

Welcome to the spring edition of the AMA's Very Influential Physician (VIP) Insider. Read on for details about these topics:

- Urge Congress to sign #FixPriorAuth Dear Colleague letter today
- How Has Social Media Engagement Changed for Congress?
- A year and a half out, these are Roll Call's 2024's most vulnerable Senators
- Cook Political Report Race Ratings: 2024 House races

Urge Congress to sign #FixPriorAuth Dear Colleague letter today

Last year, thanks to the actions of advocates just like you, the House of Representatives passed the Improving Seniors' Access to Timely Care Act; bipartisan legislation with over 300 cosponsors requiring Medicare Advantage plans to identify and issue real-time decisions for routinely approved services, adopt federally developed standardized electronic prior authorization processes, provide greater transparency surrounding the development and use of utilization management guidelines, and force them to provide rationales for denials.

[Urge your legislators to sign the #FixPriorAuth "Dear Colleague" letter today!](#)

Unfortunately, despite strong bipartisan support in the Senate, the bill failed to receive a floor vote leaving millions of patients without these prior auth protections they so desperately need.

Thankfully, late last year the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) offered new proposed rules that, once finalized, would align with many of the key provisions of the Improving Seniors' Access to Timely Care Act and improve the prior authorization process for physicians and their patients.

#FixPriorAuth champions in both the House and Senate began circulating a "Dear Colleague" letter urging CMS to promptly finalize the proposed rule and further expand its provisions to better align with the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act. In particular, the letter urges CMS to include a mechanism for MA plans to issue real-time prior authorization decisions for routinely approved services, establish a 24-hour deadline for MA plans to respond to emergent prior authorization decisions, and provide detailed transparency metrics.

This is where you come in – if you're sick and tired of the unnecessary burden that prior authorization imposes on both physicians and patients, please [contact your Representative and Senators](#) and urge them to sign on to this important Dear Colleague today!

This flawed system must be fixed, and now it's up to CMS to move electronic prior authorization forward and hold the big insurance companies accountable for the undue burden their policies put on our country's health care system.

How Has Social Media Engagement Changed for Congress?

Our partners at The Congressional Management Foundation wanted to know if social media engagement has changed for congressional offices since its inception. We asked congressional staff if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

"It is more difficult to constructively engage with our constituents using social media than a few years ago."

What they learned: A large majority of staff (66%) feel that it is more difficult to engage with constituents on social media than it was a few years ago (10% disagreed with this statement). This is not surprising, mainly because the harshness of political rhetoric has escalated dramatically over the past several years. Citizen advocates should be mindful of this when they're posting and sharing content to social media, and should aim to be concise, respectful, and factual in their posts and comments. While the barriers to engagement with Congress may be lower than ever before with the advent of social media, advocates should still take steps to ensure their message is being seen and read by congressional staff.

Source: Partnership for a More Perfect Union, Copyright Congressional Management Foundation, <http://CongressFoundation.org>. Used with permission.

A year and a half out, these are Roll Call's 2024's most vulnerable Senators

By CQ Roll Call's [Daniela Altimari](#), [Mary Ellen McIntire](#), and [Niels Lesniewski](#)

Eighteen months out from Election Day 2024, Senate Republicans have plenty of reasons to be bullish about retaking the majority, but the same could be said last year, when Democrats actually gained one seat.

Still, CQ Roll Call's first look at the 10 most vulnerable senators of 2024 is dominated by Democratic incumbents, some of whom have not made their intentions known.

Based on conversations with numerous campaign insiders and election analysts, the list has Democrats in six of the top seven spots. The only exception is Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, who checks in at No. 2, behind West Virginia Democrat Joe Manchin III.

Sinema, who was last elected as a Democrat but declared herself an independent at the start of this Congress, is in the unusual position of facing challenges from both the left and the right if she decides to seek another term.

Utah GOP Sen. Mitt Romney is not likely to be vulnerable if he decides to run for another term and makes it through the Beehive State primary, but he checks in at No. 10 on the list because he could face a significant challenge from his right.

Others could still make a future version of the list, including Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., if dynamics shift or if any of the current top 10 opt for retirement instead of subjecting themselves to another campaign cycle and potential six years in the Senate. Manchin, for instance, has told reporters that he may not make his intentions known until the end of the year.

None of the races involving the 10 most vulnerable is likely to be the most expensive Senate contest in the country (though a Texas race between Republican incumbent Sen. Ted Cruz and Democratic Rep. Colin Allred could be quite costly). The honor will most likely go to the open seat race in California, where three top Democrats — Reps. Barbara Lee, Katie Porter and Adam B. Schiff — are running to succeed the retiring Dianne Feinstein, and where there's likely to be only Democrats on the final ballot under the state's top-two system.

Because this list only looks at vulnerable incumbents, it also does not include one other race that could figure prominently in GOP efforts to take the majority. That's the seat Democratic Sen. Debbie Stabenow will be vacating in Michigan, a perennial presidential battleground.

1. Joe Manchin, D-WV

Manchin has \$9.7 million in his campaign account. He's been a constant thorn in the side of President Joe Biden and the Democrats, a stance that may play well in ruby-red West Virginia. And on the Republican side, there's a divisive ideological battle brewing between Rep. Alex X. Mooney and Gov. Jim Justice. Yet despite those factors, the Democratic senator is once again fighting for his political survival in a state that Donald Trump carried by nearly 40 percentage points. Manchin says he won't formally announce whether he intends to run again until the end of the year, but the National Republican Senatorial Committee is already running ads blasting him.

2. Kyrsten Sinema, I-AZ

Sinema has no shortage of announced and potential challengers, and it's not clear how she would access the ballot, much less prevail in November 2024. The Arizona senator became an independent at the start of the current Congress while maintaining enough ties with Democrats to get her committee assignments. Rep. Ruben Gallego is running for the seat as a Democrat, and he has already picked up significant endorsements. Republicans could have a crowded primary, with Pima County Sheriff Mark Lamb already in the race and former gubernatorial candidate Kari Lake likely running. Lake and Lamb could prove unpalatable to some GOP voters, but it is unclear whether there's enough of a middle ground for Sinema to prevail in a multicandidate race.

3. Jon Tester, D-MT

Tester is a blunt-talking third-generation farmer who has served in the Senate since 2007. He was the top fundraiser among vulnerable Democratic senators in the first quarter of 2023, taking in more than \$5 million. Republicans have yet to field a candidate to face him. Both Republicans in Montana's congressional delegation — Reps. Ryan Zinke and Matt Rosendale — along with Gov. Greg Gianforte are among the GOP's possible recruits. Defeating Tester is one of the priorities of Republican Steve Daines, the other Big Sky Country senator and the head of the NRSC. The group is targeting Tester as a big-spending Biden ally.

4. Sherrod Brown, D-OH

Brown is a political survivor who has managed to hang on in a state that has grown increasingly inhospitable to Democrats. First elected to the Senate in 2006, Brown has nurtured a reputation as an economic populist who can connect with working class voters. Brown raised \$3.6 million in the first quarter of 2023. Several Republicans are seeking to unseat him, including state Sen. Matt Dolan, whose family owns the Cleveland Guardians baseball team, and entrepreneur Bernie Moreno, who is running as a political outsider. Other

potential GOP candidates include Secretary of State Frank LaRose and Rep. Warren Davidson.

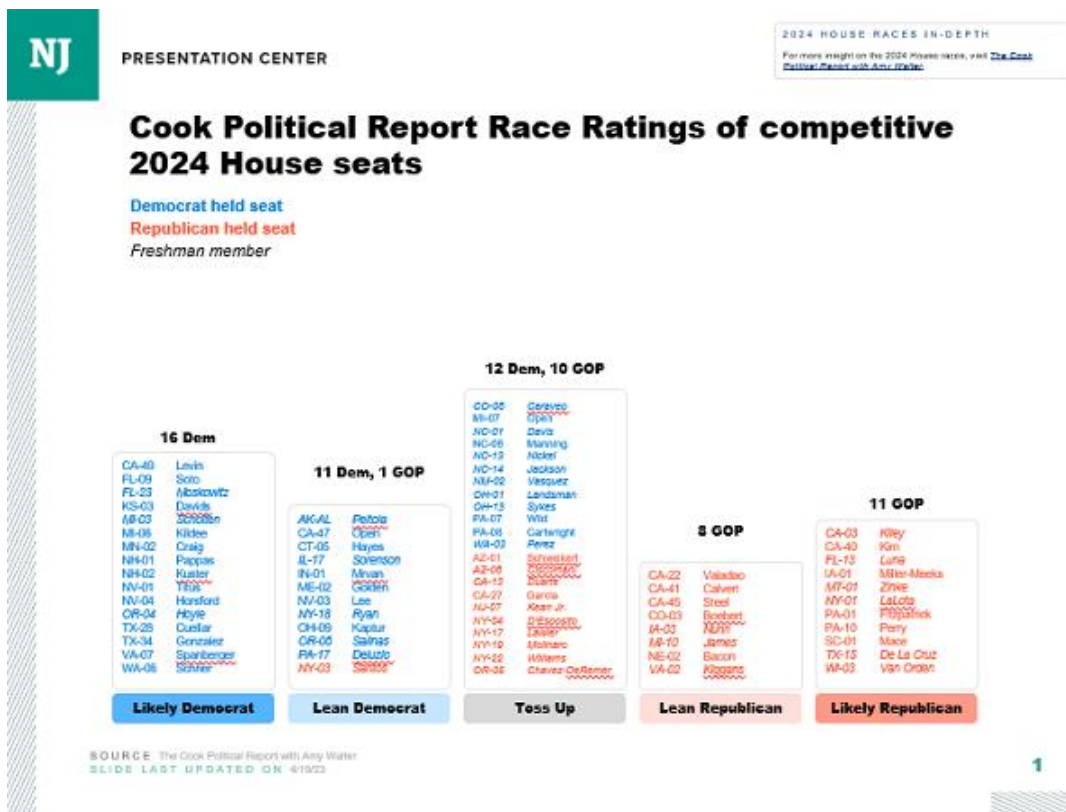
5. Jacky Rosen, D-NV

Rosen is in a perennial battleground state that Biden carried narrowly in 2020, but she may be less vulnerable than that because of Nevada Republicans' struggles to win federal races. Last year, former state attorney general Adam Paul Laxalt was a top GOP recruit and lost to incumbent Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto by about 8,000 votes, even as Republicans won the governor's office. The only major declared challenger to Rosen so far is Jim Marchant, who previously lost races for Congress and secretary of state and has expressed the view that Biden was not the legitimate winner in 2020. Rosen had about \$6 million in cash on hand at the end of March.

[Read More](#)

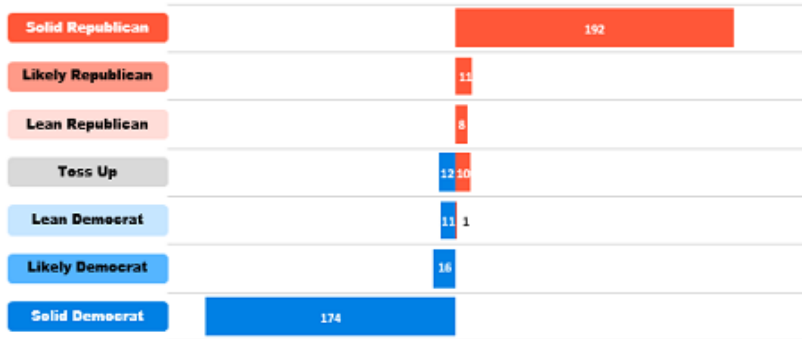
Cook Political Report Race Ratings: 2024 House races

Legendary political handicapper, Charlie Cook is out with his updated 2024 race ratings for the House. As always, Charlie shares this information in easy to understand graphics and charts (below). To stay up-to-date with his political analysis be sure to follow his team on twitter at: @CharlieCookDC and @CookPolitical



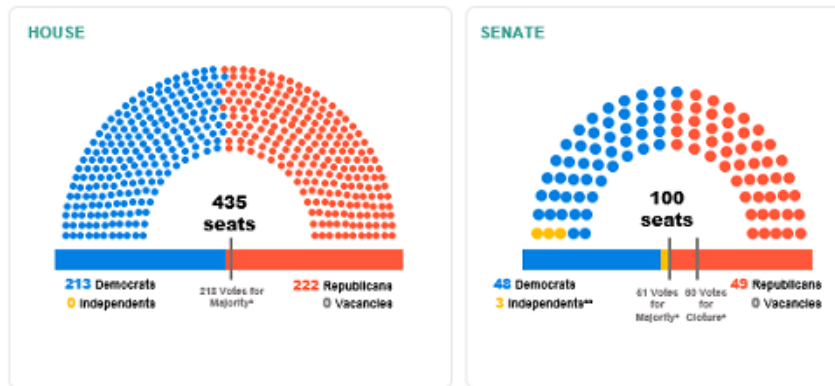
Cook Political Report 2024 House race ratings

As of April 18, 2023, ratings have been released for all 435 House districts.



SOURCE: The Cook Political Report with Amy Walter
SLIDE LAST UPDATED ON: 4/18/23

Composition of the 118th Congress



*If no vacancies and all members vote. **Sens. Sanders (VT) and King (ME) caucus with the Democrats; Sen. Sinema (AZ) caucuses with neither party but receives committee assignments from the Democrats.

SOURCE: US Senate, US House Press Gallery
SLIDE LAST UPDATED ON: 4/18/23

Advocacy calendar

JUNE

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|------------------------|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| AMA House of Delegates | | | | | | |
| 18 | 19 Juneteenth | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | |

AMA Events

Senate in Session

House in Session

Both Chambers in Session

State Work Periods

District Work Periods

Both Work Periods

Be sure to follow all the AMA's Physician Grassroots Network social media accounts for all the latest news on physician advocacy and what you can do to make sure your voice is heard on Capitol Hill.



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