





Identifying Tactical Opportunities and Crafting a Strategic Plan

Preserving Democracy Coalition General Meeting

Monday, August 10, 2026 6:30 pm

Cowan Creek Community Center - Florence Room

The U.S. Senate



The U.S. Senate has 53 Republicans and 47 Democrats (including two independents).

There are 35 seats up in 2026 - including special elections in Florida and Ohio - of which 22 are held by Republicans.

Democrats can retake control with a net gain of four seats.

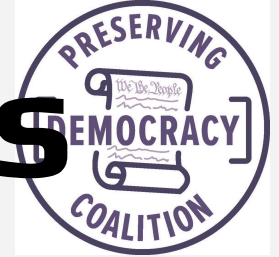
“Contestable” Senate Races



<u>State</u>	Race Type	Race Title	Incumbent	Cook PVI*	<u>Rating</u>
Alaska	Senate	<u>AK SEN 2026</u>	Dan Sullivan (R)	R+6	Toss Up
Georgia	Senate	<u>GA SEN 2026</u>	Jon Ossoff (D)	R+1	Lean D
Iowa	Senate	<u>IA SEN 2026</u>	OPEN	R+6	Lean R
Maine	Senate	<u>ME SEN 2026</u>	Susan Collins (R)	D+4	Toss Up
Michigan	Senate	<u>MI SEN 2026</u>	OPEN	EVEN	Toss Up
Minnesota	Senate	<u>MN SEN 2026</u>	OPEN	D+3	Likely D
New Hampshire	Senate	<u>NH SEN 2026</u>	OPEN	D+2	Lean D
North Carolina	Senate	<u>NC SEN 2026</u>	OPEN	R+1	Lean D
Texas	Senate	<u>TX SEN 2026</u>	OPEN	R+6	*Lean R

*The Cook Political Report; www.cookpolitical.com

Recent TX Senate Polls



- **Texas Pulse / Bush School (July 27–30, 2026):** Talarico 47%, Paxton 43% (Talarico +4)
- **Texas Southern University / YouGov (July 27–30, 2026):** Talarico 47%, Paxton 45% (Talarico +2)
- **Fox News (July 23–27, 2026):** Talarico 51%, Paxton 48% (Talarico +3)
- **Texas Public Opinion Research (July 28, 2026):** Talarico 45%, Paxton 40% (Talarico +5)
- **NY Times / Siena (June 19–27, 2026):** Talarico 47%, Paxton 47% (Even)

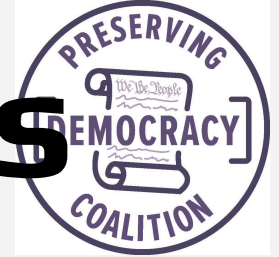
Recent TX Senate Polls



Key Takeaways:

- **Tight Margins:** Most recent general election surveys show the race within or near the respective poll's margin of error.
- **Independent Support:** Talarico's recent edge in polling has been buoyed by stronger numbers among **independent voters**.
- **Context:** While historical trends and forecasters still view Texas as a heavy lean or competitive Republican lean, the shift into a tight statistical race marks an unusually competitive environment for a statewide Democratic bid in Texas.

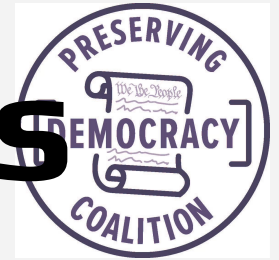
Recent TX Senate Polls



2 recent polls show an advantage for Talarico:

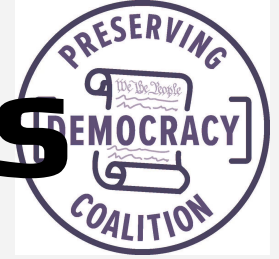
- Texas Democrats' research group 254 Labs on Thursday released polling that shows Talarico with a three-point lead, 48% to 45%, over Paxton. The poll was conducted July 15–31 and surveyed 1,001 registered voters. The poll had a margin of error of +/- 3.6%.
- The survey found Talarico has the advantage over Paxton when it comes to independent voters, 57% to 23%. Around 20% of independent voters polled said they were still undecided on the race.
- A Texas Pulse poll, released Friday by Texas A&M Bush School and ReconMR shows similar results with Talarico leading Paxton by four points, 47% to 43%. The same poll showed the two in a dead heat in June.

Recent TX Senate Polls



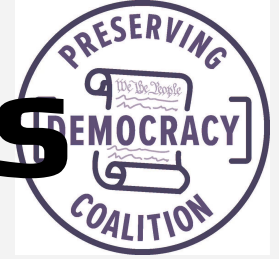
- Voters said that Talarico would do a better job than Paxton on making prices more affordable (51-38%), keeping Texans safe (50-43%) and managing the water supply in Texas (49-39%).
- Paxton leads Talarico on the issue of securing the U.S.-Mexico border, 48-44%.
- Those polled said they felt Talarico was in touch with Texas values, authentic, not corrupt and honest. A majority of voters, however, did not think he was tough.
- Voters do think Paxton is tough. They also said he was corrupt and not honest, authentic or in touch with Texas values.

Recent TX Senate Polls



- The information in the previous two slides comes from polls released by 254 Labs (<https://254labs.io>) and Texas Pulse (<https://reconmr.com/texas-pulse/>).
- The Texas Pulse is a collaborative, nonpartisan initiative between ReconMR, Texas A&M Bush School and Siena Research Institute. The poll was conducted July 27-30 and surveyed 619 likely Texas voters with a margin of error of 5.5%.

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TX Senate Fundraising



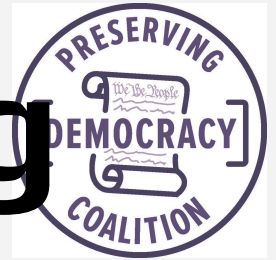
- The race for Texas's senate seat is shaping up to be one the most expensive competitions in the nation. Talarico is setting records, raising more at this stage of the race than any Texas general-election candidate in the past decade and posting the largest quarterly haul of any active Senate race.
- Paxton is lagging behind, having raised less than a quarter of what his rival has since the start of the race. Despite his fundraising disadvantage, Paxton benefits from new rules on how national party committees can spend in coordination with candidates and, like many cash-strapped Republicans, is leaning heavily on fundraising in coordination with other candidates and party groups.

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TX Senate Fundraising



- The campaigns of Talarico and Paxton reported raking in \$31.6 million and \$9.3 million, respectively, in their last quarterly filing with the Federal Election Commission. Since the beginning of 2025, Talarico's campaign has lapped Paxton's several times over, raising a cumulative \$72.0 million compared to \$16.8 million by Paxton's.
- The Democratic Senate nominee ended June with \$23.3 million on hand, more than triple his GOP rival. Despite Paxton's weaker fundraising performance, his campaign may have less to worry about after the Supreme Court struckdown federal limits on how much political parties could spend in coordination with their candidates.

(<https://www.texastribune.org/2026/07/20/texas-senate-talarico-paxton-fundraising-spending-money-donors/>)

The U.S. House



<u>State</u>	Race Type	Race Title	Incumbent	Cook PVI*	<u>Rating</u>
Texas	House	<u>TX-28 2026</u>	Henry Cuellar (D)	R+3	Lean D
Texas	House	<u>TX-31 2026</u>	John Carter (R)	R+11	Solid R
Texas	House	<u>TX-34 2026</u>	Vicente Gonzalez (D)	R+3	Toss Up

*The Cook Political Report; www.cookpolitical.com

The U.S. House



TX-28 – Cuellar (D) vs. Tijerina (R)

Longtime incumbent Democrat Henry Cuellar and Republican challenger Tano Tijerina, the former Webb County Judge, are facing off in a high-profile 2026 race for Texas' 28th Congressional District, a critical South Texas battleground stretching from San Antonio to the U.S.–Mexico border.

The U.S. House



TX-34 – Gonzales (D) vs. Flores (R)

Democratic U.S. Representative Vincente Gonzales and Republican challenger Eric Flores, an Army veteran and former prosecutor, are facing off in the November 3, 2026 general election for Texas 34th Congressional District, a high-profile battleground seat in South Texas.

The U.S. House



TX-31 – Early (D) vs. Carter (R) vs. Stoker (G)

The 2026 general election for Texas's 31st Congressional District features 84-year-old Republican incumbent John Carter, who has held the seat since the district's creation in 2003, against Democratic nominee Justin Early, a cybersecurity architect and U.S. Army veteran, and Green Party candidate Greg Stoker, a former Army Ranger and anti-war activist. Cook Political Report rates this race as 'Solid Republican,' reflecting the district's Republican-leaning Partisan Voting Index of R+11. Carter defeated a crowded primary field with nearly 60% of the vote, while Early won the Democratic primary with 57.6%.

Texas CD 31 Odds and Fundraising



TX-34 – Early (D) vs. Carter (R)

Candidate	Live odds	Funds raised
<u>John Carter</u>	90%	\$1.42M
<u>Justin Early</u>	12%	\$89.3K

<https://www.predictionedge.com/elections/us-house/texas-district-31-race-winner-by-party/> Aug. 10, 2026

MITCH MCCONNELL OUTLIVES LINDSEY GRAHAM



Texas Governor and Lt. Governor



Gina Hinojosa (D) vs. Greg Abbott (R)

Races Remain Close, With Movement Toward Dems Since June

Governor: Abbott 46% Hinojosa 45% (from 49–43% in June)

Lt. Governor: Goodwin 48% Patrick 46% (from Patrick 49–44% in June)