

March 2026 primary preview

A look at the most competitive March primary
elections in the fight for Congress

February 23, 2026

Roadmap

- **March primary overview**
- Race spotlights
 - Texas
 - North Carolina
 - Illinois

March primary dates and races to watch

MARCH ELECTION DATES

March 3: Arkansas • North Carolina • Texas

March 10: Mississippi

March 17: Illinois

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	28
29	30	31				

KEY RACES TO WATCH

RACE (PRIMARY)	INCUMBENT	POTENTIAL CANDIDATES	CPR RATING
Texas Senate	John Cornyn (R)	Ken Paxton / Wesley Hunt James Talarico / Jasmine Crockett	LIKELY R
TX-9 (R)	Open	Alex Mealer / Briscoe Cain / Dan Mims / Steve Stockman	SOLID R (FLIP)
TX-23 (R)	Tony Gonzales (R)	Brandon Herrera	SOLID R
TX-32 (R)	Open	Ryan Binkley / Paul Bondar / Jace Yarbrough	SOLID R (FLIP)
NC-1 (R)	Don Davis (D)	Laurie Buckhout / Asa Buck / Bobby Hanig	LEAN R
NC-4 (D)	Valerie Foushee (D)	Nida Allam	SOLID D
IL Senate (D)	Open	Raja Krishnamoorthi / Juliana Stratton / Robin Kelly	SOLID D
IL-2 (D)	Open	Jesse Jackson Jr. / Donna Miller / Robert Peters	SOLID D
IL-9 (D)	Open	Daniel Biss / Laura Fine / Kat Abughazaleh	SOLID D

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Primaries to watch: Texas

RACE	INCUMBENT	POTENTIAL CANDIDATES	CPR RATING
Governor DEM PRIMARY	Greg Abbott (R)	Gina Hinojosa / Chris Bell / Bobby Cole	SOLID R
Senate	John Cornyn (R)	Ken Paxton / Wesley Hunt James Talarico / Jasmine Crockett	LIKELY R
TX-9 GOP PRIMARY	Open	Alex Mealer / Briscoe Cain / Dan Mims / Steve Stockman	SOLID R (FLIP)
TX-23 GOP PRIMARY	Tony Gonzales (R)	Brandon Herrera	SOLID R
TX-29 DEM PRIMARY	Sylvia Garcia (D)	Jarvis Johnson / Robert Slater	SOLID D
TX-30 DEM PRIMARY	Open	Frederick Haynes III / Rodney LaBruce	SOLID D
TX-32 GOP PRIMARY	Open	Ryan Binkley / Paul Bondar / Jace Yarbrough	SOLID R (FLIP)

March 3: Texas Senate **Republican Primary**

KEY CONTENDERS	FUNDRAISED	POLL AVG.	NOTABLE ENDORSEMENTS
 <p>John Cornyn Incumbent Senator since 2002</p>	\$10,030,736	27.7%	Sen. John Thune (R-SD) / Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY) / Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC) / NRSC / AIPAC
 <p>Ken Paxton Attorney General since 2015</p>	\$5,320,191	31.9%	Rep. Troy Nehls (R-TX-22) / TPACTION
 <p>Wesley Hunt US Representative since 2023</p>	\$1,800,720	19.3%	Rep. Eli Crane (R-AZ-2)

WHAT TO KNOW

- Attorney General **Ken Paxton** and Rep. **Wesley Hunt** are challenging incumbent Sen. **John Cornyn** in a high-profile clash between the GOP establishment and its hardline conservative wing
- Paxton argues **Cornyn is insufficiently conservative**, while Cornyn highlights **Paxton’s legal troubles**, including his 2023 impeachment by the GOP-led state House
- **Paxton has led consistently in polling**, though the race is almost certain to **advance to a runoff**, as no candidate is likely to clear the 50 percent threshold
- **Cornyn has been endorsed by Senate leadership**, but President Trump and Sen. Ted Cruz have not yet endorsed a candidate

March 3: Texas Senate **Democratic Primary**

KEY CONTENDERS	FUNDRAISED	POLL AVG.	NOTABLE ENDORSEMENTS
 <p>James Talarico State Representative since 2018</p>	\$13,152,583	39.7%	Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM) / Rep. Julie Johnson (D-TX-23) / Houston Chronicle
 <p>Jasmine Crockett US Representative since 2023</p>	\$6,531,174	42.7%	Former Rep. Colin Allred (D-TX-32) / Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA-17) / Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA-7) / EMILYs List

WHAT TO KNOW

- **Democrats, who have not won a statewide election in Texas since 1994**, see an opening due to the divisive Republican primary
- State Rep. **James Talarico** is favored over Rep. **Jasmine Crockett**, backed by stronger head-to-head polling against potential Republican opponents and a significant fundraising edge, having raised \$13M to Crockett’s \$6.5M in 2025
- **Racial divides could ultimately determine the outcome of the race**
 - Talarico faced backlash from allegations made by a TikTok influencer who alleged he described former Rep. Colin Allred as a “mediocre Black man,” which he called a mischaracterization; Allred labeled the remark disqualifying and endorsed Crockett
 - Crockett has built an advantage among Black voters while Talarico has shown strength among Latino voters, with Crockett arguing some Latino voters were “gaslit” over her 2024 Vanity Fair comments comparing certain Latino immigrants’ views on undocumented immigrants to a “slave mentality”

March 3: Texas 9th District **Republican Primary**

KEY CONTENDERS	FUNDRAISED	NOTABLE ENDORSEMENTS
 <p>Alex Mealer METRO board member and nominee for Harris County Judge in 2022</p>	\$988,250	President Donald Trump / Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH-4) / Jim McIngvale
 <p>Briscoe Cain State representative since 2017</p>	\$383,692	Gov. Greg Abbott (R-TX) / 3 US House Reps / Former Rep. Tom DeLay (R-TX-22) / Houston Chronicle
 <p>Dan Mims State representative since 2017</p>	\$347,089	---

WHAT TO KNOW

- **President Trump has endorsed Alex Mealer** in the competitive Republican primary for Texas' 9th District, which is currently held by Rep. Al Green (D) but was **redrawn to favor Republicans** in this year's elections
- The 9th District, which includes southern Houston suburbs such as Missouri City, voted for Kamala Harris by 44 percentage points in the 2024 presidential election before redistricting but **would have voted for Donald Trump by 20 percentage points under the new lines**
- An early February University of Houston poll shows Mealer leading with 34 percent, followed by state Rep. Briscoe Cain at 26 percent, **making a runoff likely** since no candidate is on track to surpass 50 percent

March 3: Texas 23rd District **Republican Primary**

KEY CONTENDERS	FUNDRAISED	NOTABLE ENDORSEMENTS
 <p>Tony Gonzales Incumbent Representative since 2021</p>	\$1,770,982	President Donald Trump / AIPAC
 <p>Brandon Herrera YouTuber; Firearms manufacturer</p>	\$864,186	GOA / NAGR

WHAT TO KNOW

- **Rematch of the 2024 primary**, where Gonzales defeated Herrera 50.6 percent to 49.4 percent in a runoff after neither candidate secured a majority in the initial contest
- Gonzales is considered a centrist and did not receive President Trump’s endorsement in 2022 or 2024, but **has secured his backing this cycle** against Herrera, who is aligned with the party’s far right and has more than 4 million YouTube subscribers focused on testing and reviewing firearms
- Texas’ 23rd Congressional District is a **Hispanic majority district spanning much of southwestern Texas**, including the Big Bend region, southern and western San Antonio suburbs, and southwestern El Paso suburbs, and under the new congressional map would have supported Trump by 14.8 points in the 2024 presidential election

March 3: Texas 32nd District **Republican Primary**

KEY CONTENDERS	FUNDRAISED	NOTABLE ENDORSEMENTS
 <p>Paul Bondar Insurance agency owner</p>	\$1,905,588	---
 <p>Ryan Binkley Pastor</p>	\$1,258,716	Rep. Jake Ellzey (R-TX-6)
 <p>Jace Yarbrough Attorney</p>	\$325,183	President Donald Trump, Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA-4) / Gov. Greg Abbott (R-TX) / House Whip Tom Emmer (R-MN-6)

WHAT TO KNOW

- **President Trump has endorsed Jace Yarbrough** in the competitive Republican primary for Texas' 32nd District, where incumbent Rep. Julie Johnson (D) was redrawn out of the district
- The 32nd District, which covers northern and eastern Dallas and its inner northern suburbs, voted in favor of Kamala Harris by 24 percentage points in the 2024 presidential election before redistricting but **would have voted for Donald Trump by 18 percentage points under the new lines**
- With nine candidates in the race, **a runoff is possible**, with Yarbrough the only candidate who has a chance of clearing 50 percent with President Trump's endorsement

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Primaries to watch: North Carolina

RACE	INCUMBENT	POTENTIAL CANDIDATES	CPR RATING
Senate	Open	Roy Cooper Michael Whatley / Don Brown / Michele Morrow	TOSS UP
NC-1 GOP PRIMARY	Don Davis (D)	Laurie Buckhout / Asa Buck / Bobby Hanig	LEAN R
NC-4 DEM PRIMARY	Valerie Foushee (D)	Nida Allam	SOLID D

March 3: North Carolina 4th District Democratic Primary

KEY CONTENDERS	FUNDRAISED	NOTABLE ENDORSEMENTS
 <p>Valerie Foushee Incumbent representative since 2023</p>	<p>\$361,920</p>	<p>Gov. Josh Stein (D-NC) / Former Gov. Roy Cooper (D-NC) / Rep. Maxwell Frost (D-FL-10) / Rep. Deborah Ross (D-NC-2)</p>
 <p>Nida Allam Durham County Commissioner since 2020</p>	<p>\$334,740</p>	<p>Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) / Former DNC Vice Chair David Hogg</p>

WHAT TO KNOW

- **Rematch between Foushee and Allam**, who competed for the then-open seat in 2022, when Foushee defeated Allam 46 percent to 37 percent
- The redrawn 4th District differs from the lines used in 2022, with **roughly 22 percent of Foushee’s previous voters now outside the district**, compared with about 5 percent of Allam’s
- Foushee is a former Chapel Hill police administrator who served 15 years in local elected office and 10 years in the North Carolina General Assembly before winning her congressional seat, while Allam is an organizer and vice chair of the Durham County Board of Commissioners
- Foushee has secured endorsements from several high-profile North Carolina Democratic officials, while Allam has progressive support, including backing from Sen. Bernie Sanders and former DNC Vice Chair David Hogg
- From a partisan standpoint, the district remains strongly Democratic, having voted for Kamala Harris by 45 points in 2024 and **projected to do so again under the new lines**

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Primaries to watch: Illinois

RACE	INCUMBENT	POTENTIAL CANDIDATES	CPR RATING
Senate	Open	Raja Krishnamoorthi / Juliana Stratton / Robin Kelly Don Tracy	SOLID D
IL-2 DEM PRIMARY	Open	Jesse Jackson Jr. / Donna Miller / Yumeka Brown / Robert Peters / Willie Preston	SOLID D
IL-8 DEM PRIMARY	Open	Melissa Bean / Junaid Ahmed / Neil Khot / Dan Tully / Kevin Morrison / Yasmeen Bankole	SOLID D
IL-9 DEM PRIMARY	Open	Daniel Bliss / Laura Fine / Kat Abughazaleh / Mike Simmons / Bushra Amiwala / Hoan Huynh	SOLID D

March 17: Illinois Senate Democratic Primary

KEY CONTENDERS	FUNDRAISED	POLL AVG.	NOTABLE ENDORSEMENTS
 <p>Raja Krishnamoorthi US Representative since 2017</p>	\$28,480,748	35.6%	AFGE
 <p>Juliana Stratton Lieutenant Governor since 2019</p>	\$3,199,075	16.3%	Gov. J.B. Pritzker (D-IL) / Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) / Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
 <p>Robin Kelly US Representative since 2013</p>	\$2,949,084	9.7%	Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT) / 18 US Representatives

WHAT TO KNOW

- Sen. Dick Durbin’s retirement has opened this **safely Democratic seat for the first time since 1997**
- Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton entered the race first and **quickly secured Gov. J.B. Pritzker’s endorsement**, with reports indicating Pritzker and his allies sought to discourage other prominent Democrats from running, though US Reps. Robin Kelly and Raja Krishnamoorthi entered soon after
- Krishnamoorthi has **built the largest fundraising operation of any non-incumbent Senate candidate in the country**, raising more than \$28 million in 2025 and beginning 2026 with over \$15 million in cash on hand
- Krishnamoorthi has led in every public poll, with Stratton consistently in second and Kelly in third

March 17: Illinois 2nd District Democratic Primary

KEY CONTENDERS	FUNDRAISED	NOTABLE ENDORSEMENTS
 <p>Jesse Jackson Jr. Former representative (1995-2012)</p>	\$206,288	Former Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL-1)
 <p>Donna Miller Cook County commissioner since 2018</p>	\$1,295,068	Five US Reps / Former Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot / Chicago Tribune
 <p>Robert Peters State Senator since 2019</p>	\$903,344	Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) / Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) / Six US Reps / Former DNC Vice Chair David Hogg

WHAT TO KNOW

- Incumbent Rep. Robin Kelly (D) is running for Senate, opening this deep blue southeast Chicago district, where nearly two thirds of residents live in densely populated Cook County and the remainder are spread across several more rural counties along the Indiana border
- The district is nearly 50 percent Black, and all four of its representatives since 1980 have been Black
- Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller leads fundraising in the crowded field, while State Sen. Robert Peters has progressive backing, including endorsements from US Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.
- Former US Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., who left Congress amid federal charges for misusing campaign funds and ultimately served two years in federal prison, and whose brother represents the nearby 1st District, led in two polls in late 2025

March 17: Illinois 9th District Democratic Primary

KEY CONTENDERS	FUNDRAISED	NOTABLE ENDORSEMENTS
 <p>Daniel Bliss Mayor of Evanston since 2021</p>	\$1,984,528	Outgoing Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL-9) and 8 others / Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) / Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)
 <p>Laura Fine State senator since 2019</p>	\$1,921,415	3 current US Reps. / Chicago Tribune
 <p>Kat Abughazaleh Social media influencer</p>	\$2,705,175	US Rep. Ro Khanna / Former US Rep. Jamaal Bowman / Justice Democrats

WHAT TO KNOW

- Rep. Jan Schakowsky’s retirement opened this deep blue northern Chicago district for the first time since 1988, drawing 15 Democrats into one of the most competitive Illinois House primaries in recent history
- Former journalist turned progressive social media creator Kat Abughazaleh, Evanston mayor Daniel Bliss, and state senator Laura Fine each raised around \$2 million in 2025
- Divisions among Democrats over US support for Israel are in the spotlight: Fine and Biss are Jewish, Abughazaleh is Palestinian American; a dark-money super PAC reportedly backed by AIPAC is spending heavily in support of Fine
- An early February poll fielded by Impact Research found Bliss ahead with 31%, followed by Fine and Abughazaleh at 18%, with four other Democrats registering in the single digits and 11% still undecided

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