



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

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- Can the GOP supersize a Senate majority?
- Citizen advocate webinar: The Complete Citizen's Advocates Toolkit
- Most Floor Votes Don't Make Headlines

Hotline's updated House Power Rankings: Majority runs through California, New York

By: [James A. Downs](#), [Kirk A. Bado](#) and [Erika Filter](#)

The race to control the House promises to come down to the wire. House Republicans have struggled to corral their rowdy majority, leading to retirements and early resignations that have Democrats feeling good about their chances to retake the gavel. Democrats need to flip only four seats to win the majority.

Democrats, again relying on abortion rights as a key issue, have several paths to retake the House, even as Democratic retirements leave open three swing districts. Republicans, on the other hand, believe they have a stronger class of recruits that can take advantage of an unpopular president at the top of the ticket.

Mid-cycle redistricting led to major changes in Alabama, North Carolina, and Louisiana, with a slight edge for Republicans. Alabama and Louisiana saw Voting Rights Act lawsuits result in one additional Democratic-leaning district in each state, which both parties agree are uncontested right now. However, some Republicans, including Rep. Garret Graves of Louisiana, believe a court challenge will overturn the map and recreate a Louisiana Republican district.

North Carolina legislators went back to the drawing board yet again after the state's high court ruled partisan gerrymandering legal. The result wiped three Democratic-held seats, and as incumbents saw the writing on the wall, none decided to run for reelection.

Democratic state lawmakers in New York did not aggressively gerrymander when given the opportunity to redraw the map earlier this year.

The following list represents a snapshot of the race for the House six months from Election Day. These rankings do not forecast which party might win the majority but rather considers each race on its individual merits. They are based on conversations with strategists, consultants, and campaigns in both parties.

Three seats make their debut on this list, and some races have shifted drastically since our last rankings in October. In many instances, such as California's 41st, races moved down not because they have become less competitive but because others have become more competitive since October.

1. New York's 22nd: Rep. Brandon Williams (R)

Redistricting did no favors to Williams, as the New York Legislature tried to narrow his reelection path by adding Democratic-leaning territory to his already blue district. President Biden won the seat by 7 points under the old lines, and the new lines went to Biden by more than 11. GOP officials admit the Syracuse-area seat will be tough to hold, even as the Democratic primary remains unsettled. Insiders say state Rep. John Mannion seems to be the favorite. Williams only won by about a point in 2022, and that combined with a handful of negative recent headlines makes him the most vulnerable member of Congress right now.

2. New York's 4th: Rep. Anthony D'Esposito (R)

Demographics might be destiny for D'Esposito after state Democrats' slight tweaks to the congressional map left him just as vulnerable as before. Biden carried the Southern Nassau County district by double digits. Democrats will likely nominate Laura Gillen, who has benefited from early support from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. She doubled up the former police officer's fundraising in the first three months of 2024, and Republicans already are acknowledging it will be an uphill battle to keep this seat red.

3. California's 13th: Rep. John Duarte (R)

Duarte won the second-closest race in the country during the 2022 cycle, scoring a victory in the open seat by fewer than 600 votes in a fairly red year in California. He's broken with his party on a few votes related to [abortion and immigration](#), two issues that promise to be top of mind in November. Democrats are again running 2022 nominee Adam Gray, who outraised Duarte by more than \$450,000 last quarter and is quickly closing the cash-on-hand gap. In a seat Biden carried by 10 points, Democrats feel confident they can win this race on national coattails alone.

4. Washington's 3rd: Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D)

The most vulnerable Democrat on our list two times running, Gluesenkamp Perez is doing

her best to build her own brand outside the Democratic Party. She's also raised \$1.2 million in the first three months of 2024 and entered April with \$3 million cash on hand—nearly four times what her two potential GOP opponents had on hand combined. But Donald Trump carried this Southwestern Washington district by 4 points, and that could be enough to drag even Joe Kent—the 2022 nominee whose election denialism and ties to white-supremacist groups cost Republicans an otherwise easy-to-defend seat—across the line.

5. California's 27th: Rep. Mike Garcia (R)

During his first three campaigns, Garcia has had the good fortune to face the same underperforming Democratic challenger each time. But now he'll face former Virgin Galactic CEO George Whitesides, a candidate universally acknowledged by strategists in both parties as a top recruit this cycle. Whitesides has put his money where his mouth is: He raised \$1.3 million in the first three months of 2024, more than double what Garcia hauled in. The former fighter pilot is in for a dogfight if he wants to defend his seat in a district that Biden carried by 12 points.

6. New York's 19th: Rep. Marc Molinaro (R)

Despite initial plans, Molinaro's seat wasn't saved by redistricting. Biden won his district by 4.6 points in 2020, and Molinaro won his seat by just over 4,400 votes in 2022. On the Democratic side, 2022 nominee Josh Riley returned for a rematch, raising \$1.3 million in Q1 compared to Molinaro's \$536,000. Outside groups have already hit Molinaro with attack ads, and House Majority PAC is likely to hit the New York media market to win back the seat.

Can the GOP supersize a Senate majority?

By The [National Journal's Charlie Cook](#)

Rather than looking at the question of whether Republicans will seize control of the Senate, like ordering at a fast food restaurant the better question is whether their majority will be small, medium, or large.

The West Virginia seat now held by retiring Democrat Joe Manchin is pretty much a gimme putt for Republicans. That makes a 50-50 Senate the worst case scenario for the GOP. Should Republicans only pick up that one West Virginia seat, the Senate majority in the next Congress would go to the party winning this year's presidential election as the incoming vice president would be sitting in the Senate's presiding chair to break tie votes.

It would be foolhardy to say that President Biden has no chance to be re-elected, but it would be totally unrealistic to deny that the path for his re-election is both narrow and

decidedly uphill. In 2020, Biden swept all three of the Frost Best swing states (Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania) that effectively determined the 2016 election, but also three across the Sun Belt (Arizona, Georgia, and Nevada). He now trails or is at best statistically tied in all of them.

To say that Pennsylvania and its 19 Electoral College votes are necessary, but not sufficient for a Biden victory, would be an understatement. If Biden can't win Pennsylvania, his best (or least worst) of the swing states, it is really unlikely that he can win in Wisconsin (10 electoral votes) and Michigan (15), the toughest of the Frost Belt troika. The three swing states stretched across the Sun Belt, Arizona (11), Nevada (6), and Georgia (16) are all harder for Biden to crack than the three up north.

[As noted last week](#), however, Democrats losing their Senate majority is much more certain. If Republicans only sink their gimme putt in West Virginia, that alone would give Republicans a majority if Trump prevails. But after the Mountaineer State, Democrats still must defend two other seats in states Trump carried in both 2016 and 2020: Montana (held by Sen. Jon Tester) and Ohio (Sen. Sherrod Brown). Both are very strong candidates and can be expected to wage top-shelf campaigns, but even an Olympic Gold Medal swimmer can get sucked under if the undertow is bad enough. The number of Trump voters that Tester must lure over in Montana and Brown in Ohio to vote Democrat for the Senate is daunting to say the least.

After that trio of Democrats double-Trump seats come four more that Trump won in 2016 but not 2020: open seats in Arizona and Michigan as well as seats in Pennsylvania (held by Sen. Bob Casey) and Wisconsin (Sen. Tammy Baldwin).

In addition, there's a pair of Democratic-held seats that the incumbent party can by no means take for granted. Sen. Jackie Rosen is defending the seat in Nevada, where Hillary Clinton and Biden both won by not quite 2.5 percentage points in 2016 and 2020, respectively. The deeply blue state of Maryland hosts this cycle's unicorn race, where Democrats must come together after a divisive primary to take on the very popular former Republican Gov. Larry Hogan. Polls today show Hogan in the lead, but it's probably safer to just say that the race is an even bet for now.

It would be hard for any rational person to argue that this will be an Armageddon year for Senate Democrats, losing all ten of the above seats to create a 59-41 GOP majority, but parties have suffered net losses of five or more Senate seats in five post-World War II presidential election years. In the year of the nailbiter of a race between Harry Truman and Tom Dewey race in 1948, Republicans lost nine Senate seats. In 1968, another close election with Hubert Humphrey, Richard Nixon, and George Wallace running, Democrats lost six seats in the Senate. The 1980 contest between Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, too close to call before the lone debate, ended up being a ten-point win for the Republican with

Democrats losing a dozen seats. In 2008, when Barack Obama defeated John McCain, Republicans dropped eight seats.

So many Democratic seats are in varying levels of danger, with precious few pickup opportunities to plausibly offset any losses. Going back to our fries-and-a-drink analogy, a small size win for Senate Republicans would be a net gain of just one or two, yielding a tiny minority. The medium size might be GOP gains of three, with a majority of 52-54 seats. Large would flip six or more seats, seating 55 or more newly emboldened Republicans. This means an enormous, head-spinning range of policy outcomes.

The bottom line is that there is still an enormous amount of uncertainty in the November elections, not just of direction but in the magnitude of the gains or losses.

Citizen advocate webinar: The Complete Citizen's Advocates Toolkit

Join our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) for an exclusive citizen advocate webinar – The Complete Citizen's Advocates Toolkit. The webinar will be held at 3pm EST on May 21, 2024.

Many citizens (and some professionals) think the only way to influence public policy is through a grassroots email campaign. However, there are more than a dozen ways to connect with elected officials – both online and offline. This straight-forward presentation will walk participants through the Complete Citizen-Advocate's Toolkit: 15 tools available to every advocate. The presentation will include social media, town hall meetings, telephone town hall meetings, in-district meetings, and letters to the editor.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

This program is based on exclusive and private surveys of congressional staff conducted by CMF and is available only to members of CMF's Partnership for a More Perfect Union. The webinar will be conducted by Bradford Fitch, President and CEO of CMF.

Most Floor Votes Don't Make Headlines

Our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) wanted to know how much time and resources Congress spends on controversial issues compared to non-

controversial issues. To find out, CMF reviewed one year (2018) of Senate floor votes on legislation, then sorted them into categories as follows:

- Reputational/Controversial: Addresses policies including abortion, gun control, immigration, and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
- Not Reputational/Controversial: All other policy issues

What they learned: Congress spends a small minority of its floor time considering controversial policy questions. Of all the Senate floor votes on policy, only 7 percent addressed abortion, gun control, immigration, or Obamacare (PPACA). The other 93 percent of the Senate's policy votes were on non-contentious issues. Unfortunately, controversy and political drama is what sells newspapers or draws people to watch Sunday talk shows, causing many constituents to believe that Congress does not care about their concerns and priorities. Citizen advocates shouldn't let the headlines fool them. Congress spends more time on non-controversial issues than the media might lead people to believe.

MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 Memorial Day	28	29	30	31	

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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