

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

- Urge your members of Congress to support letter on physician payment update
- Senate's most vulnerable list still dominated by Democrats
- Cook Political Report updated infographics: 2024 house races
- District events and meetings - staff say "go For It"

Urge your members of Congress to support letter on physician payment update

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently released the 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule (MPFS) that includes yet another 2.8 percent cut to physician Medicare payments on January 1, 2025.

Enough is enough – [contact your member of Congress](#) and urge them to sign the Miller-Meeks/Panetta "Dear Colleague" letter today - **deadline for cosigners is September 27!**

If Congress refuses to act before the end of the year, this planned cut will mark the fifth consecutive year that CMS included a cut to physician payments within the MPFS. Failure to stop these cuts threatens Medicare beneficiary access to physicians and other health care providers treating patients in the out-patient setting.

Recently, Representatives Mariannette Miller-Meeks, MD (R-IA) and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA), along with a bipartisan group of physician members of Congress, circulated a "Dear Colleague" letter urging House leadership to take immediate action to not only stop the 2.8 percent cut, but also provide physicians with a much-needed payment update that reflects the inflationary pressure they're facing running a medical practice.

According to recent data, physician Medicare payment rates have fallen 29 percent over the last two decades when adjusted for inflation, all while the cost of running a practice continues to rise. In fact, the 2025 MPFS Proposed Rule highlights that the cost of running a practice, as measured by the Medicare Economic Index (i.e., expenses associated with

paying rent, compensating clinical and administrative staff, and purchasing supplies and equipment) is estimated to increase by 3.6 percent.

Anyone can see this path is unsustainable - another round of cuts combined with ever rising inflationary costs and a long history of insufficient Medicare payments will endanger both physician practices and the patients they serve.

Please [contact your member of Congress](#) and urge them to sign the Miller-Meeks/Panetta "Dear Colleague" today. **The deadline for cosigners is September 27!**

Physicians stand ready to work with Congress to pass crucial bipartisan legislation to address these issues before the next round of cuts go into effect – it's time to Fix Medicare Now!

I'm a new Text block ready for your content.

Senate's most vulnerable list still dominated by Democrats

By [Daniela Altimari](#) and [Mary Ellen McIntire](#) of [Roll Call](#)

The Democrats' fragile hold on the Senate majority is likely to come down to the fates of a dirt farmer from north-central Montana, a Rust Belt populist and a trio of senators from battleground states.

Less than eight weeks out from Election Day, Montana's Jon Tester and Ohio's Sherrod Brown lead the list of Roll Call's most vulnerable senators, followed by Pennsylvania's Bob Casey, Nevada's Jacky Rosen and Wisconsin's Tammy Baldwin. The ranking is based on extensive conversations with campaign insiders, party officials and independent election analysts.

Roll Call typically focuses on the 10 most endangered members in each chamber, but as has been true all cycle, the Senate list keeps thinning. Our first [assessment](#) in May 2023 of the landscape for this fall featured Democrat Joe Manchin III of West Virginia, independent Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona and Republican Mitt Romney of Utah; all have since taken themselves out of contention by announcing their retirements.

And [our most recent list](#), published in early May, was led by New Jersey Democratic Sen. Bob Menendez, [who resigned in August](#) after he was convicted on federal corruption charges.

Republicans need a net gain of two seats to take the majority next year — or one seat and

control of the White House, since the vice president breaks ties. And with Manchin's retirement, the GOP is all but guaranteed to pick up the seat in ruby-red West Virginia.

While our list looks only at vulnerable incumbents, there are several high-profile open seats whose outcomes will also shape the balance of power in the chamber.

One of the biggest Senate battlegrounds is in Arizona, where Republican Kari Lake is running against Democratic Rep. Ruben Gallego. Inside Elections with Nathan L. Gonzales rates that race Tilt Democratic.

In Michigan, Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin and former GOP Rep. Mike Rogers are vying for a seat being vacated by Sen. Debbie Stabenow. Inside Elections also rates that race Tilt Democratic.

The GOP's hopes in Maryland rest with former Gov. Larry Hogan, a Republican who has been outspoken about his disagreements with presidential nominee Donald Trump. He's facing Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks in a race to succeed retiring Democratic Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin. The contest is rated Likely Democratic, a nod to the state's deep-blue underpinnings.

There are two other races worth keeping an eye on as the campaign season winds down.

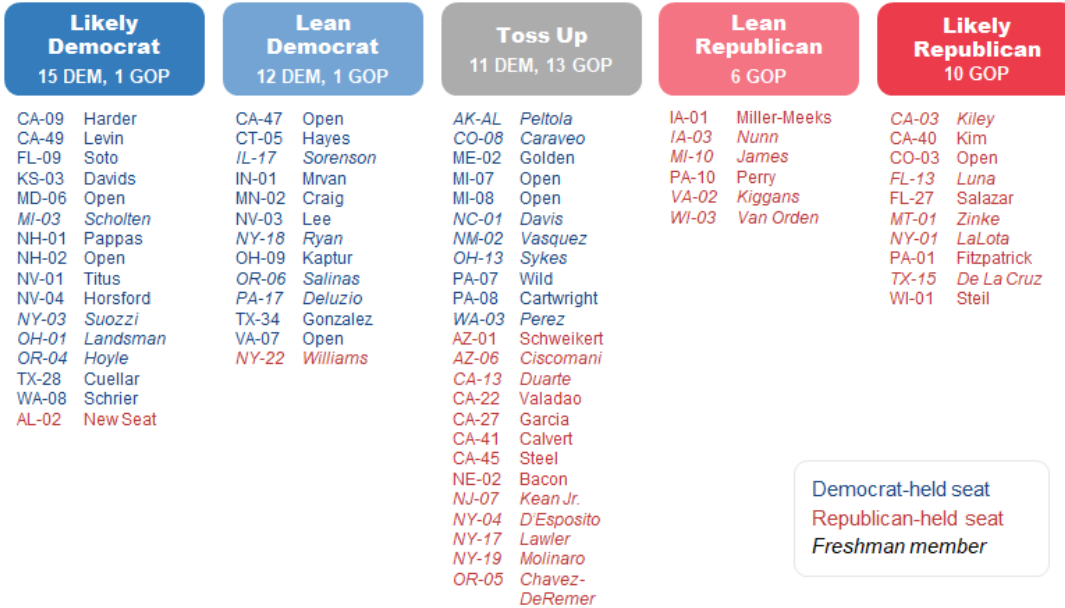
Democratic Sen. Martin Heinrich of New Mexico was showing signs he might be vulnerable in his reelection battle against Republican Nella Domenici, the former chief financial officer of a large hedge fund who is the daughter of former Sen. Pete Domenici. Heinrich began airing ads in June, and he was among the Democrats publicly calling for President Joe Biden to drop his reelection bid. But Biden's exit from the presidential race is seen as giving some down-ballot Democrats, such as Heinrich, a lift.

And in Nebraska, union leader Dan Osborn is waging a nonpartisan campaign to unseat Republican Sen. Deb Fischer. A poll by [Split Ticket and SurveyUSA](#) found the race essentially deadlocked, with Fischer at 39 percent and Osborn at 38 percent. But Fischer had \$3 million on hand as of June 30, compared with \$650,000 for Osborn. The race in a state Trump carried by 19 points in 2020 is rated Solid Republican.

[Continue reading](#)

Cook Political Report updated infographics: 2024 house races

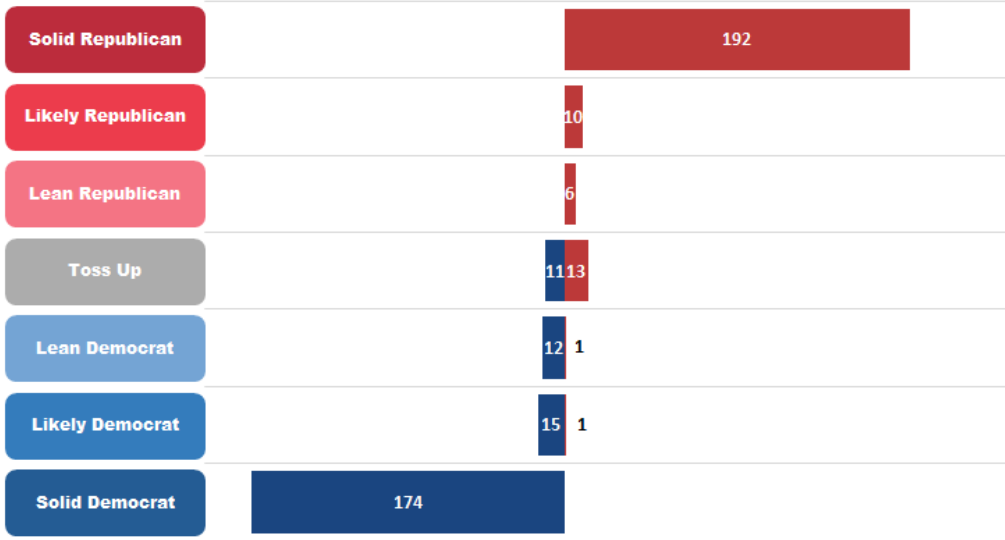
Cook Political Report Race Ratings of competitive 2024 House seats



SOURCE The Cook Political Report with Amy Walter.
SLIDE LAST UPDATED ON 9/6/24

Cook Political Report 2024 House race ratings

As of September 6, 2024, ratings have been released for all 435 House districts.

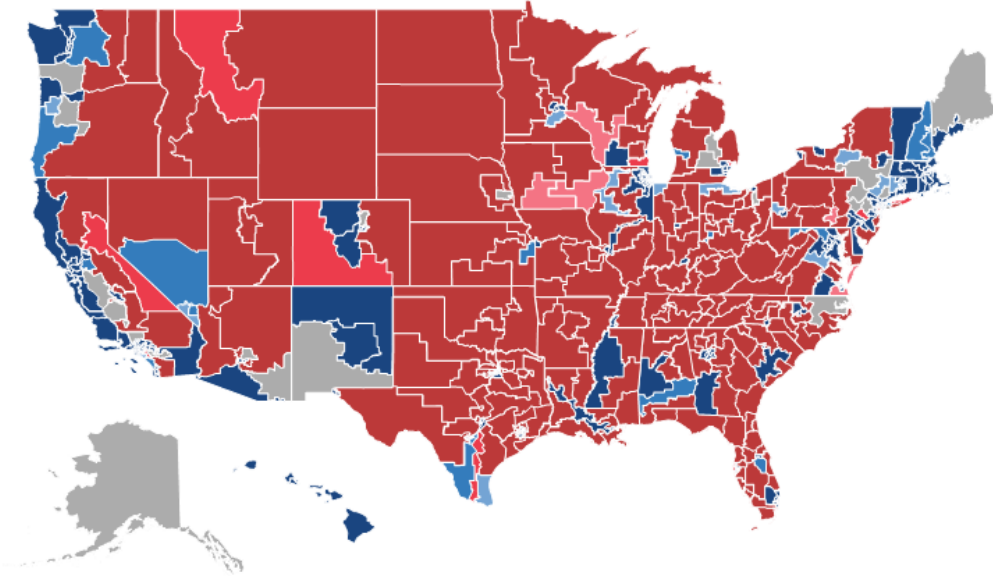


SOURCE The Cook Political Report with Amy Walter.
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Twenty-four seats are considered Toss Up districts for the 2024 election

Cook Political Report: 2024 House Race Ratings

■ Solid D ■ Likely D ■ Lean D ■ Toss Up ■ Lean R ■ Likely R ■ Solid R



SOURCE The Cook Political Report with Amy Walter.
SLIDE LAST UPDATED ON 9/6/24

District events and meetings – staff say "go For It"

Our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) were interested in knowing how staff feel about advocacy activities that occur in the district or state. CMF's surveys ask both open and closed questions when surveying Congressional staff about job aspects, including constituent engagement and district activities.

They learned through this work that 98 percent of staff agree that attending events in the district is "important to understanding constituents' views and opinions."

Grassroots mobilization professionals, when encouraging in-district engagement during Congressional district work periods, often experience resistance from their supporters. Many supporters believe you have to travel to Washington DC to be effective, but our research shows that district events have a unique and important role for Members and their staff.

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

OCTOBER

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

International Conference on Physician Health

- 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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