine, Palos, and Schaumburg. It should be noted that this proposed tax applies only to Cook County, not the entire state of Illinois.

Residents of Cook County may already be familiar with the proposed beverage tax. On November 10, 2016, the county's Board of Commissioners approved a tax on sweetened drinks, which went into effect on August 2, 2017. The tax cost consumers 1 cent per ounce of sweetened beverage, which includes drinks like soda, Gatorade, energy drinks, and pre-made coffees/teas. Upon its implementation, the tax was met with overwhelming disapproval. According to *illinoispolicy.org*, 87 percent of Cook County residents opposed the sweetened beverage tax. In response, the county agreed to repeal the tax by a vote of 15-2. The tax was officially eliminated on December 1, 2017, lasting less than four months.

However, a year later, parts of Cook County are revisiting the tax. Residents of numerous Cook County townships will vote on whether they want the sweetened beverage tax to be reinstated. The tax would help raise money for the county, which has an \$82 million deficit in its 2019 operating budget. Soda consumption in Cook County is extremely high. According to a research team led by Dr. Lisa Powell, one in four adults in Cook County drinks two or more sweetened beverages a day. Even a tax of one cent per ounce would raise a significant amount of money for the county, and would also disincentivize soda consumption. However, there is debate on whether a tax on sweetened beverages is the best way to raise more money for Cook County.

Although the responses to the referendum do not have a direct impact on the implementation of the tax, the referendum allows the county to gauge the interest of its residents. The responses will then heavily factor into the county's decision regarding the tax. This election day, Cook County residents have a chance to make their voices heard.



ducing county or state influence. In Illinois, municipalities larger than 25,000 people are automatically considered home rule units of government.

**BEVERAGE TAX:** A 1¢/oz soda tax was implemented on August 2, 2017. The tax did not affect purchases with SNAP (over 870,000), but was repealed in October 2017.

## Illinois Governor: Bruce Rauner (R) v. J. B. Pritzker (D)

BY CLAIRE DWYER

As one of the most expensive races in our nation's history of elections, the race to be Governor of Illinois is only heating up. The challenging Democrat, J.B. Pritzker, and the incumbent Republican, Bruce Rauner, have raised a combined total of over \$280 million for their respective campaigns.

The candidates have intensely attacked each other personally, including each candidate's personal wealth. Pritzker has a net worth of \$3.4 billion while Rauner has a net worth of about \$500 million. Both candidates have invested millions of their own dollars into their campaigns.

Rauner has accused Pritzker of removing toilets from his homes during renovations to avoid paying hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes, while Pritzker's campaign has accused Rauner of not taking charge during the state budget crisis which ultimately cost the state over a billion dollars.

The amount of money spent on ads and other campaign tactics has allowed these tactics to reach an unprecedented amount of Illinoisans. Pritzker, for example, has been running ads consistently for the past year and a half. As of Nov. 2, polls currently show Pritzker winning by a comfortable margin.

## Attorney General: Kwame Raoul (D) v. Erika Harold (R)

BY CLAIRE DWYER

On September 15, 2017, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan - stepdaughter of Speaker of the House Michael Madigan - announced that she would not be running for reelection in the 2018 midterms. Madigan's decision to not pursue a fifth term in office leaves a vacancy in the attorney general position. The attorney general is a very important position within government, serving as the chief law enforcement officer and lawyer for the state.

This year's race for attorney general is between Democrat Kwame Raoul and Republican Erika Harold. The race figures to be a very tight one, and has been closely monitored in the days leading up to Voting Day.

Raoul is no stranger to public office, having represented the 13th District in the Illinois Senate for 14 years. His campaign site states, "Kwame is a leading voice in the fight for equal rights, protecting children from sexual predators, criminal justice reform, and a woman's right to choose." He is an advocate for gun control and restrictions in order to decrease crime, and is also focused on protecting worker and voter rights.

Harold has had plenty of experience in the public eye, having been voted Miss America in 2003. She has also been involved in the political sphere for more than a decade, serving as a

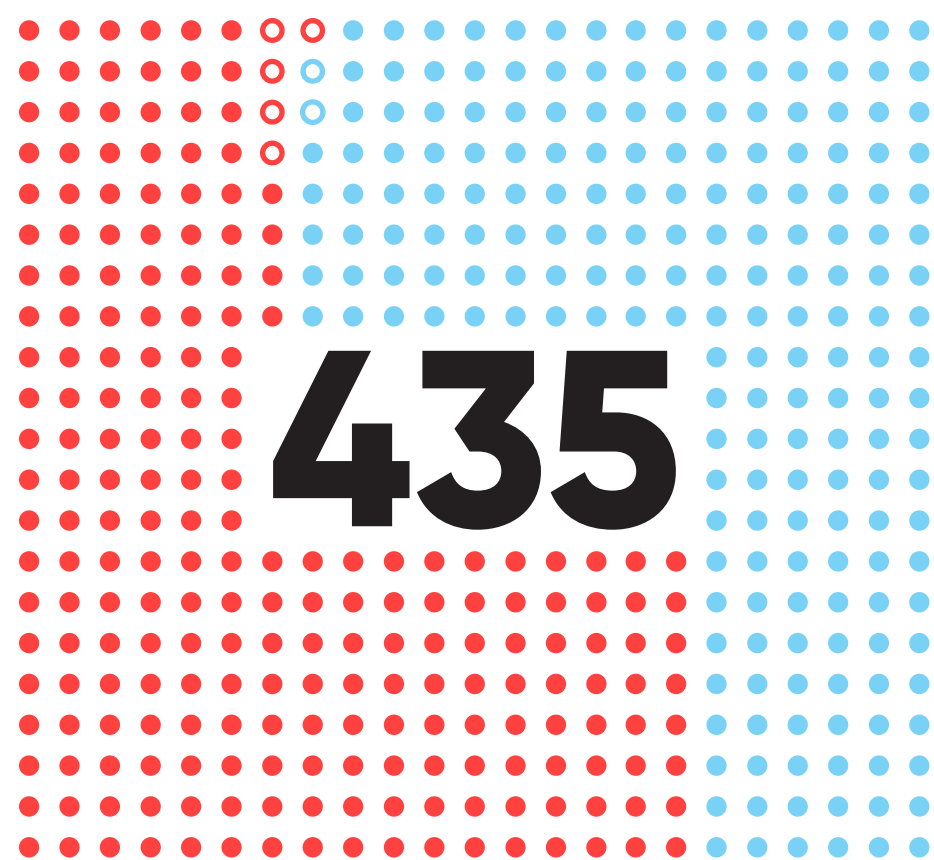


Kwame Raoul (left) and Erika Harold (right)

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHICAGO TRIBUNE

delegate to the 2004 Republican National Convention and also running for Illinois Congress in 2014, ultimately losing the Republican nomination to Rodney L. Davis. According to Harold's campaign website, her main priorities include combatting public corruption, reforming worker compensation and the criminal justice system, and fighting Illinois' opioid epidemic.

As voting day drew near, donations poured in on both sides, with each party trying to gain momentum before Election Day. In the weeks before the election, Raoul outtraised Harold by a wide margin of 14-1, according to the Chicago Tribune. Regardless, the race still figures to be extremely close. The battle between the candidates will be exciting to monitor, as the outcome will have a significant impact on legislation and reforms implemented over the next four years.



**235 REPUBLICANS**  
**193 DEMOCRATS**  
**SEVEN VACANCIES**  
 (5 REPUBLICAN, 2 DEMOCRAT)

## HOUSE OF REP. QUICK FACTS

- Location: Washington, D.C., in the United States Capitol
- Bicameral component of legislative branch - House of Representatives & Senate
- State representation determined by proportion of general population
- Elections every two years
- No term limits
- Half of 435, or 218 seats are needed for control
- Passage of laws to President approval generally requires a majority vote from both houses

## CURRENT LINEUP

- 235 Republicans, 193 Democrats, seven Vacancies (five Republican, two Democrat)
- Speaker of the House: Paul D. Ryan (R-WI) - since 2015
- Majority Leader: Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) - since 2014
- Minority Leader: Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) - since 2011

## District #9: Jan Schakowsky (D) v. John Elleson (R)

BY CLAIRE DWYER

In District 9, Democrat Jan Schakowsky is up against Republican John Elleson this election cycle for Schakowsky's seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. The 9th District traditionally goes "blue," or leans Democratic. Polls suggest Schakowsky will easily win re-election; during the 2016 election, Schakowsky won by a margin of 33 percent.

Schakowsky is up for re-election for the 11th time, having served consistently in the House since 1999. A member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and co-chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, she's well-known for her positions on human rights, education, and poverty. Prior to her work as a Congresswoman,

Schakowsky served for six years in the Illinois House of Representatives.

Elleson, according to the Chicago Sun-Times, has no political or civic background. After graduating from Christian Life College, he opened a donut shop and became a pastor at Lakewood Chapel, a position he's held for over 30 years. Elleson believes that with these experiences, he will bring "a much-needed business and common sense instinct to our government."

The 9th District serves constituents in parts of Arlington Heights, Mount Prospect, and Prospect Heights, as well as Skokie, Park Ridge, Wilmette, and parts of Chicago and the North Shore. The 9th District has a population of 722,268 residents.



Current member of the house of Representatives, Jan Schakowsky

## District #10: Brad Schneider (D) v. Doug Bennett (R)

BY MATT BEDNAR

As we get closer and closer to the 2018 midterms, a handful of races for the U.S. House of Representatives are coming to a end. The 10th District race, which ranges from Mount Prospect to the Wisconsin border containing 705,000 people, is between incumbent Democrat Brad Schneider and challenging Republican Doug Bennett.

Schneider has had two terms in this House seat, winning elections to serve from 2013-2015 and 2017-2019, and is now running for his second consecutive term and third overall. He supports economic reform to support small businesses as well as investing in infrastructure to build better bridges and roads. Schneider believes everyone deserves a high-quality



Dan Schneider (left) and Doug Bennett (right) at a League of Women Voters debate

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAILY HERALD

education without the burden of high student loans. He also supports the Affordable Care Act which was signed into law by President Obama back in 2010.

Doug Bennett won the Republican primary by a very small margin. Bennett is a 54-year-old business consultant, supporting cutting taxes for families and businesses. He also stands for border control and affordable and quality healthcare.

Both candidates have endorsements. Schneider has been endorsed by the Daily Herald and the Sun-Times. Bennett has been endorsed by the Chicago Tribune. As time dwindles down, residents in the 10th District need to decide who they want to represent them in the House of Representatives.

## District #14: Randy Hultgren (R) v. Lauren Underwood (D)

BY CARTER ZAGORSKI

"The very character of our country, of who we are, is on the ballot," former Vice President Joe Biden said to an audience of Lauren Underwood backers last Wednesday in St. Charles, Illinois.

Underwood, a registered nurse and former senior advisor at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Obama administration, is the Democratic nominee. She's running on a campaign focused on investing in small businesses, local infrastructure, local schools, affordable health care coverage, and paid family leave. In addition to Biden, Underwood has endorsements from President Barack Obama; senators Richard Durbin (D-IL), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Kamala Harris (D-CA); the AFL-CIO Illinois, American Nurses Association, Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, NOW, Planned Parenthood, Sierra Club; and the Chicago Sun Times and Daily Herald.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHICAGO TRIBUNE

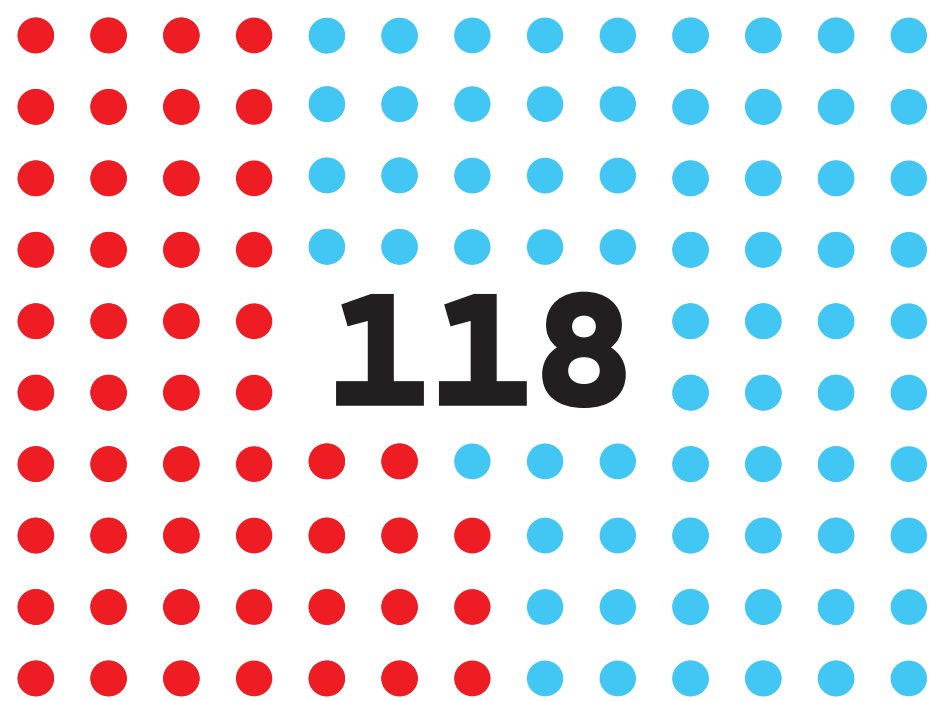
Randy Hultgren (left) and Lauren Underwood (right)

Underwood faces off against Randy Hultgren, the 14th District's incumbent Republican. Hultgren, a former Representative and Senator in the Illinois House and Senate, served during the previous Congressional Session as the Vice-Chairman on the Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Securities, and Investment; a member on the Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance, Subcommittee on Research and Technology, and Subcommittee on Energy; Co-Chairman on the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission; and Commissioner on both the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Congressional-Executive Commission on China.

Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-WI), who is retiring at the end of his current term, came to Spring Grove, Illinois, last Friday to campaign for Hultgren as well as for incumbent Republican Representative Peter Roskam. "Randy Hultgren saw problems in his community that his constituents were experiencing and he went to tackle those problems. That's the kind of person you want working for you in Congress," he said.

Hultgren occupies a seat which recent polls show is now hotly contested; polls released by Siena College/New York Times on November 3 now show Underwood leading by 3-4 percentage points over the four-term Congressman.

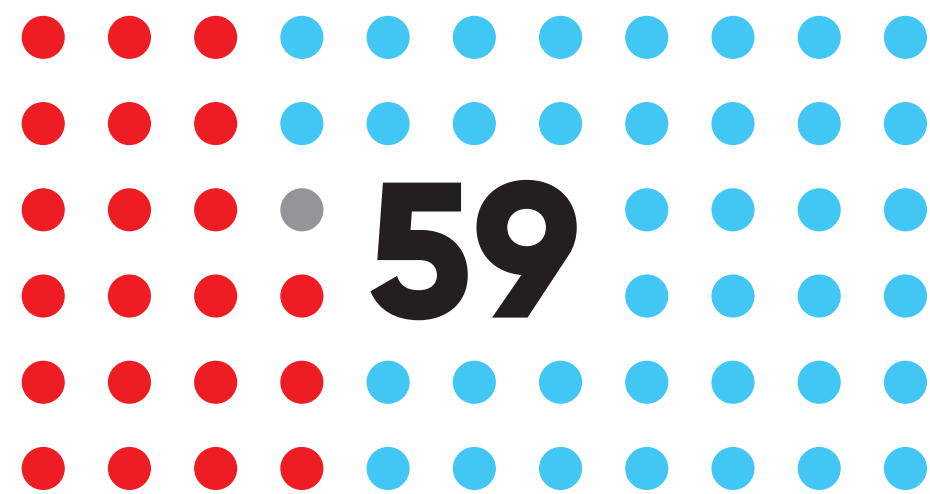
## THE HOUSE



118

51 REPUBLICANS  
67 DEMOCRATS

## THE SENATE



59

21 REPUBLICANS  
1 INDEPENDENT  
37 DEMOCRATS

## BREAKDOWN

- Location: Springfield, Illinois, in the Illinois State Capitol
- Bicameral - House of Representatives & Senate
- Each Senate seat is associated with two House seats
- Elections every two years
- No term limits
- Passage of laws to Governor approval generally requires a majority vote from both houses

## District #53: Mark Walker (D) v. Eddie Corrigan (R)

BY CARTER ZAGORSKI

The military service career of David Harris spanned over three decades, culminating in his role as Major General of the Illinois National Guard in 2003. He served as a state representative from 1983 to 1993, then again from 2011 onward. With the election of Republican Governor Bruce Rauner and a Democratic-controlled state legislature, both sides of the lawmaking process couldn't agree on a budget for more than two years. It was after the crisis concluded when Harris announced he'd no longer seek an additional term due to the excruciating process of passing the state's financial plan, which he had been a large part of; his vote, along with a small number of other Republicans, approved a contested 32 percent tax increase and ended the gridlock.

Eddie Corrigan, the Republican replacement for Harris on tomorrow's ballot, argues for repealing the legislation his predecessor's "yea" vote was instrumental for. He considers the 32 percent increase to be something "we need to eliminate," according to his campaign website, along with stances in favor of structural changes to state operations, reducing spending, a property tax freeze, re-districting reform, and investing in schools and infrastructure. He's endorsed by the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, Illinois Fraternal Order of Police, and the mayors of Arlington Heights and Prospect Heights.

Mark Walker, the Democratic nominee, was a state representative from 2009-2011 and is a "management expert and entrepreneur." He believes in a graduated income tax, investing in education, investing in small businesses, and an assault rifles ban. Walker is endorsed by the Daily Herald, Planned Parenthood, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Sierra Club, and Illinois AFL-CIO.

Walker hasn't held political office since 2011 and Corrigan hasn't held political office at all, previously working as an Outreach Coordinator for a local Congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives.



Mark Walker

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAILY HERALD



Illinois state capitol building

PHOTO COURTESY OF ILLINOIS IN FOCUS

## District #27: Tom Rooney (R) v. Ann Gillespie (D)

BY CARTER ZAGORSKI

Matt Murphy was in office for nearly a decade, his time as an Illinois State Senator spanning from 2007 through August 2016. It was then when he announced he'd be departing Springfield, choosing to enter the private sector and forcing an appointment to the vacant seat.

In Illinois, the process of naming a new state senator is determined by the party leaders of townships' votes. At the time, Rolling Meadows Mayor Tom Rooney won the voting process, prevailing in the decision over state representatives and a Republican committeeman. Over the following two years, Rooney would maintain both his responsibility as a Senator as well as his role as a history and economics teacher at West Leyden High School, but his interest in sticking to his own beliefs wasn't lost in the hours-long commute. An established Republican who isn't afraid to "maverick" on certain issues, he's both championed economic issues - evident by his presentation of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce's "Outstanding Freshman Senator" award in September - and fought for his well-defended policy positions, including his role in being the only Republican senator who voted in favor of background checks and state dealers' licenses to sell firearms in the state.

Ann Gillespie, Rooney's Democrat challenger, has strongly pushed her party's values in her campaign. A former pharmacy corporation executive,



Tom Rooney

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAILY HERALD

Gillespie believes in a reversal of the current tax system, a reduction in local taxes, investing in education, investing in environmentally-friendly infrastructure, and criminal justice reform. Gillespie attacked Rooney about his stance on gun control and said she would have voted for both of the Senate's bills to ban bump stocks and require state licensing of gun dealers, not just the latter. "You can hide behind the Second Amendment and say you can't do something that's politically unpopular, particularly within your party," she said to the Daily Herald. "But if you're really concerned about public safety and what your constituents want, I think it's pretty clear. I think they've made it pretty clear about what they want in terms of public safety."

Rooney thinks differently, articulating that he supports a ban but that the proposed law wasn't a "clean bill." He argued that the proposed legislation "was game playing. It was shenanigans applied at the last minute for political reasons. And it's why that bill didn't pass." A late amendment was added to the bill which would have enabled all home rule municipalities to create restrict or completely ban firearms.

Cook County voters will address the Rooney-Gillespie race and a firearm referendum tomorrow, and Prospect Heights voters will additionally voice their views on their city's implementation of a home rule style of governance.

# X GOVERNOR RACES

## WISCONSIN Scott Walker (R) v. Tony Evers (D)

BY CARTER ZAGORSKI

- Location: Maple Bluff, Wisconsin, in the Governor's Mansion, and Madison, Wisconsin, in the Office of the Governor
- Executive branch succession: Lieutenant governor, Secretary of State
- Gubernatorial elections every four years
- No term limits
- Incumbent: Scott K. Walker (R) - since 2011

As Illinoisans take to the polls tomorrow, one race which won't be on their ballots but may have large implications for them is Wisconsin's battle between two-term incumbent Republican Scott Walker and challenging Democrat Tony Evers for the state's governorship.

Walker, a nationally-recognizable figure, is running a campaign in our neighboring state based on developing Wisconsin's workforce, cutting taxes, investing in education, supporting small businesses, backing pro-life priorities, and keeping health care affordable. He previously served in Wisconsin's State Assembly as a representative for five terms before becoming the Executive of Milwaukee County from 2002 to 2010. He first successfully ran for his current position in 2010 by winning 52 percent of the state's vote, but after his first budget plan was met with controversy, faced and won a recall election in 2012 against his former opponent with 53 percent of the vote. In 2014, his margin increased to 6 percent in the historically political swing state.

Evers, his opponent, is the current Wisconsin Superintendent of Public Instruction, a position he's held since 2009. His campaign is focused on improving Wisconsin public schools, making health care affordable, and fixing roads and bridges.

He says he never previously thought of holding partisan office until his recent 2017 election to his post by a 70 percent margin over his Republican opponent, which followed the state's voters supporting President Trump in the 2016 presidential election. He also cites his experience as the state's Superintendent, which provided insights into Walker's perceived lack of interest in public education and uniting Wisconsin after polarizing elections, as a reason for running. "I think the issue of continuous adequate public resourcing for our public schools, K-12, making sure that we have a robust middle class and the pitting of people against each other - those are the reasons I'm running, and Walker has caused many of those things to be a problem," he told *The Capital Times* in August 2017.

Walker again finds himself in a toss-up race, as recent polls conducted vary between Walker currently leading, tying, or losing. The governor acknowledged the state of the race last week, telling supporters at a rally that "We're really encouraging people to get out and vote...the key is getting people out to vote." Evers responded to the polls similarly, tweeting on Sunday that "I love this state. And I've loved traveling all across Wisconsin...and firing people up to volunteer and get out the vote."



PHOTO COURTESY OF ABC NEWS  
President Donald Trump (left) and Wisconsin's current governor, Scott Walker (right)

## FLORIDA Ron DeSantis (R) v. Andrew Gillum (D)

BY CLAIRE DWYER

Due to Florida's law requiring term limits for governors, the state's current Governor, Rick Scott, is unable to run for a third term. Consequently, two new faces - Republican Ron DeSantis and Democrat Andrew Gillum - are battling it out to be the next Governor of Florida.

The polls, as of Nov. 2, show a near

- Location: Tallahassee, Florida, in the Governor's Mansion, and Tallahassee, Florida, in the Office of the Governor
- Executive branch succession: Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Chief Financial Officer, Commissioner of Agriculture
- Gubernatorial elections every four years
- Limited to two terms
- Incumbent: Richard L. Scott (R) - since 2011

toss up race, with candidates winning by only a slim margin. In the notorious swing state of Florida, the state voted "blue" for President Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012, but voted Republican for current President Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election. This current toss up race for governor is no exception

to the state's history of close elections.

As a result of the close race, the candidates' attacks have quickly become personal and debates have been heated. One example is the numerous heated discussions regarding race. Gillum, who could become Florida's first African-American Governor, accused DeSantis of using racist rhetoric, while DeSantis has accused Gillum of misusing city funds and accepting money from an FBI agent. Gillum, the current mayor of the state's capital city, Tallahassee, denies these claims.

Gillum has support from politicians such as former President Obama, who campaigned for Gillum in Miami, and Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT). DeSantis has seen extensive support from President Trump, who campaigned for DeSantis in Fort Myers.

With a race this close, Florida's gubernatorial race has drawn national attention, and will only gain more attention as the votes begin to be counted.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VOX  
Stacey Abrams (left) and Brian Kemp (right) at Atlanta Press Club Debate

## GEORGIA Stacey Abrams (D) v. Brian Kemp (R)

BY CARTER ZAGORSKI

- Location: Atlanta, Georgia, in the Governor's Mansion, and Atlanta, Georgia, in the Office of the Governor
- Executive branch succession: Lieutenant governor
- Gubernatorial elections every four years
- Limited to two terms
- Incumbent: John Nathan Deal (R) - since 2011

Nathan Deal, the current Governor of Georgia, has run into a problem which numerous other politicians have similarly experienced: term limits. Georgia law stipulates that terms are four years in length and renewable once, and so as Deal finishes his term, he finds himself as a "lame duck" Governor, watching from the sidelines as the new face of his state is determined by tomorrow's general election between Democratic candidate Stacey Abrams and Republican candidate Brian Kemp.

Abrams, a politician and lawyer, finds herself running a campaign in Georgia, a traditionally Republican-leaning state beginning to shift more and more Democratic, as the first African-American female major party gubernatorial nominee in our country's history.

President Donald Trump called her experience into question on Sunday, November 4th, stating that she was "not qualified" for the position and that voters should "should take a look at her past." Abrams, along with former President Barack Obama, refuted the claim, with Abrams arguing that "He's wrong," and that "I am the most qualified candidate running." A former five-term member of the Georgia House of Representatives, three terms of which she served as the Democratic party's Minority Leader, Abrams graduated from UT-Austin and Yale and is a lifetime member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a prominent New York think tank. She is campaigning on an investment in education, renewable energy, affordable housing, accessible health care, the expansion of voter registration and government transparency, as well as the championing of equal rights.

Kemp, her opponent, is a former two-term member of the Georgia Senate and

current Georgia Secretary of State, a position he's held since 2010. His campaign is based on cutting taxes and regulations, strengthening law enforcement, investing in education and health care, and expanding rural Internet access. Controversially, with his role as Secretary of State, Kemp is squarely in the national spotlight facing scrutiny over recent actions he claims will prevent voter fraud, most notably including the "exact match" requirement for voters to have all voter information perfectly match official state documents, including missing hyphens, accent marks, and middle initials, as well as his announcement of an attempt by the Democratic party to hack Georgia's voter registration files.

On November 4th, the Office of Georgia's Secretary of State released a statement which read, "We opened an investigation into the Democratic Party of Georgia after receiving information from our legal team about failed efforts to breach the online voter registration system and My Voter Page. We have contacted our federal

partners and formally requested the Federal Bureau of Investigation to investigate these possible cyber crimes."

Hours later, the Democratic Party of Georgia's Executive Director, Rebecca DeHart, responded in a statement which read, "This is yet another example of abuse of power by an unethical Secretary of State. To be very clear, Brian Kemp's scurrilous claims are 100 percent false, and this so-called investigation was unknown to the Democratic Party of Georgia until a campaign operative in Kemp's official office released a statement this morning. This political stunt from Kemp just days before the election is yet another example of why he cannot be trusted and should not be overseeing an election in which he is also a candidate for governor."

Polls released by the University of Georgia and other pollsters show Kemp gaining momentum in a tight race, his lead most recently jumping from a 49-47 percent result from a Nov. 2 Emerson College poll to a 52-40 percent result from a Nov. 4 Trafalgar Group poll.



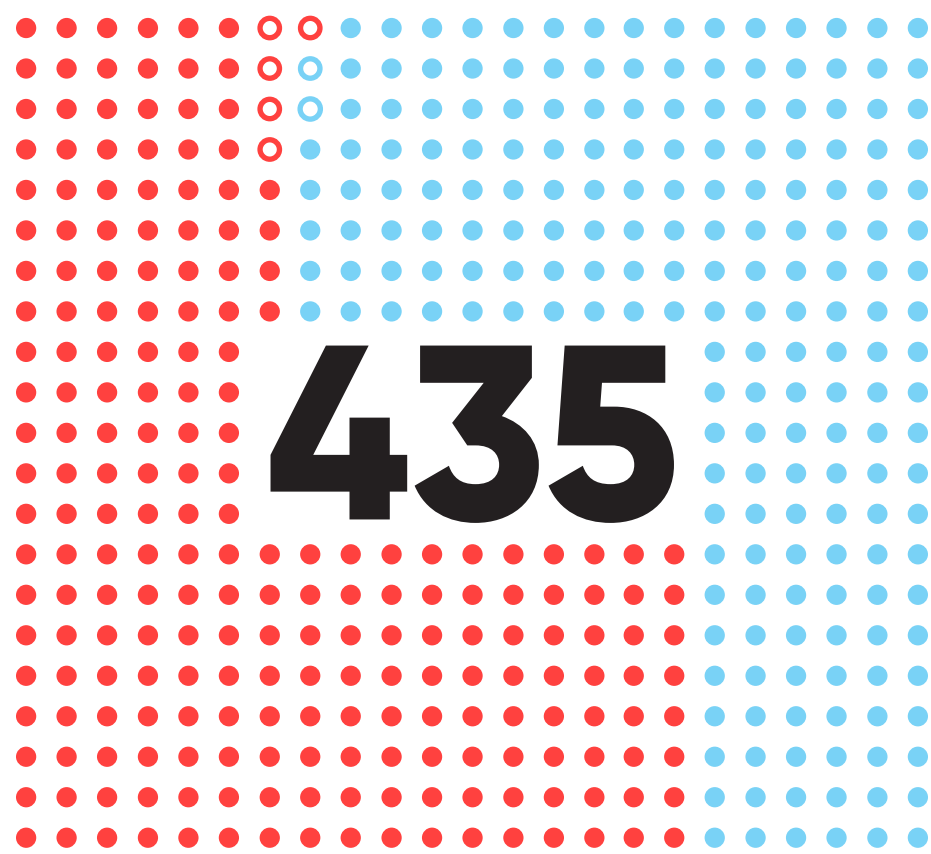
PHOTO COURTESY OF USA TODAY

Stacey Abrams (left) and Oprah Winfrey (right)

# U.S. HOUSE OF REPS

## HOUSE OF REP. QUICK FACTS

- Location: Washington, D.C., in the United States Capitol
- Bicameral component of legislative branch - House of Representatives & Senate
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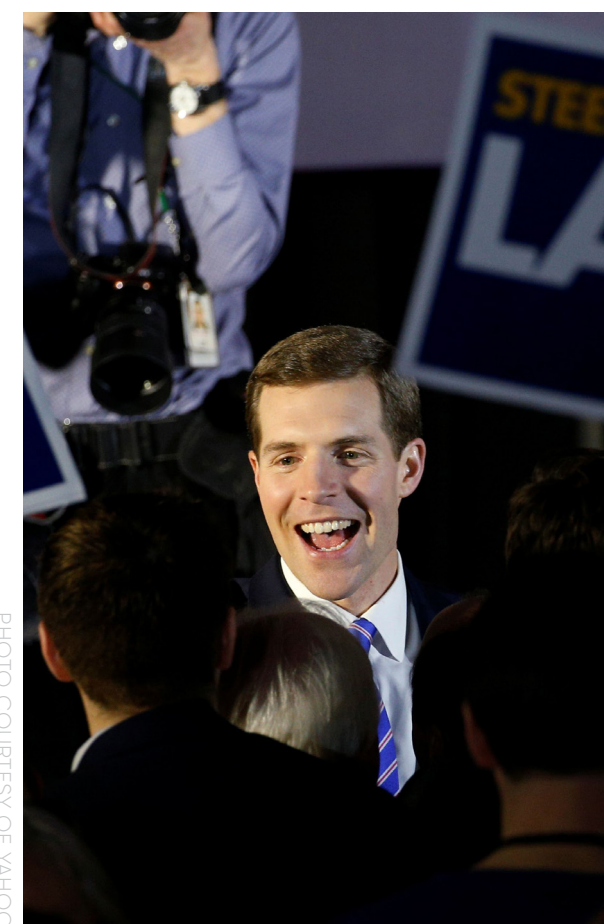
## CURRENT LINEUP

- 235 Republicans, 193 Democrats, seven Vacancies (five Republican, two Democrat)
- Speaker of the House: Paul D. Ryan (R-WI) - since 2015
- Majority Leader: Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) - since 2014
- Minority Leader: Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) - since 2011

**235 REPUBLICANS**  
**193 DEMOCRATS**  
**SEVEN VACANCIES**  
**(4 REPUBLICAN, 2 DEMOCRAT)**

## Pennsylvania District #17: Conor Lamb (D) v. Keith Rothfus (R)

BY CARTER ZAGORSKI



Democratic candidate Conor Lamb at a rally

In September 2017, Representative Tim Murphy admitted to an extramarital affair. A subsequent Pittsburgh Post-Gazette article revealed Murphy's harassment of his staff, and after House Republican leaders were convinced the allegations would be reviewed by the House Ethics Committee, Murphy resigned from the position. Enter Conor Lamb. A Marine and federal prosecutor, Lamb ran for the vacant 18th District seat in the 2018 special election as a moderate Democrat championing focus on the heroin crisis, infrastructure, the economy, healthcare, protecting Social Security, and modern energy development. The seat was last held by a Democrat in 2003. His opponent, Rick Saccone, drew national attention to the special election because of the role of figures in the national government. President Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, Donald Trump Jr., and Ivanka Trump all campaigned for Saccone, and Republicans spent more than \$8 million on the race - twice that of Democrats. But Lamb would win the race by 0.4

percent of the vote, narrowly edging out Saccone by a vote of 114,102 to 113,347. With his positive momentum, Lamb now again faces a Republican opponent; though this time, both candidates are incumbent Representatives, as a Pennsylvania Supreme Court-ordered redistricting pits the two against each other. Representative Keith Rothfus, the three-term 12th District incumbent, is a former attorney who also worked for the Department of Homeland Security. He serves on the Committee on Financial Services and House Judiciary Committee, favoring stances advocated in his legislation such as the "Congressional Pay for Performance Act," which would force members of Congress to comply with deadlines, and the "Satisfying Energy Needs and Saving the Environment, or SENSE Act," which would keep certain power plants in Western Pennsylvania open while cleaning the environment. The race, monitored around the nation as a barometer for political momentum between the parties, currently has polls projecting Lamb to win by 12-14 percentage points.

## Wisconsin District #1: Randy Bryce (D) v. Bryan Steil (R)

BY CLAIRE DWYER

With Paul Ryan's recent retirement as Speaker of the House, his coveted seat in Wisconsin's 1st District is up for re-election. Democrat Randy Bryce and Republican Bryan Steil are both vying for Ryan's seat in the House of Representatives. A member of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents, Steil's beliefs in state control of education, affordable health care, and shrinking the federal deficit have led polls to show him winning by a slim margin. Due to the fact that the district traditionally votes Republican, there is a good chance Steil could prevail. However, while Steil has raised over \$1 million for his campaign, Bryce has raised over \$7 million. As a U.S. Army veteran, cancer survivor, and union ironworker, he hopes to bring his understanding of strug-

gling working families and membership of the middle class to D.C. for his district. This competitive race has drawn support from prominent members of both parties. Bryce has received support from Senator Bernie Sanders, while President Donald Trump tweeted out his support to Steil. Steil has also received support from Ryan. The Democrats hope with the "Blue Wave" movement, traditionally Republican seats will flip to Democrats. So far, seats such as Wisconsin's First District have been more competitive than normal due to the rise of Democratic candidates. Wisconsin's First District sits right on the Wisconsin-Illinois border, and includes Kenosha and Racine, as well as parts of Rock, Walworth, Milwaukee, and Waukesha counties. The population of Wisconsin's 1st District is 715,327 residents.



2018 Wisconsin governor candidate Randy Bryce (left) and 2016 presidential candidate Bernie Sanders (right)

## New York District #27: Chris Collins (R) v. Nate McMurray (D)

BY CARTER ZAGORSKI

**REP. CHRIS COLLINS CHARGED WITH INSIDER TRADING, FEDERAL PROSECUTORS ANNOUNCE**  
THE WASHINGTON POST

**CHRIS COLLINS TURNED DOWN PLEA DEAL FROM FEDS BEFORE INDICTMENT**  
THE HILL

And yet, even with an arrest related to his stock tips that he gave to his son about a pharmaceutical company he sat on the board for, the New York district finds itself forced to choose. Either elect their three-term incumbent Republican who ran into trouble with the law but supported their values, voting to repeal the Affordable Care Act (or also known as ObamaCare), and endorsing President Trump, or elect the local businessman and town official who champions infrastructure and sustainable development? Collins initially announced that he'd be suspending his bid for Congress after the incident, but then reversed his position and chose to remain on the ballot and continue his campaign. In a New York Times interview, Tom Perez,

Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, stated that, "The choices couldn't be more stark. But as much as anything, integrity is on the ballot." Nate McMurray, the Democratic challenger, graduated from Tsinghua University in China, was a Fulbright scholar, and recently served as the Grand Island, NY, Town Supervisor. During his tenure, the Grand Island community notably eradicated toll booths in favor of cashless tolling. He also advocated for a recreational path on the town's riverfront. The race is quite closer than most think. Polls conducted over the last couple of weeks generally show that Collins has a narrow lead, but with recent positive Democratic momentum, the outcome should be considered a toss-up.

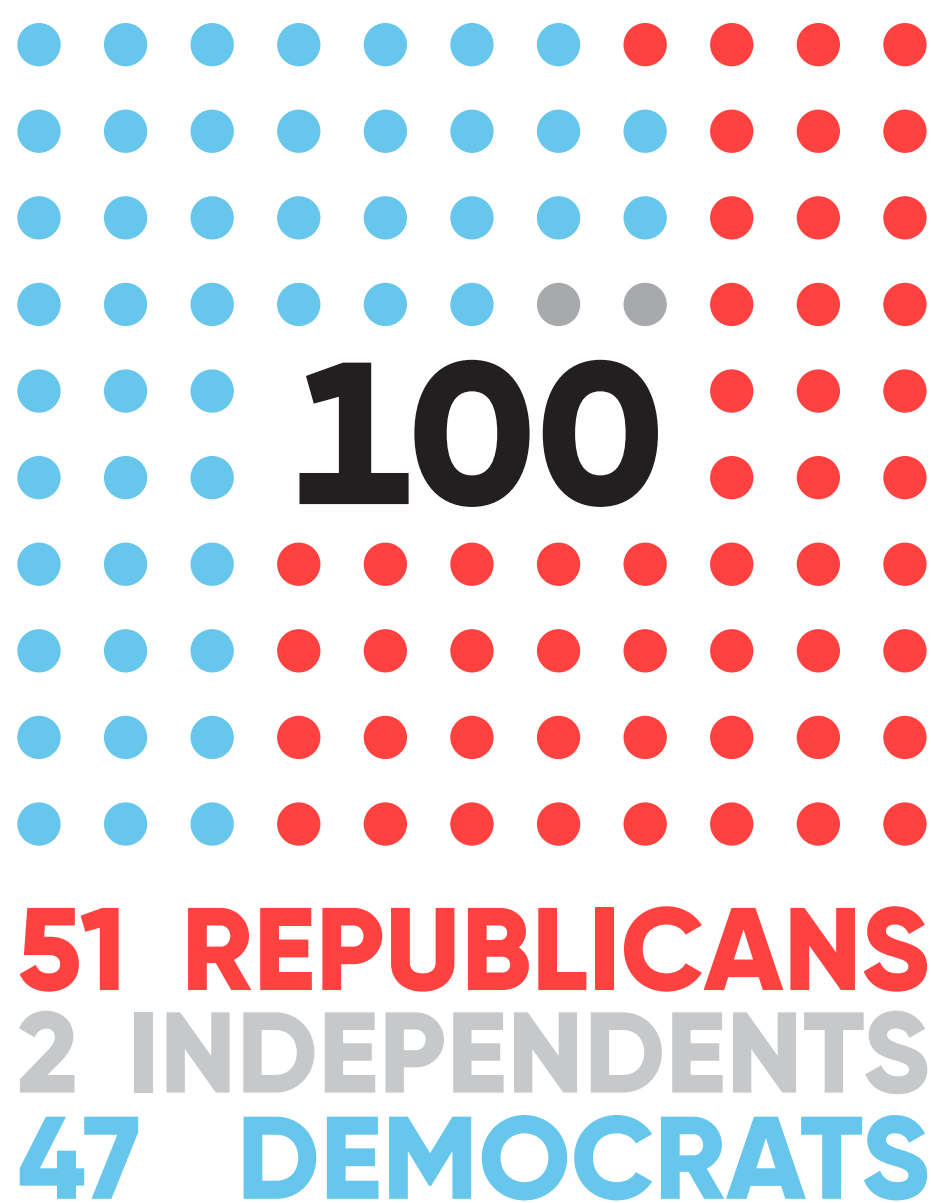
# U.S. SENATE RACES

## U.S. SENATE QUICK FACTS

- Located in Washington, D.C. in the United States Capitol
- Two house component of legislative branch: House of Representatives & Senate
- Each state is represented equally (two senators per state)
- One third of the Senate is elected every two years; Senators have six-year terms
- No term limits
- 50 seats + presidency or 51 seats needed for control
- Passage of laws to President's approval generally requires a majority vote from both houses

## CURRENT LINEUP

- President of the Senate: Vice President of the United States, Michael R. Pence (R) since 2017
- President pro tempore: Orrin G. Hatch (R-UT) since 2015
- Majority Leader: Mitch McConnell (R-KY) since 2015
- Minority Leader: Charles E. Schumer (D-NY) since 2017



## Heidi Heitkamp (D) v. Kevin Cramer (R)

BY CARTER ZAGORSKI

One of the nation's most important elections happens to be in one of the nation's smallest states by population: North Dakota, home to around 750,000 Americans.

The state's population is so small that you probably didn't realize that the above graphic is of South Dakota. Here's the real North Dakota:



That's important to illustrate, because as Illinoisans, our lack of awareness of the state's appearance on a map demonstrates that little is likely known about the influence from each individual voter on North Dakota's gubernatorial election as well as the next U.S. Senate; with a population of less than one million receiving the same amount of Senate representation as California, a state with a population of nearly 40 million, all North Dakotans have a huge choice to make in this hotly contested election with significant consequences.

Mary "Heidi" Heitkamp, the incumbent Democratic Senator, was the first woman to be elected to the Senate to represent her state in her most recent election cycle, 2012. She now faces North Dakota's current sole member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Kevin Cramer, a Democrat who has held his office since 2013. It's important to note that the U.S. Senate is much more difficult to be elected to across the United States than the U.S. House of Representatives - the Senate consists of 100 members, two per state, while the House consists of 435, determined by population - yet there are two senators and only one Representative from North Dakota, a trait currently shared by only six other states.

A recent North Dakota law tightened voter ID requirements, many believing the intention being to impede the Native American - and Democratic - vote. It forces all of the state's residents to present a current street address to vote, a roadblock for the many Native Americans who live on roads in reservations without street signs or number signs. While some argue the

new law ensures all North Dakotan votes are legitimate, many, including the Spirit Lake Tribe, vehemently disagree. The Tribe's motion against the state's Secretary of State was denied last Wednesday, along with hopes for an exemption for certain counties with large Native American populations.

In the buildup to the election, Heitkamp, along with the rest of the Senate, voted on the Brett Kavanaugh proceedings for his Supreme Court confirmation. A "blue" (Democratic) Senator from a passionate "red" (Republican) state, she faced a tough decision: please her electorate, voting to confirm the Republican party's nominee, or stick to her morals, voting against Kavanaugh?

After her "no" vote on the nominee, she now finds herself trailing by around 7-9 percentage points in the two most recent polls. With the election coming on Tuesday, many believe Cramer's lead is too great to overcome, even with his relatively moderate stances on free trade and previous poor standing with President Trump's administration. With Republicans expected to maintain control of the Senate, a last-second swing by North Dakotans for their incumbent Heitkamp could have great effects in determining the party majority and consequent upcoming Senate legislation, among other proceedings.



Democratic candidate Heitkamp (left) and republican candidate Cramer (right)

## Texas: Ted Cruz (R) v. Beto O'Rourke (D)

BY CLAIRE DWYER

In Texas, the heated race between Republican Ted Cruz and Democrat Beto O'Rourke has gained national attention due to its competitive nature.

So far, polls have Cruz leading by a slim margin. For Texas, a historically Republican state, it is rare to see a race of this scale so close.

Cruz, the current Senator, hasn't faced an election this close for his seat. The last time a Democrat was elected for a Senate seat was 1988. This close election might be the first to break that pattern. Current President Donald Trump has even supported Cruz through his rallies, despite dubbing him "Lying Ted Cruz" during the 2016 presidential election. Cruz has raised \$33 million as of Oct. 26.

O'Rourke has raised over \$70 million so far, which is more than any U.S. Senate race in history. O'Rourke has also made the most of his historic grassroots campaign, relying mostly on volunteers to get his message out across the state. The campaign has claimed to have knocked on over a million doors and made over 8 million phone calls to Texans.

This close race will continue to be closely watched as the votes come in, including the 4.3 million early votes that have already been submitted.



Republican candidate Cruz (left) and democratic candidate O'Rourke (right)

The military service career of David Harris spanned over three decades, culminating in his role as Major General of the Illinois National Guard in 2003. He served as a state representative from 1983 to 1993, then again from 2011 onward. With the election of Republican Governor Bruce Rauner and a Democratic-controlled state legislature, both sides of the lawmaking process couldn't agree on a budget for more than two years. It was after the crisis concluded when Harris

announced he'd no longer seek an additional term due to the excruciating process of passing the state's financial plan, which he had been a large part of; his vote, along with a small number of other Republicans, approved a contested 32 percent tax increase and ended the gridlock. Eddie Corrigan, the Republican replacement for Harris on tomorrow's ballot, argues for repealing the legislation his predecessor's "yes" vote was instrumental for. He considers the 32 percent increase to be

something "we need to eliminate," according to his campaign website, along with stances in favor of structural changes to state operations, reducing spending, a property tax freeze, redistricting reform, and investing in schools and infrastructure. He's endorsed by the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, Illinois Fraternal Order of Police, and the mayors of Arlington Heights and Prospect Heights. Mark Walker, the Democratic nominee, was a state representative from 2009-2011 and

is a "management expert and entrepreneur." He believes in a graduated income tax, investing in education, investing in small businesses, and an assault rifles ban. Walker is endorsed by the Daily Herald, Planned Parenthood, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Sierra Club, and Illinois AFL-CIO. Walker hasn't held political office since 2011 and Corrigan hasn't held political office at all, previously working as an Outreach Coordinator for a local Congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives.

## Indiana: Joe Donnelly (D) v. Mike Braun (R)

BY MATT BEDNAR

Tuesday's midterms are going to have great consequences, either serving as a boost or an obstacle to President Trump's plans for the remainder of his term. Indiana's race for their next Senator illustrates that their voters understands this, as their support in the race between Democratic incumbent Joe Donnelly and Republican challenger Mike Braun is extremely close; poll margins show Donnelly leading by less than 1 percent.

Joe Donnelly has been in Washington since 2006, serving in the House of Representatives from 2006-2012 and then as a Senator since 2012. Joe stance on important issues ranges into both parties views. He believes in the Keystone pipeline which is bipartisan, shrinking the skill labor gap to get more jobs to Hoosiers in

his home state, and to also fix the infrastructure in the country. Donnelly also believes in small businesses because of their huge role in Indiana's economy and support of domestic steel in America.

Mike Braun, the CEO of Meyer Distributing and owner of Indiana's Meyer Logistics, is running for conservative change to Washington. Braun believes in protecting the 2nd amendment, making Trump's tax cuts permanent, "draining the swamp," reducing government spending, strengthening the military, and protecting the borders.

This race is very important and both candidates have put a lot of time and money into this campaign. It will partially decide which party gets majority control in the Senate, and all comes down to tomorrow, November 6th.

## Tennessee: Phil Bredesen (D) v. Marsha Blackburn (R)

BY AMELIA ZOLLNER

Popular singer Taylor Swift recently broke her silence regarding politics through a lengthy Instagram post. Swift, who has lived in Tennessee since she was 14 years old, spoke out about the state's election, both endorsing Democratic candidates and encouraging her fans to vote.

Although Swift also revealed her support for Jim Cooper, a Democratic candidate for the House of Representatives, her post mainly detailed the reasoning behind her support for Senate candidate Phil Bredesen, a Democrat running against Republican Marsha Blackburn for retiring incumbent Republican Bob Corker's position. Swift announced her support for Bredesen by listing a variety of Blackburn's views that she disagrees with, stating in her Instagram post, "As much as I have in the past and would like to continue voting for women in office, I cannot support Marsha Blackburn. Her voting record in Congress appalls and terrifies me."

In October, a CBS News poll revealed that Blackburn had an 8-point lead over Bredesen. However, many are theorizing that Swift's encouraging of fans to vote Democratic could potentially swing the vote to a Democratic majority.

Swift also encouraged the rest of her fol-



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BLAZE

lowers to vote, saying, "For a lot of us, we may never find a candidate or party with whom we agree 100% on every issue, but we have to vote anyway." This post may have caused a spike in voter registration, according to Vote.org. 65,000 voters registered in the 24-hour period after her post, compared to around a total of 150,000 registrations throughout the entire month of September.

As nearly every political comment ends, Swift's post received heavy backlash from commenters and even from President Trump, who said, "I like Taylor's music about 25% less now" in regards to the situation.

An additional comment from Swift on the Tennessee election was posted in support of Bredesen last Wednesday, reading "We want leadership, not fear-based extremism. Early voting goes til Thursday and Election Day is November 6. Please don't sit this one out."