

Charlie Cook House Update: 10 Ratings Changes Favor Dem.

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Roadmap for the Presentation

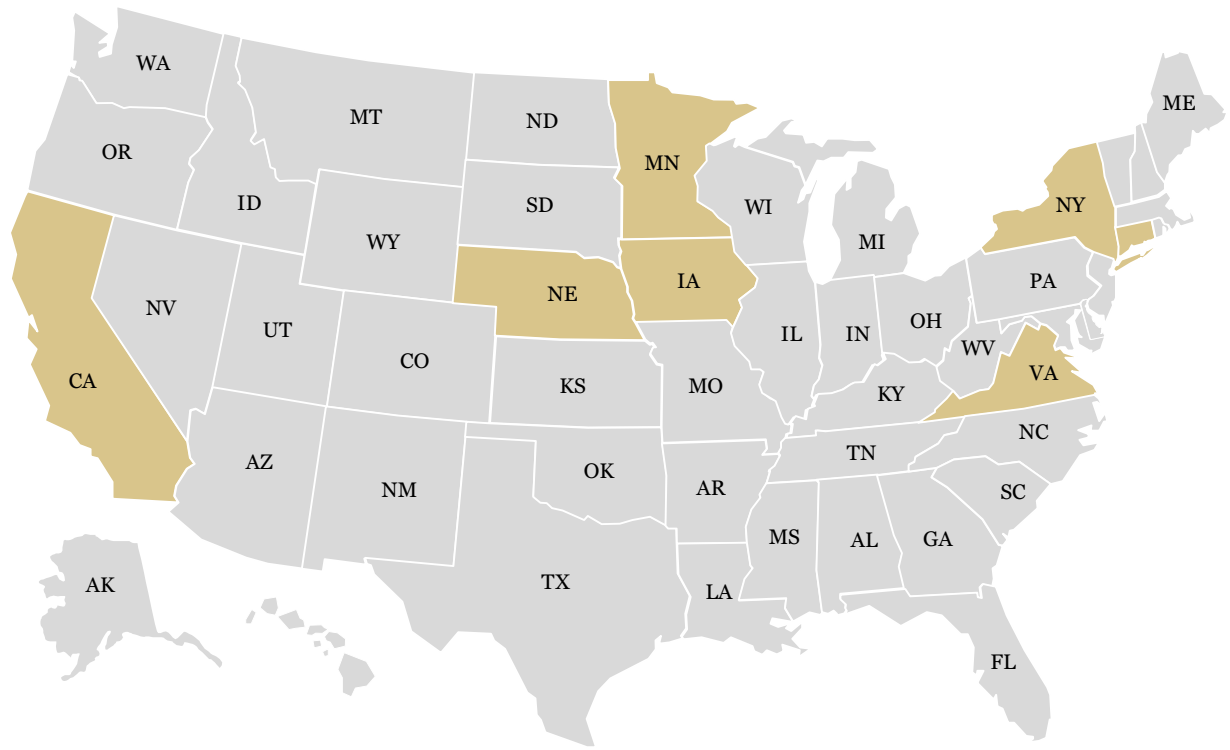
Overview of House Seats

↳ **Detailed District Breakdown**

↳ **Summary of Factors at Play**

Seven States See Changes in Charlie Cook's Ratings

States With Updated Competitive House Races



Source: David Wasserman, "House Republicans Staring Into the Abyss: 10 Ratings Changes Favor Democrats," The Charlie Cook Political Report, March 18, 2016.

Ten House Seats See Race Ratings Lean More Democratic

Full Table of Updated House Seat Rankings

| Incumbent | Old Ranking | New Ranking |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| CA-16 Costa | Likely D | Solid D |
| CA-31 Aguilar | Likely D | Solid D |
| CA-36 Ruiz | Likely D | Solid D |
| CT-05 Esty | Likely D | Solid D |
| IA-03 Young | Lean R | Toss Up |
| MN-03 Paulsen | Solid R | Likely R |
| NY-23 Reed | Likely R | Lean R |
| NY-24 Katko | Lean R | Toss Up |
| NE-02 Ashford | Toss Up | Lean D |
| VA-10 Comstock | Likely R | Lean R |

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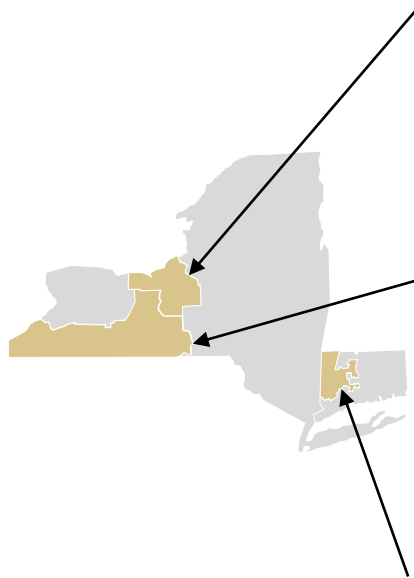
Roadmap for the Presentation

Basic Listing and Map of Races



Seats in the Northeast Shift As Formidable House Candidates Emerge in Both Parties

Northeastern Districts



New York's 24th District (West Central: Syracuse, Oswego) - Rep. John Katko (R)

New Rating: Toss Up

The fact that President Obama carried this Syracuse seat with 57 percent in 2012 made Katko's 59 percent win all the more shocking in 2014. But Democratic turnout cratered in 2014, and a Trump nomination could send it soaring. Katko's reputation as a tough-on-gangs prosecutor is an advantage, but after a slow recruiting start, Democrats now have two formidable candidates: former Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand aide Colleen Deacon and attorney Steve Williams. **Expect a highly competitive race in November.**

New York's 23rd District (Southern Tier: Jamestown, Elmira, Ithaca) - Rep. Tom Reed (R)

New Rating: Lean Republican

Democrats have failed to defeat Reed twice by nominating candidates who could be easily caricatured as Ithaca liberals. Now, they're much more upbeat about Navy Submarine officer and former Defense Department official John Plumb, who hails from blue-collar Jamestown, plays up his love for country music and his dog Gunner, and has raised \$376,000. More importantly, **Reed just became the first swing-district Republican to endorse Trump, which has the potential to make the incumbent a more polarizing figure.**

Connecticut's 5th District (Danbury, Waterbury, New Britain) - Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D)

New Rating: Solid Democrat

Esty has drawn an interesting opponent in GOP Sherman Selectman Clay Cope, a home fashion marketing executive who is openly gay. But **Esty won by a healthy seven points in the down Democratic year of 2014**, and this highly educated, high-income suburban district isn't likely to be a bastion of Trump or Cruz votes. **Esty is well-positioned for reelection in November.**

Source: David Wasserman, "House Republicans Staring Into the Abyss: 10 Ratings Changes Favor Democrats," *The Charlie Cook Political Report*, March 18, 2016.

Current GOP Nominees are at Odds with Hispanics, Will Likely Cause Problems Down the Ballot

Western Districts

California's 16th District (Central Valley: Fresno, Merced) - Rep. Jim Costa (D)

New Rating: Solid Democratic

There were rumors Costa would get an intra-party challenge from an up-and-coming Fresno Democrat, but none filed. Instead, Costa will face off in November against either rancher Johnny Tacherra, whom he narrowly beat in 2014, or Madera County Supervisor David Rogers. **This is a 59 percent Latino district, and as long as Trump or Cruz is topping the GOP ticket, it's simply not in play.**

California's 31st District (San Bernardino, Rancho Cucamonga) - Rep. Pete Aguilar (D)

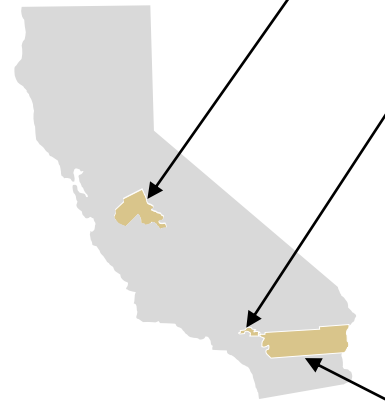
New Rating: Solid Democratic

Aguilar beat anti-drug activist Paul Chabot by just 52 percent to 48 percent in 2014, but the closeness of the race had more to do with extremely low Latino turnout in San Bernardino. Chabot is running again, but economist Sean Flynn is preferred by some DC Republicans and former Democratic Rep. Joe Baca filed here as a Republican at the last minute. **As long as Trump or Cruz is the GOP nominee, this 52 percent Latino district is not going to be voting for a Republican.**

California's 36th District (Eastern Riverside County: Palm Springs) - Rep. Raul Ruiz (D)

New Rating: Solid Democratic

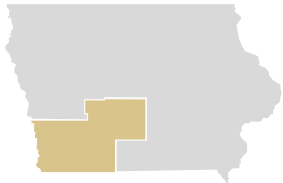
Ruiz won an impressive 54 percent in 2014 by playing up his background as an emergency room physician rather than a politician. This year, his likely opponent is pharmacist and GOP state Sen. Jeff Stone, who has been in politics much longer. **The bigger problem is that either Trump or Cruz is likely to top the ballot in this 46 percent Latino district. Safe for Ruiz.**



Source: David Wasserman, "House Republicans Staring Into the Abyss: 10 Ratings Changes Favor Democrats," The Charlie Cook Political Report, March 18, 2016.

Republicans in Midwestern Cities See A Tough Campaign Ahead With Cruz or Trump

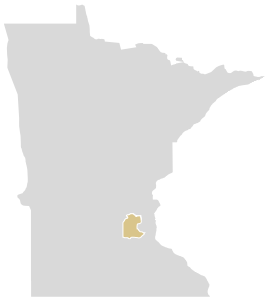
Midwestern Districts



Iowa's 3rd District (Southwest: Des Moines, Council Bluffs) - Rep. David Young (R)

New Rating: Toss Up

Now that former Democratic Gov. Chet Culver has removed himself from consideration, the June Democratic primary is likely to come down to Iraq veteran and former IA-04 nominee Jim Mowrer and investment businessman Michael Sherzan, who launched his campaign with a \$200,000 loan. **Young, a freshman, remains somewhat undefined and is exactly the type of Republican could get dragged down by a Trump or Cruz loss.** This Des Moines district voted for President Obama narrowly in both 2008 and 2012.



Minnesota's 3rd District (Twin Cities' Western Suburbs) - Rep. Erik Paulsen (R)

New Rating: Likely Republican

Paulsen is a neighborly moderate who took 62 percent of the vote in 2014 in a district that voted for President Obama narrowly in both 2008 and 2012. But Trump or Cruz would be a tough sell in this highly educated suburban district, and **Paulsen, who endorsed Rubio, has been mum on whether he will support the nominee.** Democrat Jon Tollefsen, a former foreign service officer and lobbyist for a state nurses' association, has announced he will run, but there could be others interested too. The filing deadline is May 31.



Nebraska's 2nd District (East: Omaha and suburbs) - Rep. Brad Ashford (D)

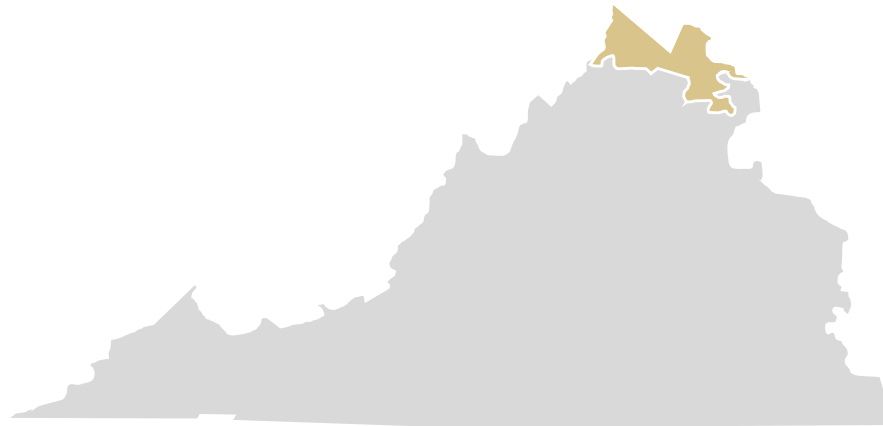
New Rating: Lean Democratic

In 2014, **Ashford became the first Democrat to represent Nebraska in the House since 1994** because of the GOP incumbent's unpopularity. According to Omaha observers, Ashford's staff has worked the district hard in his first term and he may luck out with a weak opponent once again. The filing deadline passed, and the only two GOP candidates are Tea Party former state Sen. Chip Maxwell and retired Air Force Brigadier General Don Bacon, who seems allergic to fundraising. **A Trump or Cruz nomination would only help Ashford more.**

Source: David Wasserman, "House Republicans Staring Into the Abyss: 10 Ratings Changes Favor Democrats," *The Charlie Cook Political Report*, March 18, 2016.

Increased Minority Population, Washington Influence May Sway House Seat in Northern Virginia Exurbs

Southern Districts



Virginia's 10th District (DC exurbs: McLean, Manassas) - Rep. Barbara Comstock (R)

New Rating: Lean Republican

Comstock's 56 percent win in 2014 belies this high-income Northern Virginia seat's competitiveness. Mitt Romney won this seat 50 percent to 49 percent in 2012, and this seat's Latino and Asian shares grow every year. Democrats have coalesced around real estate executive LuAnn Bennett, who is former 8th CD Rep. Jim Moran's ex-wife. Republicans are already aggressively casting Bennett as a DC insider, but **Comstock must be wary of Trump at the top of the ticket given Beltway types' strong aversion to him.**

Source: David Wasserman, "House Republicans Staring Into the Abyss: 10 Ratings Changes Favor Democrats," *The Charlie Cook Political Report*, March 18, 2016.

Roadmap for the Presentation

Basic Listing and Map of Races

└─ **Detailed District Breakdown**

└─ **Summary of Factors at Play**

Republican Presidential Nominee Will Cause Strategic Shifts Down the Ballot

Summary of Factors at Play



Cruz



Trump

A Trump or Cruz nomination wouldn't guarantee a down-ballot disaster for the GOP, but operatives on both sides admit it would inject much more uncertainty into races - especially if it were Trump. For one, given Hillary Clinton's high unfavorable ratings and Trump's willingness to adapt his message to fit changing political conditions, anything from an extremely close race to a total Clinton blowout seems possible in November.

What's more surprising than Trump's rise has been **congressional Republicans' passivity and acquiescence** at the prospect of nominating a candidate whose **offensive statements about Muslims, Mexicans and others threaten to push the party's brand further to the fringe**. Resignation and rationalization have been among Trump's biggest enablers, and that's certainly been true among House Republicans.



Rep. Curbelo



Rep. Dold

A few Republicans from Democratic-leaning seats, including **Reps. Carlos Curbelo (FL-26) and Bob Dold (IL-10), have drawn a line in the sand, saying they would never support Trump**. It's likely at least a dozen more will have to adopt that stance if they want to win reelection. But for the most part, Republicans haven't taken a side.

Source: David Wasserman, "House Republicans Staring Into the Abyss: 10 Ratings Changes Favor Democrats," The Charlie Cook Political Report, March 18, 2016.

Demographic Changes Work Against Republicans, Especially With Cruz or Trump Topping the Ticket

Demographic Factors

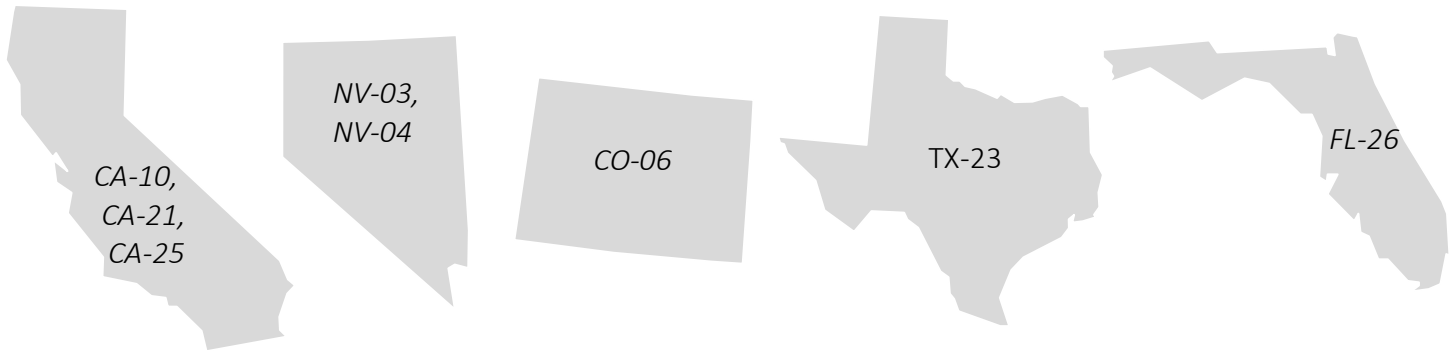
Districts with any of the following qualities could be at risk:

Español
Highly Hispanic



\$\$\$
High-Income

Trump or Cruz topping the ticket could cause districts with any of the above qualities to become contested as well. Some House seats to watch that fall under this category are shown below.



Source: David Wasserman, "House Republicans Staring Into the Abyss: 10 Ratings Changes Favor Democrats," The Charlie Cook Political Report, March 18, 2016.

National Journal Membership

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