



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

- Final reminder: registration for the 2020 Candidate Workshop is closing soon
- New 2020 Senate power rankings
- CMF report: Freshman members often hire campaign staff
- First look at the 2020 Congressional calendar

Registration for the 2020 Candidate Workshop is closing soon

Thinking about running for public office? The [2020 AMPAC Candidate Workshop](#) is designed to help you make the leap from the exam room to the campaign trail. The Workshop will be taking place February 28 – March 1 at the AMA Office in Washington, DC.

The curriculum is targeted to AMA members, their spouses, residents, medical students and medical society staff who want to learn more about what it takes to be an effective candidate. You will learn: how and when to make the decision to run; the importance of a disciplined campaign plan and message; the secrets of effective fundraising; what kinds of media advertising are right for your campaign; how to handle the inevitable crises that emerge for every campaign; the role of your spouse and your family; and how to become a better public speaker.

Registration fee is \$250 for AMA members and \$1000 for non-members. Airfare and hotel accommodation not included, but a discounted room block at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill is available.

Space is limited so [register by Feb 3](#).

Hotlines' new 2020 Senate power ranking

By the National Journal reporters Drew Gerber, Leah Askarinam and Josh Kraushaar

On the surface, the fate of the most vulnerable senators hasn't changed much since Hotline's last power ranking: But there are signs of momentum changes that may take root—or fizzle out—as 2020 begins in earnest.

Democratic Sen. Doug Jones tops the list again, as his prospects have only worsened. Republican Sen. Thom Tillis avoided an expensive primary in North Carolina but remains more vulnerable than Sen. Susan Collins in Maine. Collins is in a weaker position than in previous races, but she doesn't have to win by double digits like she has in three previous elections; she's still safer than Tillis and Republicans in Colorado and Arizona.

Now that Mike Pompeo has decided not to run for Sen. Pat Roberts's open seat, Kansas makes an appearance. And with the discord surrounding Kelly Loeffler's appointment to the Senate, the Georgia special election moves too.

Here is Hotline's ranking of the seats most likely to flip, with the race's placement in our [September ranking](#) in parentheses.

1. Alabama—Doug Jones (D) (1)

With Jeff Sessions's entry, Jones's best chance for holding his seat—Republicans renominating Roy Moore—is [slipping away](#). Sessions will likely face a runoff against former Auburn University football coach Tommy Tuberville who has recently shaken up his campaign team. Rep. Bradley Byrne, placing third in most polling, committed to going on-air early in an attempt to introduce himself to voters outside of his district. As of now, it's hard to see whether Jones pulls together the numbers to win against any of them.

2. Colorado—Cory Gardner (R) (2)

The new year has brought little relief for Gardner, who has faced a barrage of ad buys from Democratic groups. Gardner is also facing a vote on impeachment and hasn't strayed from the party line on President Trump. Former Gov. John Hickenlooper, the likely Democratic nominee, held a large margin among unaffiliated voters in recent polling, a group that just hit 40 percent of the state's electorate. But the Democrat faces a crowded primary, as well as the cloud of a pending ethics hearing.

3. Arizona—Martha McSally (R) (3)

Money remains a problem for McSally, even as she's kept pace with the top GOP fundraisers. She raised \$4 million in the fourth quarter, but has been repeatedly outraised by retired astronaut Mark Kelly. In December, McSally reportedly told state Republicans in the state that she's praying for outside spending to defend her campaign amid an onslaught of Democratic ads. Kelly slightly leads in recent public polls, including among independents. But McSally's saving grace may come from the Trump campaign's plans to spend heavily in the swing state.

4. North Carolina—Thom Tillis (R) (4)

Tillis ended December by escaping a primary challenge from Rep. Mark Walker yet again, and retired investor Garland Tucker—whose campaign had been dogging Tillis on the airwaves—suspended his campaign. Without a well-funded primary challenger, Tillis scaled back his early TV buy, which was set to eat up half of his campaign chest. Former state Sen. Cal Cunningham finally received the official backing of the Democratic Party and announced raising \$1.6 million in the last quarter of the year, even as state Sen. Erica Smith led the [sleepy primary](#) in some of the scant polling so far.

5. Maine—Susan Collins (R) (5)

Last year saw a glut of ads and cash start to flood the Pine Tree State, and there's little indication the frenzy is slowing. State House Speaker Sara Gideon outraised Collins in the third quarter, \$3.2 million to \$2 million, as both campaigns—and a handful of outside groups on both sides—took to the air. The Republican's approval numbers have dropped ahead of a tough road with impeachment. The nomination isn't a lock for Gideon, however, as former Google executive Ross LaJeunesse jumped into the race in November. His willingness to spend his own money—more than \$300,000 as of the end of the year—could complicate Gideon's path.

6. Iowa—Joni Ernst (R) (6)

The Democratic presidential caucuses have taken precedence, but the race against Ernst won't remain under the radar much longer. The Republican has chosen to highlight state-specific battles she's fought on the campaign, but she's also been tarred by allegations of coordination with an outside PAC (which the campaign denies). Former House candidate Theresa Greenfield announced raising \$1.6 million in the fourth quarter, kicking off 2020 with more than \$2.1 million on hand. But a December poll from a pro-Greenfield group still put the Democrat 6 points behind.

7. Michigan—Gary Peters (D) (7)

John James, the likely GOP nominee, has the luxury of being the only Republican in the country running in a state that's a credible pickup opportunity—other than Alabama, which Republican donors might be able to ignore in the general election. James has seized upon his party's enthusiasm, outraising Peters in the final two quarters of 2019. But James's success depends on Trump's margins in Michigan, which could ultimately help Peters.

8. Georgia special—Kelly Loeffler (R) (10)

Appointed Sen. Kelly Loeffler is a first-time candidate and has drawn skepticism from conservatives. Rep. Doug Collins, a Trump favorite, still hasn't ruled out a candidacy. A divided Republican Party would face longer odds of holding the seat. That said, Democrats are facing their own divisions. They are eyeing two candidates: DeKalb County district attorney Sherry Boston and the Rev. Raphael Warnock. But Matt Lieberman, the son of the former Democratic senator, raised a respectable \$700,000 in the fourth quarter. And former U.S. Attorney Ed Tarver expressed interest in the race last week. If Democrats can't clear the field for their pick, it's hard to see them defeating Loeffler—or any other Republican.

9. Kansas—Open (R) (not ranked)

Kansas might not need a Democratic wave in order to elect a Democratic senator. Rather, Democrats need the national environment to take a back seat to the individual candidates—and for Kris Kobach to be the GOP nominee. Without Mike Pompeo in the race, Republicans are searching for an alternative, which will likely be Rep. Roger Marshall. Both Marshall and Kobach appealed to Trump on Monday for his endorsement. But if the GOP field remains crowded, Kobach can win the nomination with a plurality and lose the general election in a repeat performance of the 2018 gubernatorial race. Still, a desire for a GOP majority in the Senate could override voters' concerns about Kobach.

10. Georgia—David Perdue (R) (8)/Texas—John Cornyn (R) (9)

If relatively generic Republican incumbents like Perdue and Cornyn are losing their seats, it's probable that Democrats are winning back the Senate and White House, and expanding their majority in the House and on the state level. That said, presidential-year turnout could boost participation from young and nonwhite voters, while B O'Rourke and Stacey Abrams establish an infrastructure to turn out the base that didn't exist in 2018. But the Democratic primaries seem unlikely to produce superstar candidates, and there's not yet evidence that Democrats can win statewide.

CMF report: Freshman members often hire campaign staff

The Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) wanted to know where new Members of Congress look to fill jobs in their congressional offices so in late 2019, they asked staff working for freshmen Members the following question.

“How many of your current staff members have worked for the Member’s campaign?”

What they learned: Freshmen members almost always hire at least one former campaign staffer to work in their congressional offices. Of those responding to the survey, 98% said that at least one of their office's staff previously worked on their Member's campaign. More than half (51%) said that their office had 1-3 former campaign staffers; one-third (33%) said there were 4-5 former campaign staff; and 14% said they had 6 or more former campaign staffers working in their office.

Why it's important: Many advocacy organizations prioritize building relationships with newly elected lawmakers. But remember – a great time to build such relationships is BEFORE Members get elected. That includes during campaigns. Advocacy organizations should consider researching whether any of their supporters worked or volunteered on new Members' campaigns. Such supporters who did so might very well have formed relationships with people hired from Members' campaigns into their congressional offices.

2020 congressional calendar

■ Both chambers in session ■ Senate only in session ■ House only in session

January*

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*The Senate has not released its January schedule due to uncertainty regarding the impeachment inquiry
Sources: RollCall

Slide last updated on: December 8, 2019