2002 STATE SENATE RATINGS

Current Legislative Lineup: 23 Democratic chambers, 24 Republican chambers, 2 Tied

The chart below provides a spectrum that analyzes the likelihood that a legislative chamber will change partisan control as a result of the 2002 election. Only chambers that are being contested this fall are listed.

Likely: These chambers are not considered competitive, but the minority party might gain a few seats.

Lean: These chambers are considered competitive, but the listed party has an advantage in either keeping or seizing control.

Toss-Up: These are the most competitive chambers; either party has a good chance of taking control.

DEMOCRATS - 20 held State Senates up in 2002

	likely dem (4)	lean dem (4)	toss up (3)	lean rep	likely rep	
	Connecticut	Maine	Colorado			
	Delaware	Tennessee	North Carolina			
	Georgia	Vermont	Washington			
	Minnesota	Wisconsin				

REPUBLICANS - 21 held State Senates up in 2002

	likely dem	lean dem (1)	toss up (1)	lean rep (6)	likely rep (2)	
		Illinois	Oregon	Iowa	Pennsylvania	
				Kentucky	Texas	
				Michigan		
				Missouri		
				Nevada		
				New Hampshire		
				tied chamber (1)		
				Arizona		

2002 STATE HOUSE RATINGS

Current Legislative Lineup: 26 Democratic chambers, 23 Republican chambers

DEMOCRATS - 23 held State Houses up in 2002

	likely dem (4)	lean dem	toss up (5)	lean rep	likely rep (1)	
	Hawaii		Indiana		Texas	
	Illinois		Missouri			
	Nevada		North Carolina			
	Tennessee		Oklahoma			
			Washington			

REPUBLICANS - 22 held State Houses up in 2002

	likely dem	lean dem	toss up (1)	lean rep (5)	likely rep (5)	
			Oregon	Iowa	Arizona	
				Michigan	Colorado	
				Minnesota	Delaware	
				Pennsylvania	Montana	
				Wisconsin	Vermont	

In the **State Senate** races, these races are listed as solid for either party: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming.
In the **State House** races, these races are listed as solid for either party: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming.

2002 STATE LEGISLATIVE RATINGS

For the first time, the *Cook Political Report* has rated the 50 state legislatures. The ratings below assess which party is likely to control each chamber after the Nov. 5 elections.

Some caveats: Current partisan breakdowns were compiled by the National Conference of State Legislatures and are current through mid-summer. Seats that were vacant at that time are not reflected in the table below. Nebraska's unicameral legislature is officially non-partisan.

The 11 chambers listed below in bold-italic type are not being contested this fall; barring unforeseen events, the current partisan control of these chambers is expected to continue after Nov. 5, 2002. However, we have rated these 11 chambers on the likelihood that partisan change could occur on election day in 2003 or 2004.

Ratings were compiled for the *Cook Political Report* by Louis Jacobson, a staff correspondent at *National Journal*.

State	House Dem	House Rep	House Ind	Control today	Rating	Sen Dem	Sen Rep	Sen Ind	Control today	Rating
Alabama	67	38	0	D	Solid D	24	11	0	D	Solid D
Alaska	13	27	0	R	Solid R	6	14	0	R	Solid R
Arizona	24	36	0	R	Likely R	15	15	0	TIE	Lean R
Arkansas	70	29	0	D	Solid D	27	7	0	D	Solid D
California	50	30	0	D	Solid D	26	14	0	D	Solid D
Colorado	27	38	0	R	Likely R	18	17	0	D	Toss-up
Connecticut	100	51	0	D	Solid D	21	15	0	D	Likely D
Delaware	15	26	0	R	Likely R	13	8	0	D	Likely D
Florida	43	77	0	R	Solid R	15	25	0	R	Solid R
Georgia	105	74	1	D	Solid D	32	24	0	D	Likely D
Hawaii	32	19	0	D	Likely D	22	3	0	D	Solid D
Idaho	9	61	0	R	Solid R	3	32	0	R	Solid R
Illinois	62	56	0	D	Likely D	27	32	0	R	Lean D
Indiana	53	47	0	D	Toss-up	18	32	0	R	Solid R
Iowa	44	56	0	R	Lean R	21	29	0	R	Lean R
Kansas	46	79	0	R	Solid R	***10***	***30***	***0***	***R***	***Solid R***
Kentucky	66	34	0	D	Solid D	18	20	0	R	Lean R
Louisiana	***71***	***34***	***0***	***D***	***Solid D***	***26***	***13***	***0***	***D***	***Likely D***
Maine	88	61	1	D	Solid D	19	15	1	D	Lean D
Maryland	106	35	0	D	Solid D	34	13	0	D	Solid D
Massachusetts	134	22	0	D	Solid D	34	6	0	D	Solid D
Michigan	52	57	0	R	Lean R	15	23	0	R	Lean R
Minnesota	62	72	0	R	Lean R	39	25	3	D	Likely D
Mississippi	***86***	***33***	***0***	***D***	***Solid D***	***33***	***19***	***0***	***D***	***Solid D***
Missouri	86	75	0	D	Toss-up	16	18	0	R	Lean R
Montana	42	58	0	R	Likely R	19	31	0	R	Solid R
Nebraska	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0	49	NA	NA
Nevada	27	15	0	D	Likely D	9	10	0	R	Lean R
New Hampshire	141	251	2	R	Solid R	11	13	0	R	Lean R
New Jersey	***44***	***36***	***0***	***D***	***Lean D***	***20***	***20***	***0***	***TIE***	***Toss-up***
New Mexico	42	28	0	D	Solid D	***24***	***18***	***0***	***D***	***Lean D***
New York	97	52	0	D	Solid D	25	36	0	R	Solid R
North Carolina	62	58	0	D	Toss-up	35	15	0	D	Toss-up
North Dakota	29	69	0	R	Solid R	17	32	0	R	Solid R
Ohio	40	59	0	R	Solid R	12	21	0	R	Solid R
Oklahoma	52	49	0	D	Toss-up	30	18	0	D	Solid D
Oregon	28	32	0	R	Toss-up	14	16	0	R	Toss-up
Pennsylvania	98	104	0	R	Lean R	21	29	0	R	Likely R
Rhode Island	85	15	0	D	Solid D	44	6	0	D	Solid D
South Carolina	52	71	0	R	Solid R	***20***	***25***	***0***	***R***	***Lean R***
South Dakota	20	50	0	R	Solid R	11	24	0	R	Solid R
Tennessee	57	42	0	D	Likely D	18	15	0	D	Lean D
Texas	78	72	0	D	Likely R	15	16	0	R	Likely R
Utah	23	52	0	R	Solid R	9	20	0	R	Solid R
Vermont	63	82	5	R	Likely R	16	14	0	D	Lean D
Virginia	***33***	***64***	***2***	***R***	***Solid R***	***18***	***21***	***0***	***R***	***Lean R***
Washington	50	48	0	D	Toss-up	25	24	0	D	Toss-up
West Virginia	75	25	0	D	Solid D	28	6	0	D	Solid D
Wisconsin	43	56	0	R	Lean R	18	15	0	D	Lean D
Wyoming	14	46	0	R	Solid R	10	20	0	R	Solid R

Handicapping the State Legislatures: A 50-State Preview

by Louis Jacobson

In the much-ballyhooed 50-50 nation, state legislatures rank as just about the most evenly divided branch of government. Of the 7,382 total legislative seats in the 50 states, a mere 65 seats separate the two major parties. That edge, narrow as it is, represents a watershed for the Republican Party, which finally broke into the nationwide majority in 2002 after 50 years of minority status.

Functionally, the GOP is in an even stronger position when control of chambers is taken into account. The Republicans control both chambers in 21 states, compared to 17 for the Democrats and 11 under split control. Republicans, who had a strong 2002 election day on the legislature front, also hold a majority of both state houses and state senates.

With only a few gubernatorial races on tap for this fall, the main lever for parties eager to seize control of state government will be the legislatures. And the stakes are high: As National Conference of State Legislatures elections analyst Tim Storey notes, "States are where issues such as civil unions and education funding are debated. Regardless of what Congress says, they're the ones who are dealing with real policy decisions on a host of matters."

For now, 19 chambers appear to be significantly competitive — just under a quarter of the 84 chambers that are being contested this fall. That's down from just under a third of chambers that were competitive going into the 2002 election – but the decline isn't a surprise, given that most states redrew their maps going into the 2002 election, which added to the volatility and uncertainty in many chambers. The flip side of this is that one party has secure control in about three-quarters of chambers.

This year, redistricting isn't as big an issue as it was in 2002 – but it is a bigger issue than it is in most years ending in "4," due to a spate of map-re-drawings that stem from judicial appeals, "re-redistricting" for partisan reasons, and the typical lag of states such as Maine that redistrict two years behind most of the others.

Anger against recent re-maps could also be an intangible factor that energizes minority parties, such as Democrats in Texas and Colorado.

In recent years, term limits have thrown many a legislature into play. But 2004 doesn't seem like a year in which term limits will be a major factor. Oklahoma, which this fall becomes the 12th state to see legislative term limits come into effect, is the one state where capping legislators' tenures will clearly make a difference. Three more states have term limits that haven't taken effect yet, but which will in future elections.

This year is also notable for the presidential race, of course – though the effect is hard to quantify, at least at this early stage. Experts say that presidential coattails could help (or hurt) legislative candidates, but so could gubernatorial races or a host of other factors.

More relevant, analysts say, is the effect of money poured into key battleground states by the presidential campaigns. This could affect such competitive states as Oregon, Washington, Iowa and

Maine, with money and attention driving turnout upward for one party or the other. At this point, however, it isn't clear which party is going to be more effective in this regard.

For now, we expect that nine Democratic-held chambers and eight Republican-held chambers (plus two tied chambers) will be competitive this fall – an appropriate mix, considering the fabled 50-50 national split. We'll revisit the rankings before election day to capture late-season movements.

Expect roughly half of these competitive chambers to switch hands this fall. In the past two decades, an average of 12 chambers have changed hands each cycle (which is defined as including shifts of control in off-year elections or due to party switchers). In the 2002 cycle, this average of 12 was hit dead-on.

If anything is likely to decrease that amount this fall, it would be the improved financial conditions in many states, which may leave voters in a better mood than in the past few years. Since, and including, the 2002 campaign cycle, voters ousted the incumbent governor's party in 24 of 40 gubernatorial elections – a remarkably high rate of throwing the bums out by historical standards.

Here, then, are the current partisan breakdowns for the nation's state legislatures, along with our forecast of the likelihood of partisan change in each chamber in the 2004 elections. Seat totals are courtesy of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Seats that are vacant or held by third parties are not included in the totals below. Nebraska's unicameral legislature is officially non-partisan and thus is not rated. Chambers that are not going to be contested this cycle are also not rated. One asterisk (*) denotes a state with one chamber not being contested this fall. Two asterisks (**) denote a state that has neither chamber contested this fall.

Rating System:
Toss-up: Control of the chamber is truly up for grabs.
Lean D or Lean R: Majority party starts with an advantage, but the race is competitive.
Likely D or Likely R: Majority party is expected to remain in control, but it could lose seats to the minority party.
Safe D or Safe R: Majority party is firmly in control, with no major shifts expected.
NR: Not rated because chamber has no races this fall, or because the chamber is officially nonpartisan.

Partisan Legislative Control, by chamber:
State Houses: 25 Republican, 23 Democratic, 1 Tied.
State Senates: 27 Republican, 21 Democratic, 1 Tied, 1 Non-Partisan

	STATE HOUSE				*STATE SENATE*			
State	D Seats	R Seats	Con-trol	Rating	D Seats	R Seats	Con-trol	Rating
****Alabama**	63	42	D	NR	25	10	D	NR
Alaska	13	27	R	Safe R	8	11	R	Likely R
Arizona	21	39	R	Likely R	13	17	R	Likely R
Tip: Long-running judicial quarrel over map lines still to be settled, but some type of incumbent- protection plan is expected, which would help the GOP retain control. Primary Date: 9/07/04								
Arkansas	70	30	D	Safe D	27	8	D	Safe D
California	48	32	D	Safe D	25	15	D	Safe D
Colorado	28	37	R	Likely R	17	18	R	Lean R
Tip: Senate Democrats, bolstered by strong recruiting, hope to pin budget problems on the GOP, but their takeover ambitions will run up against GOP unity. Primary Date: 8/10/04								
Connecticut	94	57	D	Safe D	21	15	D	Safe D

Delaware	12	29	R	Safe R	13	8	D	Safe D
Florida	39	81	R	Safe R	14	26	R	Safe R
Georgia	106	73	D	Likely D	26	30	R	Lean R

Tip: Map features lots of new districts. In the House, the GOP should gain seats, but strength of Democratic incumbents even in marginal areas suggests that the gap remains too wide for a takeover. Senate Democrats, who lost control due to party switches in '02, look to regain ground this fall. Could move to Toss-up status. Primary Date: 7/20/04

Hawaii	36	15	D	Safe D	20	5	D	Safe D
Idaho	16	54	R	Safe R	7	28	R	Safe R
Illinois	66	52	D	Safe D	32	27	D	Safe D
Indiana	51	49	D	Toss-up	18	32	R	Safe R

Tip: After GOP gains in '02, Democrats are poised to move this to Lean Dem despite close numbers. Primary Completed.

Iowa	46	54	R	Lean R	21	29	R	Lean R

Tip: GOP has edge now, but energized Democrats could make gains in both chambers. Primary Complete.

Kansas	45	80	R	Safe R	10	30	R	Safe R
Kentucky	65	35	D	Likely D	16	22	R	Likely R

Tip: Surging GOP, bolstered by anti-gay initiative, should gain in House, but could lose a Senate seat or two. Primary Completed.

****Louisiana**	68	36	D	NR	26	13	D	NR
Maine	80	67	D	Likely D	18	17	D	Toss-up

Tip: Presidential race will draw money to ordinarily quiet, but quirky, state. Term limits mean GOP could snag a House seat or two. Initiatives on a tax cap and on bear hunting could juice turnout, but unpredictably. Primary Completed.

****Maryland**	98	43	D	NR	33	14	D	NR
Massachusetts	136	23	D	Safe D	34	6	D	Safe D
***Michigan**	47	63	R	Likely R	16	22	R	NR
***Minnesota**	52	82	R	Safe R	35	31	D	NR
****Mississippi**	74	45	D	NR	29	22	D	NR
Missouri	73	90	R	Likely R	14	20	R	Likely R

Tip: Democrats have better Senate chance in '06, but could gain in House following '02 GOP takeover. Primary Date: 8/3/04.

Montana	47	53	R	Lean R	21	29	R	Lean R

Tip: Surprise Democratic target, due to a highly favorable map draw, fatigue over GOP governor and divisive GOP gubernatorial primary. Primary Completed.

Nebraska	--	--	--	--	0	0	--	NR
Nevada	23	19	D	Lean D	8	13	R	Likely R

Tip: In-migration, GOP trend, tax-hike backlash put House in play. Democrats lost best chance to seize Senate in '02. Primary Date: 9/07/04

New Hampshire	119	281	R	Safe R	6	18	R	Safe R
****New Jersey**	47	33	D	NR	22	18	D	NR
New Mexico	43	27	D	Safe D	24	18	D	Likely D
New York	103	47	D	Safe D	25	37	R	Safe R
North Carolina	59	61	Tie^	Toss-up	28	22	D	Lean D

Tip: Power-splitting House is up for grabs, though Democrats clearly benefit from a GOP wracked by factionalism. Senate Democrats held on in '02, and may again. Primary Date: 7/20/04

North Dakota	28	66	R	Safe R	16	31	R	Safe R
Ohio	37	62	R	Safe R	11	22	R	Safe R
Oklahoma	53	48	D	Lean D	28	20	D	Lean D

Tip: Term limits hit for the first time, making state volatile, but Senate Democratic wins in specials showed residual strength. House is chancier — close to a toss-up — but leans ever-so-slightly

Democratic. Primary Date: 7/27/04

Oregon	25	35	R	Likely R	15	15	Tie	Lean D

Tip: Tied Senate is expected to go Democratic, though presidential battleground status could make things volatile. Primary Completed.

Pennsylvania	94	109	R	Likely R	21	29	R	Likely R
Rhode Island	63	11	D	Safe D	32	6	D	Safe D
South Carolina	51	73	R	Safe R	21	25	R	Safe R
South Dakota	21	49	R	Safe R	9	26	R	Safe R
Tennessee	54	45	D	Lean D	18	15	D	Lean D

Tip: State has trended Republican, but Democrats will be aided by coattails of a Democratic governor who's implemented a conservative agenda to popular acclaim. Primary Date: 8/05/04

Texas	62	88	R	Safe R	12	19	R	Safe R
Utah	19	56	R	Safe R	7	22	R	Safe R
Vermont	69	74	R	Toss-up	19	11	D	Safe D

Tip: With civil-unions backlash now over, House Democrats are expected to win back a few seats. But with four Progressives and three independents holding the balance of power — and not teaming up with the Democrats — a moderate Republican could still be elected Speaker. Primary Date: 9/14/04

****Virginia**	37	61	R	NR	16	24	R	NR
Washington	52	46	D	Toss-up	24	25	R	Toss-up

Tip: With battleground status driving money and interest, both parties seek to protect narrow margins; House Democrats are somewhat better positioned than Senate Republicans, who took over in '02. Primary Date: 9/14/04

West Virginia	68	32	D	Safe D	24	10	D	Safe D
Wisconsin	41	58	R	Likely R	15	18	R	Likely R

Tip: Though Senate numbers are close in this presidential battleground state, GOP is expected to hold the chamber and maybe even gain a seat or two. But in '06, Democratic-friendly seats are up. Primary Date: 9/14/04

Wyoming	14	46	R	Safe R	10	20	R	Safe R

^ Although North Carolina's House technically has a 61-59 Republican lead, the chamber is operating under a power-sharing agreement.

Chambers in play (toss-up or lean): 19 (out of 84)
Democratic-held chambers in play: 9
Republican-held chambers in play: 8

Tied toss-up chamber: North Carolina House

Democratic-held toss-up chambers:
Indiana House
Maine Senate
Washington House

Republican-held toss-up chambers:
Vermont House
Washington Senate

Tied Lean-Democratic chambers:
Oregon Senate

Democratic-held lean-Democratic chambers:
Nevada House
North Carolina Senate
Oklahoma House
Oklahoma Senate
Tennessee House
Tennessee Senate

Republican-held lean-Republican chambers:
Colorado Senate
Georgia Senate
Iowa House
Iowa Senate
Montana House
Montana Senate

Louis Jacobson is deputy editor of *Roll Call*. In 2002, he handicapped state legislative races for the *Cook Political Report*. Prior to joining *Roll Call*, he often wrote about state politics as a staff correspondent for *National Journal* magazine.

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Handicapping the State Legislatures: A 50-State Preview

by Louis Jacobson

For all the back-and-forth polls in the presidential battleground states, little has changed in the national outlook for state legislatures since our last survey in early July.

One more body, the Georgia House, now merits inclusion on our list of competitive chambers, and a second, the Oklahoma House, has moved from Lean Democratic to Toss-Up. A few more chambers have registered movement over the last three months, but not enough to change our call, including the Kentucky House, the Tennessee Senate and the Maine House (all moving in the Republican direction) and the Vermont House and the Washington House (both leaning more towards the Democrats).

These shifts add up, on balance, to a slightly improved outlook for the Republicans. But nationally, it still leaves a roughly even split intact. Of the 84 chambers being contested this year, 20 are considered competitive, including 10 held by the Democrats, eight held by the Republicans and two chambers that are tied.

Republicans hope that President Bush's late-summer surge will boost GOP candidates further down the ballot. While Bush's newfound popularity surely won't hurt Republican legislative candidates, such long presidential coattails are rare historically – especially when the salient issues (foreign policy, Iraq, terrorism) are ones that legislatures have essentially no power to control.

Moreover, the drawing of ever-more-safe districts for both Democrats and Republicans has led to a profusion of chambers where (like Congress) very few seats are genuinely up for grabs in any given election year. That smaller "playing field" makes it harder for either party to put together big swings that can transform a chamber that isn't already razor-close competitive.

Here, then, are the current partisan breakdowns for the nation's state legislatures, along with our forecast of the likelihood of partisan change in each chamber in the 2004 elections. Seat totals are courtesy of the National Conference of State Legislatures. Seats that are vacant or held by third parties are not included in the totals below. Nebraska's unicameral legislature is officially non-partisan and thus is not rated. Chambers that are not going to be contested this cycle are also not rated. One asterisk (*) denotes a state with one chamber not being contested this fall. Two asterisks (**) denote a state that has neither chamber contested this fall.

Rating System:

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Likely D or Likely R: Majority party is expected to remain in control, but it could lose seats to the minority party.
***Safe D or Safe R*:** Majority party is firmly in control, with no major shifts expected.
NR: Not rated because chamber has no races this fall, or because the chamber is officially nonpartisan.

Partisan Legislative Control, by chamber:

State Houses: 25 Republican, 23 Democratic, 1 Tied.
State Senates: 27 Republican, 21 Democratic, 1 Tied, 1 Non-Partisan

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	STATE HOUSE				*STATE SENATE*			
State	D Seats	R Seats	Con-trol	Rating	D Seats	R Seats	Con-trol	Rating
****Alabama**	63	42	D	NR	25	10	D	NR
Alaska	13	27	R	Safe R	8	11	R	Likely R
Arizona	21	39	R	Likely R	13	17	R	Likely R
Arkansas	70	30	D	Safe D	27	8	D	Safe D
California	48	32	D	Safe D	25	15	D	Safe D
Colorado	28	37	R	Likely R	17	18	R	Lean R

Tip: Surprisingly close presidential race and strong Senate candidacy by Democrat Ken Salazar give hope to downballot Democrats, but the size of the House margin makes a switch of control unlikely. In the razor-close Senate, Republicans actually feel stronger than they did earlier this year.

Connecticut	94	57	D	Safe D	21	15	D	Safe D
Delaware	12	29	R	Safe R	13	8	D	Safe D
Florida	39	81	R	Safe R	14	26	R	Safe R
Georgia	106	73	D	Lean D	26	30	R	Lean R

Tip: With a map that features lots of new districts, the Georgia House is the very definition of volatility. Democrats, holding onto a 33-seat majority, insist that House contests will be decided on local factors, but the surge by President Bush (aided, in some quarters at least, by conservative Georgia Democrat Zell Miller) can only help Republicans in this GOP-trending state. Ultimately, the question is not whether the GOP can net enough seats to win control outright, but whether they can seize enough seats to convince several more conservative Democrats to switch parties after Election Day, thus shifting control to the GOP. The Senate, which might have switched to Toss-Up under circumstances more favorable to the Democrats, now looks more likely to remain Republican.

Hawaii	36	15	D	Safe D	20	5	D	Safe D
Idaho	16	54	R	Safe R	7	28	R	Safe R
Illinois	66	52	D	Safe D	32	26	D	Safe D
Indiana	51	49	D	Toss-up	18	32	R	Safe R

Tip: The outlook in the nip-and-tuck House has not changed much. Either a surge by either candidate in the still-close governor's race, or a likely rout by President Bush, could tip the balance.

Iowa	46	54	R	Lean R	21	29	R	Lean R

Tip: Democrats claim an aggressive early-balloting program, but there's no firm evidence yet of a wave big enough to topple the GOP in either chamber.

Kansas	45	80	R	Safe R	10	30	R	Safe R
Kentucky	65	34	D	Likely D	16	22	R	Likely R

Tip: While the calls for both chambers remain the same as earlier in the summer, the political picture has changed significantly, with an unpredictable impact for Election Day. The state has been undergoing a general Republican trend — and President Bush, Sen. Jim Bunning and a same-sex marriage ban are on the ballot this fall — but new Republican Gov. Ernie Fletcher and the legislature are mired in a brawl over the budget and a threatened teacher strike over health-plan changes. Everyone in Frankfort has taken a hit in popularity, particularly the governor, whose approval ratings have fallen significantly. Another wrench is that a scheduled pre-election special session could take at-risk Democratic candidates (and a few Republicans) off the trail. If the GOP

can gain enough seats in the House , it might be able to peel off a number of Democrats to elect a speaker acceptable to both factions. But the most likely scenario seems to be continued Democratic control in the House and a GOP majority in the Senate.

****Louisiana**	68	36	D	NR	26	13	D	NR
Maine	80	67	D	Likely D	18	17	D	Toss-up

Tip: Term limits, combined with frustration over a Democratic governor and legislators failing to pass property-tax relief, could aid the GOP in both chambers. But Republicans would need a sizable wave to take control of the House.

****Maryland**	98	43	D	NR	33	14	D	NR
Massachusetts	136	23	D	Safe D	34	6	D	Safe D
***Michigan**	46	63	R	Likely R	16	22	R	NR
***Minnesota**	52	82	R	Safe R	35	31	D	NR
****Mississippi**	74	45	D	NR	29	22	D	NR
Missouri	73	90	R	Likely R	14	20	R	Likely R
Montana	47	53	R	Lean R	21	29	R	Lean R

Tip: This surprise Democratic target state remains hotly contested, due to a highly favorable map draw, fatigue over the outgoing GOP governor and divisive GOP gubernatorial primary.

Nebraska	--	--	--	--	0	0	--	NR
Nevada	23	19	D	Lean D	8	13	R	Likely R

Tip: Little has changed: The House is in play while the Senate, despite its modest margin, is not.

New Hampshire	119	281	R	Safe R	6	18	R	Safe R
****New Jersey**	47	33	D	NR	22	18	D	NR
New Mexico	43	27	D	Safe D	24	18	D	Likely D
New York	103	47	D	Safe D	25	37	R	Safe R
North Carolina	59	61	Tie^	Toss-up	28	22	D	Lean D

Tip: The House, still under a power-sharing agreement, is hopelessly up for grabs. Intra-party strife within the GOP makes for wild post-election scenarios. In the Senate, the Democrats, despite their narrow margin, are slightly favored to hold on.

North Dakota	28	66	R	Safe R	16	31	R	Safe R
Ohio	37	62	R	Safe R	11	22	R	Safe R
Oklahoma	53	48	D	Toss-up	28	20	D	Lean D

Tip: Even Democrats now acknowledge that the House has moved from Lean Democratic to Toss-Up status. With term limits being implemented for the first time, more than a dozen House seats are highly competitive, and the Republicans only have to net three to take over. The Senate, by contrast, is considered safer for the Democrats.

Oregon	25	35	R	Likely R	15	15	Tie	Lean D

Tip: With as many as three seats ripe for Democratic picking, the tied Senate is expected to go Democratic. No such change is expected in the Republican House.

Pennsylvania	94	109	R	Likely R	21	29	R	Likely R
Rhode Island	63	11	D	Safe D	32	6	D	Safe D
South Carolina	51	73	R	Safe R	21	25	R	Safe R
South Dakota	21	49	R	Safe R	9	26	R	Safe R

Tennessee	54	45	D	Lean D	18	15	D	Lean D

Tip: Republicans argue that the Senate should move to Toss-Up status, but Democrats still seem likelier to keep their edge in this GOP-trending state, thanks to the popularity of a pro-business, Democratic governor.

Texas	62	88	R	Safe R	12	19	R	Safe R
Utah	19	56	R	Safe R	7	22	R	Safe R
Vermont	69	74	R	Toss-up	19	11	D	Safe D

Tip: The Vermont House is a rare chamber in which Republicans have to defend a narrow majority in a solid blue state. Even though the most likely outcome at this point seems to be a Democratic takeover, the chamber's four Progressives and three independents hold the balance of power. With the likelihood of post-Election Day bargaining between the various parties, it seems most prudent to keep the House in the Toss-Up column.

****Virginia**	37	61	R	NR	16	24	R	NR
Washington	52	46	D	Toss-up	24	25	R	Toss-up

Tip: Democrats were cheered by a strong Democratic turnout in the September primary, and some suggest that the House now leans slightly Democratic. But with lots going on in the state – a presidential battleground, a hot governor's race, a somewhat competitive Senate contest and a couple of contested U.S. House seats – the ultimate impact of turnout patterns won't be known until the votes are counted. House Democrats are still somewhat better positioned than Senate Republicans to retain their narrow majority.

West Virginia	68	32	D	Safe D	24	10	D	Safe D
Wisconsin	41	58	R	Likely R	15	18	R	Likely R
Wyoming	14	46	R	Safe R	10	20	R	Safe R

^ Although North Carolina's House technically has a 61-59 Republican lead, the chamber is operating under a power-sharing agreement.

Chambers in play (toss-up or lean): 20 (out of 84)
Democratic-held chambers in play: 10
Republican-held chambers in play: 8
Tied chambers in play: 2

Chambers that shifted since July report
Georgia House: Moved from Likely Democratic to Lean Democratic
Oklahoma House: Moved from Lean Democratic to Toss-Up

Tied toss-up chamber: North Carolina House

Democratic-held toss-up chambers:
Indiana House
Maine Senate
Oklahoma House
Washington House

Republican-held toss-up chambers:
Vermont House
Washington Senate

Tied Lean-Democratic chambers:
Oregon Senate

Democratic-held lean-Democratic chambers:
Georgia House
Nevada House
North Carolina Senate
Oklahoma Senate
Tennessee House
Tennessee Senate

Republican-held lean-Republican chambers:
Colorado Senate
Georgia Senate
Iowa House
Iowa Senate
Montana House
Montana Senate

Louis Jacobson is deputy editor of *Roll Call*. His first report on state legislative races appeared in the July 9, 2004 *Report*.

THE ROTHENBERG POLITICAL REPORT

A Nonpartisan Analysis of American Politics and Elections

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The Rothenberg Political Report is an independent newsletter that reports on U.S. House and Senate contests, as well as gubernatorial elections and general political trends/developments. It neither endorses candidates nor advocates positions on matters of public policy.

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Handicapping the State Legislatures: A 50-State Status Report

By Louis Jacobson

Both Democrats and Republicans agree: Despite the possibility of a wave at the national level, the fight to control the state legislatures will boil down to Tip O'Neill's dictum: "All politics is local."

In part, this is because in most states, legislators draw their own district lines, based on local rather than national factors. And the issue looming over the 2006 legislative elections is the fight to control the state Houses and Senates after 2010, when the next legislative and Congressional lines are drawn.

This became even more urgent with the June 28 Supreme Court ruling that upheld Texas's mid-decade redistricting.

Of the thirty-six states in which state legislatures control redistricting, twenty are within four seats of switching party control.

Indeed, even now, party strategists are assembling two- and three-cycle plans to retake one chamber of another. This is especially true for Democrats in New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Another factor this year is the big shadow cast by legislative term limits. Say what you will about the wisdom of limiting legislators' terms: They have opened up at least the hope of intra-party competition.

Another factor this cycle will be the gubernatorial landscape, in which well over a dozen incumbents are considered vulnerable. Gubernatorial troubles in Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin could influence legislative races, while a two-year-itch for unpopular first-term governors

could hurt the legislative colleagues of Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels and Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt, both Republicans. That said, the link between governors' races and legislative contests is not always direct; much of the time, voting patterns may have more to do with how good a party's overall get-out-the-vote operation is rather than the level of satisfaction with the incumbent.

By the numbers, we see ten vulnerable Democratic-held chambers, compared to only eight vulnerable Republican-held chambers. But don't let that fool you. Republicans acknowledge that President Bush's problems are being felt at the local level, and they know that if Democratic voters want to send a message this fall, state legislatures could be a key venue for that message.

"Voting based on the president matters as much as voting based on the governor," said Tim Storey, a political analyst at the National Conference of State Legislatures. "If there are megatrends that drive turnout, it can spell trouble for party in power."

History bears this out. According to the NCSL, the party occupying the White House has lost legislative seats in every midterm election back to 1938, except in 2002, when President Bush gained 177 seats. Even the swing four years ago was small compared to some others in the past half-century: 514 Democratic seats lost in 1994, 628 Republican seats lost in 1974, 762 Democratic seats lost in 1966 and 812 Republican seats lost in 1958.

Even if the Republicans were to lose just a small fraction of those seats this fall, a big swing in partisan control could result, because so many chambers today are closely divided, and because Republicans hold many of the chambers where a Democratic wave could make gains possible.

On average, twelve chambers flip control in every two-year cycle. In the 2004 cycle, thirteen chambers flipped.

The Democrats are on something of a roll legislatively. Since Bush broke with history in 2002, they have picked up legislative seats in 2003, 2004, and 2005, according to the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee. On the last major Election Day for legislators, 2004, Democrats gained forty-five seats nationally.

And Democrats can take heart that the recent special elections for legislative seats have mostly gone their way. In eleven of twelve special elections in which a seat changed partisan hands, the seat switched from the GOP to the Democrats; only two went the other way, according to the NCSL. And in no fewer than nine special elections, Democratic candidates won state House or Senate seats with vote shares between six and twenty percentage points above normal Democratic performance in those districts, according to the DLCC. These included three races each in Pennsylvania and Virginia and one each in Kentucky, Missouri and Texas.

Another notable trend is that several of long-serving legislative leaders have been knocked out in primaries this year, including political giants in Indiana, North Carolina and Pennsylvania. This has been mostly a Republican problem, emblematic of a base divided between die-hard

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conservatives and more pragmatic politicians. That, too, cannot be a good sign for the GOP as it enters an election season that will almost certainly be a battle between the two parties' bases.

All of this comes in a context of almost perfect parity nationally. The two parties control the same number of state Senates, and the GOP has a mere two-chamber lead in state Houses. Looked at a different way, Republicans control twenty legislatures outright, the Democrats control nineteen outright and ten are split. And seats? All told, just twenty-one seats separate the two parties — 3,663 for the Democrats, 3,642 for the Republicans, a difference of less than three-tenths of one percent.

Seat totals below are courtesy of the National Conference of State Legislatures, as of May 2006; some minor changes in the partisan breakdown of seats may have occurred since the most recent NCSL tally was compiled, but no changes in party control have taken place. Seats that are vacant or held by third parties are not included in the totals below. Nebraska's unicameral legislature is officially non-partisan and thus is not rated.

Chambers that are not going to be contested this cycle are also not rated. One asterisk (*) denotes a state with one chamber not being contested this fall. Two asterisks (**) denote a state that has neither chamber contested this fall.

Rating System:

Toss-Up: Control of the chamber is truly up for grabs.
Lean D or Lean R: Majority party starts with an advantage, but the race is competitive.
Likely D or Likely R: Majority party is expected to remain in control, but it could lose seats to the minority party.
Safe D or Safe R: Majority party is firmly in control, with no major shifts expected.
NR: Not rated because chamber has no races this fall, or because the chamber is officially nonpartisan.

Current control:
State House: 25 Republican, 23 Democratic, 1 Tied^
State Senate: 24 Republican, 24 Democratic, 1 Tied, 1 Non-Partisan

STATE HOUSE					**STATE SENATE**			
State	D Seats	R Seats	Con-trol	Rating	D Seats	R Seats	Con-trol	Rating
Alabama	63	42	D	Likely D	25	10	D	Likely D

Tip: Don't expect a sudden change in control, but the South's long-term shift to the Republicans could enable the GOP to nibble away at the Democratic majorities in both chambers this year. In time, enough conservative Democrats might be convinced to switch to the GOP, thereby flipping party control.

Alaska	14	26	R	Safe R	8	12	R	Safe R

Tip: Though Gov. Frank Murkowski (R) has myriad problems, they will not reduce GOP majorities in either chamber.

Arizona	21	39	R	Safe R	12	18	R	Safe R

Tip: The Republican majority in both chambers is divided between conservatives and moderates, and several races this fall will determine what kind of GOP majority will prevail next year. But don't expect the infighting to cause the GOP to lose control of either chamber.

Arkansas	72	28	D	Safe D	27	8	D	Safe D
California	48	32	D	Safe D	25	15	D	Safe D
Colorado	35	30	D	Toss-Up	18	17	D	Toss-Up

Tip: The surprise news of the 2004 legislative elections was the Democratic takeover of not one but two legislative chambers in Colorado. But the margins are thin and hardly insurmountable for the GOP. Aiding the Democrats is a strong gubernatorial challenge by moderate Bill Ritter. But aiding the Republicans is the emergence of anti-immigration ire, fed by a court's recent removal of a ballot initiative that would have curbed benefits for illegal immigrants. Paradoxically, the House, despite bigger margins, may be the likelier chamber to switch, based on a seat-by-seat analysis.

Connecticut	99	52	D	Safe D	24	12	D	Safe D
Delaware	15	25	R	Likely R	13	8	D	Safe D

Tip: Democrats could gain a few seats in the House, but a full takeover is further down the road.

Florida	36	84	R	Safe R	14	26	R	Safe R
Georgia	78	101	R	Safe R	22	34	R	Safe R
Hawaii	41	10	D	Safe D	20	5	D	Safe D
Idaho	13	57	R	Safe R	7	28	R	Safe R
Illinois	65	53	D	Safe D	31	27	D	Safe D

Tip: Despite the investigations dogging Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration, the Democrats should remain in control unless he's indicted or forced from office – two prospects that seem unlikely for now. Though the Senate is nominally close, several GOP Senators are not seeking reelection, making a flip unlikely.

Indiana	48	52	R	Toss-Up	17	33	R	Safe R

Tip: The travails of GOP Gov. Mitch Daniels – bad fallout from time zone shifts, toll road privatization and the closure of local motor-vehicle offices – have damaged Republican chances of keeping the House. Some observers predict a Democratic takeover, citing the non-presidential year (which helps Democrats in this red state) and a strong recruiting effort, but we'll reserve

judgment until this fall. In the Senate, the drama of the president pro-tem being ousted in the primary by a Christian conservative ought not obscure the fact that the GOP is in solid control of that chamber.

Iowa	49	51	R	Toss-Up	25	25	Tie	Toss-Up

Tip: Is there any more evenly matched state in the nation than Iowa? If either Democratic Secretary of State Chet Culver or GOP Rep. Jim Nussle open up a big lead in the open governor's race, that could make a difference in some legislative contests. A job-training scandal in Polk County could morph into problems for the Democrats. But for now, the fight for control of the Iowa legislature is the purest of toss-ups.

*Kansas	42	83	R	Safe R	10	30	R	NR
Kentucky	56	44	D	Likely D	15	22	R	Likely R
**Louisiana	65	39	D	NR	24	15	D	NR
Maine	74	73	D	Toss-Up	19	16	D	Toss-Up

Tip: Not only are both chambers close, but Maine is splintered by third- and fourth parties – and legislators are subject to term limits — meaning lots of volatility and open seats. (Currently, the state House seats four independents, which is greater than the Democrats' margin of control.) New England can expect a Democratic year, but Republicans feel good about their recruiting and organization in the House, and they only have to shoot for a plurality. Democrats are in somewhat better shape in the Senate, though it still rates a Toss-Up rating for now. With poll data scarce, call this state with caution.

Maryland	98	43	D	Safe D	33	14	D	Safe D
Massachusetts	137	20	D	Safe D	34	6	D	Safe D
Michigan	52	58	R	Likely R	16	22	R	Likely R

Tip: With Gov. Jennifer Granholm (D) hobbled by a poor economy, this doesn't look like the year for Democrats to make major gains in either chamber. They're looking instead to 2008, when term limits could aid the Democrats in taking over the House. (The Senate won't be up that year.)

Minnesota	66	68	R	Toss-Up	37	29	D	Safe D

Tip: Democrats will gun for the House, where they unexpectedly gained more than a dozen seats in 2004, but they'll have to expend significant effort shoring up seats they won narrowly last time. If anything, the relatively conflict-free legislative session – a contrast to the rancor that preceded the 2004 election – as well as the non-presidential cycle should help the GOP. Democratic hopes for a takeover will rely on replicating their strong ground game from 2004.

**Mississippi	75	47	D	NR	27	24	D	NR
Missouri	66	97	R	Likely R	11	23	R	Likely R

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Tip: Poll numbers for Gov. Matt Blunt (R) are in the doldrums, and that should be enough to stall, or even slightly reverse, the GOP's strong legislative gains of recent years. But the GOP majorities appear solid enough to maintain control.

Montana	50	50	Tie^	Toss-Up	27	23	D	Lean D

Tip: The Democrats' surprise sweep of the governorship and the legislature in this red state two years ago will be put to the test this fall. Democrats have a slight edge in the state Senate, but few would argue with the proposition that the tied (though, under state law, Democratic-led) state House is a pure Toss-Up. Unlike 2004, Democrats won't have popular Gov. Brian Schweitzer (D) on the ticket running against a scandal-wounded incumbent Republican governor, Judy Martz. But if either Republican Conrad Burns or Democratic state Senate President Jon Tester pulls decisively ahead in their Senate contest, that may show whether the Democratic surge in Big Sky country is for real or not.

Nebraska	--	--	--	--	0	0	--	NR
Nevada	26	16	D	Safe D	9	12	R	Lean R

Tip: Democrats should keep control of the Assembly, and maybe even expand to a veto-proof majority. And for the first time in a couple cycles, they have at least an outside shot at seizing the Senate. Control hinges on two Las Vegas seats held by Republicans Sandra Tiffany and Barbara Cegavske, both of whom face tough primaries as well as credible (if underdog) Democratic challengers. Ultimately, the GOP has the edge in that chamber, particularly given the plethora of statewide offices that are competitive this year. "Truth is, the Democrats only have the resources to win some of those contests," said one GOP strategist. "History says that they will go for all of them and come up short on most or all. But something tells me that they are smarter this year and will take attorney general and secretary of state – and call it a great year."

New Hampshire	152	246	R	Safe R	8	16	R	Likely R

Tip: Taking over the largest state House in the nation will take many years, but the Democrats – who are surging in New Hampshire – could narrow the GOP margins in the much smaller state Senate this fall.

**New Jersey	48	32	D	NR	22	18	D	NR
*New Mexico	42	28	D	Safe D	24	18	D	NR
New York	105	45	D	Safe D	27	35	R	Likely R

Tip: Democrats, bolstered by anti-Bush sentiment and an expected rout by Democratic gubernatorial candidate Eliot Spitzer, are gunning to take control of the state Senate for the first time in more than 40 years. But they expect to do so within three cycles — in time for the next round of redistricting — rather than this fall. The Democratic goal for this year is to shore up their potentially vulnerable Senators and perhaps flip one GOP-held seat.

North Carolina	63	57	D	Toss-Up	29	21	D	Likely D

Tip: Will the investigation of Democratic House Speaker Jim Black outweigh the Bush doldrums? "If Black is indicted before the election — which I think is unlikely — all bets are off," said one observer in the state. But without major statewide or federal races on tap, it will be a base election, and despite their general problems in the South, the Democrats in North Carolina arguably have a stronger fundraising and get-out-the-vote apparatus in place than the GOP does, owing to Republicans' deep fractiousness in recent years.

North Dakota	27	67	R	Safe R	15	32	R	Safe R
Ohio	38	61	R	Likely R	11	22	R	Safe R

Tip: The scandal woes of Gov. Bob Taft (R) and the rest of his state party shouldn't have much of an impact on the GOP's hold on the state Senate, where only half the seats are up. But Republicans could lose a handful of seats in the state House, even as they keep control of the chamber. With decent chances of picking up the governorship, a U.S. Senate seat, several Congressional districts and a number of statewide offices (which in Ohio hold big sway over the redistricting process), the once-dormant state Democratic Party won't be able to focus as much on the legislature this year. Their big chance for gains will come in 2008, when legislative term limits begin to hit and loads of GOP-held seats come open.

Oklahoma	44	57	R	Safe R	25	23	D	Toss-Up

Tip: In this solidly red state, the GOP quickly solidified its hold on the state House, which it seized in 2004. As for the state Senate, Democrats caution that the GOP failed to recruit the strongest possible candidate for some vulnerable Democratic-held seats. Still, if trends continue, the Senate rating could shift to lean Republican by fall.

Oregon	27	33	R	Lean R	18	12	D	Likely D

Tip: The gubernatorial election this year should be a doozy, with a weak Democratic incumbent, a Republican moderate, a maverick independent and a handful of other small-party nominees. That could provide some volatility, but at this point, politicos do not expect either the minority Democrats in the House or the minority Republicans in the Senate to gain more than a seat or two — not enough to flip control.

Pennsylvania	94	109	R	Lean R	20	30	R	Likely R

Tip: While a festering pay-hike backlash will likely produce a volatile fall election season, the Republicans, despite internal divisions, appear secure in the Senate and have a better than 50-50 chance to hold the state House. But their margin could narrow if several seats in the Democratic-trending Philadelphia area flip, as expected, aided by the coattails of Gov. Ed Rendell (D), who's up for reelection. Any chance to offset these gains by boosting GOP success in the historically Democratic southwestern part of the state has been dashed by a shortage of strong Republican candidates in the region.

Rhode Island	60	15	D	Safe D	33	5	D	Safe D
*South Carolina	50	74	R	Safe R	20	26	R	NR
South Dakota	19	51	R	Safe R	10	25	R	Safe R

Tip: With no close Congressional or statewide contests on the ballot this fall, South Dakota's election season will be dominated by abortion. After passing a law that criminalizes almost all abortions and challenges the constitutionality of Roe v. Wade, critics qualified a ballot initiative that would overturn the law. A reenergized Democratic Party is now trying to target Republicans in the legislature who supported the law (while leaving alone the moderate Republicans who agree with them). The GOP's margins in both chambers are too big to enable a Democratic takeover, and in the GOP primary, anti-abortion hard-liners trounced a couple of moderates. But Democrats can at least dream about securing an abortion-rights majority in November. Two House contests and two Senate contests, all in the Sioux Falls area, will probably be fought almost exclusively over abortion.

Tennessee	53	46	D	Lean D	15	18	R	Lean R

Tip: Gov. Phil Bredesen, a Democrat in a red state, has remained fairly secure for reelection despite making difficult cuts to health coverage for lower-income Tennesseeans. But Democrats in the legislature will have to run without assuming much of a gubernatorial coattail effect. Democrats say the GOP missed an opportunity in the House by not recruiting stronger candidates against a couple of potentially vulnerable incumbents.

Texas	63	87	R	Safe R	12	19	R	Safe R
Utah	19	56	R	Safe R	8	21	R	Safe R
Vermont	83	60	D	Safe D	21	9	D	Safe D
**Virginia	40	57	R	NR	17	23	R	NR
Washington	56	42	D	Lean D	26	23	D	Lean D

Tip: Democratic Gov. Christine Gregoire, elected narrowly in a controversial recount in 2004, has had a successful two years with the legislature, and there are no signs of a backlash strong enough to dislodge Democrats. The Democrats feel good about their organization and candidates, even though a handful of House Democratic incumbents will have to run for reelection after winning with less than 50 percent two years ago. The fireworks are likelier to come in 2008, if she faces Republican Dino Rossi in a rematch.

West Virginia	69	31	D	Safe D	21	13	D	Safe D
Wisconsin	39	60	R	Safe R	14	19	R	Lean R

Tip: Both parties in the legislature are enmeshed in corruption scandals, and, separately, Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle is grappling with ethics investigations of his administration. Given the hotly contested gubernatorial race, the legislature is ripe for some upheaval this year. The size of the GOP majority makes a change in the Assembly a real stretch, but in the Senate, the GOP has some vulnerable seats. If Democratic candidates can separate themselves from the scandal and surf a Democratic wave in November — admittedly big ifs — the Senate could flip control.

Wyoming	14	46	R	Safe R	7	23	R	Safe R

^ Montana's House is considered tied, but its Speaker is a Democrat. State law requires that the position be filled by a Member of the governor's party. Currently, the governor is Democrat Brian Schweitzer.

Chambers in play (Toss-Up or Lean): 20 out of 88 (23 percent)
Democratic-held chambers in play: 10
Republican-held chambers in play: 8
Tied chambers in play: 2

Democratic-held Toss-Ups (6)
Colorado House
Colorado Senate
Maine House
Maine Senate
North Carolina House
Oklahoma Senate

Republican-held Toss-Ups (3)
Indiana House
Iowa House
Minnesota House

Tied Toss-Ups (2)
Iowa Senate
Montana House

Democratic-held Lean D (4)
Montana Senate
Tennessee House
Washington House
Washington Senate

Republican-held Lean R (5)
Nevada Senate
Oregon House
Pennsylvania House
Tennessee Senate
Wisconsin Senate

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Louis Jacobson is deputy editor of *Roll Call* and author of its "Out There" column on politics in the states. He has handicapped state legislative races for the *Rothenberg Political Report* and the *Cook Political Report*.

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NOTE TO OUR READERS:

Regular readers of the *Rothenberg Political Report* are aware that we adjust our production schedule during the second half of an election year to deliver more issues before Election Day. This issue (produced during what would normally be an "off-week" for us) is an example of that schedule change, but the change will be most noticeable after Labor Day. Watch your mail boxes and Rothenbergpoliticalreport.com.

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POS for Gerlach and NRCC, Sept. 25-26—General Election ballot: Gerlach over Murphy 51%-39%. IDs: Murphy 34% favorable/34% unfavorable.
Franklin & Marshall College, Sept. 20-25—General Election ballot: Gerlach over Murphy 44%-41%. IDs: Gerlach 33% favorable/26% unfavorable; Murphy 21% favorabler/22% unfavorable.
POS for Gerlach and NRCC, Sept. 13-14—General Election ballot: Gerlach over Murphy 47%-36%. IDs: Gerlach 50% favorable/29% unfavorable, Murphy 31% favorable/26% unfavorable.
Benenson Strategy Group for DCCC, August 20-23—General Election ballot: Murphy over Gerlach 44%-42%.

PENNSYLVANIA 7 – Curt Weldon (R), seeking reelection.

Former Vice Admiral Joe Sestak (D) is a strong challenger in a good region of the country for Democrats. Cong. Weldon (R) hasn't had a competitive race in years, but he is currently touting a poll with him well ahead. Democrats were growing pessimistic but a new survey gives them some reason for renewed optimism.

Franklin & Marshall College, Sept. 22-27—General Election ballot: Sestak over Weldon 45%-44%. IDs: Weldon 41% favorable/32% unfavorable; Sestak 29% favorable/8% unfavorable.
POS for Weldon and NRCC, Sept. 12-13—General Election ballot: Weldon over Sestak 52%-33%.

WASHINGTON 8 – Dave Reichert (R), seeking reelection.

Republicans insist that the GOP incumbent is in solid shape, while a new Grove Insight poll shows exactly opposite. Heavy new NRCC spending suggests that Reichert is not out of the woods yet.

Grove Insight for EMILY's List, Sept. 18-21—General Election ballot: Reichert over Burner 44%-43%. Reichert job ratings: 40% positive/46% negative. IDs: Reichert 46% favorable/35% unfavorable, Burner 33% favorable/13% unfavorable.

State Legislative Races Outlook

By Louis Jacobson

Little has changed in the outlook for the state legislatures since the Rothenberg Political Report published its last rankings on July 7. The only ratings change is in the Alaska Senate, where allegations of corruption involving a number of politicians - including Senate President Ben Stevens, the son of U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) - are calling into question the GOP's grip on the chamber. Previously classified as Safe Republican, this seat now moves to Likely Republican. That still falls short of the competitive category (which is reserved for Toss-Up and Lean seats), but depending on how the investigation plays out, it would be a mistake to rule out a party switch, even in as staunchly a Republican state as Alaska. The chamber's current partisan breakdown is twelve Republicans, eight Democrats.

Democrats feel somewhat stronger than they did in early July about their prospects in Colorado, where gubernatorial candidate Bill Ritter is surging; the Indiana House, where poor approval ratings for Gov. Mitch Daniels (R) are dragging down GOP legislators; Michigan; Montana and the Ohio House. But none of these shifts is sufficient to merit a change in classification yet. Republicans, for their part, feel stronger about their chances in the Alabama Senate, among other states. But no other states merit a change in call yet.

That leaves the following 20 chambers in play going into Election Day:
Democratic-held Toss-Ups: Colorado House, Colorado Senate, Maine House, Maine Senate, North Carolina House, Oklahoma Senate
Republican-held Toss-Ups: Indiana House, Iowa House, Minnesota House
Tied Toss-Ups: Iowa Senate, Montana House
Democratic-held Lean Democratic: Montana Senate, Tennessee House, Washington House, Washington Senate
Republican-held Lean Republican: Nevada Senate, Oregon House, Pennsylvania House, Tennessee Senate, Wisconsin Senate

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[UPDATE- October 12, 2006- WEST VIRGINIA]

The Rothenberg Political Report is shifting its call for one statelegislative chamber. The West Virginia state House, currently with 68 Democrats and 32 Republicans, will now shift from Solid Democratic to Likely Democratic. That's still outside the range of "competitive," but the change suggests that the Republican minority could gain seats this fall.

The shift is being driven by a significant investment of money and organizational resources by Don Blankenship, the CEO of Massey Energy, a major coal and energy company in the state. Blankenship is targeting the state House. WestVirginia is a historically Democratic state, especially where the state legislature is concerned, and the Democratic edge in the state House appears too wide to make a one-year takeover likely. However, Blankenship--astaunchly pro-business conservative and a bete noire of state Democrats, trial lawyers and labor unions--has deep pockets and has been a player in past political wars, sinking significant money into state Supreme Court races.

The state has been trending Republican on the national level, suggesting that the GOP, despite its institutional weaknesses locally, is gaining ground in the state. The Democrats' best asset right now is Gov. JoeManchin, who is extremely popular. But it's not clear how much he'll be willing to spend from his warchest to bolster the legislature this year. (Manchin is not up for reelection again until 2008.) So, don't expect the chamber to flip control, but a GOP gain of seats, even in what's turning into a generally Democratic year elsewhere, looks possible.

POSTED BY NATHAN GONZALES AT 10/04/2006 12:01:00 AM

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[UPDATE- October 20, 2006- OHIO]

The Rothenberg Political Report is shifting its call for the Ohio state House from Likely Republican to Lean Republican and its call for the Ohio state Senate from Solid Republican to Likely Republican. While the long-dominant GOP is still favored to keep control of both chambers, albeit by narrower margins, the simmering scandal environment for the Ohio GOP has metastasized in recent weeks, and it's no longer guaranteed that the party's 20-plus-seat margin in the House will be enough to keep control past Election Day. Close observers of the Ohio political scene are split on whether GOP control is truly endangered -- some insist that the Democrats won't be able to take over the House this cycle -- but enough Republicans tell us that the anti-Republican sentiment is so strong that anything is possible, so we've decided to shift the call.

By reclassifying the Ohio House as Lean Republican, the chamber becomes the 21st to be deemed competitive by the Report. Here is the full list:

Democratic-held Toss-Ups (6)
Colorado House
Colorado Senate
Maine House
Maine Senate
North Carolina House
Oklahoma Senate

Republican-held Toss-Ups (3)
Indiana House
Iowa House
Minnesota House

Tied Toss-Ups (2)
Iowa Senate
Montana House

Democratic-held Lean D (4)
Montana Senate
Tennessee House
Washington House
Washington Senate

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Republican-held Lean R (6)
Nevada Senate
Ohio House
Oregon House
Pennsylvania House
Tennessee Senate
Wisconsin Senate

posted by Nathan Gonzales at 10/04/2006 12:01:00 AM

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TOP STORY

THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 2008

Will Democrats grow legislative edge in '08?

By Louis Jacobson, Stateline.org Columnist

With the nation swept up in a riveting presidential election, state legislative races might rank far down the political totem pole this fall. But with almost two dozen chambers at risk of a takeover by their minority parties — roughly one of every four that have elections — state legislative contests will carry weight this year, both for the obvious policy implications as well as for their impact on the 2010 round of congressional redistricting.

For the first — but not for the last — time this election cycle, "Out There" has rated the political hold on each of the 84 partisan legislative chambers in 43 states that have members up for re-election in November. This year, the Democratic party is well-positioned to hold its majority of chambers — but greatly expanding control may not be in the cards.

The predictions of what might happen after the ballots are counted are based on interviews with about 45 national and state-based experts. Each chamber was determined to be Safe Democratic, Likely Democratic, Lean Democratic, Toss-Up, Lean Republican, Likely Republican or Safe Republican.

What's at stake, in part, is that eight states, including major ones such as Indiana, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Wisconsin, have divided control of their legislatures, at least one chamber that could flip party-control in 2008 and a system that allows lawmakers to redraw congressional districts in conjunction with their governors after 2010. In each case, seizing control of a chamber could significantly shift the dynamics of redistricting. And in another big state, Texas, Democrats are looking to secure a place at the redistricting table by winning the state House.

LOUIS JACOBSON

Louis Jacobson is the editor of *CongressNow*, an online publication launched in 2007 that covers legislation

The big picture is that both parties face a parallel landscape. Ten Democratic-controlled chambers — five Senates and five Houses — are in play, which means a chamber ranked as Toss-Up, Lean Republican or Lean Democratic.

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and policy in Congress and is affiliated with *Roll Call* newspaper in Washington, D.C. Jacobson originated the "Out There" column in 2004 as a feature for *Roll Call*, where he served as deputy editor. Earlier, Jacobson spent 11 years with *National Journal* covering lobbying, politics and policy, and served as a contributing writer for two of its affiliates, *CongressDaily* and *Government Executive*. He also was a contributing writer to The *Almanac of American Politics* and has done political handicapping of state legislatures for both *The Rothenberg Political Report* and *The Cook Political Report*.

Republicans control 11 chambers in play — five Senates and six Houses. Two politically tied chambers are also in play, while 14 are not up for election this year.

This means that, structurally, the two parties are equally well-positioned to register gains or suffer losses. And at least at this early date, the key external factors shed little light on which party might ultimately do better in November.

Historically, legislative pickups tend to coincide with what's happening at the top of the ticket — in 11 of the past 17 presidential elections, the winning party also gained legislative seats, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). This would be bad news for the GOP, which faces a host of difficulties, from President Bush's low approval ratings to the war in Iraq and the faltering economy.

But Democrats have some worries as well. For one thing, they could be held back by their past successes — the fact that they have netted legislative gains for two consecutive major cycles, specifically a six-chamber gain in 2004 and an eight-chamber gain in 2006. Today, there are 30 Democratic-controlled state Houses compared to 19 for the Republicans, and 27 Democratic state Senates compared to 20 held by Republicans and two that are tied. (Nebraska's legislature is unicameral and non-partisan.)

It's unclear how much higher the Democrats can go.

"The Democrats had such huge gains in 2006 that a lot of the low-hanging fruit is gone," said Tim Storey, an elections specialist at NCSL. "The Democrats are playing defense as much as the Republicans are."

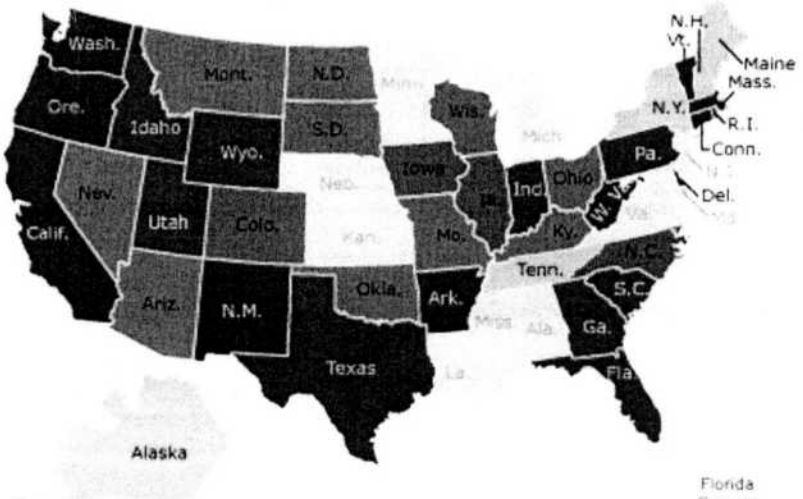
Moreover, Republicans and Democrats alike say that the complicated race for the Democratic presidential nomination remains a big question mark for how voting will play out in the legislatures. How the nominee is decided could determine whether key elements of the Democratic coalition, such as African-Americans, Hispanics and blue-collar whites, stick with the Democrats further down the ballot, or whether they don't

Stateline.org

Outlook for legislatures' party control in '08

Across the states, 84 partisan legislative chambers have members up for reelection in November, with almost two dozen at risk of changing party control. After the ballots are counted, this is what "Out There" predicts the political landscape will be.

State legislatures: upper chambers



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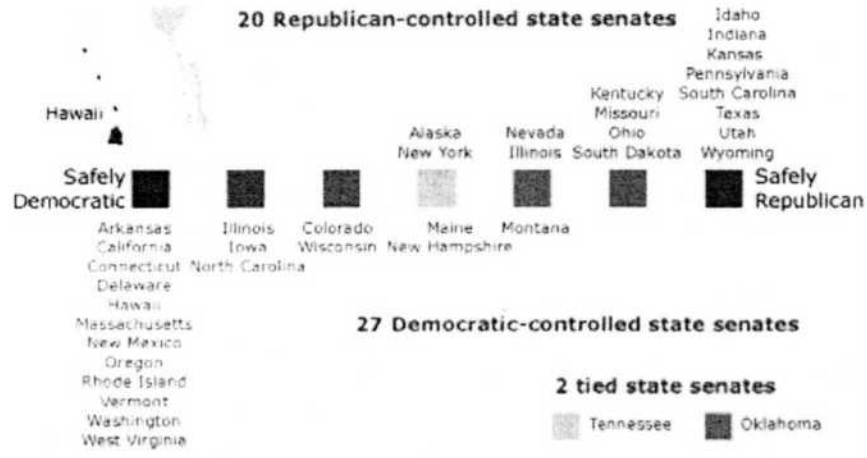
...vote at all or defect to the Republicans.

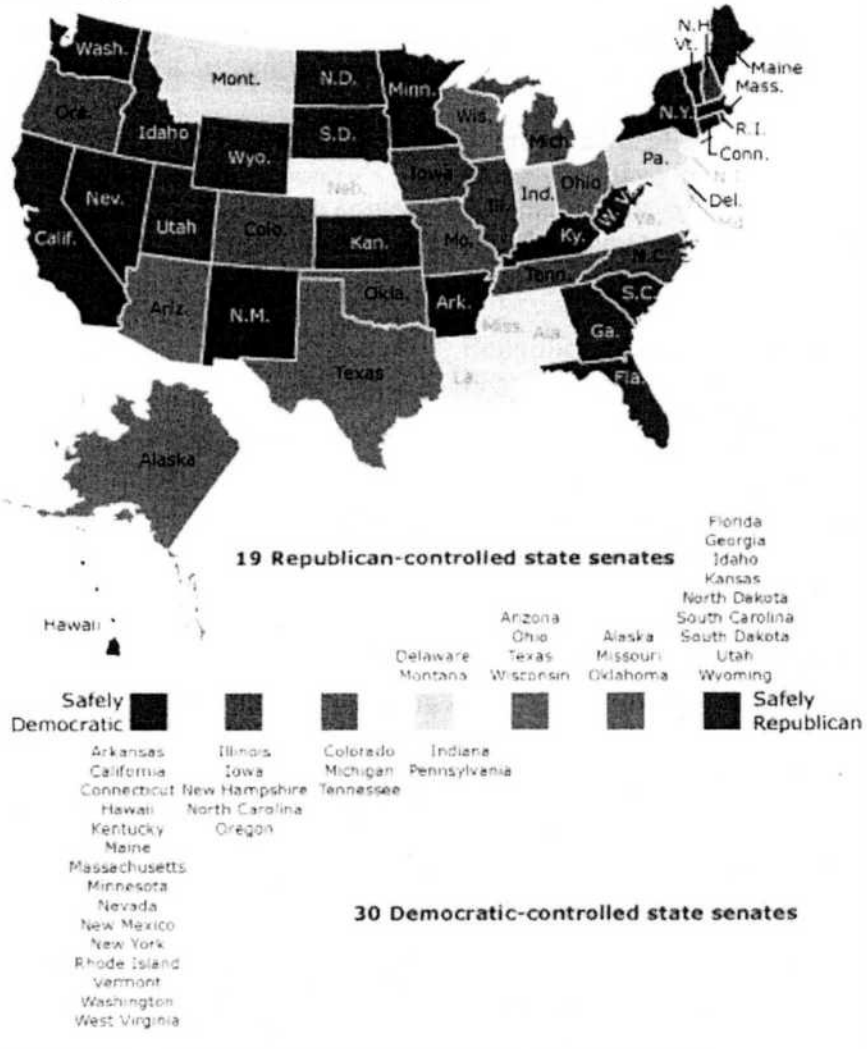
As for the 23 chambers being contested in November that are considered in play, each party controls four Toss-Up chambers, most of them pivoting on the difference of a seat or two. The Democrats' Toss-Up chambers are the Senate in Maine and New Hampshire and the House in Indiana and Pennsylvania. The Republican-controlled Toss-Ups are the Senate in Alaska and New York and the House in Delaware and Montana. One tied chamber, the Tennessee Senate, is a Toss-Up as well.

With one exception — the Montana Senate — the chambers that are leaning Democratic or Republican begin with an advantage to the incumbent majority. The chambers leaning Democratic are the Colorado House and Senate, the Wisconsin Senate and the House in Tennessee and Michigan. Those leaning Republican are the Arizona House and Senate, the Senate in Nevada and North Dakota, the House in Ohio and Texas and the Wisconsin Assembly. One tied



Nebraska has a nonpartisan State Senate

State legislatures: lower chambers



The Nebraska State Legislature has no lower chamber

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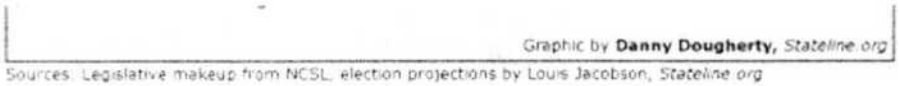
...chamber leans Republican: the Oklahoma Senate.



Graphic by **Danny Dougherty**, *Stateline.org*

Sources: Legislative makeup from NCSL, election projections by Louis Jacobson, *Stateline.org*

The national marquee contest among legislatures is almost certainly the battle for the New York Senate, both because of the size of the state's media market and because a switch could give the Democrats a free hand in the 2010 round of congressional redistricting.

The chamber is currently held by the GOP, 32-30. With the recent elevation of Lt. Gov. David Paterson (D), who had been able to cast a tie-breaking vote in the Senate, the Democrats now have to net two seats to take over — a task seen as within their reach. While the scandal-linked resignation of New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer (D) was hardly good news for Empire State Democrats, the Republicans' decades-long hold on the chamber is widely believed to be weakening because of broader demographic and political trends. In fact, Paterson's takeover from Spitzer, whose popularity was sagging before the scandal broke, could even aid the Democrats.

Another potential big-state prize for Democrats is the Texas House, where the Republicans — once seemingly invincible — find themselves ahead only 79-71 after a net nine-seat gain by the Democrats since 2004. The GOP has been weakened internally by fights revolving around the leadership of hard-line Speaker Tom Craddick.

One of the biggest Republican targets will be Michigan's Democratic-controlled House. The battered economy — both Michigan's and the country's — threatens to leave voters in a sour mood, and the state House is the only big statewide contest on the ballot this year. The GOP has seized on tax-hike votes, but a seat-by-seat analysis suggests that the Democrats may be able to hold on to their margin.

LEGISLATURES IN 2008

	Senate				House			
State	D	R	Control	'08 Projection	D	R	Control	'08 Projection
** Alabama	23	12	D	No election	62	43	D	No election
Alaska	9	11	R***	Toss-Up	17	23	R	Likely Republican
Arizona	13	17	R	Leaning Republican	27	33	R	Leaning Republican
Arkansas	27	8	D	Safely Democratic	75	25	D	Safely Democratic
California	25	15	D	Safely Democratic	47	32	D	Safely Democratic
Colorado	20	15	D	Leaning Democratic	40	25	D	Leaning Democratic
Connecticut	24	12	D	Safely Democratic	107	44	D	Safely Democratic
Delaware	13	8	D	Safely Democratic	19	22	R	Toss-Up
Florida	14	26	R	Safely Republican	42	78	R	Safely Republican
Georgia	22	34	R	Safely Republican	73	107	R	Safely Republican
Hawaii	21	4	D	Safely Democratic	44	7	D	Safely Democratic
Idaho	7	28	R	Safely Republican	19	51	R	Safely Republican

Republicans will also look to Pennsylvania, where the Democrats hold a slender one-seat edge. Democrats are on the hot seat because of an investigation into bonuses paid to legislative staffers who did political work. Even so, the seat-by-seat outlook and the national political environment favor the Democrats.

The GOP will also be trying to flip a number of Democratic-held chambers in red states. These include both chambers in Tennessee — the tied Senate and the Democratic-controlled House — as well as the tied Oklahoma Senate and the Indiana House, where a gain of

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Illinois	37	22	D	Likely Democratic	67	51	D	Likely Democratic
Indiana	17	33	R	Safely Republican	51	49	D	Toss-Up
Iowa	30	20	D	Likely Democratic	53	47	D	Likely Democratic
Kansas	10	30	R	Safely Republican	47	78	R	Safely Republican
Kentucky	15	22	R	Likely Republican	63	37	D	Safely Democratic
** Louisiana	23	16	D	No election	53	50	D	No election
Maine	18	17	D	Toss-Up	90	59	D	Safely Democratic
** Maryland	33	14	D	No election	104	37	D	No election
Massachusetts	35	5	D	Safely Democratic	140	19	D	Safely Democratic
*Michigan	17	21	R	No election	58	52	D	Leaning Democratic
*Minnesota	45	22	D	No election	85	48	D	Safely Democratic
** Mississippi	27	25	D	No election	75	47	D	No election
Missouri	14	20	R	Likely Republican	71	92	R	Likely Republican
Montana	26	24	D	Leaning Republican	49	50	R	Toss-Up
Nebraska	Nebraska has a unicameral, nonpartisan legislature							
Nevada	10	11	R	Leaning Republican	27	15	D	Safely Democratic
New Hampshire	14	10	D	Toss-Up	237	158	D	Likely Democratic
** New Jersey	23	17	D	No election	48	32	D	No election
New Mexico	24	18	D	Safely Democratic	42	28	D	Safely Democratic
New York	30	32	R	Toss-Up	108	42	D	Safely Democratic
North Carolina	31	19	D	Likely Democratic	68	52	D	Likely Democratic
North Dakota	21	26	R	Leaning Republican	33	61	R	Safely Republican
Ohio	12	21	R	Likely Republican	46	53	R	Leaning Republican
Oklahoma	24	24	Tie	Leaning Republican	44	57	R	Likely Republican
Oregon	18	10	D	Safely Democratic	31	29	D	Likely Democratic
Pennsylvania	21	29	R	Safely Republican	102	101	D****	Toss-Up
Rhode Island	33	5	D	Safely Democratic	61	13	D	Safely Democratic
South Carolina	19	27	R	Safely Republican	51	73	R	Safely Republican
South Dakota	15	20	R	Likely Republican	20	50	R	Safely Republican
Tennessee	16	16	Tie	Toss-Up	53	46	D	Leaning Democratic
Texas	11	20	R	Safely Republican	71	79	R	Leaning Republican
Utah	8	21	R	Safely Republican	20	55	R	Safely Republican
Vermont	23	7	D	Safely Democratic	93	49	D	Safely Democratic

just two seats would enable Republicans to take over. The Democrats will try to flip narrowly divided GOP chambers in blue states, such as the Delaware House, and swing states, such as the Nevada Senate and the Ohio House.

Perhaps the most unexpected chambers in play for the fall are two held by the GOP in staunchly Republican states: the Alaska Senate and the North Dakota Senate.

In Alaska, a corruption scandal has soured voters on the reigning generation of Republican politicians. In the Senate, the GOP nominally holds an 11-9 lead, but the Democrats and some Republicans already hold functional control of the chamber. "Out There" rates it as a Toss-Up.

In North Dakota, the Democrats hope to follow up on their six-seat Senate gain in 2006 with another three seats in 2008, which would be enough to take control of the chamber. Democrats are hopeful, not only because of the national mood, but also because of fallout from a workers compensation ballot measure that they believe helps their cause. "Out There" currently rates the chamber as leaning Republican.

As with the presidential race, the Mountain West should be a key battleground this fall. Montana's two chambers, both narrowly divided for several

** Virginia	21	19	D	No election	45	53	R	No election
Washington state	32	17	D	Safely Democratic	63	35	D	Safely Democratic
West Virginia	23	11	D	Safely Democratic	72	28	D	Safely Democratic
Wisconsin	18	15	D	Leaning Democratic	47	52	R	Leaning Republican
Wyoming	7	23	R	Safely Republican	17	43	R	Safely Republican

*States with only one chamber being contested this fall.
**States with no legislative races this fall.
***In Alaska, a coalition of Democrats and Republicans actually controls the chamber despite the GOP lead in seats.
****In Pennsylvania, the speaker is a moderate Republican elevated by the Democrats, with functional control reserved for the Democrats.

Sources: Legislative makeup from NCSL; election projections by Louis Jacobson, *Stateline.org*

cycles running, will continue to be hotly contested. Elsewhere, Democrats will seek to maintain control of both chambers in Colorado, and will try to make headway in Arizona. Colorado seems a likelier bet for now, since Democrats will be facing home-stater U.S. Sen. John McCain on the top of the Arizona GOP ticket.

Nationally, it is possible that the Democrats could make significant gains once again, but history is against them. Some of the biggest landslides in voting for the legislatures have come during midterm elections — 1958, 1966, 1974, 1994 and 2006 among them — and not presidential years. This pattern isn't set in stone, but early analysis by "Out There" sees only modest legislative gains this cycle — maybe even a wash — meaning that Democratic strength in the legislatures looks likely to last for at least another cycle.

Comment on this story in the space below by registering with Stateline.org.

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COMMENTS (1)

Add a comment

North Dakota Senate
By Tracy Potter on Mar 20, 2008 8:01:51 PM

The Democratic-NPL won 14 of 24 Senate races in 2006, losing one incumbent and taking away seven GOP seats. The seven seats the Dem-NPL defends in 2008 are largely safe, having withstood the Bush 2004 landslide in North Dakota. Only one Dem-NPL incumbent has resigned and it's in a very Democratic district where a popular former Dem-NPL Senator is running to replace the incumbent. The GOP has several resignations in the 16 districts it has to defend, and several of the 16 districts tended Democrat in the last election.

If it were legal, I'd place a bet against the prediction that the Senate leans Republican. We Democrats certainly know how to lose elections, but the odds are all in favor of a Democratic-NPL majority in the Senate in 2009.

Another trend toward the Democrats is a surprising survey showing Obama leading McCain 46-42 in North Dakota. Obama has scheduled an appearance in the state for April 4. Even if he doesn't carry the state, a strong showing in the presidential race has historically proven to have a strong impact on legislative races.

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TOP STORY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2008

Legislative races tilting Dems' way in '08

By Louis Jacobson, Stateline.org Columnist

The nation's worsening economic picture and Democrat Barack Obama's widening lead in the presidential race appear to be boosting the prospects for Democrats to expand their lead in the state legislatures.

Democrats today hold a 27-20 lead in control of state Senates and a 30-19 lead in state Houses. Two state Senates are tied.

With 20 days until Election Day, "Out There" rates 25 chambers as in play – about 30 percent of the 84 legislative bodies electing members this fall in 43 states. Of those, 11 chambers are rated Toss-Ups, seven with Republican and four with Democratic majorities. (Nebraska also is holding legislative elections, but its unicameral legislature is nonpartisan.)

Using a middle-of-the road scenario, if the parties were to split the Toss-Up chambers on Nov. 4 and hold onto those "leaning" their way, the Democrats stand to net a gain of perhaps one from among the 25 chambers. Even that would not be an insignificant achievement, considering how hard it is to follow up on their big gains in 2004 and 2006 when they netted six and then eight legislative chambers. Plus, the single biggest prize of the year could be the New York Senate, growingly within reach for Democrats.

If there is a Democratic wave on Election Day, the party could be looking at a net gain of four chambers, perhaps even more. Still, a massive shift may not be in the cards, given how much low-hanging fruit the Democrats grabbed in 2006.

LOUIS JACOBSON

Louis Jacobson is the editor of *CongressNow*, an online publication launched in 2007 that covers legislation and policy in Congress and is

Since "Out There" last handicapped legislatures in the 50 states on March 20, the ratings for 13 chambers have shifted, 10 moving in the Democrats' direction and only three moving toward the Republicans. The trend is a clear sign of the darkened outlook for Republicans running for office at any level this year, perhaps even for presidential

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affiliated with *Roll Call* newspaper in Washington, D.C. Jacobson originated the "Out There" column in 2004 as a feature for *Roll Call*, where he served as deputy editor. Earlier, Jacobson spent 11 years with *National Journal* covering lobbying, politics and policy, and served as a contributing writer for two of its affiliates, *CongressDaily* and *Government Executive*. He also was a contributing writer to The *Almanac of American Politics* and has done political handicapping of state legislatures for both *The Rothenberg Political Report* and *The Cook Political Report*.

candidate John McCain.

"The hill is definitely getting steeper for McCain and the GOP, and that's trickling down to the legislative level," said Tim Storey, an elections specialist at the National Conference of State Legislatures. "I thought (Republican vice-presidential nominee) Sarah Palin might be the X factor for the Republicans, but I don't see a big impact on the legislative races."

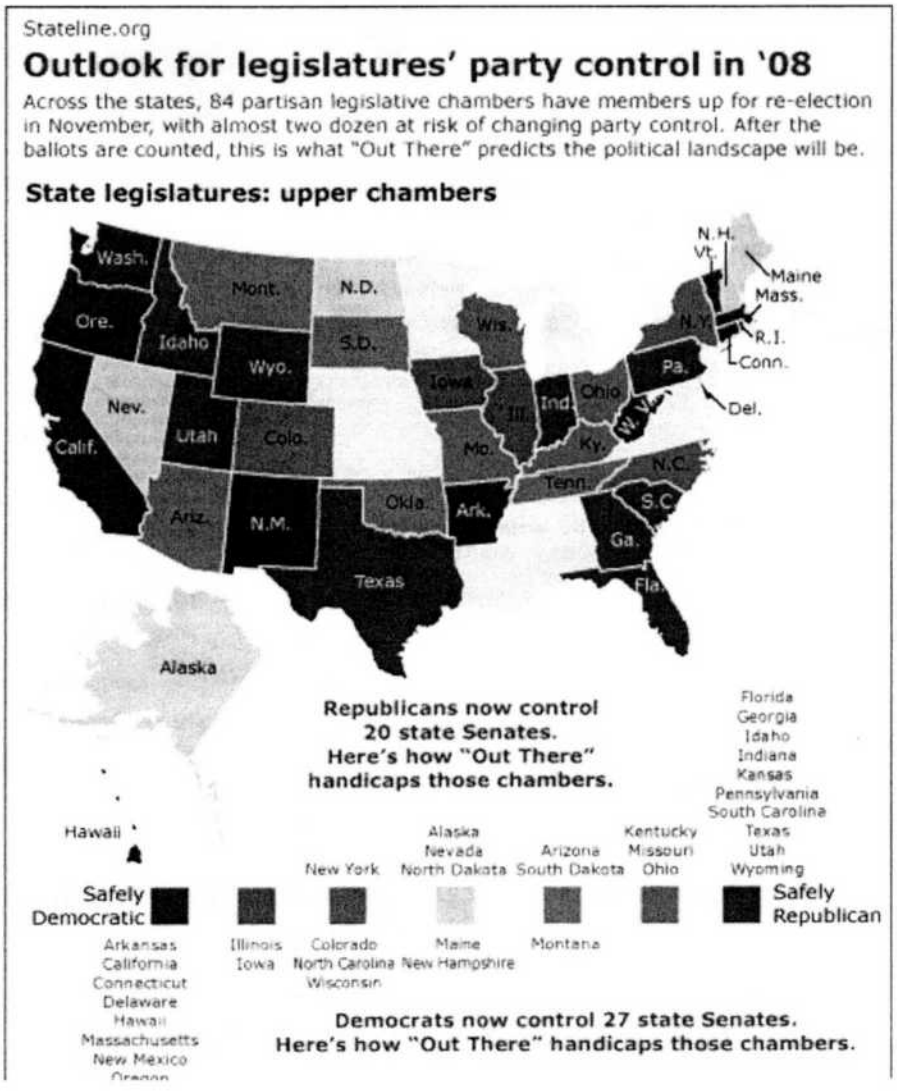
Historically, legislative pickups tend to coincide with what's happening at the top of the ticket: In 11 of the past 17 presidential elections, the winning party also gained legislative seats, according to NCSL.

Predictions of which party will win legislative control in 2008 are based on interviews with several dozen national and state-based experts. Each chamber was determined to be Safe Democratic, Likely Democratic, Lean Democratic, Toss-Up, Lean Republican, Likely Republican or Safe Republican.

The chambers that moved toward the Democrats in recent months are a mixed bunch. The Republican-held New York Senate and Delaware House had been rated as Toss-Ups seven months ago but now look more likely to shift to Democratic control amid a general cratering of support for Republican candidates in the northeastern U.S.

Out west, Obama's unexpected strength has helped push the Arizona House, the Nevada Senate and the North Dakota Senate to Toss-Up from Lean Republican, while the South Dakota Senate has shifted to Lean Republican from Likely Republican.

In the Midwest, the



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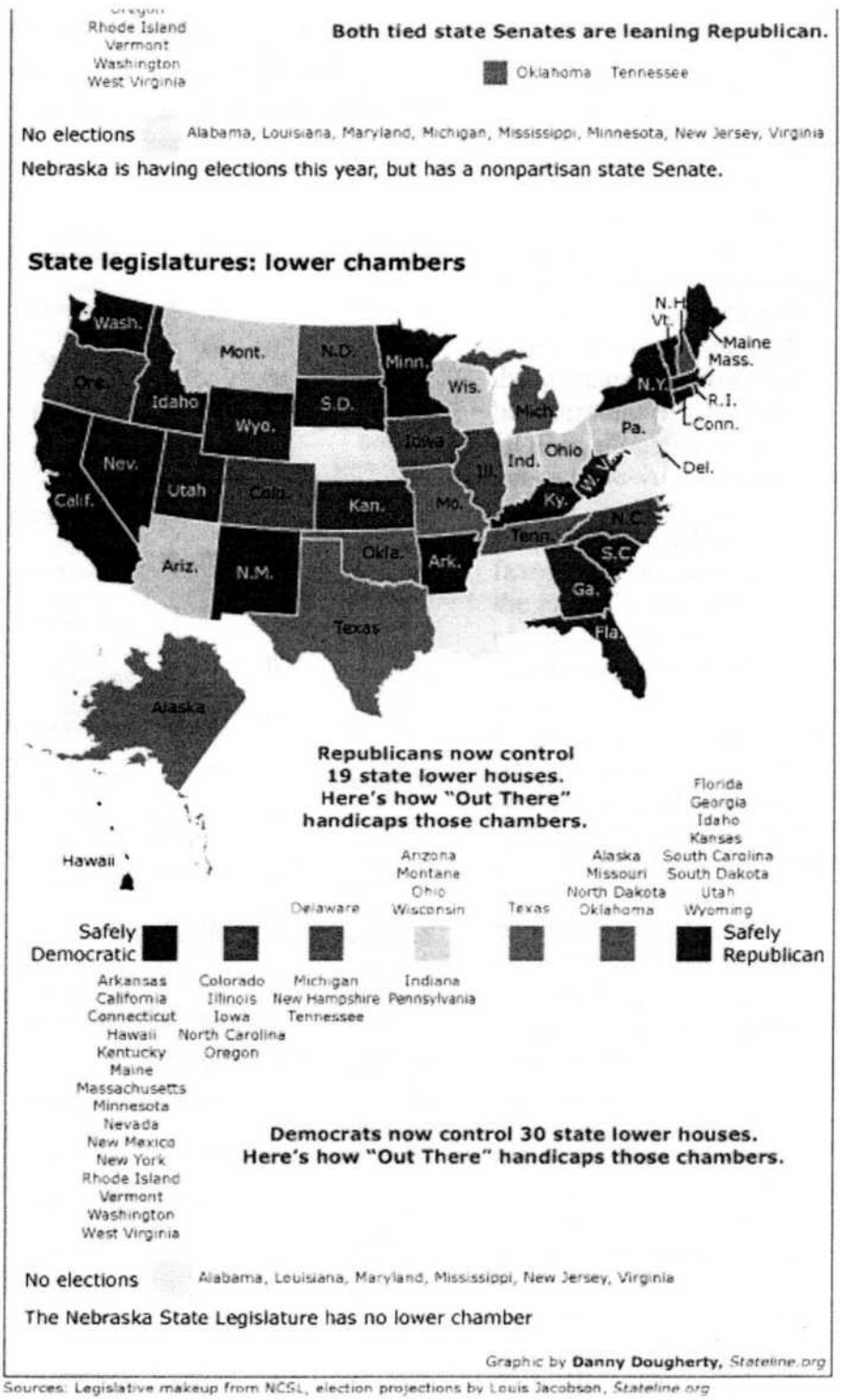
Democrats are better-positioned to score gains in two hotly contested presidential battleground states. The Ohio House and the Wisconsin Assembly both have shifted to Toss-Up from Lean Republican.

In each of these cases, the GOP is at risk of losing control of a chamber. By contrast, only three chambers have moved in the Republicans' direction in recent months.

They are the New Hampshire House, where the need to re-elect a massive number of first-term legislators is posing a challenge to leaders of the Democratic majority; the North Carolina Senate, where surprise gubernatorial frontrunner Pat McCrory (R) may be able to carry a few Senate hopefuls on his coattails; and the tied Tennessee Senate, where Republicans are forecasting gains in rural areas in a state where Obama is not expected to have much impact down the ballot.



Sources: Legislative makeup from NCSL, election projections by Louis Jacobson, *Stateline.org*

Probably the most unusual chamber this cycle is Alaska. Against the backdrop of the corruption trial of U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens (R) and the energizing, but polarizing, vice-presidential bid by Gov. Sarah Palin (R), the narrowly divided state Senate will be up for grabs. But the factor to watch is how the parties caucus after the election: The chamber is currently led by a coalition of Democrats and Republicans, with another faction of Republicans in the minority. Another coalition deal looks quite possible for 2009.

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LEGISLATURES IN 2008

	Senate				House			
State	D	R	Control	'08 Projection	D	R	Control	'08 Projection
** Alabama	23	12	D	No election	62	43	D	No election
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California	25	15	D	Safely Democratic	47	32	D	Safely Democratic
Colorado	20	15	D	Leaning Democratic	40	25	D	Likely Democratic
Connecticut	24	12	D	Safely Democratic	107	44	D	Safely Democratic
Delaware	13	8	D	Safely Democratic	19	22	R	Leaning Democratic
Florida	14	26	R	Safely Republican	42	78	R	Safely Republican
Georgia	22	34	R	Safely Republican	73	107	R	Safely Republican
Hawaii	21	4	D	Safely Democratic	44	7	D	Safely Democratic
Idaho	7	28	R	Safely Republican	19	51	R	Safely Republican
Illinois	37	22	D	Likely Democratic	67	51	D	Likely Democratic
Indiana	17	33	R	Safely Republican	51	49	D	Toss-Up
Iowa	30	20	D	Likely Democratic	53	47	D	Likely Democratic
Kansas	10	30	R	Safely Republican	47	78	R	Safely Republican
Kentucky	15	22	R	Likely Republican	63	37	D	Safely Democratic
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Maine	18	17	D	Toss-Up	90	59	D	Safely Democratic
** Maryland	33	14	D	No election	104	37	D	No election
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Montana	26	24	D	Leaning Republican	49	50	R	Toss-Up
Nebraska	Nebraska has a unicameral, nonpartisan legislature							
Nevada	10	11	R	Toss-Up	27	15	D	Safely Democratic
New Hampshire	14	10	D	Toss-Up	237	158	D	Leaning Democratic
** New Jersey	23	17	D	No election	48	32	D	No election
New Mexico	24	18	D	Safely Democratic	42	28	D	Safely Democratic

Here and there, the GOP has a few bright spots. In four Democratic-held chambers – the Maine Senate, the New Hampshire Senate, the Indiana House and the Pennsylvania House – the Republicans would need to net only a couple seats to take control, and each of those states is a presidential battleground in which the GOP is allocating major get-out-the-vote resources.

Meanwhile, the GOP is favored to take control of the nation's two tied chambers, the Tennessee Senate and the Oklahoma Senate, as well as the Democratic-held Montana Senate. And a number of legislative chambers appear to be in firm GOP control despite those states being presidential battlegrounds. These include both chambers in Florida, Georgia and Missouri, plus one chamber each in Indiana and Pennsylvania.

However, the rest of the Democratic-held chambers that are rated as in play – the Senates in Colorado, North Carolina and Wisconsin, and the lower chambers in Michigan, New Hampshire and Tennessee – look like longer shots for the GOP. McCain already has pulled out of Michigan, for instance.

If the GOP does lose a number of chambers in

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New York	30	32	R	Leaning Democratic	108	42	D	Safely Democratic
North Carolina	31	19	D	Leaning Democratic	68	52	D	Likely Democratic
North Dakota	21	26	R	Toss-Up	33	61	R	Likely Republican
Ohio	12	21	R	Likely Republican	46	53	R	Leaning Republican
Oklahoma	24	24	Tie	Leaning Republican	44	57	R	Likely Republican
Oregon	18	10	D	Safely Democratic	31	29	D	Toss-Up
Pennsylvania	21	29	R	Safely Republican	102	101	D****	Toss-Up
Rhode Island	33	5	D	Safely Democratic	61	13	D	Safely Democratic
South Carolina	19	27	R	Safely Republican	51	73	R	Safely Republican
South Dakota	15	20	R	Leaning Republican	20	50	R	Safely Republican
Tennessee	16	16	Tie	Leaning Republican	53	46	D	Leaning Democratic
Texas	11	20	R	Safely Republican	71	79	R	Leaning Republican
Utah	8	21	R	Safely Republican	20	55	R	Safely Republican
Vermont	23	7	D	Safely Democratic	93	49	D	Safely Democratic
** **Virginia**	21	19	D	No election	45	53	R	No election
Washington state	32	17	D	Safely Democratic	63	35	D	Safely Democratic
West Virginia	23	11	D	Safely Democratic	72	28	D	Safely Democratic
Wisconsin	18	15	D	Leaning Democratic	47	52	R	Toss-Up
Wyoming	7	23	R	Safely Republican	17	43	R	Safely Republican

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****In Pennsylvania, the speaker is a moderate Republican elevated by the Democrats, with functional control reserved for the Democrats.

Sources: Legislative makeup from NCSL; election projections by Louis Jacobson, *Stateline.org*

2008, Republicans can take a small bit of solace that 2010 will present them with a wide range of opportunities for rebounding. And if they do, it couldn't come at a better time: That will be the last election before congressional and legislative lines are redrawn following the 2010 census.

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F 1

State Senate Race RatingsSwitch to State House

Posted By Louis Jacobson | August 5, 2010

Even though we're still months away from the election, this year's race to control the nation's legislatures appears likely to become an especially volatile one. Just under one-third of the state legislative chambers that are up this fall are considered "in play" -- that is, rated tossup, lean Democratic or lean Republican. That rate is several percentage points higher than any rating in this handicapping series going back to the fall of 2002, which also topped out at 31 percent. And in most recent cycles, the number of competitive chambers has risen as Election Day nears, putting 2010 on a course to be the most turbulent of the past decade. This map and its ratings will be updated again this fall, with late-breaking updates added through Election Day. **Click on a state below to get more details on any of the 50 state legislatures, including current control of the state Senate and state House, race predictions, if applicable, and an assessment of each state race.**

Safe Democratic

- Arkansas
- California
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Hawaii
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Rhode Island
- Vermont
- West Virginia

Likely Democratic

- Illinois
- Minnesota
- Oregon
- Washington

Lean Democratic

- Colorado
- Iowa
- Maine
- Nevada
- North Carolina

Tossup

F 2

- Alabama
- Alaska
- New Hampshire
- New York
- Wisconsin

Lean Republican

- Montana
- Tennessee

Likely Republican

- Arizona
- Florida
- Kentucky
- Michigan

Safe Republican

- Georgia
- Idaho
- Indiana
- Missouri
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Pennsylvania
- South Dakota
- Texas
- Utah
- Wyoming

Not Rated*

- Kansas
- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- Nebraska
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- South Carolina
- Virginia

*Not rated because chamber has no races this fall, or because the chamber is officially nonpartisan.

F
3

- **ALABAMA**
  - Tossup
  - Dems20
  - Reps15
  - Tossup
  - Dems60
  - Reps45

  In this Deep South state, the GOP reigns supreme in national contests, and the ancestrally Democratic legislature is under greater pressure than ever in 2010. Both chambers have been in Democratic hands for more than a century but are vulnerable to a party switch this year. A number of Democratic retirements in both the House and Senate will aid the GOP's chances, as will ongoing fallout from corruption investigations. Already, some recent special elections have gone the Republicans' way. Even if the GOP doesn't get enough seats on Election Day, they might have enough momentum to convince a few conservative Democrats to switch parties, allowing them to shift control.

- **ALASKA**
  - Tossup
  - Dems10
  - Reps10
  - Lean R
  - Dems18
  - Reps22

  In recent years, the Alaska legislature has been fractured in unusual ways, with party label not always determining who exercises majority power in a chamber. Though the state is reliably Republican in national races, the legislative races in Alaska are more driven by local issues and personal factors. With narrow margins in both chambers and malleable party ties, both the House and Senate are in play (tossup for the Senate and lean Republican for the House) but with an expectation that both assessments could jump around a bit before Election Day.

- **ARIZONA**
  - Likely R
  - Dems12
  - Reps18
  - Likely R
  - Dems25
  - Reps35

  With Arizona in the national spotlight for its polarizing new law that cracks down on illegal immigration, the state's politics are volatile. Polling in the state shows that the law is popular, so on the surface, the GOP shouldn't be concerned about keeping its majorities in both chambers. But even Republicans acknowledge some

worry. The splits in the national GOP between a restive Tea Party base and the party establishment are even rawer here than in other states, and the targeting of illegal immigration could energize Hispanics to vote in unusually large numbers for a midterm election. The GOP certainly starts with an edge, but don't rule out a tightening as Election Day approaches.

- **ARKANSAS**
  - Safe D
  - Dems27
  - Reps8
  - Safe D
  - Dems72
  - Reps28

Though Arkansas has moved aggressively in the GOP's direction in national races, its legislative chambers are both solidly Democratic. The GOP is likely to pick up some seats in both chambers, but not enough to seriously threaten the Democrats' hold in either body.

- **CALIFORNIA**
  - Safe D
  - Dems25
  - Reps14
  - Safe D
  - Dems49
  - Reps29

Though this year's gubernatorial and U.S. Senate races in California are expected to be especially competitive by recent standards, no one expects the Republicans to take over either chamber of the legislature. The main question is whether the Democrats can move closer to the required two-thirds majority in each chamber to avoid paralysis on tax and budget issues. The early answer is no, thanks to generalized unease over the state's perilous fiscal situation (which would argue against gains for the incumbent legislative majority) and the expected Republican edge nationally in the 2010 midterms.

- **COLORADO**
  - Lean D
  - Dems21
  - Reps14
  - Lean D
  - Dems37
  - Reps27

Once the shining example of Democratic gains in the West, Colorado is poised to slip away from the Democrats. Gov. Bill Ritter is leaving after just one term; the

party must get through both a competitive primary and a competitive general election in order to hold a shaky U.S. Senate seat; and both chambers of the legislature are in play. For now, the Democrats have a slight edge, thanks to the fact that Republicans will have to oust incumbents who have worked their districts hard. But the national climate, combined with the fact that the Democrats have unified control of state government, makes this a prime pickup opportunity for the GOP.

- **CONNECTICUT**
  - Safe D
  - Dems24
  - Reps12
  - Safe D
  - Dems114
  - Reps36

The Republicans are showing some signs of life on the recruiting front, but the margins are too big in both chambers for the GOP to do much more than nibble away at Democratic majorities.

- **DELAWARE**
  - Safe D
  - Dems15
  - Reps6
  - Lean D
  - Dems24
  - Reps17

The Delaware Senate should remain in Democratic hands, as it has been for years. The Delaware House -- a Democratic pickup two years ago, ending a long GOP reign -- is up for grabs. The likelihood that popular GOP Rep. Mike Castle will win an open Senate seat should help Republicans down-ballot, but Democrats aren't sitting still -- they're playing offense against GOP incumbents in a number of downstate seats. Ultimately, shoe-leather campaigning makes a big difference in a small state like Delaware. For now, the House leans Democratic, but it could shift to tossup before Election Day.

- **FLORIDA**
  - Likely R
  - Dems14
  - Reps26
  - Likely R
  - Dems43
  - Reps76

With a marquee U.S. Senate race, a competitive gubernatorial race and several hot U.S. House contests, the battle for the legislature is unlikely to generate much attention from the media, activists or donors. On paper, the GOP's wide margins in both chambers should suggest an easy path to retaining power, but the party will have to grapple with fallout from term limits and, more importantly, the still-simmering scandal over financial mismanagement of the state Republican Party, which could prompt voter discomfort with the entrenched GOP majority in Tallahassee. For now, the Republicans seem too well-ensconced to lose their majority in the legislature, but the Sunshine State is politically volatile these days, making the fate of the legislature worth watching despite the GOP's healthy margins.

- **GEORGIA**
  - Safe R
  - Dems21
  - Reps35
  - Safe R
  - Dems74
  - Reps105

The shift from ancestral Democratic control to a new Republican majority in Georgia is now complete. Expect the GOP to hold on to both chambers of the legislature with ease.

- **HAWAII**
  - Safe D
  - Dems23
  - Reps2
  - Safe D
  - Dems45
  - Reps6

In Hawaii, Democrats here have some of their largest legislative majorities of any state. With such a stranglehold, Democratic fracturing is a problem; an unresolved intra-party split between two Democrats cost the party a seat in the U.S. House. But all sides agree that there is zero chance that the GOP will take over either chamber even in this Republican-trending year.

- **IDAHO**
  - Safe R
  - Dems7
  - Reps28
  - Safe R
  - Dems18
  - Reps52

While the GOP in Idaho (and elsewhere) faces internal pressures between the establishment and Tea Partiers, the Democrats are in no position to take advantage. The GOP is certain to maintain its large majorities here.

- **ILLINOIS**
  - Likely D
  - Dems37
  - Reps22
  - Likely D
  - Dems70
  - Reps48

The Democrats ought to be in worse shape than they are in Illinois, considering the black eye the party has gotten from the saga of ousted Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich (now on trial for corruption-related charges) as well as the failed-bank travails of the party's U.S. Senate nominee, Alexi Giannoulias. But the GOP has longstanding corruption baggage of its own, and the electorate in the populous Chicago area is sufficiently moderate-to-liberal to keep the Democrats in the driver's seat. It's possible that eight years of unified Democratic control could grate on voters and push them to vote Republican this fall, but for now anyway, the Democratic margins in the legislature seem big enough to withstand the storm.

- **INDIANA**
  - Safe R
  - Dems17
  - Reps33
  - Lean R
  - Dems52
  - Reps48

The GOP should easily hold on to the state Senate and make a serious play for the always-close state House, which is currently controlled -- narrowly -- by the Democrats. An aggressive GOP push, backed by popular Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels, has House Democrats on the defensive, suggesting a Republican turnover even at this early point in the campaign year.

- **IOWA**
  - Lean D
  - Dems32
  - Reps18
  - Tossup
  - Dems56
  - Reps44

Iowa, the state that arguably catapulted Barack Obama to the presidency, isn't as warm toward the Democrats as it was two years ago. Democratic Gov. Chet

F 8

Culver is in a deep hole against GOP gubernatorial nominee Terry Branstad, a former governor, and Culver's travails have boosted GOP hopes of winning back one or both of the state's legislative chambers. The state House is a tossup and the state Senate leans Democratic, but these ratings could bounce around in the coming months.

- **KANSAS**
  - NR
  - Dems9
  - Reps31
  - Safe R
  - Dems49
  - Reps76

Only the state House is up this year. On paper, the GOP has a large margin in the House and should keep or increase it, but the state Republican Party's long-running split between moderates and conservatives means that what's on paper is not always reflective of the real power dynamic. There is talk of a coalition between Democrats and moderate Republicans next year -- the kind that worked to elect Democrat Kathleen Sebelius twice as governor -- but at this point that result is speculative at best. And the GOP gubernatorial candidate, Sen. Sam Brownback, is cruising to an easy victory that should ameliorate differences between the two wings of the state party. For now, let's stick with the official label and call the chamber safe Republican.

- **KENTUCKY**
  - Likely R
  - Dems17
  - Reps20
  - Likely D
  - Dems64
  - Reps35

The parties each control one chamber in Kentucky – Republicans the Senate and Democrats the House – and at the end of the day, those majorities are likely to hold. But the hot Senate race involving Tea Party-backed insurgent Ron Paul could help shake up the political landscape in unexpected ways. Keep this one on the radar.

- **LOUISIANA**
  - NR
  - Dems23
  - Reps16
  - NR
  - Dems52
  - Reps50

F
9

Louisiana does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

- **MAINE**
  - Lean D
  - Dems20
  - Reps15
  - Safe D
  - Dems95
  - Reps55

The nearly 2-to-1 Democratic margin in the state House should hold even in a tough midterm cycle for the party. But the state Senate, which is much closer and which has often been competitive in past cycles, is in play once again. Maine's celebrated independent streak and its public-financing law could meld with anti-incumbent sentiments to produce a volatile fight for control. It rates leans Democratic for now, but that could change.

- **MARYLAND**
  - Safe D
  - Dems33
  - Reps14
  - Safe D
  - Dems104
  - Reps36

The anti-incumbent and anti-Democratic mood elsewhere seems unlikely to take hold in solidly Democratic Maryland. The party's strong hold on both chambers should continue uninterrupted even if former GOP Gov. Bob Ehrlich makes a strong run at his successor, Democrat Martin O'Malley.

- **MASSACHUSETTS**
  - Safe D
  - Dems34
  - Reps6
  - Safe D
  - Dems144
  - Reps16

Despite a difficult reelection bid for first-term Democratic Gov. Deval Patrick -- and the GOP victory in the special election to fill the seat of the late U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy – the Democrats' margins in the legislature are so massive that it's all but mathematically impossible for them to take over in 2010, no matter how favorable the political environment. While the GOP could pick up a few seats, both chambers are undoubtedly Safe Democratic.

- **MICHIGAN**

- Likely R
- Dems16
- Reps22
- Lean D
- Dems66
- Reps43

The environment in Michigan couldn't be worse for the Democrats, with crushing economic hardship and two terms of Democratic gubernatorial control. The Democrats are poised to lose the open-seat governorship, and while their chances of holding the state House are stronger, they could lose control of that chamber too. The Senate should easily stay in Republican hands, maybe even adding a few seats to the GOP column.

- **MINNESOTA**
  - Likely D
  - Dems46
  - Reps21
  - Lean D
  - Dems87
  - Reps47

The Democrats are still favored to hold both chambers in Minnesota, but amid much angst over the state's fiscal situation, a shift of control – especially in the House – isn't out of the question.

- **MISSISSIPPI**
  - NR
  - Dems27
  - Reps25
  - NR
  - Dems72
  - Reps50

Mississippi does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

- **MISSOURI**
  - Safe R
  - Dems11
  - Reps23
  - Safe R
  - Dems73
  - Reps89

F
11

Though the Show-Me state is often competitive in national races, the GOP seems to be in good shape in both chambers of the state legislatures. A favorable national mood may even enable the party to expand its edge.

- **MONTANA**
  - Lean R
  - Dems23
  - Reps27
  - Tossup
  - Dems50
  - Reps50

Both chambers in Big Sky country have been narrowly divided in recent years, and the outlook is for close margins once again. The GOP is favored to maintain its narrow edge in the state Senate, while the tied House is once again anybody's guess. More Republican House seats than Democratic seats are in swing districts, but to take over, the Democrats would also have to hold the seats they have, and that's no foregone conclusion in this political environment. An unresolved question is how hard Democratic Gov. Brian Schweitzer campaigns for his fellow Democrats in the legislature.

- **NEBRASKA**
  - NR
  - Dems-
  - Reps-
  - NR
  - Dems-
  - Reps-

Nebraska's unicameral legislature is nonpartisan, so it is not rated.

- **NEVADA**
  - Lean D
  - Dems12
  - Reps9
  - Likely D
  - Dems28
  - Reps14

Nevada's a hot political state this year, with hard-fought contests for governor and U.S. Senate. After going for Obama in 2008, the pendulum has swung toward the GOP in 2010, but it's unclear whether that shift will be enough to change control of the legislature. With a 2-to-1 Democratic margin, the Assembly looks fairly solid for the Democrats, though the GOP could gain enough seats to end the Democrats' veto-override majority. Meanwhile, in the Senate, the Republicans could take over with a net gain of just three seats, but the seat-by-seat math

F
12

suggests that those GOP gains are not a foregone conclusion, even in this political environment. For now, give the Democratic majority a slight edge in the state Senate, but that's subject to change.

- **NEW HAMPSHIRE**
  - Tossup
  - Dems14
  - Reps10
  - Tossup
  - Dems222
  - Reps176

The Granite State, the last in the northeast to lose its Republican sheen during the past decade, looks more promising for the GOP in 2010, amid fatigue with unified Democratic control and a budget mess. Both chambers of the legislature are tossups, both the narrowly divided Senate and the enormous state House, where Democrats demonstrated in 2006 that a party can flip many seats in a single election. In the House, the Republicans will also likely benefit from the way party slates are put together.

- **NEW JERSEY**
  - NR
  - Dems23
  - Reps17
  - NR
  - Dems47
  - Reps33

New Jersey does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

- **NEW MEXICO**
  - NR
  - Dems27
  - Reps15
  - Likely D
  - Dems45
  - Reps25

This year's environment in New Mexico isn't great for the Democrats, who have had unified control for the past eight years, but margins in the state House – the only chamber up this year – are likely too big for the Republicans to do more than make a dent in the Democratic majority.

- **NEW YORK**
  - Tossup
  - Dems32

- Reps30
- Safe D
- Dems107
- Reps42

In most places, the majority party controlling a state Senate that became a national laughingstock would be on its way out. But despite a cycle of party switches, lockouts, fiscal problems, a dysfunctional relationship with the governor and an excess of scandal-tarred figures, the slim Democratic majority is getting away with a designation of tossup, thanks to the state's general Democratic lean, a strong candidate for governor (Andrew Cuomo) and missed Republican opportunities. The Democratic-dominated Assembly will remain safely Democratic.

- **NORTH CAROLINA**
  - Lean D
  - Dems30
  - Reps20
  - Lean D
  - Dems68
  - Reps52

In this purple-to-red Southern state where the Democrats control the governorship and both chambers of the legislature, Democrats are arguably overrepresented in state government. So Republicans can expect gains in 2010, especially in the state Senate, where Democratic turnover is high. Both chambers lean Democratic, with the Senate more likely to flip, but these ratings could well shift in the GOP's direction by fall.

- **NORTH DAKOTA**
  - Safe R
  - Dems21
  - Reps26
  - Safe R
  - Dems36
  - Reps58

North Dakota has weathered the Great Recession better than most states, so the anti-incumbent mood isn't pronounced here, at least on the state level. That's good news for the Republicans, who can feel confident that they'll keep their hold on both chambers – even the fairly closely divided state Senate, which was on the Democrats' watch list just two years ago.

- **OHIO**
  - Safe R
  - Dems12

- Reps21
- Tossup
- Dems53
- Reps46

Recession-battered Ohio is another state with big, competitive contests this year -- Democratic Gov. Ted Strickland is seeking a second term, and the parties are battling over an open U.S. Senate seat. The state Senate is safely in GOP hands, but the victor of the battle for the state House -- which the Democrats seized just two years ago by a narrow margin -- is anybody's guess. In contrast to Democratic gubernatorial candidates elsewhere, Strickland has managed to remain competitve in the polls, but it's an open question whether he'll have enough coattails to keep the House in Democratic hands. For now, call the House a tossup.

- **OKLAHOMA**
  - Safe R
  - Dems22
  - Reps26
  - Safe R
  - Dems40
  - Reps61

Both chambers in Oklahoma shifted from Democratic to Republican during the past decade, and in this staunchly conservative state, they're not going back anytime soon. Both chambers will remain safely Republican.

- **OREGON**
  - Likely D
  - Dems18
  - Reps12
  - Likely D
  - Dems36
  - Reps24

Oregon Republicans are excited about the possibility that Chris Dudley, an ex-Portland Trailblazer with a moderate and outsider profile, could give the GOP their first taste of the governorship in almost three decades. But even if Dudley pulls off that feat, a GOP takeover of either chamber in generally blue Oregon is considered a much longer shot. That said, Republican gains in one or both chambers are quite possible, and that could be enough to snatch away the Democrats' 60 percent supermajority, which is required to raise taxes.

- **PENNSYLVANIA**
  - Safe R
  - Dems20
  - Reps30

- Tossup
- Dems103
- Reps97

The state Senate is solidly Republican, but the Democratic majority in the state House is as fragile as they get. Republican Tom Corbett leads Democrat Dan Onorato in all polls, conforming to an eight-years-and-out pattern for party control of the governorship that has prevailed since World War II. Add in the lingering effects of the "Bonusgate" scandal (which hit Democrats harder) and the impending exit of Democratic Gov. Ed Rendell from the stage (which removes a big Democratic asset in southeastern Pennsylvania) and all signs point to a severely stressed Democratic hold on the House. Rate the chamber a tossup for now, but that could easily switch to lean Republican by our next rating.

- **RHODE ISLAND**
  - Safe D
  - Dems33
  - Reps4
  - Safe D
  - Dems69
  - Reps6

The margins in Rhode Island are tilted too heavily toward the Democrats to allow for anything other than marginal gains – if that -- for the GOP.

- **SOUTH CAROLINA**
  - NR
  - Dems19
  - Reps27
  - Safe R
  - Dems51
  - Reps73

Not even the continuing media circus involving sex scandals and intemperate comments by Palmetto State politicians is shaking the Republican hold on the legislature. Only the state House is up this fall, but continued problems in recruiting Democratic candidates has robbed the party of any serious chance it had of vying for control.

- **SOUTH DAKOTA**
  - Safe D
  - Dems14
  - Reps21
  - Safe RR
  - Dems24
  - Reps46

The Democrats made a play for the legislature in 2008, when Barack Obama was also chasing votes in South Dakota, but that's history now. If anything, the Democrats could lose seats in one or both chambers this fall.

- **TENNESSEE**
  - Lean R
  - Dems14
  - Reps19
  - Lean R
  - Dems48
  - Reps50

The Republicans are favored in both the Tennessee Senate, which they control outright, and the messy Tennessee House, where an independent, formerly Republican Speaker was elected with Democratic support. The Democrats have been fading in Tennessee, and the end of Democratic Gov. Phil Bredesen's two terms this year should only accelerate that trend. While Democrats aren't writing off either chamber yet, the GOP is poised to gain slightly in both.

- **TEXAS**
  - Safe R
  - Dems12
  - Reps19
  - Likely R
  - Dems73
  - Reps77

Texas Democrats probably won't fare as well as they did in 2008, when Obama energized rank-and-file members and the party came close to pulling even in the state House. The margin in that chamber remains close (it's somewhat wider in the state Senate) but the electoral mood in 2010 makes GOP gains likelier. A wild card is whether the controversy over Arizona-style immigration laws could energize Latino voters.

- **UTAH**
  - Safe R
  - Dems8
  - Reps21
  - Safe R
  - Dems22
  - Reps53

Few states are as solidly Republican as Utah, and despite fireworks between Tea Party activists and more establishment Republicans at state party nominating conventions, the Utah GOP has no fear of losing ground numerically in 2010.

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17

- **VERMONT**
  - Safe D
  - Dems22
  - Reps7
  - Safe D
  - Dems95
  - Reps48

While the GOP will have a credible shot at holding the governorship – and while third-party intrigue on the left always threatens to cause headaches for the state Democratic Party – there's wide agreement that the Democrats should remain in control of both chambers in Vermont.

- **VIRGINIA**
  - NR
  - Dems22
  - Reps18
  - NR
  - Dems39
  - Reps59

Virginia does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

- **WASHINGTON**
  - Likely D
  - Dems31
  - Reps18
  - Likely D
  - Dems62
  - Reps36

The national political climate gives Republicans some hope of gaining ground in generally blue Washington state, but it's premature at this point to call either chamber anything more than Likely Democratic.

- **WEST VIRGINIA**
  - Safe D
  - Dems26
  - Reps8
  - Safe D
  - Dems71
  - Reps29

West Virginia has moved towards the Republicans in recent national races, but Democrats in the legislature know how to frame themselves to win here. The GOP could pick up some seats, but the large Democratic margins should hold.

F
18

- **WISCONSIN**
  - Tossup
  - Dems18
  - Reps15
  - Tossup
  - Dems52
  - Reps46

The Democrats control both chambers of the legislature as well as the governorship -- a bad position to be in for 2010, especially for a state located in the swing industrial Midwest. Observers say there's a good chance that at least one chamber will flip to the GOP, with the Assembly being the early favorite to shift. For no, call both tossups.

- **WYOMING**
  - Safe R
  - Dems7
  - Reps23
  - Safe R
  - Dems19
  - Reps41

Staunchly Republican Wyoming will remain so in 2010. In fact, Democratic retirements could even allow the GOP to expand its margins.

E 1

Posted By Louis Jacobson | September 29, 2010

With just a month left until the 2010 elections, the forecast for Democrats is worsening. Since we last reported on the races, we've shifted 18 chambers from their July ratings -- all
in the Republicans' direction. This is terrible news for the Democratic Party. With just over
one-third of the state legislative chambers up this fall considered "in play" -- that is, rated tossup, lean Democratic or lean Republican -- the Democrats are on the verge of losing a net of four to 12 Senate chambers and six to 15 House chambers. In none of the previous five cycles was there ever this wide a difference in projected risk between the two parties. Click on a state below to get more details on any of the 50 state legislatures, including current control of the state Senate and state House, race predictions, if applicable, and an assessment of each state race. This map and its ratings will be updated again before the election.

Safe D

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-

See note on Nov. 1 2010 ratings

Arkansas
California
Connecticut
Delaware
Hawaii
Maryland
Massachusetts
Rhode Island
Vermont
West Virginia

Likely D

-
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Illinois

E 2

Minnesota

Lean D

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Colorado
Iowa
Nevada
Oregon
Washington

Tossup

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Alabama
Alaska
Maine
New Hampshire
New York
North Carolina
Wisconsin

Lean R

Likely R

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Kentucky
Michigan
Montana

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Tennessee

Safe R

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Arizona
Florida
Georgia
Idaho
Indiana
Missouri
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Pennsylvania
South Dakota
Texas
Utah
Wyoming

N/R*

• Kansas
• Louisiana
• Mississippi
• Nebraska
• New Jersey
• New Mexico
• South Carolina
• Virginia

*Not rated because chamber has no races this fall, or because the chamber is officially nonpartisan.

E
4

• ALABAMA
o Tossup
o Dems20
o Reps15
o Tossup
o Dems60
o Reps45
Here as elsewhere, the Republican trend has only intensified in recent months. Both chambers have been in Democratic hands for more than a century but are vulnerable to a party switch this year. Even if the GOP doesn't get enough seats on Election Day, the party
might have enough momentum to convince a few conservative Democrats to switch teams,
allowing a shift in control. For now, we're keeping both chambers as tossups, but if the GOP
lean strengthens even further, each chamber could shift to lean Republican before Election
Day.

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o

ALASKA
Tossup
Dems10
Reps10

o Lean R
o Dems18
o Reps22
The Alaska primary results in late August stunned the country, with a little-known, Tea Party-backed candidate, Joe Miller, defeating incumbent Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski.
It's a good example of how unpredictable Alaska politics can be. In recent years, legislative
races in Alaska have been driven by local issues and personal factors, with party label not always paramount. With narrow margins in both chambers and malleable party ties, both the House and Senate are in play -- tossup for the Senate and lean Republican for the House -- though we'll be watching to see whether either chamber merits a shift in the GOP's
direction.

• ARIZONA

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o Safe R
o Dems12
o Reps18
o Safe R
o Dems25
o Reps35

The Arizona primary in late August only strengthened what we already knew -- that the state is one of the epicenters of political anger, and Republican momentum. One would think that the state's polarizing immigration law might have energized Latino voters, but there's little sign that an organized backlash at the ballot box is emerging. (The longer-term
impact is harder to predict.) Observers in the state fault the Democratic Party for being leaderless and weak, which is a key reason we're shifting the ratings of both chambers from
likely Republican to safe Republican.

• ARKANSAS
o Safe D
o Dems27
o Reps8
o Safe D
o Dems72
o Reps28

Not much has changed in Arkansas since our last ranking. Though the state has moved aggressively in the GOP's direction in national races, its legislative chambers are both solidly
Democratic, and there's an overwhelmingly strong Democrat at the top of the ticket -- Gov.
Mike Beebe, who's seeking a second term with token opposition. The GOP is likely to pick up
some seats in both chambers due in part to national trends, but not enough to seriously threaten the Democrats' hold in either body.

• CALIFORNIA
o Safe D
o Dems25
o Reps14
o Safe D
o Dems49
o Reps29

Strong, deep-pocketed Republican candidates for governor (Meg Whitman) and senator (Carly Fiorina) are running strongly, providing hope for Republicans in down-ticket races.
The current numbers, combined with California's Democratic lean in recent history, make a

partisan flip in either chamber unlikely, though the GOP could narrow the margins in each
chamber.

• COLORADO
o Lean D
o Dems21
o Reps14
o Tossup
o Dems37
o Reps27
By all rights, the Democratic legislative majorities in Colorado should be highly endangered,
but the party has been granted a stay of execution thanks to the mess the GOP has made for itself in the gubernatorial race. Democrat John Hickenlooper, currently the mayor of Denver, is bucking voter fatigue with the majority party and has become the frontrunner to
succeed Gov. Bill Ritter. That's been made possible by the imploding candidacy of political
neophyte Dan Maes, a Tea Party activist who won the GOP nomination, and the third-party
candidacy of anti-immigration former Rep. Tom Tancredo. We're still shifting the House from lean Democratic to tossup, but the GOP crack-up is enough to keep the Senate in the
lean Democratic category. That said, the situation is volatile enough that our rating could change before Election Day.

• CONNECTICUT
o Safe D
o Dems24
o Reps12
o Safe D
o Dems114
o Reps36
It could be a relatively good year for Republicans in Connecticut, but the margins in the Legislature are too big for the GOP to do much more than nibble away at Democratic majorities.

• DELAWARE
o Safe D
o Dems15
o Reps6
o Lean D
o Dems24
o Reps17

E 7

Tea Party-backed candidate Christine O'Donnell's stunning upset of long-serving moderate
Republican Rep. Mike Castle in the GOP Senate primary on Sept. 14 demonstrates that even
low-key Delaware isn't immune from the volatility that's been typical elsewhere during the
2010 election cycle. The Delaware Senate should remain Democratic, but the Delaware House -- a Democratic pickup two years ago, ending a long GOP reign -- should be even more up for grabs than it was during our last look in July. For now we'll keep it as lean Democratic, but apparently, anything could happen before Election Day.

• FLORIDA
o Safe R
o Dems14
o Reps26
o Safe R
o Dems43
o Reps76
During the Aug. 25 Florida primary, GOP turnout exceeded Democratic turnout by 40 to 50
percent, suggesting that the state's two chambers are safer for the GOP than we had previously thought. While the Republicans' scandal-tinged leadership in the Legislature is

not exactly popular among voters, we think national and statewide trends give the Democrats little hope of gains this year, so we're shifting both chambers to safe Republican.

• GEORGIA
o Safe R
o Dems21
o Reps35
o Safe R
o Dems74
o Reps105
The shift from ancestral Democratic control to a new Republican majority in Georgia is now
complete. Expect the GOP to hold on to both chambers of the Legislature with ease.

• HAWAII
o Safe D
o Dems23
o Reps2
o Safe D
o Dems45
o Reps6

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8

In Hawaii, Democrats have some of the largest legislative majorities of any state. All sides
agree that there is zero chance that the GOP will take over either chamber, even in this Republican-trending year.

• IDAHO
o Safe R
o Dems7
o Reps28
o Safe R
o Dems18
o Reps52
While the GOP in Idaho (and elsewhere) faces internal pressures between the establishment
and Tea Partiers, the Democrats are in no position to take advantage. The GOP is certain to
maintain its large majorities here.

• ILLINOIS
o Likely D
o Dems37
o Reps22
o Lean D
o Dems70
o Reps48
In Illinois, the state budget is in a $13 billion hole, and the unfunded liability for public pensions is among the worst of any state in the country. Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn, who moved up when former Gov. Rod Blagojevich was impeached, is in such bad straits that he
trails Bill Brady, a Republican candidate whose staunchly conservative views on social and
fiscal issues would make him a longshot in Illinois in almost any other circumstance. Such
GOP advantages won't help much in the Senate, where the party would have to win virtually
all of the seats that are up this year to take control, but they're enough for us to shift the House from likely Democratic to lean Democratic. It's unwise to bet against long-serving Speaker Michael Madigan, but it would be even more unwise to reject the possibility that the GOP could ride voter irritation with Democratic control to a flip in the House.

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INDIANA

o Safe R
o Dems17

o Reps33
o Lean R
o Dems52
o Reps48
The GOP was already favored to flip the closely divided -- and for years, hotly contested --
Indiana House, and if anything, the likelihood has only grown since our first rating in July,
thanks to both national and state-based momentum. But we're not quite ready to declare the chamber no longer in play by shifting it from lean Republican to likely Republican. It could happen before Election Day, though.

• IOWA
o Lean D
o Dems32
o Reps18
o Tossup
o Dems56
o Reps44
Iowa's disaffection with Democrats remains strong, with Democratic Gov. Chet Culver deeply vulnerable against GOP gubernatorial nominee Terry Branstad, a former governor.
We're keeping the state House a tossup and the state Senate lean Democratic, but if current
trends intensify, both chambers could move in the GOP's direction before Election Day.

• KANSAS
o NR
o Dems9
o Reps31
o Safe R
o Dems49
o Reps76
Not much has changed since our last rating. As we said at the time, only the state House is
up this year. On paper, the GOP has a large margin in the House and should keep or increase it, but the state Republican Party's long-running split between moderates and conservatives means that what's on paper is not always reflective of the real power dynamic. There is talk of a coalition between Democrats and moderate Republicans next year -- the kind that worked to elect Democrat Kathleen Sebelius twice as governor -- but at this point that result is speculative at best. And the GOP gubernatorial candidate, Sen. Sam Brownback, is cruising to an easy victory that should ameliorate differences between
the two wings of the state party. For now, we'll stick with the official label and call the chamber safe Republican.

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• KENTUCKY
o Likely R
o Dems17
o Reps20
o Likely D
o Dems64
o Reps35
The parties each control one chamber in Kentucky -- Republicans the Senate and Democrats
the House. While the GOP is likely to add seats in both chambers, it is unlikely to be able to
add enough to flip the nearly 2-to-1 Democratic majority in the state House. So we're keeping the Senate at likely Republican and the House at likely Democratic.

• LOUISIANA
o NR
o Dems23
o Reps16
o NR
o Dems52
o Reps50
Louisiana does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

• MAINE
o Tossup
o Dems20
o Reps15
o Likely D
o Dems95
o Reps55
The nearly 2-to-1 Democratic margin in the state House looked solid the last time we checked, but that's beginning to change, as the GOP looks strong in the gubernatorial race and has some open seats to work with in a GOP wave year. The shift toward the GOP is also
shaping the race for the Senate, which we now rate as a pure tossup. Maine's celebrated independent streak and its public-financing law are melding with anti-incumbent sentiments
to produce a volatile fight for control.

• MARYLAND
o Safe D
o Dems33
o Reps14
o Safe D
o Dems104
o Reps36

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11

The anti-incumbent and anti-Democratic mood elsewhere seems unlikely to take hold in solidly Democratic Maryland. The party's strong hold on both chambers should continue uninterrupted even if former GOP Gov. Bob Ehrlich makes a strong run at his successor, Democrat Martin O'Malley.

• MASSACHUSETTS
o Safe D
o Dems34
o Reps6
o Safe D
o Dems144
o Reps16
Despite a difficult reelection bid for first-term Democratic Gov. Deval Patrick -- and the GOP
victory in the special election to fill the seat of the late U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy -- the Democrats' margins in the Legislature are so massive that it's all but mathematically impossible for the GOP to take over in 2010, no matter how favorable the political environment. While the GOP could pick up seats, both chambers are safe Democratic.

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MICHIGAN
Likely R
Dems16
Reps22
Lean D
Dems66

o Reps43
The environment in Michigan is getting no better for the Democrats than it was last time we
checked, with an attractive Republican candidate for governor comfortably ahead in the polls amid vast economic dislocation. Were the gap in the state House smaller, we'd call it a
tossup, but it's wide enough to justify a lean Democratic rating for now. The GOP-held Senate should easily remain in Republican hands and could shift to safe Republican before
Election Day.

• MINNESOTA
o Likely D

o Dems46
o Reps21
o Lean D
o Dems87
o Reps47

Minnesota's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party will likely lose a number of seats in both chambers, but the Democrats are in a somewhat better position here than they are in other states. While the Democrats currently control both chambers, the burden of the state's grim fiscal situation is shared with an outgoing Republican governor, Tim Pawlenty. Thanks in part to mediocre approval ratings for Pawlenty, Democrat Mark Dayton -- unlike Democratic nominees elsewhere -- is doing pretty well, leading Republican Tom Emmer by a modest margin. (Independent Tom Horner is also in the race.) The House has more seats in play, in part because the DFL currently occupies a number of seats that, by the numbers, ought to be held by the GOP. A takeover of the House is unlikely, but not out of the question. The Senate, meanwhile, has interesting matchups, but it is considered less likely to flip.

• MISSISSIPPI
o NR
o Dems27
o Reps25
o NR
o Dems72
o Reps50

Mississippi does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

• MISSOURI
o Safe R
o Dems11
o Reps23
o Safe R
o Dems73
o Reps89

Though the Show Me State is often competitive in national races, the GOP is in strong shape in both chambers. The favorable national mood may even enable the party to expand its edge.

• MONTANA
o Likely R
o Dems23
o Reps27
o Lean R
o Dems50

o Reps50
Both chambers in Big Sky country have been narrowly divided in recent years, but the growing Republican tide makes matters harder for the Democrats. There's a strong Tea Party following in the state, and the Obama administration's agenda is broadly unpopular. It's not clear that Gov. Brian Schweitzer, a Democrat, will go to the mat to help vulnerable legislators -- or whether it would help at this point even if he did.

• NEBRASKA
o NR
o Dems-
o Reps-
o NR
o Dems-
o Reps-
Nebraska's unicameral legislature is nonpartisan, so it is not rated.

• NEVADA
o Lean D
o Dems12
o Reps9
o Likely D
o Dems28
o Reps14
Given Nevada's severe economic upheaval and the state's sagebrush conservative direction for 2010, it's somewhat surprising that the Democrats have a decent shot at maintaining their majority in both chambers of the Legislature. With a 2-to-1 Democratic margin, the Assembly looks pretty solid for the Democrats, though the GOP could gain enough seats to end the Democrats' veto-override majority. Meanwhile, in the Senate, the Republicans could take over with a net gain of just three seats, but the seat-by-seat math suggests that those GOP gains are hardly a foregone conclusion, even in this political environment. Even Republicans concede that the Senate might only swing by one seat in either direction -- not enough to flip the chamber.

• NEW HAMPSHIRE
o Tossup
o Dems14
o Reps10
o Tossup
o Dems222
o Reps176

The New Hampshie GOP should benefit from voter fatigue with unified Democratic control
and a $600 million budget mess. But we're not ready to shift either the narrowly divided Senate or the enormous state House out of the tossup category yet, in part because the Sept. 14 primary -- unlike primaries in some other states this year -- wasn't a game-changer for the GOP. The big unknown is how independent voters go. They once leaned strongly Republican, then shifted tentatively in 2004 and more decisively in 2006 and 2008
toward the Democrats. This year, there's not a lot of excitement about the top of the Democratic ticket, so they might stay home. If they do, at least one chamber, if not both, could flip to the GOP.

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NEW JERSEY
NR
Dems23
Reps17
NR
Dems47

o Reps33
New Jersey does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

• NEW MEXICO
o NR
o Dems27
o Reps15
o Likely D
o Dems45
o Reps25
This year's environment in New Mexico isn't great for the Democrats, who have had unified
control for the past eight years and a good shot at picking off the governorship and possibly
other statewide offices. But margins in the state House -- the only chamber up this year -- are likely too big for the Republicans to do more than make a dent in the Democratic majority, at least for now.

• NEW YORK
o Tossup

o Dems32
o Reps30
o Safe D
o Dems107
o Reps42
The Democratic-dominated Assembly will remain safely Democratic, while the closely divided New York Senate remains a tossup. Democrat Andrew Cuomo maintains a big lead
in the gubernatorial race, which should help the party up and down the ballot in November.
But the big shocker of the Sept. 14 primary -- the massive upset by outspoken, Tea Party-aligned Republican Carl Paladino -- gives some pause. On the one hand, Paladino could help
fellow GOP candidates, especially from upstate districts, by turning out new batches of angry voters inspired by his baseball-bat-wielding rhetoric. But such gains could be canceled
out by a dampening of GOP support downstate, where suburban voters tend to shy away from extreme candidates. The two trends might end up being a wash, but the energy of the
Paladino insurgency remains a wild card that shouldn't be ignored.

• NORTH CAROLINA
o Tossup
o Dems30
o Reps20
o Lean D
o Dems68
o Reps52
The Republican momentum of 2010 is slowly undermining the Democratic edge in this southern state, one of the last states in the region where Democrats are probably overrepresented in state government. For multiple reasons, including money trends, the GOP is clearly the party with momentum. Amid signs that the GOP is competitive in enough
seats to flip the chamber, we're shifting the Senate from Lean Democratic to tossup. The House has a slightly larger Democratic margin, and the GOP could end up a couple seats short of a flip, so we'll keep it at lean Democratic for now.

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NORTH DAKOTA
Safe R
Dems21

Reps26
Safe R

o Dems36
o Reps58
North Dakota has weathered the Great Recession better than most states, so the anti-incumbent mood isn't pronounced here, at least on the state level. That's good news for the
Republicans, who can feel confident that they'll keep their hold on both chambers -- even the fairly closely divided state Senate, which was on the Democrats' watch list just two years ago.

• OHIO
o Safe R
o Dems12
o Reps21
o Lean R
o Dems53
o Reps46
Recent independent polling shows the GOP pulling away in the once-competitive U.S. Senate and gubernatorial contests, which suggests that Ohio Republicans may have improved their position downballot as well. The GOP never needed big gains to flip the state
House -- which the Democrats seized just two years ago by a narrow margin -- but now, those needed gains are looking achievable. The pivotal nature of Ohio in national politics means that outside Democrats won't abandon the state. But the Democratic state House majority looks more vulnerable than it did in mid-summer.

• OKLAHOMA
o Safe R
o Dems22
o Reps26
o Safe R
o Dems40
o Reps61
Both chambers in Oklahoma shifted from Democratic to Republican during the past decade,
and in this staunchly conservative state, they're not going back anytime soon. Both chambers will remain safely Republican.

• OREGON
o Lean D
o Dems18
o Reps12
o Likely D
o Dems36

o Reps24
In both Pacific Northwest states, historical Democratic leanings are softening -- not dramatically, but enough to justify a rating change in favor of the GOP. In Oregon, Chris Dudley, an ex-Portland Trailblazer with a moderate and outsider profile, gives the GOP its
best chance for winning the governorship in almost three decades. His candidacy, combined
with the national Republican lean, puts the Oregon Senate newly in play, though the GOP would have to essentially run the table to flip the chamber. On the House side, where the Democratic lead is bigger, the GOP is likely to gain a number of seats but fall short of a majority, so we'll keep that chamber at likely Democratic for now.

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PENNSYLVANIA
Safe R
Dems20
Reps30

o Lean R
o Dems103
o Reps97
Democrats in the narrowly divided state House aren't out of the game yet, but the recent polling in statewide races -- especially for governor and U.S. Senate -- suggests growing difficulties for Pennsylvania Democrats this fall. Republican Tom Corbett leads Democrat
Dan Onorato in all gubernatorial polls, conforming to an eight-years-and-out pattern for party control of the governorship that has prevailed since World War II. The sagging popularity and leverage of lame-duck Gov. Ed Rendell doesn't help the Democratic cause.

• RHODE ISLAND
o Safe D
o Dems33
o Reps4
o Safe D
o Dems69
o Reps6
Rhode Island has a volatile, multiway gubernatorial race, and the poor economy doesn't help the Democratic majority in the Legislature. But the margins are simply too large for the
Democrats to lose control this year.

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18

• SOUTH CAROLINA
o NR
o Dems19
o Reps27
o Safe R
o Dems51
o Reps73
Only the state House is up this fall, but continued problems in recruiting Democratic candidates has robbed the party of any serious chance it had of vying for control.

• SOUTH DAKOTA
o Safe D
o Dems14
o Reps21
o Safe RR
o Dems24
o Reps46
The Democrats made a play for the Legislature in 2008, when Barack Obama was also chasing votes in South Dakota, but that's ancient history, with all types of Democrats running scared in the state. The Democrats will likely lose seats in one or both chambers this fall.

• TENNESSEE
o Likely R
o Dems14
o Reps19
o Likely R
o Dems48
o Reps50
The Republican wave, the state's conservative leanings and the big lead by GOP gubernatorial candidate Bill Haslam all point in the GOP's direction -- enough for us to shift
both chambers out of the "in play" category of lean Republican and into the likely Republican designation.

• TEXAS
o Safe R
o Dems12
o Reps19
o Likely R
o Dems73
o Reps77
Texas Democrats, once a forlorn bunch, are showing some signs of optimism at the moment, thanks to scandals affecting GOP lawmakers and an unusually strong gubernatorial
bid by Democratic nominee Bill White. But it's not clear that these pluses will offset the

minuses of the national Republican wave. For now, we don't see enough movement to shift
the state House from likely Republican to lean Republican. But if the Democrats continue to
get some breaks, the rating could shift before Election Day.

• UTAH
o Safe R
o Dems8
o Reps21
o Safe R
o Dems22
o Reps53
Few states are as solidly Republican as Utah, and despite fireworks between Tea Party activists and more establishment Republicans at state party nominating conventions, the Utah GOP has no fear of losing ground numerically in 2010.

• VERMONT
o Safe D
o Dems22
o Reps7
o Safe D
o Dems95
o Reps48
While the GOP will have a credible shot at holding the governorship -- especially after a tough, closely divided Democratic gubernatorial primary -- there's wide agreement that the
Democrats should remain in control of both chambers in Vermont.

• VIRGINIA
o NR
o Dems22
o Reps18
o NR
o Dems39
o Reps59
Virginia does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

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20

WASHINGTON
Lean D
Dems31
Reps18
Lean D
Dems62
Reps36
in neighboring Oregon, the GOP is poised to gain ground in Washington state. While the

state's traditional Democratic lean and wide margins in both chambers make a flip an uphill
challenge, the results in the state's unusual all-party primary on Aug. 17 show signs of strength for key Republican candidates and weakness for their Democratic opponents. We
see enough GOP ferment to justify a shift in both chambers from likely Democratic to lean
Democratic.

• WEST VIRGINIA
o Safe D
o Dems26
o Reps8
o Safe D
o Dems71
o Reps29
West Virginia has moved towards the Republicans in recent national races, and the GOP has
a chance of seizing the Senate seat long held by Democrat Robert Byrd this fall. But Democrats in the Legislature know how to frame themselves to win here. The GOP could pick up some seats, but the large Democratic margins should hold.

• WISCONSIN
o Tossup
o Dems18
o Reps15
o Tossup
o Dems52
o Reps46
The Democrats control both chambers of the Legislature as well as the governorship -- a bad position to be in for 2010, especially for a state located in the swing industrial Midwest.
Observers say there's a good chance that at least one chamber will flip to the GOP, though
the likelier chamber is a matter of debate. National Democratic figures from President

E
21

Barack Obama on down have made visits to Wisconsin, suggesting that it will remain a key
battleground through Election Day. We'll keep both chambers in the tossup category for now.

• WYOMING
o Safe R
o Dems7
o Reps23
o Safe R
o Dems19
o Reps41
Staunchly Republican Wyoming will remain so in 2010. In fact, Democratic retirements could even allow the GOP to expand its margins.

Party Control

Democrats are poised to lose a legislative chambers and attorney

It's no surprise that the 2010 election cycle is looking ominous for Democrats. The party is in danger of losing the U.S. House and Senate, and is poised to fall below a majority of the governorships. It also is about to lose a slew of state legislative chambers and attorney general offices. G

State Legislatures

The race to control the nation's legislatures may be overshadowed during this year's midterm elections by congressional and gubernatorial contests, but the battle is poised to be pivotal nonetheless. This fall's legislative elections—the last before the start of a once-every-decade redistricting process—are unique for two reasons: More chambers are in play this year than in any cycle since at least 2002, and even more strikingly, the Democrats have vastly more at risk than the Republicans do.

"This is going to be an extremely challenging year for Democrats for a variety of reasons," says Tim Storey, senior fellow of the National Conference of State Legislatures. "History is not on their side. Since 1900, the party in the White House loses seats in the legislature in every midterm except for 1934 and 2002."

Today's Democratic Party, however, was already set up for a fall. The Democrats control a majority of the governors' offices and state senates and houses at a time when a severe national recession and state fiscal crises are pushing voters into an angry, anti-incumbent mood. Polls typically show Republicans and Republican-leaning voters more energized to vote than their Democratic counterparts, undercutting Democratic hopes in almost every state.

"I think the main issue will be jobs and the economy," Storey says. "State budgets continue to be in very poor shape. It's hard to build support when all you do is cut programs across the board and anger nearly every constituency." Implementation of the new health-care law also will pose challenges for states, while hot-button issues such as immigration could produce extra volatility.

Vitals

Current Party Control:
State Houses: 32 Democratic, 16 Republican, one tied, one nonpartisan
State Senates: 28 Democratic, 20 Republican, one tied, one nonpartisan
Chambers up in 2010: 45 State Houses, 42 State Senates
Chambers in play*: 27 out of 87

**These are races that are either too close to call, or lean Democratic or Republican.*

slew of state general offices.

By Louis Jacobson

Attorneys General

So what about state attorney general races? It's pretty much the same story. A 32-to-18 Democratic edge over the Republicans is distinctly at risk.

In all, 43 attorney general offices are popularly elected. And of those 43, no less than 30 are being contested this fall—the Democrats hold 19 of the contested seats. Three of those 19 Democratic-held seats are already tilting to the GOP. In each case, the incumbent Democrat left to run for governor, leaving the seat open. The three states are: California, where the state district attorney may be too liberal for voters; and Georgia and Oklahoma, where Republicans in these solidly conservative states are poised to take over.

While the top issues dominating attorney general races often are specific to the state as opposed to national in scope—such as enforcement of consumer protection laws or crackdowns on methamphetamines—it's possible that broader national issues will hold sway in what is shaping up to be a Republican-wave year.

These potentially big issues include an effort to repeal President Barack Obama's health-care law—an effort that already has won support from a good portion of Republican attorneys general nationally. Another could be immigration, especially whether states choose to follow Arizona's lead in trying to stiffen enforcement powers over illegal immigrants.

Vitals

Current Party Control: 32 Democrats, 18 Republicans
Elected Seats: 43 (seven appointed)
Seats up in 2010: 30
Seats in play*: 11

**These are races that are either too close to call, or lean Democratic or Republican.*

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State Senate Race RatingsSwitch to State House

Posted By Louis Jacobson | November 1, 2010

With little time left until the 2010 elections, the forecast for Democrats is worsening. Since we last reported on the races, we've shifted 8 more chambers in the Republicans' direction. This is terrible news for the Democratic Party, which is also in danger of losing several attorney general offices. But there is a modest silver lining for the Democrats: no chambers are newly in play. The overall landscape remains 25 Democratic chambers in play, compared to just one GOP-held chamber and two tied chambers. Democrats are on the verge of losing a net of four to 12 Senate chambers and seven to 15 House chambers. In none of the previous five cycles was there ever this wide a difference in projected risk between the two parties. Click on a state below to get more details on any of the 50 state legislatures, including current control of the state Senate and state House, race predictions, if applicable, and an assessment of each state race. Today's map and ratings will be the final update before election day.

Safe D

* Arkansas
* California
* Connecticut
* Delaware
* Hawaii
* Maryland
* Massachusetts
* Rhode Island
* Vermont
* West Virginia

← These are state senate only — Use state by state thumbnails for both chambers ratings

Likely D

* Illinois
* Minnesota

Lean D

* Colorado
* Iowa
* Nevada
* Oregon
* Washington

Tossup

* Alaska

D
2

* Maine
* New York
* North Carolina

Lean R

* Alabama
* New Hampshire
* Wisconsin

Likely R

* Kentucky
* Michigan
* Montana
* Tennessee

Safe R

* Arizona
* Florida
* Georgia
* Idaho
* Indiana
* Missouri
* North Dakota
* Ohio
* Oklahoma
* Pennsylvania
* South Dakota
* Texas
* Utah
* Wyoming

N/R*

* Kansas
* Louisiana
* Mississippi
* Nebraska
* New Jersey
* New Mexico
* South Carolina
* Virginia

*Not rated because chamber has no races this fall, or because the chamber is officially nonpartisan.

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ALABAMA
- o Lean R
- o Dems20
- o Reps15
- o Lean R
- o Dems60
- o Reps45

Here as elsewhere, the Republican trend has only intensified in recent months. Both chambers have been in Democratic hands for more than a century but are vulnerable to a party switch this year. Even if the GOP doesn't get enough seats on Election Day, the party might have enough momentum to convince a few conservative Democrats to switch teams, allowing a shift in control.

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ALASKA
- o Tossup
- o Dems10
- o Reps10
- o Lean R
- o Dems18
- o Reps22

In recent years, legislative races in Alaska have been driven by local issues and personal factors, with party label not always paramount. With narrow margins in both chambers and malleable party ties, both the House and Senate are in play -- tossup for the Senate and lean Republican for the House. The state's wild Senate race scrambles matters even further.

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ARIZONA
- o Safe R
- o Dems12
- o Reps18
- o Safe R
- o Dems25
- o Reps35

Arizona is one of the epicenters of political anger, and Republican momentum. One would think that the state's polarizing immigration law might have energized Latino voters, but there's little sign that an organized backlash at the ballot box is emerging. The longer-term impact is harder to predict.

*

ARKANSAS

- o Safe D
- o Dems27
- o Reps8
- o Safe D
- o Dems72
- o Reps28

Not much has changed in Arkansas since our last ranking. Though the state has moved aggressively in the GOP's direction in national races, its legislative chambers are both solidly Democratic, and there's an overwhelmingly strong Democrat at the top of the ticket -- Gov. Mike Beebe, who's seeking a second term with token opposition. The GOP is likely to pick up some seats in both chambers due in part to national trends, but not enough to seriously threaten the Democrats' hold in either body.

*

CALIFORNIA

- o Safe D
- o Dems25
- o Reps14
- o Safe D
- o Dems49
- o Reps29

Deep-pocketed Republican candidates for governor, Meg Whitman, and senator, Carly Fiorina, initially looked strong, but they have faded in recent weeks. Even if this ends up being a stronger-than-usual year for the California GOP, the current numbers, combined with California's Democratic lean in recent history, make a partisan flip in either chamber unlikely.

*

COLORADO

- o Lean D
- o Dems21
- o Reps14
- o Tossup
- o Dems37
- o Reps27

By all rights, the Democratic legislative majorities in Colorado should be highly endangered, but the party has been granted a stay of execution thanks to the mess the GOP has made for itself in the gubernatorial race. Democrat John Hickenlooper, currently the mayor of Denver, is bucking voter fatigue with the majority party and has become the favorite to succeed Gov. Bill Ritter. That's been made possible by the imploding candidacy of political neophyte Dan Maes, a Tea Party activist who won the GOP nomination, and the third-party candidacy of anti-immigration former Rep. Tom Tancredo.

*

CONNECTICUT

D
5

- o Safe D
- o Dems24
- o Reps12
- o Safe D
- o Dems114
- o Reps36

Even before Republican candidate Linda McMahon lost ground in the U.S. Senate race, the margins in the Legislature were too big for the GOP to do much more than nibble away at Democratic majorities.

*

DELAWARE

- o Safe D
- o Dems15
- o Reps6
- o Lean D
- o Dems24
- o Reps17

The unexpected primary victory by Tea Party-backed Senate candidate Christine O'Donnell has given Delaware Democrats a gift, up and down the ballot. The Delaware Senate was going to remain Democratic anyway, but the House -- a Democratic pickup two years ago, ending a long GOP reign -- now looks safer than it did in our last analysis.

*

FLORIDA

- o Safe R
- o Dems14
- o Reps26
- o Safe R
- o Dems43
- o Reps76

During the Aug. 25 Florida primary, GOP turnout exceeded Democratic turnout by 40 to 50 percent. While the Republicans' scandal-tinged leadership in the Legislature is not exactly popular among voters, national and statewide trends give the Democrats little hope of gains this year in the Sunshine State.

*

GEORGIA

- o Safe R
- o Dems21
- o Reps35
- o Safe R
- o Dems74
- o Reps105

D
6

The shift from ancestral Democratic control to a new Republican majority in Georgia is now complete. Expect the GOP to hold on to both chambers of the Legislature with ease.

*

HAWAII

- o Safe D
- o Dems23
- o Reps2
- o Safe D
- o Dems45
- o Reps6

In Hawaii, Democrats have some of the largest legislative majorities of any state. All sides agree that there is zero chance that the GOP will take over either chamber, even in this Republican-trending year.

*

IDAHO

- o Safe R
- o Dems7
- o Reps28
- o Safe R
- o Dems18
- o Reps52

While the GOP in Idaho (and elsewhere) faces internal pressures between the establishment and Tea Partiers, the Democrats are in no position to take advantage. The GOP is certain to maintain its large majorities here.

*

ILLINOIS

- o Likely D
- o Dems37
- o Reps22
- o Lean D
- o Dems70
- o Reps48

In Illinois, the state budget is in a $13 billion hole, and the unfunded liability for public pensions is among the worst of any state in the country. Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn, who moved up when former Gov. Rod Blagojevich was impeached, is in such bad straits that he trails Bill Brady, a Republican candidate whose staunchly conservative views on social and fiscal issues would make him a longshot in Illinois in almost any other circumstance. Such GOP advantages won't help much in the Senate, where the party would have to win virtually all of the seats that are up this year to take control, but they're enough for us to shift the House from likely Democratic to lean Democratic. It's unwise to bet against long-serving Speaker Michael Madigan, but it would be even more

unwise to reject the possibility that the GOP could ride voter irritation with Democratic control to a flip in the House.

*

INDIANA
- o Safe R
- o Dems17
- o Reps33
- o Lean R
- o Dems52
- o Reps48

The GOP was already favored to flip the closely divided -- and for years, hotly contested -- Indiana House, but thanks to both national and state-based momentum, the races remain safe Republican and lean Republican.

*

IOWA
- o Lean D
- o Dems32
- o Reps18
- o Tossup
- o Dems56
- o Reps44

Iowa's disaffection with Democrats appears strong, with Democratic Gov. Chet Culver deeply vulnerable against GOP gubernatorial nominee Terry Branstad, a former governor.

*

KANSAS
- o NR
- o Dems9
- o Reps31
- o Safe R
- o Dems49
- o Reps76

Only the state House is up this year. On paper, the GOP has a large margin in the House and should keep or increase it, but the state Republican Party's long-running split between moderates and conservatives means that what's on paper is not always reflective of the real power dynamic.

*

KENTUCKY
- o Likely R
- o Dems17
- o Reps20
- o Likely D
- o Dems64

- Reps35

The parties each control one chamber in Kentucky -- Republicans the Senate and Democrats the House. While the GOP is likely to add seats in both chambers, it is unlikely to be able to add enough to flip the nearly 2-to-1 Democratic majority in the state House. So we're keeping the Senate at likely Republican and the House at likely Democratic.

*

LOUISIANA
- NR
- Dems23
- Reps16
- NR
- Dems52
- Reps50

Louisiana does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

*

MAINE
- Tossup
- Dems20
- Reps15
- Likely D
- Dems95
- Reps55

Maine's celebrated independent streak, its public-financing law and a volatile gubernatorial race are melding with anti-incumbent sentiments to produce a fight for control that's hard to gauge, even this close to Election Day.

*

MARYLAND
- Safe D
- Dems33
- Reps14
- Safe D
- Dems104
- Reps36

The anti-incumbent and anti-Democratic mood elsewhere seems not to have taken hold in solidly Democratic Maryland. The party's strong hold on both chambers should continue uninterrupted, especially with the near-collapse of the gubernatorial candidacy of former GOP Gov. Bob Ehrlich.

*

MASSACHUSETTS
- Safe D
- Dems34

- o Reps6
- o Safe D
- o Dems144
- o Reps16

Despite a difficult reelection bid for first-term Democratic Gov. Deval Patrick -- and the GOP victory in the special election to fill the seat of the late U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy -- the Democrats' margins in the Legislature are so massive that it's all but mathematically impossible for the GOP to take over in 2010, no matter how favorable the political environment. While the GOP could pick up seats, both chambers are safe Democratic.

*

MICHIGAN

- o Likely R
- o Dems16
- o Reps22
- o Tossup
- o Dems66
- o Reps43

The environment in Michigan is getting no better for the Democrats than it was last time we checked, with an attractive Republican candidate for governor comfortably ahead in the polls amid vast economic dislocation. The GOP-held Senate should easily remain in Republican hands; now we're shifting the Democratic-held House one notch, from lean Democratic to Tossup.

*

MINNESOTA

- o Likely D
- o Dems46
- o Reps21
- o Lean D
- o Dems87
- o Reps47

Minnesota's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party will likely lose a number of seats in both chambers, but the Democrats are in a somewhat better position here than they are in other states. While the Democrats currently control both chambers, the burden of the state's grim fiscal situation is shared with an outgoing Republican governor, Tim Pawlenty. Thanks in part to mediocre approval ratings for Pawlenty, Democrat Mark Dayton -- unlike Democratic nominees elsewhere -- is doing pretty well, leading Republican Tom Emmer by a modest margin. (Independent Tom Horner is also in the race.) The House has more seats in play, in part because the DFL currently occupies a number of seats that, by the numbers, ought to be held by the GOP. A takeover of the House is unlikely, but not out of the question. The Senate, meanwhile, has interesting matchups, but it is considered less likely to flip.

*

MISSISSIPPI
- o NR
- o Dems27
- o Reps25
- o NR
- o Dems72
- o Reps50

Mississippi does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

*

MISSOURI
- o Safe R
- o Dems11
- o Reps23
- o Safe R
- o Dems73
- o Reps89

Though the Show Me State is often competitive in national races, the GOP is in strong shape in both chambers. The favorable national mood may even enable the party to expand its edge.

*

MONTANA
- o Likely R
- o Dems23
- o Reps27
- o Lean R
- o Dems50
- o Reps50

Both chambers in Big Sky country have been narrowly divided in recent years, but the growing Republican tide makes matters harder for the Democrats. There's a strong Tea Party following in the state, and the Obama administration's agenda is broadly unpopular. It's not clear that Gov. Brian Schweitzer, a Democrat, will go to the mat to help vulnerable legislators -- or whether it would help at this point even if he did.

*

NEBRASKA
- o NR
- o Dems-
- o Reps-
- o NR
- o Dems-
- o Reps-

Nebraska's unicameral legislature is nonpartisan, so it is not rated.

*

D
11

NEVADA
- o Lean D
- o Dems12
- o Reps9
- o Likely D
- o Dems28
- o Reps14

Given Nevada's severe economic upheaval and the state's sagebrush conservative direction for 2010, it's somewhat surprising that the Democrats have a decent shot at maintaining their majority in both chambers of the Legislature. With a 2-to-1 Democratic margin, the Assembly looks pretty solid for the Democrats, though the GOP could gain enough seats to end the Democrats' veto-override majority. Meanwhile, in the Senate, the Republicans could take over with a net gain of just three seats, but the seat-by-seat math suggests that those GOP gains are hardly a foregone conclusion, even in this political environment. Even Republicans concede that the Senate might only swing by one seat in either direction -- not enough to flip the chamber.

*

NEW HAMPSHIRE
- o Lean R
- o Dems14
- o Reps10
- o Lean R
- o Dems222
- o Reps176

It's looking like both chambers, currently held by the Democrats, are going to shift to the Republicans. Even though Democratic Gov. John Lynch is a slight favorite to win reelection, a University of New Hampshire poll showed Republicans comfortably ahead in the generic legislative ballot.

*

NEW JERSEY
- o NR
- o Dems23
- o Reps17
- o NR
- o Dems47
- o Reps33

New Jersey does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

*

NEW MEXICO
- o NR
- o Dems27
- o Reps15
- o Likely D

o Dems45
o Reps25

This year's environment in New Mexico isn't great for the Democrats, who have had unified control for the past eight years and a good shot at picking off the governorship and possibly other statewide offices. But margins in the state House -- the only chamber up this year -- are likely too big for the Republicans to do more than make a dent in the Democratic majority, at least for now.

*

NEW YORK
o Tossup
o Dems32
o Reps30
o Safe D
o Dems107
o Reps42

The Democratic-dominated Assembly will remain safely Democratic, while the closely divided New York Senate remains a tossup, perhaps with an ever-so-slight Republican lean, despite the meltdown by Tea Party-backed Republican gubernatorial nominee Carl Paladino.

*

NORTH CAROLINA
o Tossup
o Dems30
o Reps20
o Tossup
o Dems68
o Reps52

The Republican momentum of 2010 is undermining the Democratic edge in this southern state, one of the last states in the region where Democrats are probably overrepresented in state government. For multiple reasons, including money trends, the GOP is clearly the party with momentum. We already shifted the Senate from lean Democratic to tossup in our last analysis. This time, we're making the same move for the House.

*

NORTH DAKOTA
o Safe R
o Dems21
o Reps26
o Safe R
o Dems36
o Reps58

North Dakota has weathered the Great Recession better than most states, so the anti-incumbent mood isn't pronounced here, at least on the state level. That's good news for the Republicans, who can feel confident that they'll keep their hold on both chambers -- even the fairly closely divided state Senate, which was on the Democrats' watch list just two years ago.

*

OHIO

- o Safe R
- o Dems12
- o Reps21
- o Lean R
- o Dems53
- o Reps46

The GOP never needed big gains to flip the state House -- which the Democrats seized just two years ago by a narrow margin -- but even with a modest narrowing of other statewide races recently, those needed gains are looking achievable.

*

OKLAHOMA

- o Safe R
- o Dems22
- o Reps26
- o Safe R
- o Dems40
- o Reps61

Both chambers in Oklahoma shifted from Democratic to Republican during the past decade, and in this staunchly conservative state, they're not going back anytime soon. Both chambers will remain safely Republican.

*

OREGON

- o Lean D
- o Dems18
- o Reps12
- o Likely D
- o Dems36
- o Reps24

In both Pacific Northwest states, historical Democratic leanings are softening. In Oregon, Chris Dudley, an ex-Portland Trailblazer with a moderate and outsider profile, gives the GOP its best chance for winning the governorship in almost three decades, though the race is still tight. The GOP would have to essentially run the table to flip the Senate. On the House side, the GOP is likely to gain a number of seats but fall short of a majority.

*

PENNSYLVANIA

- o Safe R
- o Dems20
- o Reps30
- o Lean R
- o Dems103
- o Reps97

Democrats in the narrowly divided state House aren't out of the game yet, but the recent polling in statewide races -- especially for governor and U.S. Senate -- suggests continuing challenges for Pennsylvania Democrats this fall.

*

RHODE ISLAND

- o Safe D
- o Dems33
- o Reps4
- o Safe D
- o Dems69
- o Reps6

Rhode Island has a volatile, multiway gubernatorial race, and the poor economy doesn't help the Democratic majority in the Legislature. But the margins are simply too large for the Democrats to lose control this year.

*

SOUTH CAROLINA

- o NR
- o Dems19
- o Reps27
- o Safe R
- o Dems51
- o Reps73

Only the state House is up this fall, but continued problems in recruiting Democratic candidates has robbed the party of any serious chance it had of vying for control.

*

SOUTH DAKOTA

- o Safe D
- o Dems14
- o Reps21
- o Safe RR
- o Dems24
- o Reps46

The Democrats made a play for the Legislature in 2008, when Barack Obama was also chasing votes in South Dakota, but that's ancient history, with all types of Democrats running scared in the state. The Democrats will likely lose seats in one or both chambers this fall.

*

TENNESSEE
- o Likely R
- o Dems14
- o Reps19
- o Likely R
- o Dems48
- o Reps50

The Republican wave, the state's conservative leanings and the big lead by GOP gubernatorial candidate Bill Haslam all point in the GOP's direction.

*

TEXAS
- o Safe R
- o Dems12
- o Reps19
- o Likely R
- o Dems73
- o Reps77

Texas Democrats, once a forlorn bunch, are showing some signs of optimism at the moment, thanks to an unusually strong gubernatorial bid by Democratic nominee Bill White. But White's still the underdog, and the dynamics of 2010 suggest that the GOP should be able to hold both chambers, and maybe even improve their position.

*

UTAH
- o Safe R
- o Dems8
- o Reps21
- o Safe R
- o Dems22
- o Reps53

Few states are as solidly Republican as Utah, and despite fireworks between Tea Party activists and more establishment Republicans at state party nominating conventions, the Utah GOP has no fear of losing ground numerically in 2010.

*

VERMONT
- o Safe D
- o Dems22
- o Reps7
- o Safe D
- o Dems95
- o Reps48

While the GOP will have a credible shot at holding the governorship -- especially after a tough, closely divided Democratic gubernatorial primary -- there's wide agreement that the Democrats should remain in control of both chambers in Vermont.

*

VIRGINIA
- o NR
- o Dems22
- o Reps18
- o NR
- o Dems39
- o Reps59

Virginia does not have legislative elections this year, so no rating is offered.

*

WASHINGTON
- o Lean D
- o Dems31
- o Reps18
- o Lean D
- o Dems62
- o Reps36

As in neighboring Oregon, the GOP is poised to gain ground in Washington state. While the state's traditional Democratic lean and wide margins in both chambers make a flip an uphill challenge, the results in the state's unusual all-party primary on Aug. 17 show signs of strength for key Republican candidates and weakness for their Democratic opponents.

*

WEST VIRGINIA
- o Safe D
- o Dems26
- o Reps8
- o Safe D
- o Dems71
- o Reps29

West Virginia has moved towards the Republicans in recent national races, and the GOP has an even-money chance of seizing the Senate seat long held by Democrat Robert Byrd this fall. But Democrats in the Legislature know how to frame themselves to win here. The GOP could pick up some seats, but the large Democratic margins should hold.

*

WISCONSIN
- o Lean R
- o Dems18
- o Reps15
- o Lean R

- o Dems52
- o Reps46

The Democrats control both chambers of the Legislature as well as the governorship -- a bad position to be in for 2010, especially for a state located in the swing industrial Midwest. Continuing problems for Democratic Sen. Russ Feingold, U.S. House candidates and gubernatorial candidate Tom Barrett suggest that the GOP wave is going to be especially strong here, justifying a shift to lean Republican.

*

WYOMING

- o Safe R
- o Dems7
- o Reps23
- o Safe R
- o Dems19
- o Reps41

Staunchly Republican Wyoming will remain so in 2010. In fact, Democratic retirements could even allow the GOP to expand its margins.

Note from Carl Klarner
I compared the list of states in the first two pages with the text. They match, with the exception of a typo that says ND is safely D in the text, but safely R in the table at the beginning.

It is therefore the case that the handicaps for the state house don't appear in the Nov 1, 2010 document, as KS, NM and SC are said to not be up.

Aug. 2012

C
1

Most of the political world's attention this year will be focused on the presidential race. But while the nation is watching President Obama and Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney duke it out, state legislatures will be forging their own battles -- all the more important because of the influence that state governments have had in recent years on hot-button issues ranging from voter identification to hydrofracking regulations.

This year's state legislative contests are being shaped by a one-two punch: a historic shift of 20-plus chambers in the GOP's direction on Election Day 2010, followed by a once-every-decade process of redistricting. In a strategic sense, the GOP timed its big 2010 gains perfectly since line redrawing has allowed the party to protect them.

That being said, this year's legislative elections will likely to be either a slight reinforcement of GOP gains or a small rollback by the Democrats. But a big move in either direction seems unlikely at this point, particularly given the close presidential race.

This is the first in a series of articles handicapping the 50 state legislatures leading up to the 2012 election. The assessment is based on interviews with dozens of state and national political sources. As always, we rate chambers on the following scale: safe Republican, likely Republican, lean Republican, tossup, lean Democratic, likely Democratic and safe Democratic. The categories labeled "lean" and "tossup" are considered competitive or in play. Chambers in either of the "likely" categories are not expected to change party control on Election Day, but it's possible that the minority party could net a few seats and nibble into the majority's lead.

This year, we find a total of 24 state legislative chambers to be in play -- 28 percent of all chambers holding elections this year. Nine chambers lean Republican (eight of them are currently held by the GOP and one is tied). Eight chambers are tossups (five are held by the Democrats and three by the GOP). And seven chambers lean Democratic (five are held by Democrats, one by the GOP and one is tied).

To have two dozen chambers in play at this stage of the 2012 cycle is somewhat above historical norms, but not as high as the landmark year of 2010. Two summers ago, it was already clear that 2010 was going to be a cycle of historic volatility, with 27 chambers, or 32 percent, in play during our summertime attempt at assigning ratings.

But the big difference between 2010 and 2012 is the partisan split of these in-play chambers. At this point two years ago, it was plain to see that the GOP was poised for one-sided gains: 21 Democratic-held chambers were in play in our first rating, compared to just four Republican-held chambers. This meant that the Republicans could go on offense all across the nation without having to worry about playing much defense.

That partisan imbalance was historically unusual: In the previous four election cycles we handicapped, the typical ratio of vulnerable chambers between the parties was close to even. And this year, it is again.

This year, 12 Republican-held chambers are in play, compared to 10 Democratic-held chambers and two tied chambers. In the absence of a strong partisan wave, this would suggest a possible net shift of between zero and two seats in either party's direction on Election Day. An outcome in that range would solidify -- or at most, roll back slightly -- the GOP's gains from 2010.

How big were those gains from 2010? Very big. The GOP now controls 59 legislative chambers, the Democrats control 37 and two are tied. Nebraska has a unicameral, nonpartisan legislature. (A full breakdown of current margins in each of the state legislatures is provided courtesy of the National Conference of State Legislatures.)

If our ratings prove accurate, then even if the Democrats manage to seize a few chambers away from the Republicans in 2012, they will still find themselves far behind the GOP in overall control of chambers on Election Night, and quite possibly for more election cycles beyond that.

Structurally, the Democrats' long-term hole is worsened by a half-dozen chambers that shifted to the GOP in 2010 and that are unlikely to return to the Democratic fold a generation or more. These include both chambers in Alabama, both chambers in North Carolina and the state House in Indiana and Montana.

The Democrats also have new realignment worries for 2012. This year, the party is at risk of losing both chambers in Arkansas (we rate both as tossups), as well as the officially tied but de facto jointly controlled Alaska Senate (lean Republican) and the Kentucky House (lean Democratic). Once the Democrats lose these chambers, none will easily return to the Democratic fold, given the long-term partisan trends in each of these states.

Perhaps the most immediate disappointment for the Democrats is the Republicans' seeming ability -- for now, anyway -- to defend their gains from 2010 in swing or Democratic-leaning states. Eight chambers seized by the GOP in 2010 and rated lean Republican come in states Obama won in 2008: Maine (Senate), Michigan (House), Minnesota (Senate), New Hampshire (both chambers), Ohio (House), Pennsylvania (House) and Wisconsin (Senate). To make significant gains, the Democrats have to put more of these chambers into play.

The Democrats do have some opportunities to play offense. Their best chances for flipping a chamber back two years after losing control are probably the Colorado House, the Minnesota House and the New York Senate (all of which we rate as tossups) and the Maine and Oregon houses (both of which are rated lean Democratic).

We'll continue to analyze ongoing developments in the state legislatures as the election season progresses. But for now, here are our chamber-by-chamber ratings and brief summaries of the state of play:

State	Senate	House

C
4

Alabama	NR	NR
Alaska	Lean R	Safe R
Arizona	Likely R	Likely R
Arkansas	Tossup	Tossup
California	Safe D	Safe D
Colorado	Lean D	Tossup
Connecticut	Safe D	Safe D
Delaware	Safe D	Safe D
Florida	Likely R	Likely R
Georgia	Safe R	Safe R
Hawaii	Safe D	Safe D
Idaho	Safe R	Safe R
Illinois	Safe D	Safe D
Indiana	Safe R	Safe R
Iowa	Tossup	Likely R
Kansas	Safe R	Safe R
Kentucky	Safe R	Lean D
Louisiana	NR	NR
Maine	Lean R	Lean D
Maryland	NR	NR
Massachusetts	Safe D	Safe D
Michigan	NR	Lean R

Minnesota	Lean R	Tossup
Mississippi	NR	NR
Missouri	Safe R	Safe R
Montana	Safe R	Safe R
Nebraska	NR	--
Nevada	Tossup	Lean D
New Hampshire	Lean R	Lean R
New Jersey	NR	NR
New Mexico	Likely D	Lean D
New York	Tossup	Safe D
North Carolina	Likely R	Likely R
North Dakota	Safe R	Safe R
Ohio	Safe R	Lean R
Oklahoma	Safe R	Safe R
Oregon	Lean D	Lean D
Pennsylvania	Likely R	Lean R
Rhode Island	Safe D	Safe D
South Carolina	Safe R	Safe R
South Dakota	Safe R	Safe R
Tennessee	Safe R	Safe R
Texas	Safe R	Safe R
Utah	Safe R	Safe R

C
6

Vermont	Safe D	Safe D
Virginia	NR	NR
Washington	Tossup	Likely D
West Virginia	Likely D	Likely D
Wisconsin	Lean R	Likely R
Wyoming	Safe R	Safe R

NR = Not rated, either because there is no election this year or it is a nonpartisan legislature.

Rating	Held by D	Held by R	Currently Tied
Lean R -- 9	0	8	1
Tossup – 8	5	3	0
Lean D – 7	5	1	1

Total competitive – 24

Percent competitive – 28%

Total Democratic-held in play: 10

Total Republican-held in play: 12

Total tied in play: 2

STATE CAPSULES

State	Senate	House

Alabama NR NR

Alabama doesn't have legislative elections this year.

Alaska Lean R Safe R

In recent years, the Alaska Senate has been operating under an unusual leadership arrangement. Technically it's been tied, but Democrats and moderate Republicans have been in charge. Now, redistricting could shift this uneasy equilibrium thanks to line-drawing favorable to the GOP and long-term population shifts. Demographics have continued to shift away from rural Alaska to the major population centers, with the biggest growth in the Matanuska-Susitna area -- the conservative stronghold that is home to Sarah Palin. This means the Senate has a good shot at going Republican.

Arizona Likely R Likely R

Arizona's Legislature has taken a strong turn to the right in recent years, particularly on immigration, and pushback from moderate Republicans and Latino voters doesn't look strong enough to do more than nibble away at the GOP's 2-to-1 margins in either chamber. Bigger Democratic gains will likely have to accumulate over several election cycles.

Arkansas Tossup Tossup

It appears to be just a matter of time before Arkansas goes the way of its neighbors. The Democrats -- more conservative than the national party -- have long been in charge, but their margins in both chambers have narrowed. With concerted Republican candidate recruiting, the Senate and House now rate as tossups.

California Safe D Safe D

There's no question the Democrats will keep control of both chambers, but what's less clear is whether they can get to a two-thirds margin in the Assembly and the Senate. That's important, because Republicans in recent years have had just enough votes to block the Democrats on fiscal policy legislation that requires a two-thirds supermajority. The resulting gridlock has only complicated the state's efforts to improve its grim fiscal outlook. Of the two chambers, the Democrats look likelier to get two-thirds in the Senate. In the Assembly, the outlook is murkier, in part due to fallout from the state's new top-two primary format, in which two candidates from the same party can face off in the general election.

Colorado Lean D Tossup

Colorado will be a hard-fought presidential battleground state, but its impact on the battle for the state Legislature remains unclear. The Democrats look well positioned to keep their Senate majority, though with perhaps a seat or two fewer. The House, currently held a narrow GOP margin, is more up for grabs. The Democrats probably benefited from

redistricting and from a bitter battle over civil unions, but we'll be cautious at this point and call the chamber a tossup.

Connecticut	Safe D	Safe D

The Democrats have large majorities in both chambers and are in no danger of losing them, especially in a presidential year.

Delaware	Safe D	Safe D

Delaware trended Democratic even in the strongly Republican year of 2010. The Democrats' majorities in both chambers are safe.

Florida	Likely R	Likely R

Despite passage of a new "fair districts" law -- and Florida's status as a presidential swing state -- the GOP's hold on both chambers looks strong. The best the Democrats can hope for this year are some incremental gains.

Georgia	Safe R	Safe R

Like its southern neighbors, Georgia's Legislature has become solidly Republican.

Hawaii	Safe D	Safe D

The Democratic margins in the Hawaii Legislature are 24-1 in the Senate and 43-8 in the House. Enough said.

Idaho	Safe R	Safe R

It could be generations before Democrats become competitive again in the Idaho Legislature.

Illinois	Safe D	Safe D

The Democratic margins in the Illinois Legislature aren't huge, but given recent partisan trends in the state, they should be enough to keep control.

Indiana	Safe R	Safe R

The GOP seized control of the state House in 2010, and they aren't giving it up anytime soon. The House and the Senate is safe Republican.

Iowa	Tossup	Likely R

The GOP should be able to hold onto its wide lead in the House. The Senate, where the Democrats have a narrow edge, could go either way, though redistricting probably was kinder to the Democrats.

Kansas	Safe R	Safe R

In Republican primary fights that attracted national attention, staunch conservatives roundly defeated relative moderates who had been cool to Republican Gov. Sam Brownback's agenda. But Kansas is so strongly Republican that it's not clear that Democrats will be able to capitalize on the opportunities presented by GOP candidates who may be too conservative for their districts. For now, we'll keep both chambers at safe Republican.

Kentucky	Safe R	Lean D

Chances are good that Kentucky's split legislative control will continue, but if one chamber's going to switch, it would be the Democratic-held House -- if not by Election Day victories outright, then possibly by a combination of Election Day victories and post-election party-switching. The fact that the Kentucky House has remained in Democratic hands this long is an anomaly for the region.

Louisiana	NR	NR

Louisiana doesn't have legislative elections this year.

C
12

Maine	Lean R	Lean D

One of the most stunning turnabouts of 2010 was the takeover of both chambers of the Maine Legislature by the GOP, combined with the victory of Republican Paul LePage for the governorship. The climate will be better for the Democrats in 2012 -- it's a presidential year, and LePage has had a stormy tenure so far -- which makes them a slight favorite to take back the House. But the GOP has a decent shot at holding the Senate.

Maryland	NR	NR

Maryland doesn't have legislative elections this year.

Massachusetts	Safe D	Safe D

Massachusetts' strong Democratic majorities are in no danger in 2012.

Michigan	NR	Lean R

Only the state House is up this year in Michigan. It was one of the chambers the Republicans took over in 2010, and while it will be competitive -- particularly if Obama has any coattails in the state -- the GOP has the early edge in retaining control.

C
13

Minnesota	Lean R	Tossup

Both chambers in Minnesota flipped to the GOP in 2010, and both will be competitive this year. Memories of the unpopular 2011 state government shutdown are a negative for the GOP in many state legislative races; polls suggest that voters blamed the Legislature more than Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton. Partly because of redistricting, the Republicans have a better shot of holding the Senate than the House, which is likely to end up with a narrow majority.

Mississippi	NR	NR

Mississippi doesn't have legislative elections this year.

Missouri	Safe R	Safe R

Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon is favored to win a second term, but he's worked well with the GOP-controlled Legislature -- indeed, that's part of the reason for his popularity. The Republican edge looks solid.

Montana	Safe R	Safe R

In recent cycles, Montana has had some of the closest legislative chambers in the country; the state House was tied going into the 2010 election. Those days are over. After seizing the majority two years ago, Republicans

are likely to cement their majority in both chambers as the state moves to the right.

Nebraska NR --

Nebraska's unicameral legislature is nonpartisan.

Nevada Tossup Lean D

Nevada, a key battleground state in the presidential election, will see lots of money and attention from the two parties. For now, the Democrats have the edge in keeping their Assembly majority, though the loss of a few seats is possible. The Senate, perennially close, is a tossup. The GOP is high on its chances, but on a seat-by-seat basis, it's far from a sure thing. Most of the key districts are fairly evenly divided by party, and a number of races have strong candidates on both sides.

New Hampshire Lean R Lean R

The GOP swept to legislative control in the Granite State in 2010, and at this point, they're favored to keep the reins. But with the state a presidential battleground, as well as home to an open-seat gubernatorial race, a lot will be going on this fall, and the Legislature could get swept up into the fray. One of the biggest challenges for the Democrats is that the state House is enormous -- 400 seats -- so they would have to make up a lot of ground in order to flip the chamber. It's happened in the past, but

usually in years with a strong partisan wave -- something that probably won't be the case this year.

New Jersey NR NR

New Jersey doesn't have legislative elections this year.

New Mexico Likely D Lean D

The Democrats have a fairly comfortable margin in the New Mexico Senate, and while redistricting may produce the gain of a few seats for the GOP, a takeover is not expected at this point. The House has a much narrower Democratic margin, but for now we're calling this lean Democratic. Partly this has to do with historical leanings, and partly because of Obama's strength in the state, particularly with Latino voters.

New York Tossup Safe D

The narrowly divided Senate, currently held by the GOP, is a tossup. A combination of redistricting and retirements has made for a fluid outlook, though Democrats feel optimistic about turnout given the presence of Obama and Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand on the ballot.

North Carolina Likely R Likely R

In a landmark shift, the GOP took control of both chambers in 2010, and the party is expected to keep control. On the one hand, the GOP Legislature isn't especially popular (nor is the outgoing Democratic governor). This could lead to a smattering of Democratic gains, particularly in urban and moderate suburban districts. On the other hand, Republicans solidified their gains through redistricting, and they have a financial edge. It remains to be seen whether the GOP's existing supermajority in the Senate will survive, and whether the House can achieve supermajority status, which they didn't have for the past two years. This question may matter less, however, if the GOP wins the governorship, which the party is currently favored to do.

North Dakota Safe R Safe R

Just a couple of cycles ago, Democrats had visions of making North Dakota's Legislature competitive. No longer. Not only has the state solidified its conservative lean, but the recent drilling boom has created an economic juggernaut that has eliminated, at least for now, any economic unease that could pose a problem for incumbents. Both chambers are rated safe Republican.

Ohio Safe R Lean R

Ohio is both a presidential battleground -- currently leaning slightly to Obama -- and home to embattled GOP Gov. John Kasich (he's had a rocky first two years in office). But the state House, which flipped to the GOP in 2010, looks likely to stay in Republican hands. Why? Money, redistricting and a strong organization. Absent the emergence of a wave, the

Democrats could gain a couple seats but quite a bit less than is necessary to take control.

Oklahoma	Safe R	Safe R

Now that the Republicans are in legislative control, they won't be giving it up any time soon in this solidly red state.

Oregon	Lean D	Lean D

Both chambers in Oregon are narrowly divided. The House is currently tied with split-partisan control. The combination of Obama's presence on top of the ticket, a sex scandal involving a Republican leader and tough races for several GOP freshmen in challenging districts suggests that the Democrats are slightly favored to win outright control of the chamber. In the Senate, the Democrats are slight favorites to keep their current 16-14 edge.

Pennsylvania	Likely R	Lean R

The GOP took control of the state House in 2010 and is currently favored to hold it. However, Democrats are hoping that the combination of Obama on the ticket and the recent rough patch for GOP Gov. Tom Corbett will give the party's chances a boost. It's unclear at this point whether Corbett's troubles can be hung on the Legislature -- not to mention whether all of it will be drowned out by the presidential race, which should be a big deal in the Keystone State. Meanwhile, in the Senate, the Democrats could gain a little ground, but not enough to take over.

Rhode Island	Safe D	Safe D

Democratic majorities in Rhode Island are massive; expect no major changes.

South Carolina	Safe R	Safe R

GOP Gov. Nikki Haley has had a tough first two years, but South Carolina, one of the most staunchly conservative states in the nation's most conservative region, offers Republicans a significant margin for error. There's no indication that they'll lose legislative control anytime soon.

South Dakota	Safe R	Safe R

The GOP has safe majorities in both chambers; the Democrats aren't going to make up that margin in the near future.

Tennessee	Safe R	Safe R

The GOP has solid leads in both chambers, and there's no sign of a significant shift in either direction.

Texas	Safe R	Safe R

The Latino demographic boom that could aid the Democratic Party isn't happening fast enough to help the party's chances in the legislature this fall. The GOP is so well ensconced in the state that it will outlast even GOP Gov. Rick Perry's plummeting approval ratings.

Utah	Safe R	Safe R

The GOP is rock-solid in Utah.

Vermont	Safe D	Safe D

The Democrats hold a natural edge in Vermont, and the popularity of Democratic Gov. Peter Shumlin can only help.

Virginia	NR	NR

Virginia doesn't have legislative elections this year.

Washington	Tossup	Likely D

Washington is historically Democratic-leaning, but fatigue with the longstanding majority party is giving the GOP an opening this year, most notably in the gubernatorial race. The Democratic House majority looks secure, but the Senate is up for grabs. The Democrats suffered defections by some of its more moderate members on key votes, a shift that hastened

the retirement of the majority leader. Several open seats could go either way, so we're calling this a tossup.

West Virginia	Likely D	Likely D

Republicans have dreams of making widespread gains in West Virginia, considering how favorable the state has been to recent GOP presidential candidates. But in contrast to Arkansas -- another state that's demographically and ideologically similar -- West Virginia is not on the verge of seeing its Legislature tip to the GOP. Democratic legislative incumbents know how to win in the Mountain State despite their partisan label, and the margins in both chambers are still too big to put either one into play this year. Longer term, all bets are off.

Wisconsin	Lean R	Likely R

In the bubbling cauldron that is Wisconsin politics today, the GOP took over the state Senate in 2010 and then lost control narrowly due to recall elections earlier this year. The GOP has the edge in 2012 because of redistricting, but the chamber will also be highly competitive thanks to grassroots intensity. The Assembly is a safer bet to maintain GOP control.

Wyoming	Safe R	Safe R

Wyoming Republicans hold an insurmountable edge in their Legislature.

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1

Oct. 2012

For the first time since 2004, we are in the midst of an election cycle that isn't a wave election. And on the state legislative level, this has meant a playing field more stable than any we've seen in quite a while.

In 2006, 2008 and 2010, one party had a strong edge, enabling it to put more and more legislatures into play as Election Day approached.

This year, we find enough movement since our first legislative handicapping of the cycle in August to change the ratings of only chambers. Those changes have been modest – and neither party appears to be putting previously uncompetitive chambers into serious contention.

Two chambers moved towards the Democrats – the Colorado House (moving from tossup to lean Democratic) and the Minnesota Senate (from lean Republican to tossup).

Meanwhile, three chambers moved toward the Republicans – the House and Senate in Arkansas (both of which moved from tossup to lean Republican) and the Pennsylvania House (which moved from lean Republican to likely Republican).

The shifts don't change the overall outlook we forecast in August -- either a slight strengthening of the GOP's strong lead in chambers or a small rollback by the Democrats. A big move in either direction continues to appear unlikely at this point, particularly given the close presidential race.

The GOP now controls 59 legislative chambers, the Democrats control 37 and two are tied. Nebraska has a unicameral, nonpartisan legislature. (A full breakdown of current margins in each of the state legislatures is provided courtesy of the National Conference of State Legislatures.)

As always, our assessment is based on interviews with dozens of state and national political sources. We rate chambers on the following scale: safe Republican, likely Republican, lean Republican, tossup, lean Democratic, likely Democratic and safe Democratic. The categories labeled "lean" and "tossup" are considered competitive or in play. Chambers in either of the

B 2

"likely" categories are not expected to change party control on Election Day, but it's possible that the minority party could net a few seats and nibble into the majority's lead.

The number of competitive chambers in our analysis actually dropped by once since August, with Pennsylvania's Republican House majority looking more solid than it did previously.

We now find 23 state legislative chambers to be in play. Nine chambers lean Republican (six of them are currently held by the GOP, two are held by the Democrats and one is tied). Six chambers are tossups (three are held by the Democrats and three by the GOP). And eight chambers lean Democratic (five are held by Democrats, two by the GOP and one is tied).

All told, the parties are at roughly equal risk. Ten Democratic chambers and 11 Republican chambers are in play, as are two tied chambers.

If our ratings prove accurate, then even if the Democrats manage to seize a few chambers away from the Republicans in 2012, they will still find themselves far behind the GOP in overall control of chambers on Election Night, and quite possibly for more election cycles beyond that.

We'll continue to analyze ongoing developments in the state legislatures as the election season progresses. Click a state in the map below to view our chamber-by-chamber ratings for each state.

State Legislature Control: U.S. Totals

Rating	Held by D	Held by R	Currently Tied	Total
Lean Republican	2	6	1	9
Tossup	3	3	0	6
Lean Democrat	5	2	1	8
Total	10	11	2	23

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Ratings changes shown in **bold** below.

State	Senate	House
Alabama	NR	NR
Alaska	Lean R	Safe R
Arizona	Likely R	Likely R
Arkansas	**Tossup → Lean R**	**Tossup → Lean R**
California	Safe D	Safe D
Colorado	Lean D	**Tossup → Lean D**
Connecticut	Safe D	Safe D
Delaware	Safe D	Safe D
Florida	Likely R	Likely R
Georgia	Safe R	Safe R
Hawaii	Safe D	Safe D
Idaho	Safe R	Safe R
Illinois	Safe D	Safe D
Indiana	Safe R	Safe R
Iowa	Tossup	Likely R
Kansas	Safe R	Safe R
Kentucky	Safe R	Lean D

Louisiana	NR	NR
Maine	Lean R	Lean D
Maryland	NR	NR
Massachusetts	Safe D	Safe D
Michigan	NR	Lean R
Minnesota	**Lean R → Tossup**	Tossup
Mississippi	NR	NR
Missouri	Safe R	Safe R
Montana	Safe R	Safe R
Nebraska	NR	--
Nevada	Tossup	Lean D
New Hampshire	Lean R	Lean R
New Jersey	NR	NR
New Mexico	Likely D	Lean D
New York	Tossup	Safe D
North Carolina	Likely R	Likely R
North Dakota	Safe R	Safe R
Ohio	Safe R	Lean R
Oklahoma	Safe R	Safe R
Oregon	Lean D	Lean D
Pennsylvania	Likely R	**Lean R → Likely R**

Rhode Island	Safe D	Safe D
South Carolina	Safe R	Safe R
South Dakota	Safe R	Safe R
Tennessee	Safe R	Safe R
Texas	Safe R	Safe R
Utah	Safe R	Safe R
Vermont	Safe D	Safe D
Virginia	NR	NR
Washington	Tossup	Likely D
West Virginia	Likely D	Likely D
Wisconsin	Lean R	Likely R
Wyoming	Safe R	Safe R

Changes to capsules

Arkansas

We said in August that it appears to be just a matter of time before the Arkansas legislature goes the way of its neighbors. And that time appears to be even closer than before. The Democrats -- more conservative than the national party -- have long been in charge in the Arkansas legislature, but their margins in both chambers have narrowed. After concerted Republican candidate recruiting, the Senate and House now rate as lean Republican. President Barack Obama's unpopularity, paired with a surge in

Republican strength across the state, has the wind strongly at the Republicans' back.

Colorado

Colorado continues to be a hard-fought presidential battleground state. The Democrats still look well positioned to keep their Senate majority, though with perhaps a seat or two fewer. The House, currently held a narrow GOP margin, now leans slightly Democratic. The Democrats likely benefited from redistricting and from a bitter battle over civil unions.

New York

We came close to shifting the narrowly divided Senate, currently held by the GOP, from tossup to lean Republican. The state should go heavily for Obama, but the GOP has a funding edge, and a combination of redistricting and retirements has meant the outlook remains fluid.

Minnesota

Both chambers in Minnesota flipped to the GOP in 2010, and both are competitive this year. Memories of the unpopular 2011 state government shutdown are a negative for the GOP in many state legislative races; polls suggest that voters blamed the Legislature more than Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton. Redistricting helped the Republicans' position in the Senate, but a few Republican incumbents are now unexpectedly facing tighter races. The GOP may lose one of two chambers, but it's now unclear which one.

Pennsylvania

The GOP took control of the state House in 2010; we have shifted our rating from lean Republican to likely Republican, given increasingly tough math for the Democrats. In the Senate, the Democrats could gain a little ground, but not enough to take over.

All other thumbnails stay the same

FINAL PRE-ELECTION 2012 (GOVERNING)

Lean Democratic

8. West Virginia

Likely Democratic

9. Missouri

Safe Democratic

10. Vermont

11. Delaware

STATE LEGISLATURES

State	Senate	House
Alabama	NR	NR
Alaska	Lean R	Safe R
Arizona	Likely R	Likely R
Arkansas	Lean R	Lean R
California	Safe D	Safe D
Colorado	Lean D	Lean D
Connecticut	Safe D	Safe D
Delaware	Safe D	Safe D
Florida	Likely R	Likely R
Georgia	Safe R	Safe R

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Hawaii	Safe D	Safe D
Idaho	Safe R	Safe R
Illinois	Safe D	Safe D
Indiana	Safe R	Safe R
Iowa	Tossup	Likely R
Kansas	Safe R	Safe R
Kentucky	Safe R	Lean D
Louisiana	NR	NR
Maine	Lean R	Lean D
Maryland	NR	NR
Massachusetts	Safe D	Safe D
Michigan	NR	Lean R
Minnesota	Tossup	Tossup
Mississippi	NR	NR
Missouri	Safe R	Safe R
Montana	Likely R	Safe R
Nebraska	NR	--
Nevada	Tossup	Lean D
New Hampshire	Lean R	Lean R
New Jersey	NR	NR
New Mexico	Likely D	Lean D

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3

New York	Tossup	Safe D
North Carolina	Likely R	Likely R
North Dakota	Safe R	Safe R
Ohio	Safe R	Lean R
Oklahoma	Safe R	Safe R
Oregon	Lean D	Lean D
Pennsylvania	Likely R	Likely R
Rhode Island	Safe D	Safe D
South Carolina	Safe R	Safe R
South Dakota	Safe R	Safe R
Tennessee	Safe R	Safe R
Texas	Safe R	Safe R
Utah	Safe R	Safe R
Vermont	Safe D	Safe D
Virginia	NR	NR
Washington	Tossup	Likely D
West Virginia	Likely D	Likely D
Wisconsin	Lean R	Likely R
Wyoming	Safe R	Safe R

STATE AG

http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/gov-2014-state-legislative-races-democrats-play-defense.html

Democrats Playing Defense in 2014 State Legislative Races

BY: Louis Jacobson | June 23, 2014

In the battle for control of the nation's state legislatures, there are fewer competitive chambers this year than at any time since at least 2002. Still, the Democrats have more chambers at risk this cycle -- and fewer options for flipping chambers held by the GOP.

The current partisan breakdown in state legislatures is 58 Republican-held chambers and 40 Democratic-held chambers. That's a slightly smaller margin than the 61 chambers the GOP controlled in 2012. Historically, though, it's a high GOP total. As recently as the run-up to the 2010 election, the Democrats held a 62 to 36 advantage in chambers.

Today, the GOP controls both chambers in 27 states, while the Democrats control both chambers in 19; three states have one chamber controlled by each party. (Nebraska's unicameral legislature is nonpartisan.)

At this point in the campaign cycle, we find 17 chambers that are vulnerable to a change in control in November. That's far fewer chambers in play at this point in the cycle than in 2012, when there were 24 in play. It's also fewer than the 27 in play at this point in the most recent midterm election, 2010. But keep in mind that it's still early; typically, a handful of additional chambers come into play between July and October.

What should worry Democrats -- beyond 2014 being the sixth year of a Democratic presidential term -- is that they have more chambers at risk than the Republicans do. Of the 17 at-risk chambers this year, 11 are currently held by the Democrats and only six are held by the GOP.

Ominously for the Democrats, this is only the second time during the seven cycles we've been handicapping that one party has been stuck with a significantly larger share of vulnerable chambers than the other. Generally, the at-risk chambers have been split more or less equally between the parties. Only in one prior cycle was there a lopsided division of at-risk chambers: in 2010. And that year, the Democrats suffered massive losses in state legislatures.

Of the 11 chambers at risk for the Democrats, six are rated either a tossup or lean Republican. One Democratic-held chamber already leans Republican: the New Hampshire House, thanks to a GOP-friendly redistricting map. Five other Democratic chambers are rated tossups: the Colorado Senate, the Iowa Senate, the Nevada Senate, the New Mexico House and the West Virginia House. The remaining at-risk chambers are currently rated lean Democratic: the Colorado House, the Kentucky House, the Maine Senate, the Minnesota House and the Oregon Senate.

Meanwhile, among GOP-held chambers, there's currently only one that we rate as a tossup, the New York Senate. Another five Republican-held chambers are leaning Republican: the Arkansas House, the Iowa House, the New Hampshire Senate, the Washington state Senate and the Wisconsin Senate.

If this mix of competitive chambers holds, it could leave the GOP poised to pick up two or three chambers this fall. If the GOP ends up having some wind at its back, Republicans could net as many as seven or eight chambers. With the breeze blowing the other way, the Democrats could max out at a net gain of two chambers.

At-Risk Chambers			
Rating	Held by D	Held by R	Total
Lean Republican	1	5	
Tossup	5	1	
Lean Democrat	5	0	
Total	11	6	17

A big reason why fewer chambers are in play in 2014 is a long-running realignment in the South in which Democratic chambers have steadily turned over to the GOP. Chambers once controlled by moderate-to-conservative Democrats in states like Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and North Carolina have been counted as vulnerable in recent cycles when the Democratic majorities were hanging on. Now, by contrast, they are solidly Republican -- so solid that they are no longer remotely competitive.

Another factor at play this year is the GOP's ability to solidify its recent legislative gains in a core group of purple states, mainly in the Midwest. Four states that Barack Obama won twice -- Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin -- are collectively home to eight GOP-majority chambers, seven of which are relatively safe for Republicans this year. If the Democrats had managed to put a few more of these chambers into play, the partisan split of at-risk chambers for 2014 would have been essentially even, rather than tilted against the Democrats. But they haven't.

As always, our assessment is based on interviews with dozens of state and national political sources. We rate chambers on the following scale: safe Republican, likely Republican, lean Republican, tossup, lean Democratic, likely Democratic and safe Democratic. The categories labeled "lean" and "tossup" are considered competitive or in play. Chambers in either of the "likely" categories are not expected to change party control on Election Day, but it's possible that the minority party could net a few seats and nibble into the majority's lead. The current partisan breakdown in each chamber comes from the National Conference of State Legislatures; seats that are vacant or held by third-party politicians are not included in the totals.

We'll continue to analyze ongoing developments in the state legislatures as the election season progresses.

ALABAMA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 23-11 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 66-37 R

The Republican takeover of the Alabama Legislature in 2010 won't be reversed any time soon, something that's also true in a number of other Southern states. The biggest competition for incumbent Alabama lawmakers came in the primaries; the Democrats aren't expected to gain much if any ground this fall.

ALASKA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 13-7 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 26-14 R

The bipartisan coalition that led the Senate from 2006 to 2012 is ancient history, thanks to a Republican-friendly redistricting in 2012. That leaves the GOP in good shape to retain solid control through at least the next redistricting after the 2020 Census. The only potential wild card is a citizen-

initiated ballot measure to overturn an oil tax bill; the tax bill in the measure's crosshairs, which was backed by Gov. Sean Parnell, cut oil-production taxes when prices are high. Its presence on the ballot could boost turnout, though any resulting Democratic gains in the legislature, if they materialize, would be on the margins.

ARIZONA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 17-13 R
House: Projected Likely R; Current 36-24 R

Arizona Republicans have been in control of the legislature for years, despite some intra-caucus friction between hard-liners and pragmatists. Even though Democrats can be competitive in Arizona, a midterm election doesn't seem like the party's best opportunity to make large gains. Smaller gains are possible, but at the end of the day, the GOP should be able to maintain control in both chambers.

ARKANSAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 22-13 R
House: Projected Lean R; Current 51-48 R

After a long period of Democratic control, the GOP took the majority in both Arkansas chambers in 2012. Its hold is solid in the Senate, but the House is more iffy, with Democrats needing to net just two seats in order to flip the chamber back. The GOP is still slightly favored, but Arkansas is ground zero for a lot of competitive races this fall, including an open-seat gubernatorial race and a hard-fought U.S. Senate contest. If a wave develops from the top of the ballot, legislative races could feel the impact.

CALIFORNIA

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 28-11 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 55-25 D

California Democrats are in no danger of losing their majorities in both chambers, particularly as Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown looks strong for another term in 2014. The only danger would come from losing their two-thirds supermajority, which allows the party in power to exercise their will on budgetary and other matters without minority input.

COLORADO

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 18-17 D
House: Projected Lean D; Current 37-28 D

In purple Colorado, the Democrats control both legislative chambers and the governorship. But their grip on the Senate hangs by a thread after two Democratic lawmakers were ousted in a recall election for taking pro-gun-control stances. A half-dozen seats could be competitive, leaving the chamber a tossup. The House, meanwhile, is a bit safer for the Democrats, though still competitive. Because it's an off-year, low turnout is expected, which could benefit Republicans. But Democrats could gain if the GOP's statewide slate strays too far to the right, as seems equally possible.

CONNECTICUT

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 21-14 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 98-53 D

Even though Democratic Gov. Dannel Malloy is facing a tough re-election campaign, Connecticut Democrats are in good shape to maintain their legislative majorities. They aren't expected to reach the two-thirds supermajority, however, that would allow the party to override gubernatorial vetoes, a power that would become especially important if the GOP ousts Malloy this fall.

DELAWARE

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 13-8 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 24-14 D

The Democrats will have no trouble holding on to their majorities in this blue state.

FLORIDA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 26-14 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 74-45 R

Despite a highly competitive gubernatorial race this fall and Florida's record as a purple state in presidential races, the GOP is in solid control of both chambers of the legislature. If the courts order Florida to redo its redistricting map -- a legal challenge is currently underway -- then the Democrats would have a better shot at picking up seats in 2016.

GEORGIA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 38-18 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 119-60 R

The GOP won a two-thirds supermajority in the state Senate in 2012, and just missed doing the same in the House. Achieving dual supermajorities could allow them to pass constitutional amendments without Democratic votes. The GOP stands ready to pick up another couple seats in the House this fall, making a second supermajority very possible. Either way, the GOP has a solid hold on both chambers.

HAWAII

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 24-1 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 44-7 D

Democratic Gov. Neil Abercrombie is experiencing a bumpy path to re-election, but in the legislature, Hawaii's Democratic majorities are ridiculously large. Even if the GOP manages to pick up seats, they'll still be far, far in the hole.

IDAHO

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-7 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 57-13 R

Both chambers in Idaho are solidly in Republican control. While the GOP has some internal divisions, the Democrats shouldn't be much of a factor for the foreseeable future.

ILLINOIS

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 40-19 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 71-47 D

The gubernatorial race -- a slugfest between unpopular Democratic incumbent Pat Quinn and deep-pocketed GOP businessman Bruce Rauner -- could have a trickle-down effect on state legislative contests if one of the candidates gets a strong upper hand. But the Democrats have big leads in both chambers, so the party would have to experience a major wipeout to lose its majorities. A likelier outcome is for the House Democratic supermajority to fall.

INDIANA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 37-13 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 69-31 R

Indiana's GOP majorities -- indeed, supermajorities -- are super-safe. In fact, the Republicans in the Senate could add another seat or two. Democrats are hoping that bigger turnout in the 2016 presidential election year could help them claw back a few House seats, though even then, gains in the Senate will be an uphill climb.

IOWA

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 26-24 D
House: Projected Lean R; Current 53-47 R

Iowa is one of a vanishing number of states with split legislative control. The Democratic edge in the Senate is narrow -- the GOP needs to flip just one seat to achieve a tie, and two to gain control. The GOP has a slightly larger margin in the House. The 2014 election features a relatively easy re-election bid by GOP Gov. Terry Branstad and a highly competitive open-seat U.S. Senate contest.

KANSAS

Senate: No Race; Current 32-8 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 92-33 R

GOP Gov. Sam Brownback's strongly conservative agenda has irked Democrats and moderate Republicans, making his re-election contest against Democrat Paul Davis unusually competitive. The GOP edge in the House -- the only chamber that will be contested this year -- is too massive for Democrats to pose much of a threat to Republican control. But the Democrats could gain on the margins, either by winning seats outright or by seeing moderate Republicans win seats in the August primary. A nine-seat House gain by Democrats would enable the party to thwart constitutional amendments.

KENTUCKY

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 23-14 R
House: Projected Lean D; Current 54-46 D

As most Southern legislative chambers have slipped away from the Democrats, the Kentucky House has somehow managed to remain the exception. The GOP would need a five-seat gain to take control, but that's unlikely as Republican efforts to recruit candidates turned out to be weaker than some expected. Meanwhile, the GOP-held Senate is in no danger of going Democratic. Kentucky is a big electoral battleground this year, as U.S. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell fights for his political life; it remains to be seen whether money spent on the Senate race will have a trickle-down effect on turnout for the legislature.

LOUISIANA

Senate: 26-13 R
House: 59-44 R

Neither chamber in Louisiana is contested this year.

MAINE

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 19-15 D
House: Projected Likely D; Current 89-58 D

The Maine Legislature has flipped back and forth in recent years, with the GOP taking over in 2010 and the Democrats seizing back control in 2012 (when Obama was at the top of the ballot). The Democrats' sizable majority in the state House looks durable for now, but the much narrower Democratic margin in the Senate makes a GOP takeover a possibility. The contest for the legislature hasn't fully jelled yet; much more attention is being paid to the hotly contested three-way gubernatorial race and an open-seat contest for the U.S. House.

MARYLAND

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 36-11 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 98-43 D

Races for state legislature have taken a back seat to the open-seat gubernatorial contest so far. Still, Democratic margins are large in both chambers, and no one expects GOP gains significant enough to eliminate Democratic supermajorities.

MASSACHUSETTS

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 36-4 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 131-29 D

The Democrats have massive margins in Massachusetts, and to the extent the state GOP is focusing its efforts on 2014, it's on the open-seat gubernatorial race where the Democrats are favored but not dominant.

MICHIGAN

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 26-12 R
House: Projected Likely R; Current 59-51 R

Michigan may be a purple-to-blue state in presidential races, but the GOP is sitting pretty in the legislature. The Democrats would need to gain five seats to take the majority in the House, but that's a stretch; they have some pickup opportunities, but also some vulnerable seats to protect. In the Senate, the best the Democrats can hope for is to end the GOP supermajority, but that's no lock, either. With a competitive gubernatorial race (Republican Rick Snyder is seeking a second term) and an open-seat U.S. Senate race, the legislature may not attract an enormous amount of attention or money this fall

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MINNESOTA

Senate: Current 39-28 D
House: Projected Lean D; Current 73-61

The GOP would need a net gain of seven seats to take control in the House. The Democratic margin in the Senate is solid and the chamber is not up this year. The state tends to lean Democratic, but that edge could be narrower in a low-turnout, midterm election.

MISSISSIPPI

Senate: 32-20 R
House: 65-57 RS

Neither chamber in Mississippi is contested this year.

MISSOURI

Senate:Projected Safe R; Current 24-9 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 108-52 R

Once a relatively competitive state, Missouri has taken a turn to the right. The large GOP margins in both chambers are utterly solid -- and important for the GOP's continuing skirmishes with moderate Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon.

MONTANA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 29-21 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 61-38 R

The Democrats may hold the Montana governorship, but the Republicans' grip on the legislature seems pretty solid. Thanks to the state's conservative bent and Democrats' increasing difficulty winning in rural areas, control of the House appears safe for the GOP and is only slightly less solid in the Senate. If the Democrats do manage to make gains, the best they'd be expected to do is to flip a seat or two. But in a midterm election year where a Democratic U.S. Senate seat is in deep jeopardy -- and amid concerns about President Obama's proposed rules on carbon emissions (an unpopular policy in energy-producing states) -- even that seems a stretch.

NEBRASKA

Senate: Unicameral/Nonpartisan

Nebraska's unicameral legislature is officially nonpartisan, so we do not handicap it.

NEVADA

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 11-10 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 27-15 D

The Democratic edge in the Assembly is one seat short of a supermajority and seems solid, despite the prospect of an easy re-election for GOP Gov. Brian Sandoval. The far more narrowly divided Senate is perennially under attack from the minority GOP. Three seats will be in play; the GOP has plausible contenders and a general election slate for statewide offices that's more of a draw for Republican voters. However, the districts lean modestly Democratic.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 13-11 R
House: Projected Lean R; Current 220-179 D

Democratic Gov. Maggie Hassan is favored to win re-election, but the Democrats may not be so lucky in the legislature. They currently control the state's massive 400-seat state House, but their reign could be short, since the Republicans benefit from a redistricting map favorable to their party. In a midterm election cycle that's more favorable to the GOP, it's entirely plausible for Republicans to net the 20 seats needed to flip the majority; after all, the chamber is known for experiencing wild swings. The much smaller state Senate is currently held by the Republicans, and the GOP has an ever-so-slight edge in keeping control.

NEW JERSEY

Senate: 24-16 D
House: 48-32 D

Neither chamber in New Jersey is contested this year.

NEW MEXICO

Senate: No Race; Current 25-17 D
House: Projected Tossup; Current 37-33 D

The state Senate isn't up this year, but control of the New Mexico House --which has been in the hands of Democrats since 1953 -- is up for grabs this year, with only a three-seat gain needed to flip the chamber. It doesn't hurt Republicans that it's a midterm election and that GOP Gov. Susana Martinez is favored to win a second term. Martinez is joined on the ticket by other Hispanic Republicans, making the ticket more ethnically diverse than in past years.

NEW YORK

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 32-29 R
House: Projected Safe D; Current 100-40 D

New York's Senate is as fluid as its House is rock-solid. A coalition of Republicans and maverick Democrats currently run the Senate. A midterm election gives the GOP a shot at winning control

outright, but the left-leaning Working Families Party is trying to get Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo to push for a more liberal Democratic majority. Overall, there are too many moving parts at this point to call the Senate anything but a tossup.

NORTH CAROLINA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 33-17 R
House:Projected Safe R; Current 77-43 R

North Carolina has been one of the most contentious state government battlegrounds over the past two years, thanks to the aggressively conservative agenda pursued by the House and Senate GOP majorities. But in an off-year election, the Democrats aren't expected to gain back much ground. The best the Democrats can hope for is to get the Republicans below the three-fifths supermajority threshold in one or both chambers. Considering that the GOP has a significant edge in fundraising and that competitive districts under the GOP-drawn map are relatively scarce, that seems like a stretch. The hotly contested U.S. Senate campaign between incumbent Democrat Kay Hagan and former GOP House Speaker Thom Tillis will likely be the biggest factor in driving turnout.

NORTH DAKOTA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 33-14 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 71-23 R

In solidly Republican North Dakota, both chambers are held by Republican supermajorities; they are safe.

OHIO

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 23-10 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 60-39 R

Ohio may swing in presidential races, but the GOP has a lock on both chambers of the legislature. At the beginning of this year, the Senate Republican caucus had a stunning 50 to 1 fundraising lead over the Democratic caucus, as well as a solid supermajority. The House GOP has a smaller, but still significant, fundraising advantage of about 20 to 1. House elections can be more volatile than the Senate, but at this point, no one expects a Democratic takeover.

OKLAHOMA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 36-12 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 72-29 R

The days when conservative Democrats ruled the Oklahoma Legislature are gone. The realignment toward Republicans in Oklahoma, hastened by Obama's unpopularity, ensures that the GOP will maintain supermajorities in both chambers.

OREGON

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 16-14 D
House: Projected Likely D; Current 34-26 D

Oregon has been such a solidly Democratic state in recent election cycles that it's not clear that the GOP will be able to take advantage of some breaks, notably the public's disaffection with the spectacular failure of the state health insurance marketplace under Democratic Gov. John Kitzhaber. Weighing down GOP hopes is a shortage of vulnerable seats and mediocre candidate recruitment. The narrowly divided Senate, currently controlled by the Democrats, is vulnerable to a tie or a flip. The Democrats have a somewhat more comfortable margin in the House.

PENNSYLVANIA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 27-23 R
House: Projected Likely R; Current 111-92 R

Republican Tom Corbett is the most vulnerable incumbent governor in the country, but the GOP's edge in the legislature seems reasonably solid. In the Senate, the Democrats would only need to flip three seats to take control of a chamber the GOP has long held, but the lineup of seats being contested is favorable to the Republicans. Meanwhile, in the House, the margin is wider, giving Republicans some room for error. If Corbett's re-election bid begins to be a down-ballot drag for the GOP, one or both of these chambers could shift to vulnerable. But there's no sign of that yet.

RHODE ISLAND

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 32-5 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 69-6 D

Rhode Island has one of the most lopsided legislatures in the nation. The Democrats have nothing to worry about.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Senate: Current 28-18 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 78-46 R

With a Republican-friendly redistricting map, there are few real competitive legislative elections on tap in South Carolina this cycle. While there's some skirmishing between establishment and Tea Party Republicans, both chambers will end up safely in the GOP camp. (The Senate is not being contested this year.)

SOUTH DAKOTA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-7 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 53-17 R

In solidly Republican South Dakota, the only relevant battles are between the establishment and Tea Party wings of the GOP. The Democrats aren't much of a factor here.

TENNESSEE

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 26-7 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 71-27 R

The GOP has a lock on the Tennessee Legislature.

TEXAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 19-12 R
House: Projected Safe R Current 95-55 R

Recent election cycles have demonstrated that Texas is growing ever-more conservative, so the GOP's current edge in the legislature seems rock solid. The House is poised to continue under the leadership of centrist conservative Joe Straus, while the Senate will most likely be run by Dan Patrick, the GOP nominee for the state's powerful position of lieutenant governor. (Democrats say Patrick may be too conservative to win over even Texas voters, but whether Democratic state Sen. Leticia Van de Putte can really knock him off remains to be seen.) Patrick is expected to relax the senate's longstanding two-thirds supermajority, which would effectively gut Democratic leverage in the chamber.

UTAH

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 24-5 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 61-14 R

The Utah Legislature is tilted massively toward the GOP. There's no chance of broad Democratic gains.

VERMONT

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 21-7 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 93-47 D

In solidly blue Vermont, the Democrats have strong majorities, and the third-party Progressives don't appear to be a threat to their control.

VIRGINIA

Senate: 20-19 R
House: 67-22 R

We won't be rating the legislature because it has no elections this year, but its volatile status demands a brief discussion regardless. The departure of a Democratic lawmaker from the tied state Senate -- flipping control of the chamber to the GOP, allegedly in exchange for a plum appointment (since turned down) and a judgeship for his daughter -- has resulted in much intrigue and a major headache for newly elected Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe. The governor had been hoping to expand Medicaid over GOP objections. The urgency of this dispute suggests there will be further machinations to come in the next few months.

WASHINGTON STATE

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 26-23 R
House: Projected Likely D; Current 55-43 D

The Democrats should be able to hold on to their majority in the House without much trouble, despite some strong recruiting by the GOP caucus. The Senate, currently controlled by the

Republicans and one Democrat as a bipartisan coalition, is more on the edge, with several pathways for one party or the other to gain ground.

WEST VIRGINIA

Senate: Projected Likely D; Current 24-10 D
House: Projected Tossup; Current 53-47 D

On the House side, the GOP could undo a Democratic run of control that began all the way back in 1928. Some think the GOP has an edge, but we're sticking with tossup for now. In the Senate, the Democrats should be able to hold on for at least one more cycle.

WISCONSIN

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 18-15 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 60-39 R

The Wisconsin Assembly has a huge Republican advantage; the GOP-led Senate is much tighter. Three Republican senators are leaving, giving Democrats a chance to return Wisconsin to divided government despite a pro-Republican redistricting map. The governor's race could play a major role by driving turnout in this highly polarized state. For now, GOP enthusiasm is running higher than Democratic enthusiasm, but if Democrat Mary Burke gains traction against incumbent Republican Gov. Scott Walker, that could boost Democratic hopes down ballot.

WYOMING

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 26-4 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 52-8 R

The Wyoming Legislature is lopsidedly Republican, and Democratic chances of even marginal gains likely evaporated with the Obama administration's issuance of proposed new regulations on carbon emissions.

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Only a Few 2014 Legislative Races Are Competitive

BY: Louis Jacobson | October 22, 2014

The battle for control of the nation's state legislatures has gotten a little bit more competitive since mid-summer -- but not a whole lot.

When *Governing* last rated the nation's legislative chambers in June, there were fewer competitive chambers than at any time since at least 2002. In the updated ratings, it appears six chambers in five states are more competitive.

Three chambers are shifting in the GOP's direction: Kentucky's House, from lean Democratic to tossup; Minnesota's House, from lean Democratic to tossup; and Nevada's Assembly, from safe Democratic to likely Democratic.

Three chambers are also shifting in the Democrats' direction -- Michigan's House from likely Republican to lean Republican, and both chambers in North Carolina from Safe Republican to Likely Republican.

In general, though, these shifts do not dramatically change this election cycle's overall landscape, which tilts against the Democrats. The Democrats still have more chambers at risk this cycle -- and limited options for flipping chambers held by the GOP.

All told, the GOP is poised to pick up two or three chambers this fall, though outcomes could range from a Democratic gain of two to a Republican gain of seven or eight.

The current partisan breakdown in state legislatures is 58 Republican-held chambers and 40 Democratic-held chambers. That's a slightly smaller margin than the 61 chambers the GOP controlled in 2012. Historically, though, it's a high GOP total. As recently as the run-up to the 2010 election, the Democrats held a 62 to 36 advantage in chambers.

Today, the GOP controls both chambers in 27 states, while the Democrats control both chambers in 19; three states have one chamber controlled by each party. (Nebraska's unicameral legislature is nonpartisan.)

Less than a month away from Election Day, there are 18 chambers vulnerable to a change in control, up by one from mid-summer. That's well below the number of chambers in play at this point in the cycle than in 2012, when there were 24 in play. It's also fewer than the 27 in play at this point in the most recent midterm election, 2010.

The Democrats do have more at risk this cycle. Not only is 2014 the sixth year of a Democratic presidential term, but they also have more chambers at risk than the Republicans do. Of the 18 at-risk chambers this year, 11 are currently held by the Democrats, compared to seven held by the GOP.

That said, the relatively small number of vulnerable chambers limits the Democrats' downside risk this year. And the modest number of adjustments made in this update contrast with the 2006 and

2010 cycles, when national partisan waves developed. Those years, *Governing* was shifting large numbers of chambers right up through Election Day. The Democrats' challenge stems less from a Republican headwind and more from the map they have faced since the beginning of this cycle.

Of the 11 chambers at risk for the Democrats, seven are rated either tossup or lean Republican. The Democratic-held chamber that leans Republican is the New Hampshire House, thanks to a GOP-friendly redistricting map. The seven Democratic-held tossup chambers are: the Colorado Senate, the Iowa Senate, the Nevada Senate, the New Mexico House, the West Virginia House and two new additions, the Kentucky House and the Minnesota House. The remaining at-risk chambers are currently rated lean Democratic: the Colorado House, the Maine Senate, and the Oregon Senate.

Meanwhile, among GOP-held chambers, there's currently only one that's a tossup, the New York Senate. Another six Republican-held chambers are leaning Republican: the Arkansas House, the Iowa House, the New Hampshire Senate, the Washington state Senate, the Wisconsin Senate, and one newly classified lean Republican chamber, the Michigan House.

The ratings shift for three chambers that aren't highly competitive. Nevada's Assembly shifted from safe Democratic to likely Democratic, and both chambers in North Carolina switched from safe Republican to likely Republican. In each of these chambers, the minority party has a chance of gaining ground on the majority, but not enough to wrest control.

The situation in North Carolina is the most interesting. There's been a backlash against the North Carolina GOP's conservative agenda, and while it probably won't be enough to flip the chambers this year, even Republicans acknowledge it could cut the party's margins in one or both chambers.

As always, assessment are based on interviews with dozens of state and national political sources. Chambers are rated on the following scale: safe Republican, likely Republican, lean Republican, tossup, lean Democratic, likely Democratic and safe Democratic. The categories labeled "lean" and "tossup" are considered competitive or in play. Chambers in either of the "likely" categories are not expected to change party control on Election Day, but it's possible that the minority party could net a few seats and nibble into the majority's lead. The current partisan breakdown in each chamber comes from the National Conference of State Legislatures; seats that are vacant or held by third-party politicians are not included in the totals.

Rating	Held by D	Held by R	Total
Lean Republican	1	6	7
Tossup	7	1	8
Lean Democrat	3	0	3
Total	11	7	18

ALABAMA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 23-11 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 66-37 R

The Republican takeover of the Alabama Legislature in 2010 won't be reversed any time soon, despite the Oct. 20 indictment of House Speaker Mike Hubbard, the architect of the takeover. The biggest competition for incumbent Alabama lawmakers came in the primaries, rather than the general election.

ALASKA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 13-7 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 26-14 R

The bipartisan coalition that led the Senate from 2006 to 2012 is ancient history, thanks to a Republican-friendly redistricting in 2012. That leaves the GOP in good shape to retain solid control through at least the next redistricting after the 2020 Census. While the gubernatorial race was shaken up with the creation of a fusion ticket between an Independent and a Democrat, there isn't much reason to think it will change the calculus for legislative races.

ARIZONA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 17-13 R
House: Projected Likely R; Current 36-24 R

Arizona Republicans have been in control of the legislature for years, despite some intra-caucus friction between hard-liners and pragmatists. Even though Democrats can be competitive in Arizona – including in this year's gubernatorial race – it's not clear that the party can count on coattails, especially in a midterm election. Smaller gains are possible, but at the end of the day, the GOP should be able to maintain control in both chambers.

ARKANSAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 22-13 R
House: Projected Lean R; Current 51-48 R

After a long period of Democratic control, the GOP took the majority in both Arkansas chambers in 2012. Its hold is solid in the Senate, but the House is more iffy, with Democrats needing to net just two seats in order to flip the chamber back. The battle will be waged district by district, though the GOP is still slightly favored, since Republicans are now slightly favored in both the open-seat gubernatorial race and a hard-fought U.S. Senate contest – a lean that could translate into other races.

CALIFORNIA

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 28-11 D
Assembly: Projected Safe D; Current 55-25 D

California Democrats are in no danger of losing their majorities in both chambers, particularly as Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown looks strong for another term in 2014. The only danger would come from losing their two-thirds supermajority, which allows the party in power to exercise their will on budgetary and other matters without minority input. The odds are slightly on the side of Democrats keeping their two-thirds majorities in both chambers, though in the Senate, it could take until a special election in December.

COLORADO

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 18-17 D
House: Projected Lean D; Current 37-28 D

In purple Colorado, the Democrats control both legislative chambers and the governorship. But their grip on the Senate hangs by a thread after two Democratic lawmakers were ousted in a recall election for taking pro-gun-control stances. A half-dozen seats are competitive, including the two recall seats. Republicans feel good about their chances, but too much remains up in the air to move the Senate away from tossup. The House also stays at Lean Democratic.

CONNECTICUT

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 21-14 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 98-53 D

Even though Democratic Gov. Dannel Malloy is facing a tough re-election campaign, Connecticut Democrats are in good shape to maintain their legislative majorities. They aren't expected to reach the two-thirds supermajority, however, that would allow the party to override gubernatorial vetoes, a power that would become especially important if the GOP ousts Malloy this fall.

DELAWARE

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 13-8 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 24-14 D

The Democrats will have no trouble holding on to their majorities in this blue state.

FLORIDA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 26-14 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 74-45 R

Despite a highly competitive gubernatorial race this fall and Florida's history as a purple state in presidential races, the GOP is in solid control of both chambers of the legislature.

GEORGIA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 38-18 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 119-60 R

The GOP won a two-thirds supermajority in the state Senate in 2012, and just missed doing the same in the House. Achieving dual supermajorities could allow them to pass constitutional amendments without Democratic votes. The GOP stands ready to pick up another couple seats in the House this fall, making a second supermajority possible. While the Democrats are finding stronger-than-expected prospects in the gubernatorial and U.S. Senate races in the state, the GOP should have a solid hold on both chambers.

HAWAII

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 24-1 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 44-7 D

Democratic Gov. Neil Abercrombie was ousted in a primary, and the winner of the three-way general election for governor is anybody's guess. But in the legislature, Hawaii's Democratic majorities are ridiculously large. Even if the GOP manages to pick up seats, they'll still be far, far in the hole.

IDAHO

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-7 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 57-13 R

Both chambers in Idaho are solidly in Republican control. While the GOP has some internal divisions, the Democrats shouldn't be much of a factor for the foreseeable future.

ILLINOIS

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 40-19 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 71-47 D

A weak Democratic gubernatorial candidate -- unpopular incumbent Pat Quinn, locked in a close race with deep-pocketed GOP businessman Bruce Rauner – could cost Democrats their supermajority in the House, but the party should remain in power in both chambers, thanks to the strongly advantageous, Democratic-drawn redistricting map. Of the 19 seats up in the Senate this year, only two are considered competitive, so the best plausible outcome the Republicans is perhaps 20 out of 59 seats.

Meanwhile, in the House, only 47 of 118 seats are even contested, and perhaps 10 are competitive.

INDIANA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 37-13 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 69-31 R

Indiana's GOP majorities are super-safe; in fact, the Republicans in the Senate could add another seat or two. Democrats are hoping that bigger turnout in the 2016 presidential election year could help them claw back a few House seats, though even then, gains in the Senate will be an uphill climb. Some Democrats hope to they might be able to win back enough seats to bust the GOP quorum-proof majority, but even if they win some of their targeted seats, they run the risk of losing some others and ending up with a wash.

IOWA

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 26-24 D
House: Projected Lean R; Current 53-47 R

Iowa is one of a vanishing number of states with split legislative control. The Democratic edge in the Senate is narrow -- the GOP needs to flip just one seat to achieve a tie, and two to gain control. The GOP has a slightly larger margin in the House. The 2014 election features a relatively easy re-election bid by GOP Gov. Terry Branstad and a highly competitive open-seat U.S. Senate contest;

better-than-expected results by either Branstad or Republican Senate candidate Joni Ernst could have an impact on legislative races.

KANSAS

Senate: No Races; Current 32-8 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 92-33 R

GOP Gov. Sam Brownback's strongly conservative agenda has irked Democrats and moderate Republicans, making his re-election contest against Democrat Paul Davis unusually competitive. The GOP edge in the House -- the only chamber that will be contested this year -- is too massive for Democrats to pose much of a threat to Republican control. But the traditional Democratic-moderate Republican coalition may well gain at the margins, with several moderate Republicans prevailing in primary elections and Democrats possibly picking up a few seats. This might be enough to thwart proposed constitutional amendments that require a two-thirds majority.

KENTUCKY

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 23-14 R
House: Projected Tossup; Current 54-46 D (Shift from Lean D)

As most Southern legislative chambers have slipped away from the Democrats, the Kentucky House has somehow managed to remain the exception. The GOP would need a five-seat gain to take control. An influx of money will help the GOP cause, as would the prospect of party switchers joining the fold if the GOP ends up on Election Night with a one- or two-seat deficit. A flip is no slam-dunk, but in a midterm election where the GOP has a good environment, caution means shifting this from Lean Democratic to tossup. Meanwhile, the GOP-held Senate is in no danger of going Democratic.

LOUISIANA

Senate: 26-13 R
House: 59-44 R

Neither chamber in Louisiana is contested this year.

MAINE

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 19-15 D
House: Projected Likely D; Current 89-58 D

The Maine Legislature has flipped back and forth in recent years, with the GOP taking over in 2010 and the Democrats seizing back control in 2012 (when Obama was at the top of the ballot). The Democrats' sizable majority in the state House looks durable for now, but the much narrower Democratic margin in the Senate makes a GOP takeover a possibility. Any impact from the hotly contested gubernatorial race is tough to predict, since it’s a three-way contest.

MARYLAND

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 36-11 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 98-43 D

Races for state legislature have taken a back seat to the open-seat gubernatorial contest so far, and Republicans are doing better than expected in the gubernatorial contest. Still, Democratic margins are large in both chambers, and no one expects GOP gains significant enough to eliminate Democratic supermajorities.

MASSACHUSETTS

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 36-4 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 131-29 D

While the gubernatorial race is proving to be much tougher than Democratic nominee Martha Coakley might have expected just a few months ago, the Democrats have massive margins in Massachusetts. Whoever wins the governorship, it won't make a difference in the state House and Senate.

MICHIGAN

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 26-12 R
House: Projected Lean R; Current 59-51 R (shift from Likely R)

The GOP hold in the Senate is secure, but the House is looking somewhat competitive. The Democrats would need to gain five seats to take the majority in the House. That's looking slightly more plausible than a few months ago -- they have a few strong candidates in open races and their vulnerable incumbents seem to be hanging on. Still, the GOP has some good prospects of their own, so they maintain the advantage. The House race shifts from Likely Republican to Lean Republican.

MINNESOTA

Senate: No races; Current 39-28 D
House: Projected Tossup; Current 73-61 D (shift from Lean D)

The GOP would need a net gain of seven seats to take control in the House. Several vulnerable Democratic-Farmer-Labor seats are in GOP-leaning districts, and a GOP net pickup of seven seats is conceivable. Control of the chamber could hinge on narrow margins in a few of the 134 districts. Meanwhile, the solidly Democratic Senate is not up this year.

MISSISSIPPI

Senate: 32-20 R
House: 65-57 RS

Neither chamber in Mississippi is contested this year.

MISSOURI

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 24-9 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 108-52 R

Once a relatively competitive state, Missouri has taken a turn to the right. The large GOP margins in both chambers are utterly solid -- and important for the GOP's continuing skirmishes with moderate Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon. The Republican majority is so lopsided that Republicans have been able to override Nixon's vetoes.

MONTANA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 29-21 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 61-38 R

The Democrats may hold the Montana governorship, but the GOP maintains a sizable enthusiasm gap over Democrats in the state, and as a result, their grip on the legislature is solid. Thanks to the state's conservative bent and Democrats' increasing difficulty winning in rural areas, control of the House appears safe for the GOP and is only slightly less solid in the Senate. But in a midterm election year where a Democratic U.S. Senate seat is in all but flipped -- and amid concerns about President Obama's proposed rules on carbon emissions (an unpopular policy in energy-producing states) -- even minor Democratic gains are implausible.

NEBRASKA

Senate: Unicameral/Nonpartisan

Nebraska's unicameral legislature is officially nonpartisan, *Governing* doesn't handicap it.

NEVADA

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 11-10 D
Assembly: Projected Likely D; Current 27-15 D (Shift from Safe D)

The Democratic edge in the Assembly is one seat short of a supermajority and seems likely to hold, but the prospect of an easy re-election for GOP Gov. Brian Sandoval – and a lead in early balloting for the GOP -- could pull some seats the GOP's way. As a result, we're moving the Assembly from Safe Democratic to Likely Democratic; if the GOP surge continues, we might push it further before Election Day. The far more narrowly divided Senate is perennially under attack from the minority GOP. Republican prospects in the Senate have increased since our last handicapping. Three seats will be in play; the GOP has plausible contenders and a general election slate for statewide offices that's more of a draw for Republican voters. However, the districts, all in Clark County (Las Vegas), lean modestly Democratic. This is the GOP's strongest takeover chance in recent years, but for now, but being cautious keeps the rating at tossup.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 13-11 R
House: Projected Lean R; Current 220-179 D

Democratic Gov. Maggie Hassan is favored to win re-election, but the Democrats may not be so lucky in the legislature. They currently control the state's massive 400-seat state House, but their reign could be short, since the Republicans benefit from a redistricting map favorable to their party. In a midterm election cycle that's more favorable to the GOP, it's entirely plausible for Republicans to net the 20 seats needed to flip the majority; after all, the chamber is known for experiencing wild

swings. The much smaller state Senate is currently held by the Republicans, and the GOP has an ever-so-slight edge in keeping control.

NEW JERSEY

Senate: 24-16 D
Assembly: 48-32 D

Neither chamber in New Jersey is contested this year.

NEW MEXICO

Senate: No Race; Current 25-17 D
House: Projected Tossup; Current 37-33 D

The state Senate isn't up this year, but control of the New Mexico House --which has been in the hands of Democrats since 1953 -- is up for grabs this year, with only a three-seat gain needed to flip the chamber. It doesn't hurt Republicans that it's a midterm election and that GOP Gov. Susana Martinez is favored to win a second term. Martinez is joined on the ticket by other Hispanic Republicans – and women -- making the ticket more diverse than in past years. It's a tossup, but it's clear that this is a major opportunity for the Republicans.

NEW YORK

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 29-26 R (8 Independent or Vacant)
Assembly: Projected Safe D; Current 100-40 D

New York's Senate is as fluid as its House is rock-solid. A coalition of Republicans and maverick Democrats currently run the Senate, and Republicans have taken comfort in some recent polls. However, there are too many moving parts with choices about party affiliation to call the Senate anything but a tossup.

NORTH CAROLINA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 33-17 R (Shift from Safe R)
House: Projected Likely R; Current 77-43 R (Shift from Safe R)

North Carolina has been one of the most contentious state government battlegrounds over the past two years, thanks to the aggressively conservative agenda pursued by the House and Senate GOP majorities. This appears to have sparked some backlash – the GOP U.S. Senate candidate, state House Speaker Thom Tillis, is struggling in his bid to oust Democratic incumbent Kay Hagan for that very reason. In addition, the Democratic-aligned outside groups are better organized and better funded than they were in 2010 and 2012, when GOP outside groups dominated.

So it's now looking plausible for Democrats to peel back a few seats in one or both chambers, especially in districts anchored by urban counties like Wake, Buncombe and New Hanover. While it's not a slam dunk Republicans will lose their supermajorities, it's now within the realm of possibility. And if so, that would set up Democrats, if they can get their organizational act together, to make a serious challenge for control of one chamber or other in 2016, despite districts drawn to favor Republicans.

NORTH DAKOTA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 33-14 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 71-23 R

In solidly Republican North Dakota, both chambers are held by Republican supermajorities; they are safe.

OHIO

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 23-10 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 60-39 R

Ohio may swing in presidential races, but the GOP has a lock on both chambers of the legislature. With the legislative picture bleak, the Democrats suffered a further blow with the implosion of gubernatorial candidate Ed FitzGerald amid personal questions. It might even be enough to add marginally to the GOP lead in one chamber or the other.

OKLAHOMA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 36-12 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 72-29 R

The days when conservative Democrats ruled the Oklahoma Legislature are gone. The realignment toward Republicans in Oklahoma, hastened by Obama's unpopularity, ensures that the GOP will maintain supermajorities in both chambers.

OREGON

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 16-14 D
House: Projected Likely D; Current 34-26 D

Oregon has been such a solidly Democratic state in recent election cycles that it's not clear that the GOP will be able to take advantage of some breaks, notably the public's disaffection with the spectacular failure of the state health insurance marketplace under Democratic Gov. John Kitzhaber. Weighing down GOP hopes is a shortage of vulnerable seats and mediocre candidate recruitment. The narrowly divided Senate, currently controlled by the Democrats, is vulnerable to a tie; a flip looks more unlikely for Republicans than it did a few months ago, and an extension of the Democratic edge looks more plausible than it did previously. It stays at Lean Democratic. In the House, meanwhile, the Democrats have a somewhat more comfortable margin.

PENNSYLVANIA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 27-23 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 111-92 R

Republican Tom Corbett is the most vulnerable incumbent governor in the country, but the GOP's edge in the legislature seems reasonably solid. In the Senate, the Democrats would only need to flip three seats to take control of a chamber the GOP has long held, but the lineup of seats being contested is favorable to the Republicans. Meanwhile, in the House, the margin is wider, giving

Republicans some room for error. If Corbett's re-election bid begins to be a down-ballot drag for the GOP, one or both of these chambers could shift to vulnerable. But there's no sign of that yet.

RHODE ISLAND

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 32-5 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 69-6 D

Rhode Island has one of the most lopsided legislatures in the nation. Regardless of what happens in the competitive open-seat gubernatorial race, the Democrats have nothing to worry about.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Senate: No races; Current 28-18 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 78-46 R

With a Republican-friendly redistricting map, there are few real competitive legislative elections on tap in South Carolina this cycle. While there's some skirmishing between establishment and Tea Party Republicans, both chambers will end up safely in the GOP camp. (The Senate is not being contested this year.)

SOUTH DAKOTA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-7 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 53-17 R

In solidly Republican South Dakota, the only relevant battles are between the establishment and Tea Party wings of the GOP. The Democrats aren't much of a factor here.

TENNESSEE

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 26-7 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 71-27 R

The GOP has a lock on the Tennessee Legislature.

TEXAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 19-12 R
House: <Projected Safe R; Current 95-55 R

Recent election cycles have demonstrated that Texas is growing ever-more conservative, so the GOP's current edge in the legislature seems rock solid. The House is poised to continue under the leadership of centrist conservative Joe Straus, while the Senate will almost certainly be run by Dan Patrick, the GOP nominee for the state's powerful position of lieutenant governor. Patrick is conservative even by Texas standards, and he’s expected to relax the senate's longstanding two-thirds supermajority, probably to three-fifths, which would effectively gut any remaining Democratic leverage in the chamber.

UTAH

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 24-5 R
House: Projected Safe R; Current 61-14 R

The Utah Legislature is tilted massively toward the GOP. There's no chance of broad Democratic gains.

VERMONT

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 21-7 D
House: Projected Safe D; Current 98-44 D

In solidly blue Vermont, the Democrats have strong majorities, so any marginal gains by the GOP should not make a difference. There are a handful of Progressive Party and Independent legislators, but their numbers are not big enough to make a practical difference in control.

VIRGINIA

Senate: 20-18 R
House: 67-32 R

There's no reason to rate the Legislature because it has no regular elections this year. However, a vacancy in one safe Democratic Senate district means that a special election will be on the ballot in November. Either way, the GOP will retain the control it won with the departure of a Democratic lawmaker from the previously tied chamber – a watershed development that effectively blocked key agenda items being pursued by newly elected Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe.

WASHINGTON STATE

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 26-23 R
House: Projected Likely D; Current 55-43 D

It’s looking like a status-quo election in Washington state. The Democrats look likely to hold on to their House majority, and the Republicans are modestly favored to keep their coalition in the state Senate, which they currently exercise with 24 Republicans and two Democrats. One of those Democrats is retiring, but the GOP appears to pick up an open seat of a retiring minority Democrat incumbent, which along with the the remaining GOP-caucusing Democrat, will be enough to continue their coalition. In the House, the GOP could notch a couple of seats -- too few to flip control, but possibly enough to hand the majority some tough votes on fiscal issues next year.

WEST VIRGINIA

Senate: Projected Likely D; Current 24-10 D
House: Projected Tossup; Current 53-47 D

On the House side, the GOP could undo a Democratic run of control that began all the way back in 1928. Some think the GOP has an edge, but it's a tossup for now. In the Senate, the Democrats should be able to hold on for at least one more cycle.

WISCONSIN

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 17-15 R
Assembly: Projected Safe R; Current 60-39 R

The Wisconsin Assembly has a huge Republican advantage; the GOP-led Senate is much tighter. Four Republican senators are leaving, two in competitive districts, giving Democrats a chance to return Wisconsin to divided government despite a pro-Republican redistricting map. But for that to happen, Democrat Mary Burke would need to provide some coattails downballot; she's locked in a tight race with incumbent Gov. Scott Walker.

WYOMING

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 26-4 R
Assembly: Projected Safe R; Current 52-8 R

The Wyoming Legislature is lopsidedly Republican, and Democratic chances of even marginal gains likely evaporated with the Obama administration's issuance of proposed new regulations on carbon emissions.

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http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/gov-ratings-roundup-2014-statewide-elections.html

Ratings Roundup: 2014 Statewide Elections

BY: Louis Jacobson | October 30, 2014

Election Day isn't just a day of reckoning for candidates, it's a day of reckoning for us, too.

Over the past 24 months, we've been publishing periodic ratings that handicap the nation's gubernatorial races, state attorney general contests and partisan control in the state legislative chambers. Now, before Election Night, we're putting them all together in one final frenzy of ratings that readers can use as a guide to watching the returns.

Over the past few weeks, we've noticed a modest breeze blowing in the direction of the Republicans in some select states. In gubernatorial races, we've decided to shift two states' ratings in the GOP's favor -- New Mexico and Rhode Island. In state AG races, three states are moving into the GOP's camp -- Texas, Utah and Nevada. And in the fight to control the nation's legislatures, we're shifting two states in the Republican direction, the Connecticut Senate and the Nevada General Assembly.

The only race we're shifting towards the Democrats is the New Mexico AG race.

Given that we have been tracking more than 150 races or chambers, that's a pretty strong degree of stability in the electoral picture. This, despite how close this year's gubernatorial races have been. We currently rate no fewer than 18 of the 36 seats being contested as "competitive," meaning they're either tossups or leaning to one party or the other. One additional race -- in Pennsylvania -- is already considered likely to switch parties.

Of these 18 competitive seats, 12 are considered tossups. That's a huge number. In 2010 -- the last cycle with so many governors races contested -- we counted only seven tossup contests. This large number of tossups greatly complicates the job of handicapping for us, due to the methodology we use for our ratings.

For the gubernatorial and AG races, we not only offer a rating, such as tossup or lean Democratic, but also a rank ordering. That is, the list can be viewed as a continuum between the states or races most likely to go Republican (at the top) and the states most likely to go Democratic (at the bottom). The idea is that, once the results are in, we should be able to draw a line somewhere in the middle of the tossup category and divide the seats won by the GOP from the seats won by the Democrats.

For the gubernatorial races, we achieved this result in 2012 and were off by just one contest in 2010. But with 12 tossup races clustering around the middle this year, there's a much higher chance that the middle of our list will end up being jumbled between Republican-won and Democratic-won seats.

Currently, the Republicans hold the lead in governorships: 29 seats to the Democrats' 21. The range of possible Election Day outcomes for gubernatorial races is broad -- a net gain of nine or 10 seats for either party is possible. However, if a strong national wave doesn't materialize and the contests are decided more or less on their own merits, than a net gain of one or two seats for the Democrats seems likeliest.

Similarly, with attorney general contests, it's possible that either party could net up to five seats on Election Day, but without a strong wave, the likeliest outcome would be either no net change or a gain of one seat in either party's direction. Currently, the Democrats hold 26 seats to the Republicans 24. The Democrats' lead in popularly elected AGs is narrower -- 22 seats to 21.

Finally, in the state legislatures, the GOP is poised to pick up three to four chambers, though the outcomes could range from a Democratic gain of one or two to a Republican gain of eight or nine. The current partisan breakdown in state legislatures is 58 Republican-held chambers and 40 Democratic-held chambers.

With that, our latest ratings:

GOVERNORS

Safe Republican

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval (R)
Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam (R)
Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead (R)
South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard (R)
Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin (R)
Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad (R)
Texas: Open seat; held by Gov. Rick Perry (R)
Ohio Gov. John Kasich (R)
Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley (R)
Idaho Gov. Butch Otter (R)
New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez (R) (Shift from likely Republican)

Likely Republican

Nebraska: Open seat; held by Gov. Dave Heineman (R)
South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley (R)

Lean Republican

Arkansas: Open seat; held by Gov. Mike Beebe (D)
Arizona: Open seat, held by Gov. Jan Brewer (R)

Tossup

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder (R)
Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal (R)
Alaska Gov. Sean Parnell (R)
Massachusetts: Open seat; held by Gov. Deval Patrick (D)
Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback (R)
Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (R)
Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy (D)
Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper (D)
Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn (D)
Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R)

Maine Gov. Paul LePage (R)
Rhode Island: Open seat, held by Gov. Lincoln Chafee (D) (Shift from lean Democratic)

Lean Democratic

New Hampshire Gov. Maggie Hassan (D)
Maryland: Open seat; held by Gov. Martin O'Malley (D)
Hawaii: open seat, Gov. Neil Abercrombie (D) defeated in primary
Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber (D)

Likely Democratic

Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton (D)
Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett (R)

Safe Democratic

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D)
California Gov. Jerry Brown (D)
Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin (D)

ATTORNEYS GENERAL

Safe Republican

Oklahoma AG Scott Pruitt (R)
South Dakota AG Marty Jackley (R)
North Dakota AG Wayne Stenehjem (R)
Idaho AG Lawrence Wasden (R)
South Carolina AG Alan Wilson (R)
Nebraska: Open seat; held by Jon Bruning (R)
Kansas AG Derek Schmidt (R)
Texas: Open seat; held by Greg Abbott (R) (Shift from likely Republican)

Likely Republican

Alabama AG Luther Strange (R)
Ohio AG Mike DeWine (R)
Utah AG Sean Reyes (R) (Shift from lean Republican)

Lean Republican

Colorado: Open seat; held by John Suthers (R)
Florida AG Pam Bondi (R)
Georgia AG Sam Olens (R)
Michigan AG Bill Schuette (R)

Tossup

Arkansas: Open seat; held by Dustin McDaniel (D)
Arizona: Open seat; held by Tom Horne (R)

Wisconsin: Open seat; held by J.B. Van Hollen (R)
Nevada: Open seat; held by Catherine Cortez Masto (D) (Shift from lean Democratic)

Lean Democratic

New Mexico: Open seat; held by Gary King (D) (Shift from tossup)
Rhode Island AG Peter Kilmartin (D)

Likely Democratic

New York AG Eric Schneiderman (D)
Iowa AG Tom Miller (D)
Illinois AG Lisa Madigan (D)

Safe Democratic

Massachusetts: Open seat; held by Martha Coakley (D)
Minnesota AG Lori Swanson (D)
Maryland: Open seat; held by Doug Gansler (D)
Connecticut AG George Jepsen (D)
Delaware: Open seat; held by Beau Biden (D)
California AG Kamala Harris (D)
Vermont AG Bill Sorrell (D)

STATE LEGISLATURES

Alabama

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Alaska

Senate: Projected likely R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Arizona

Senate: Projected likely R; currently R-held
House: Projected likely R; currently R-held

Arkansas

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected lean R; currently R-held

California

Senate: Projected safe D; currently D-held
Assembly: Projected safe D; currently D-held

Colorado

Senate: Projected tossup; currently D-held
House: Projected lean D; currently D-held

Connecticut

Senate: Projected likely D; currently D-held (Shift from safe Democratic)
House: Projected safe D; currently D-held

Delaware

Senate: Projected safe D; currently D-held
House: Projected safe D; currently D-held

Florida

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Georgia

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Hawaii

Senate: Projected safe D; currently D-held
House: Projected safe D; currently D-held

Idaho

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Illinois

Senate: Projected safe D; currently D-held
House: Projected safe D; currently D-held

Indiana

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Iowa

Senate: Projected tossup; currently D-held
House: Projected lean R; currently R-held

Kansas

Senate: No races; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Kentucky

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected tossup; currently D-held

Louisiana

No races, both chambers R-held

Maine

Senate: Projected lean D; currently D-held
House: Projected likely D; currently D-held

Maryland

Senate: Projected safe D; currently D-held
House: Projected safe D; currently D-held

Massachusetts

Senate: Projected safe D; currently D-held
House: Projected safe D; currently D-held

Michigan

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected lean R; currently R-held

Minnesota

Senate: No races; currently D-held
House: Projected tossup; currently D-held

Mississippi

No races, both chambers R-held

Missouri

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Montana

Senate: Projected likely R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Nebraska

Senate: Unicameral/nonpartisan

Nevada

Senate: Projected tossup; currently D-held
Assembly: Projected tossup; currently D-held (shift from Likely Republican)

New Hampshire

Senate: Projected lean R; currently R-held
House: Projected lean R; currently D-held

New Jersey

No races, both chambers D-held

New Mexico

Senate: No race; currently D-held
House: Projected tossup; currently D-held

New York

Senate: Projected rossup; currently R-held
Assembly: Projected safe D; currently D-held

North Carolina

Senate: Projected likely R; currently R-held
House: Projected likely R; currently R-held

North Dakota

Senate: Projected safe R; Ccurrently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Ohio

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Oklahoma

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Oregon

Senate: Projected lean D; currently D-held
House: Projected likely D; currently D-held

Pennsylvania

Senate: Projected likely R; currently R-held
House: Projected likely R; currently R-held

Rhode Island

Senate: Projected safe D; currently D-held
House: Projected safe D; currently D-held

South Carolina

Senate: No races; currently R-held
House: Projected Safe R; Currently R-held

South Dakota

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Tennessee

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Texas

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Utah

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
House: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Vermont

Senate: Projected safe D; currently D-held
House: Projected safe D; currently D-held

Virginia

No races, both chambers are R-held

Washington

Senate: Projected lean R; currently R-held
House: Projected likely D; currently D-held

West Virginia

Senate: Projected likely D; currently D-held
House: Projected tossup; currently D-held

Wisconsin

Senate: Projected lean R; currently R-held
Assembly: Projected safe R; currently R-held

Wyoming

Senate: Projected safe R; currently R-held
Assembly: Projected safe R; currently R-held

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Handicapping the 2016 State Legislative Races

Near rock bottom in state chambers, Democrats are hoping to capitalize on a presidential year.

BY: Louis Jacobson | May 19, 2016

If you look at a map of the United States, divided by state legislative districts, you'll see a very red America with a few splotches of blue. Since Republicans flipped nine Democratic-held chambers in 2014, they've been firmly in control of a majority of state legislatures. While the Republican lead won't disappear in 2016, Democrats can be confident they'll regain a bit of ground this November.

Currently, the GOP controls 68 chambers to the Democrats' 30. That's a historically high level for Republicans. As recently as the run-up to the 2010 election, Democrats held a 62-to-36 advantage. Now, Republicans hold both the Senate and House in 30 states, Democrats hold both in 12 states, and the chambers are split in seven.

This means the GOP will have to defend more chambers this fall, which is just one factor that favors Democrats this cycle. Another is that it's a presidential year, so turnout will be higher than in midterm elections, a pattern that tends to benefit Democrats.

But potentially the biggest factor helping Democrats in state legislative elections will be Donald Trump, a uniquely divisive candidate. His presence atop the ballot worries many Republicans who track state legislatures.

It's still a long way to November, and recent polls showing a closer race between Trump and Hillary Clinton is an important reminder that things could change. But at least for now, Trump's expected nomination is increasing the number of chambers we've rated as "in play."

In our handicapping below -- the first of the 2016 cycle -- we find 27 chambers in play, of which 18 are currently held by the GOP and nine are held by the Democrats. Of the 18 GOP-held chambers, 11 lean Republican and seven are tossups. Of the nine Democratic-held chambers, eight are lean Democratic, with only one tossup.

That's a relatively large number of chambers in play, and it's also the best ratio of Democratic vulnerable chambers to Republican vulnerable chambers in several cycles. Democrats could gain a half-dozen chambers back this cycle, and if the backlash to Trump turns out to be strong, Democratic gains could be even bigger.

One complication is that even if Trump loses by a large margin nationally, he could actually boost Republican candidates running in state legislative districts that have a conservative Democratic lean, particularly blue-collar areas in the Midwest and Northeast.

Either way, a lot depends on who ultimately wins the presidency. That person, said Tim Storey, a longtime elections analyst with the National Conference of State Legislatures, has a good shot at getting a boost in legislative elections. In the 29 elections since 1900, the party winning the White

House has gained seats in 21 of them. The average gain during a presidential year is 192 seats nationally. "The top of the ticket really matters," Storey said.

The Republican-held chambers that are currently rated as tossups are the Colorado Senate, the Maine Senate, the Nevada Senate and Assembly, the New Hampshire Senate, the New Mexico House and the New York Senate.

The Republican chambers that are rated lean Republican are the Arizona Senate and House, the Michigan House, the Minnesota House, the New Hampshire House, the North Carolina Senate and House, the Washington state Senate, the West Virginia Senate, and the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly.

The one Democratic-held chamber currently rated a tossup is the Connecticut Senate.

The Democratic chambers currently rated lean Democratic are the Colorado House, the Connecticut House, the Iowa Senate, the Kentucky House, the Maine House, the Minnesota Senate, the New Mexico Senate and the Washington state House.

As always, our assessments are based on interviews with dozens of state and national political sources. Chambers are rated on the following scale: safe Republican, likely Republican, lean Republican, tossup, lean Democratic, likely Democratic and safe Democratic. The categories labeled "lean" and "tossup" are considered competitive or in play. Chambers in either of the "likely" categories are not expected to change party control on Election Day, but it's possible that the minority party could net a few seats and nibble into the majority's lead. The current partisan breakdown in each chamber comes from the National Conference of State Legislatures; seats that are vacant or held by third-party politicians are not included in the totals.

Here's our state-by-state rundown:

ALABAMA

Senate: 26-8 R

House: 72-33 R

Neither chamber is contested this year.

ALASKA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 14-6 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 23-16 R

A Republican-friendly redistricting in 2012 makes it unlikely that Democrats will see much success in this heavily Republican state. Still, the state is struggling fiscally due to low-energy prices, which could offer a few openings for Democrats.

ARIZONA

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 18-12 R

House: Projected Lean R; Current 36-24 R

Seemingly every cycle, Arizona is potentially competitive for Democrats, due to its sizable Latino electorate. Can having Donald Trump atop the Republican ballot this year finally get Democrats over the hump? Possibly. U.S. Sen. John McCain, a Republican, is in a race for his political life, and Arizona Republicans have been embroiled for years in intra-party conflicts between Establishment and Tea Party factions. Arizona Republicans start with the edge, but 2016 could be an unusually turbulent year.

ARKANSAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 24-11 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 64-36 R

The GOP majority, first achieved in 2012, looks solid. Neither party considers this on their watch list, and Trump is likelier to be a plus than a minus here for Republicans.

CALIFORNIA

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 26-14 D

Assembly: Projected Safe D; Current 52-28 D

California remains as strong as ever for the Democrats, and with Latinos potentially coming out in droves to vote against Trump, they should not have to worry about losing control in 2016.

COLORADO

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 18-17 R

House: Projected Lean D; Current 34-31 D

In purple Colorado, the Democrats narrowly lost control of the Senate in 2014, while they narrowly kept the House. Both parties are targeting both chambers again this year, and they're both in play. The chance to vote against Trump could energize Colorado's significant Latino population, suggesting that the Democrats are probably in a better position here than the GOP. But for the moment, we'll be cautious, calling House Democrats a slight favorite to retain control and the Senate too close to call.

CONNECTICUT

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 21-15 D

House: Projected Lean D; Current 86-64 D

Connecticut is our sleeper pick of the cycle. The Democrats have had large legislative margins for years, but those margins have narrowed bit by bit. In addition, Democratic Gov. Dannel Malloy, beset by economic and fiscal challenges, is broadly unpopular. In the Senate, one seat is already poised to go Republican, and at least six other seats -- all held by Democrats -- are up for grabs.

Even Democrats in the state acknowledge that the chamber is no better than a tossup for their party. The Democrats have more breathing room in the House, and the GOP will have to defend about a dozen open seats, possibly straining their resources. But a 12-seat loss for Democrats is not out of the question, and that would be enough to flip control to the GOP.

DELAWARE

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 12-9 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 25-16 D

In this blue state, Democrats should have little trouble holding on to their majorities in a presidential election year.

FLORIDA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 26-14 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 81-39 R

The GOP has held a large lead in both Florida chambers for years, and at the end of the day, they should stay in control. But Democrats have at least a possibility of gaining ground, thanks to a mid-decade redistricting of the state Senate that created more competitive districts and the possibility of high Latino turnout due to Trump's candidacy. Florida Democrats could well make single-digit gains, but we're reluctant at this point to move it beyond likely Republican.

GEORGIA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 39-17 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 118-61 R

While Georgia is considered a potentially promising state for Democrats on the presidential level, we're not yet convinced it will extend to that legislative level, where GOP margins seem far too wide to overcome. If we see signs of movement, we'll adjust our rating, but for now, we're keeping both Georgia chambers at safe Republican.

HAWAII

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 24-1 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 44-7 D

Hawaii's Democratic majorities are still ridiculously large and should stay that way.

IDAHO

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-7 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 56-14 R

Despite some internal GOP divisions, the Democrats shouldn't be much of a factor for the foreseeable future.

ILLINOIS

Senate: Projected Likely D; Current 39-20 D

House: Projected Likely D; Current 71-47 D

Illinois has been wracked by a painful budgetary face-off between GOP Gov. Bruce Rauner and the Democratic-controlled legislature. Neither branch has come off well, but legislators are the ones on the ballot, so losing some seats is a possibility for Democrats. Rauner is expected to provide unprecedented funding for Republican legislative candidates, but the Democrats will benefit from a favorable legislative district map drawn in 2011. Because this is a presidential year in a blue state, continued Democratic control looks likely.

INDIANA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 40-10 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 71-29 R

Republican Gov. Mike Pence faces a tough re-election bid this year, and an underwhelming performance could shave the otherwise strong GOP legislative majorities. Control, however, is highly unlikely to switch.

IOWA

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 26-24 D

House: Projected Likely R; Current 57-43 R

Observers see better-than-even odds of a continued legislative split -- a Democratic Senate and a Republican House.

KANSAS

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 32-8 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 97-28 R

GOP Gov. Sam Brownback's hard-right policies are unpopular among many moderates in the state, to say nothing of Democrats. With his approval ratings hovering around 20 percent, Democrats hope to capitalize. But while Democrats may make some inroads, the bigger story may be moderates gaining ground back within the GOP, potentially moderating the ideology of the chambers without changing the party that controls it.

KENTUCKY

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 27-11 R

House: Projected Lean D; Current 53-47 D

Despite a generation-long shift to the GOP throughout the South and Republican Matt Bevin seizing a Democratic-held gubernatorial open seat in 2015, the Kentucky House remains in Democratic hands. The House is still going to be competitive in 2016, but we'll give the Democrats a slight edge for now. The Senate is solidly in GOP hands.

LOUISIANA

Senate: 25-14 R

House: 61-42 R

Neither chamber is contested this year.

MAINE

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 20-15 R

House: Projected Lean D; Current 79-69 D

Both chambers of Maine's split-control legislature are going to be in play this fall, with Democrats having an edge in the House and a chance to flip the GOP-held Senate. Complicating projections in this presidential year is the possibility that Trump could pull some economically struggling blue-collar legislative districts to the GOP even if he doesn't win the state as a whole.

MARYLAND

Senate: 33-14 D

House: 90-51 D

Neither chamber is contested this year.

MASSACHUSETTS

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 33-5 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 125-34 D

Republican Charlie Baker won the governorship in 2014, and he remains popular. As in Maine, Trump could pull some districts to the GOP, but Democrats have massive margins that won't come close to crumbling in a single cycle.

MICHIGAN

Senate: No races; Current 27-11 R

House: Projected Lean R; Current 63-46 R

The GOP has a decent-sized majority in the House -- the only chamber up this year -- but the big wild card is whether GOP Gov. Rick Snyder's role in the Flint water crisis is going to have a negative down-ballot effect for Republicans. Being cautious, we're keeping this competitive, but leaning Republican.

MINNESOTA

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 39-28 D

House: Projected Lean R; Current 73-61 R

Both chambers are in play, with a modest lean toward the Democrats in the Senate and Republicans in the House. The House could shift to tossup if the Trump effect hits hard. But since the GOP has already lost a lot of their suburban swing seats -- where Trump could be most damaging to the party's down-ballot prospects -- they don't have a whole lot of exposure in the House. In the Senate, rural Democratic retirements and a split between metro-area environmentalists and rural labor-union members and farmers makes the chamber competitive.

MISSISSIPPI

Senate: 32-20 R

House: 74-48 R

Neither chamber is contested this year.

MISSOURI

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 24-8 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 116-45 R

Missouri is edging towards competitive-state status thanks to the presidential campaign and several statewide races, including the governorship. This suggests that marginal Democratic gains are possible. But the GOP edge in both chambers is large and seems likely to hold regardless of what happens elsewhere on the ballot.

MONTANA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 29-21 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 59-41 R

Energy, infrastructure and power plant emission rules are key issues here, making it hard for Democrats to separate themselves from the national party. The GOP should hold onto to its majority in the House, perhaps with small Democratic gains, and may expand their edge in the Senate.

NEBRASKA

Senate: Unicameral/Nonpartisan

Nebraska's unicameral legislature is officially nonpartisan; Governing doesn't handicap it.

NEVADA

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 11-10 R

Assembly: Projected Tossup; Current 25-17 R

The 2014 midterm election cycle was a total wipeout for Nevada Democrats. Could 2016 bring redemption? Possibly. Latinos are a force in the state, and the prospect of a Trump presidency will likely boost their turnout. The Senate, as usual, has a razor-thin majority and will be fiercely contested. The margin in the Assembly is wider, but it's close enough to be vulnerable to a Democratic takeover. For now we'll be cautious and rate both chambers as tossups, but if the winds continue to blow in the Democrats' direction, that could shift.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 14-19 R

House: Projected Lean R; Current 239-160 R

The GOP did a good job drawing district lines after the 2010 Census, but the Senate is close enough that Democrats have a decent shot at taking the Senate or at least getting to a 12-12 split. Flipping the state's massive 400-seat state House depends on a Democratic wave in the state, which is possible but less likely.

NEW JERSEY

Senate: 24-16 D

Assembly: 52-28 D

Neither chamber is contested this year.

NEW MEXICO

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 24-18 D

House: Projected Tossup; Current 37-33 R

In the Republican wave year of 2014, the GOP seized control of the New Mexico House, which had been in the hands of Democrats since 1953. But in a presidential year in a period when heavily Latino New Mexico has become more strongly Democratic, that reign could be short-lived.

NEW YORK

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 32-31 D (but Republican control)

Assembly: Projected Safe D; Current 106-42 D

For yet another cycle, New York's Senate is fluid and the House is solid for Democrats. In the Senate, a coalition of Republicans and maverick Democrats still run the show. While Democrats have high hopes of making inroads, predicting what will happen in this kind of coalition-led chamber is folly.

NORTH CAROLINA

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 34-16 R

House: Projected Lean R; Current 74-45 R

North Carolina, already a contentious state politically due to the GOP's aggressively conservative agenda, has only become more controversial in the wake of the state's polarizing transgender bathroom bill. The GOP's favorable district lines and decent margins offer enough protection that we're not projecting a flip to the Democrats at this point. But losses are a real possibility, and if a nascent Democratic wave gathers energy, all bets are off. Public and internal polling shows some softness for incumbent Republicans, particularly in suburban districts. And losing their veto-proof majorities -- which would be significant if Democrat Roy Cooper wins the governor's mansion -- is a possibility.

NORTH DAKOTA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 32-15 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 71-23 R

In solidly Republican North Dakota, both chambers are safe.

OHIO

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 23-10 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 65-34 R

The outlook for the Democrats in this key swing state is far better than 2014, a nonpresidential year when the party had a dud as a gubernatorial nominee. Still, the GOP margins are sizable. For now, modest Democratic gains are possible, but it's not looking like there will be enough seats in play to shift control this cycle.

OKLAHOMA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 39-9 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 71-30 R

The GOP in solidly Republican Oklahoma will have no problem maintaining supermajorities in both chambers.

OREGON

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 18-12 D

House: Projected Likely D; Current 35-25 D

Although half the seats in the Oregon Senate are up this year, many of the Democratic districts are from Portland and other safe areas. As for the House, Republicans are aiming for a handful of seats in the eastern and western suburbs in an attempt to reduce the Democratic majority. But significant gains for the GOP will be hard in a presidential year.

PENNSYLVANIA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 30-19 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 119-84 R

Pennsylvania Republicans enjoy disproportionately large margins in both chambers thanks to redistricting, despite the state's overall purple-to-blue lean. Trump's presence on the ballot could hurt in some suburban areas if voters punish down-ballot Republicans. But even if the GOP loses seats there, Trump is strong in other parts of the state, and it's not likely to be enough to flip either chamber this cycle.

RHODE ISLAND

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 32-5 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 63-11 D

Rhode Island continues to have one of the most lopsided legislatures in the nation. The Democrats have nothing to worry about.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 27-18 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 78-46 R

Both chambers are solidly Republican and will stay that way.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Senate:Projected Safe R; Current 27-8 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 58-12 R

In solidly Republican South Dakota, the Democrats aren't much of a factor.

TENNESSEE

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-5 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 73-26 R

The GOP should continue to have a lock on the Tennessee Legislature.

TEXAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 20-11 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 98-49 R

Any inroads Democrats can make in Texas this year due to an energized Latino electorate probably won't be enough to shift GOP margins significantly.

UTAH

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 24-5 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 63-12 R

Even if Utah is more sour on Trump than any other red state, there's little reason to believe that antipathy will trickle down to legislative candidates. The GOP's strong margins are rock-solid.

VERMONT

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 21-9 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 85-53 D

The presidential cycle should help keep Vermont's legislature strongly Democratic. But if Republican Lt. Gov. Phil Scott wins the governorship, he could have modest coattails.

VIRGINIA

Senate: 21-19 R

House: 66-34 R

Neither chamber is contested this year.

WASHINGTON STATE

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 25-24 R

House: Projected Lean D; Current 50-48 D

Though Washington state is generally blue, the Senate currently has 25 Republicans and 24 Democrats -- including one Democrat who caucuses with the Republicans. The Democrats are chasing a Republican open seat and two GOP incumbents. Meanwhile, the Democrats have one open seat in play and one endangered incumbent. For now, we're rating this lean Republican, though this could change depending on the Trump effect. In the House, the Democrats hold a

narrow advantage -- their smallest since 2002 -- and perhaps seven seats are in play. For now, we'll call this lean Democratic.

WEST VIRGINIA

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 18-16 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 64-36 R

The dual GOP takeover of 2014 should hold in 2016. We're calling the Senate lean Republican for now due to the chamber's narrow margin, but that could join the House as likely Republican before the campaign season is over.

WISCONSIN

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 19-14 R

Assembly: Projected Lean R; Current 63-36 R

While we don't see either chamber as highly vulnerable, we're rating them both competitive for now. Wisconsin was one of Trump's weaker primary states, and the Democrats are sure to make a big push here because a victory in Wisconsin is crucial to Clinton's electoral college chances.

WYOMING

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 26-4 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 52-8 R

The Wyoming Legislature is lopsidedly Republican and will stay that way.

Correction: A previous version of this article incorrectly stated that Democrats lost control of the Colorado state Senate in 2012. It was 2014.

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November Likely to Lessen GOP's Advantage in Legislatures

BY: Louis Jacobson | October 12, 2016

In the battle for control of the 50 state legislatures, the shifting tides in the presidential race don't appear to be having much of an impact.

Instead, structural factors -- like the fact that the Democrats control a record low number of legislative chambers and the fact that more Democratic-leaning voters tend to go to the polls in presidential election years -- are having a bigger effect.

The result, if our analysis is correct, should be a continued -- but narrower -- lead for Republicans in state legislatures.

Currently, the GOP controls 68 chambers to the Democrats' 30. Just a few years ago, it was Democrats that held a 62-to-36 advantage. But the 2010 elections changed that. Now, Republicans hold both the Senate and House in 30 states, Democrats hold both in 12 states, and the chambers are split in seven.

Democrats were hoping that Trump's candidacy would harm Republicans up and down the ballot. We won't rule out that possibility; nothing that happens this election year surprises us anymore. But Trump's unique characteristics as a candidate emphasize differences between himself and other Republicans, making it less likely that GOP voters will punish state legislators for sharing a party with Trump. If anything, Republicans who don't vote for Trump may actively support downballot Republicans to reinforce their partisan identification.

In the handicapping below -- our first since May -- we haven't moved a single chamber either into or out of our "competitive" category, which consists of chambers rated as either tossup, lean Democratic or lean Republican. We see 27 chambers as competitive -- 18 currently held by Republicans and nine held by Democrats.

Of the 18 chambers held by Republicans, six are rated as tossups, 11 as lean Republican and one as lean Democratic. Of the nine chambers held by Democrats, two are rated as tossups and seven as lean Democratic.

This is a relatively large number of chambers in play, and it offers Democrats the most chances they've had to take back some control since 2010. Without a one-sided wave, Democrats could regain control of a half-dozen chambers this cycle.

The chambers where they're most likely to regain control are the Nevada Assembly -- which is now rated lean Democratic -- and the Colorado Senate, the Maine Senate, the Nevada Senate, the New Hampshire Senate, the New Mexico House and the New York Senate -- which are all tossups.

By contrast, the Republicans have the best chance of taking control of the following Democratic chambers in November: the Connecticut Senate and the Kentucky House, which are both tossups.

The Republican chambers rated lean Republican are the Arizona Senate and House, the Michigan House, the Minnesota House, the New Hampshire House, the North Carolina Senate and House, the Washington state Senate, the West Virginia Senate, and the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly.

The Democratic chambers rated lean Democratic are the Colorado House, the Connecticut House, the Iowa Senate, the Maine House, the Minnesota Senate, the New Mexico Senate and the Washington state House.

Though no competitive contests have changed since May, we did update the ratings of three chambers -- the Alaska Senate and the Nevada Assembly in the Democrats' favor and the Kentucky House in the Republicans' favor.

As always, our assessments are based on interviews with dozens of state and national political sources.

Chambers are rated on the following scale: safe Republican, likely Republican, lean Republican, tossup, lean Democratic, likely Democratic and safe Democratic. The chambers labeled "lean" and "tossup" are considered competitive. The chambers labeled "likely" aren't expected to change party control, but it's possible that the minority party could take a small bite out of the majority's lead.

The current partisan breakdown in each chamber comes from the National Conference of State Legislatures. Seats that are vacant or held by third-party politicians are not included in the totals.

Here's our state-by-state rundown:

ALABAMA

Senate: 26-8 R

House: 72-32 R

Neither chamber is contested this year.

ALASKA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 14-6 R *(Shift from Safe R)*

House: Projected Likely R; Current 23-16 R

A few upsets for incumbents in the August primary have increased the likelihood of modest Democratic gains in the Senate, so we're changing the rating for that chamber from safe Republican to likely Republican. In the House, the Republicans stand to lose a few seats. However, Republicans will be able to rely on members of rural Democrats known as the "bush caucus." We're keeping the House at likely Republican.

ARIZONA

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 18-12 R

House: Projected Lean R; Current 36-24 R

Arizona, usually a red state, continues to look iffy for Republicans this year. Latinos seem energized not only to oppose Donald Trump but also, in populous Maricopa County, to vote against controversial sheriff Joe Arpaio, who is seeking re-election. For now, the Republican margins in both chambers look a little wide to move the ratings to tossup, but both chambers will be competitive.

ARKANSAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 24-11 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 64-36 R

The GOP majority, first achieved in 2012, looks solid. Neither party considers this to be on their watch list, and Trump is likelier to be a plus than a minus here for Republicans.

CALIFORNIA

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 26-14 D

Assembly: Projected Safe D; Current 52-28 D

Democratic control in California remains solid. Instead, the question is whether or not the Democrats can secure a two-thirds supermajority. The Assembly looks like a better prospect for achieving supermajority status; several GOP Assembly incumbents fared poorly in the state's top-two primary system, coming in behind two Democratic challengers. Given Trump's unpopularity in the state, Assembly Democrats stand to pick up three to four seats. Meanwhile, the Senate seems to be on track to remain static. Only five of the 20 seats up this year are held by the GOP, and three of those are safe.

COLORADO

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 18-17 R

House: Projected Lean D; Current 34-31 D

In this presidential battleground state, both parties are targeting both chambers -- and they're both in play. The Democrats' prospects look a little better than they did in our last handicapping but not enough to change the ratings.

CONNECTICUT

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 21-15 D

House: Projected Lean D; Current 87-64 D

Connecticut was the sleeper pick of our May analysis, but the Democrats have bounced back a bit. Republicans are playing defense in places they thought were safe, and Democrats seem to be doing better at protecting their open seats. In addition, Trump hasn't caught fire in the state. That said, Democratic Gov. Dannel Malloy is beset by economic and fiscal challenges and remains broadly unpopular. While he's not on the ballot this year, voters could choose to punish Democratic legislators instead. On balance, there's been a shift toward the Democrats, but it isn't big enough to change our ratings in either chamber.

DELAWARE

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 12-9 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 25-16 D

In this blue state, Democrats should have little trouble holding on to their majorities in a presidential election year.

FLORIDA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 26-14 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 81-39 R

The Democrats, already benefiting from a mid-decade redistricting of the state Senate and an energized Latino electorate, are still looking at single-digit gains, but GOP margins are large enough that they should retain control after Election Day.

GEORGIA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 39-17 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 118-61 R

Despite continued Democratic hopes of stealing Georgia from the GOP fold on the presidential level, any Democratic gains in the legislature are likely to be modest. Both chambers stay at safe Republican.

HAWAII

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 24-1 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 44-7 D

Hawaii's Democratic majorities are still ridiculously large and should stay that way.

IDAHO

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-7 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 56-14 R

Despite some internal GOP divisions, the Democrats shouldn't be much of a factor for the foreseeable future.

ILLINOIS

Senate: Projected Likely D; Current 39-20 D

House: Projected Likely D; Current 71-47 D

Illinois continues to be wracked by a painful budgetary face-off between GOP Gov. Bruce Rauner and the Democratic-controlled legislature. The state is on track to hold its most expensive legislative election year ever because Rauner has pumped millions into legislative races. But at the end of the day, not many seats are expected to change hands due to a favorable legislative district map for the Democratic majority and Illinois' normal, Democratic-leaning dynamics of a presidential election year.

INDIANA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 40-10 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 71-29 R

Trump is ahead in the state, but a number of downballot races are competitive, and before he became Trump's running mate, Gov. Mike Pence faced a tough re-election bid. This suggests that Democrats could gain some seats. However, the GOP margins are large enough to provide a strong cushion.

IOWA

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 26-23-1 D

House: Projected Likely R; Current 57-43 R

Republicans feel better about their chances in the Senate than they did a few months ago, partly due to Trump's unexpectedly strong showing in polls of the state. However, one "never-Trump" Republican senator, David Johnson, has left the party, complicating the GOP's task of taking control. And since 2000, the Democrats have performed well in presidential cycles. Meanwhile, the GOP retains an edge in the House. All told, the most likely outcome remains a continued legislative split -- a Democratic Senate and a Republican House.

KANSAS

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 32-8 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 97-28 R

GOP Gov. Sam Brownback's hard-right policies remain unpopular among many moderates in the state. The August primaries proved that when moderate Republicans earned a stronger-than-anticipated set of victories. This, combined with possible Democratic wins in general election races, could set up moderate majorities in one both chambers -- even if the GOP retains relatively wide margins in both.

KENTUCKY

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 27-11 R

House: Projected Tossup; Current 53-47 D *(Shift from Lean D)*

Both Republican Gov. Matt Bevin and Trump are popular in the state, putting increased pressure on the Democrats' narrow edge in the House -- the last Democratic-held chamber in the South and the last such chamber in a state carried by Mitt Romney in 2012. All four incumbent House Democratic leaders have races that will keep them tied down and less able to raise money for threatened colleagues. So we're shifting it from lean Democratic to tossup. Meanwhile, the Senate remains solidly in GOP control.

LOUISIANA

Senate: 25-14 R

House: 60-42 R

Neither chamber is contested this year.

MAINE

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 20-15 R

House: Projected Lean D; Current 79-69 D

Both chambers of Maine's split legislature remain in play, with Democrats holding an edge in the House and a chance to flip the GOP-held Senate. Democrats are eager to leverage unhappiness with GOP Gov. Paul LePage, who had a bad August, including impeachment talk. On the other hand, Trump looks poised to take one of Maine's district-by-district electoral votes, suggesting reason for GOP optimism at least in some regions of the state. We'll keep the ratings as they were, a tossup Senate and a lean Democratic House.

MARYLAND

Senate: 33-14 D

House: 90-51 D

Neither chamber is contested this year.

MASSACHUSETTS

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 34-6 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 126-34 D

Even if Republicans gain some seats -- which seems unlikely -- the Democrats' massive margins won't come close to crumbling in a single cycle.

MICHIGAN

Senate: No Races; Current 27-11 R

House: Projected Lean R; Current 63-46 R

The GOP has a decent-sized majority in the House -- the only chamber up this year -- but Democrats are also hoping for a boost from the unpopularity of GOP Gov. Rick Snyder and Clinton's lead over Trump. The question is whether specific blue-collar districts could warm to Trump. For now, we're keeping the chamber at lean Republican.

MINNESOTA

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 39-28 D

House: Projected Lean R; Current 73-61 R

Both chambers remain in play, with a modest lean toward the Democrats in the Senate and toward the Republicans in the House. It's quite possible that margins in both chambers will tighten, with suburban Republicans defecting to Democrats and rural Democrats defecting to a Trump-led GOP. A change in control in either chamber is possible. But for now, the most likely outcome is a continued Democratic Senate and a continued Republican House.

MISSISSIPPI

Senate: 32-20 R

House: 72-47 R

Neither chamber is contested this year.

MISSOURI

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 24-8 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 114-45 R

Post-2010 redistricting has made it difficult for Missouri Democrats to gain ground in recent cycles, but marginal Democratic gains are possible this year, especially given strong campaigns by Democratic candidates for governor and U.S. senator. Still, the GOP edge in both chambers is large. In fact, there's a better than ever chance that the GOP keeps its veto-proof status, which could come in hand if the Democrats retain the governor's mansion.

MONTANA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 29-21 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 59-41 R

Energy, infrastructure and power plant emission rules are key issues here, making it hard for Democrats to separate themselves from the national party. The GOP should hold onto to its majority in the House, perhaps with small Democratic gains, and may expand their edge in the Senate.

NEBRASKA

Senate: Unicameral/Nonpartisan

Nebraska's unicameral legislature is officially nonpartisan; *Governing* doesn't handicap it.

NEVADA

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 11-10 R

Assembly: Projected Lean D; Current 24-17 R *(Shift from Tossup)*

Trump fared unexpectedly well in polling in Nevada during most of 2016, but Clinton has gained in recent weeks. And observers expect a strong turnout by Latinos in the state, leaving Democrats optimistic that they can reverse the Republican gains of 2014. We're shifting the Assembly from tossup to lean Democratic.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 14-10 R

House: Projected Lean R; Current 239-160 R

The GOP succeeded in drawing favorable district lines after the 2010 Census, but the Senate is close enough that Democrats have a decent shot at taking control, or at least getting to a 12-12 split. Flipping the state's massive 400-seat state House depends on a Democratic wave emerging in the state, which is possible but far from a certainty.

NEW JERSEY

Senate: 24-16 D

Assembly: 52-28 D

Neither chamber is contested this year.

NEW MEXICO

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 24-18 D

House: Projected Tossup; Current 37-33 R

In the Republican wave year of 2014, the GOP seized control of the New Mexico House, which had been in the hands of Democrats since 1953. The GOP needs to protect a lot of close seats in the House, and in a presidential election year, the Democrats should have an edge. On the other hand, a special legislative session is addressing some hot-button issues, such as crime, that are favorable to Republicans. The GOP has also found some top-tier Hispanic candidates. A wild card is whether relative support for former New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson, the libertarian presidential candidate, will have any impact downballot.

NEW YORK

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 32-31 D (but Republican control)

Assembly: Projected Safe D; Current 105-42 D

For yet another cycle, New York's Senate is fluid and the House is solid for Democrats. In the Senate, a coalition of Republicans and maverick Democrats still run the show. Given the huge Clinton lead in this blue state, the GOP is working uphill. The party is unlikely to get a clear majority in the Senate, so coalition control is likely to persist.

NORTH CAROLINA

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 34-16 R

House: Projected Lean R; Current 74-45 R

North Carolina has become an even bigger national battleground since our previous analysis. It's turned into a must-win state for Trump and a key target for Clinton. Despite favorable legislative lines, Republicans are fretting about GOP-held districts in the Raleigh and Charlotte suburbs, given the unpopularity of Trump and the HB2 "bathroom bill." The GOP's substantial margins are the only reason we're keeping these chambers at lean Republican. Of the two, House Republicans seem likelier to lose their veto-proof majority than Senate Republicans.

NORTH DAKOTA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 32-15 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 70-23 R

In solidly Republican North Dakota, both chambers are safe.

OHIO

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 23-10 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 65-34 R

Trump has polled consistently well in this state, energizing blue-collar voters. This makes it even harder for Democrats, who already faced an uphill climb in the state. Fewer than 10 of the 99 House seats have been considered competitive in each of the last two cycles. There may be a few Democratic wins on the House side due to the higher number of term-limited incumbents. But GOP control is not in serious danger in either chamber.

OKLAHOMA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 39-9 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 71-30 R

The GOP in solidly Republican Oklahoma will have no problem maintaining supermajorities in both chambers.

OREGON

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 18-12 D

House: Projected Likely D; Current 35-25 D

Only two seats in the Oregon Senate are plausibly competitive this year, both of them long held by Democrats. In the House, the Republicans are making a run at three Democratic-held open seats in the eastern and western suburbs of Portland, plus another Democratic-held open seat extending to the state capital of Salem. But even if the GOP were to sweep and hold their own vulnerable seats -- an unlikely outcome in a higher-turnout presidential year in this blue state -- it would still fall short of what's needed to take control.

PENNSYLVANIA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 30-19 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 119-84 R

Despite the state's overall purple-to-blue lean, Pennsylvania Republicans enjoy disproportionately large margins in both chambers thanks to redistricting. The Republicans could pick up a few House seats and a Senate seat in the southwestern corner of the state, where Trump is strong. That could offset expected losses in the Philadelphia suburbs, where Trump is deeply unpopular. All in all, none of this is likely to be enough to flip either chamber this cycle.

RHODE ISLAND

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 32-5 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 63-11 D

Rhode Island will continue to have one of the most lopsided legislatures in the nation.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-18 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 77-46 R

Both chambers are solidly Republican and will stay that way.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 27-8 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 58-12 R

In solidly Republican South Dakota, the Democrats aren't much of a factor.

TENNESSEE

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-5 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 73-26 R

The GOP should continue to have a lock on the Tennessee Legislature.

TEXAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 20-11 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 98-51 R

Any inroads Democrats can make in Texas this year due to an energized Latino electorate probably won't be enough to shift GOP margins significantly. The Senate isn't expected to move an inch. In the House, a worst-case scenario for Republicans would be to drop 10 seats. Smaller losses are more likely.

UTAH

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 24-5 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 63-12 R

Even if Utah is more sour on Trump than any other red state, there's no reason to believe that antipathy will trickle down to legislative candidates. There aren't even many competitive seats. The GOP's strong margins are rock-solid.

VERMONT

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 21-9 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 85-53 D

The presidential cycle should help keep Vermont's legislature strongly Democratic. But if Republican Lt. Gov. Phil Scott wins the governorship, he could have modest coattails. More important for the GOP is to keep the number of House seats above 51 -- the number of votes to sustain a veto. Scott, if he wins, will need that leverage in negotiations with lawmakers, especially over budget and tax issues.

VIRGINIA

Senate: 21-18 R

House: 66-34 R

Neither chamber is contested this year.

WASHINGTON STATE

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 25-24 R

House: Projected Lean D; Current 50-48 D

Though Washington state is generally blue, its legislative chambers are narrowly divided, with the Democrats controlling the House and the GOP controlling the Senate. The Senate currently has 25 Republicans and 24 Democrats -- including one Democrat who caucuses with the Republicans. Chamber control is expected to come down to races involving one Democratic and one Republican incumbent in the King County suburbs plus a Republican-held open seat that includes Vancouver. A Democratic open seat in King and Snohomish counties may be competitive as well. On balance, we're keeping the chamber at lean Republican. In the House, the Democrats hold a narrow advantage -- their smallest since 2002 -- and Republicans are hopeful for a takeover. The GOP has a leg up in the House because in one district, no Democrat finished in the top two in the primary for one seat, guaranteeing the GOP at least one flipped seat. The GOP has some other opportunities in other districts, but the party is also trying to defend a handful of open seats. Given that this is a presidential election cycle, we'll call this lean Democratic, but barely.

WEST VIRGINIA

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 18-16 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 64-36 R

With Trump set to score a big victory in West Virginia, we expect the chambers to remain in Republican hands after a GOP takeover in 2014. But Democratic gubernatorial nominee Jim Justice is running strongly, and that could help Democrats on the margins. We'll keep the Senate at lean Republican and the House as likely Republican.

WISCONSIN

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 19-14 R

Assembly: Projected Lean R; Current 63-36 R

Wisconsin has continued to be a competitive, if Democratic-leaning, state on the presidential level, which suggests that the Democrats may gain some seats -- but not enough to flip the two chambers.

WYOMING

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 26-4 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 51-9 R

The Wyoming Legislature is lopsidedly Republican and will stay that way.

This article was printed from: **http://www.governing.com/topics/elections/gov-2016-legislative-handicapping-october.html**

http://www.governing.com/topics/elections/gov-ratings-roundup-2016-statewide-elections.html

Ratings Roundup: 2016 Statewide Elections

BY: Louis Jacobson | November 7, 2016

Election Day is almost here, and as we've done in past electoral cycles, we're publishing a final frenzy of ratings for all the races handicapped this year.

Readers can use this as a guide to watching the returns -- and as a check on the accuracy of our analyses.

For the Electoral College, gubernatorial and AG contests, we not only offer a rating, such as tossup or lean Democratic, but also a rank ordering. That is, the list can be viewed as a continuum between the states or races most likely to go Republican (at the top) and those most likely to go Democratic (at the bottom). The idea is that, once the results are in, we should be able to draw a line somewhere in the middle of the tossup category and divide the seats won by the GOP from the seats won by the Democrats.

For the Electoral College, we have achieved strong accuracy in past cycles. In 2008, just one state and one of Nebraska's congressional districts were on the wrong side of our dividing line. And in 2012, every state was on the correct side of the line.

Our gubernatorial handicapping has been generally accurate as well. In 2010, we were off by just one contest; in 2012, we were fully correct; and in 2014, our worst performance, we were wrong about four (out of 36) contests.

In 2014, the first cycle we rank-ordered state AG races, our calls were fully accurate. And in the seven state legislative cycles handicapped, we've, on average, mislabeled as noncompetitive one or two chambers that ultimately flipped party control.

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Our final ratings show 274 electoral votes are likely to go to Hillary Clinton, 186 to Donald Trump and 78 remain in the tossup category. That's a few electoral votes more than Clinton needs to win the presidency without having to win any tossup states.

Since our previous handicapping in October, we've made five shifts between rating categories, plus a handful of moves within a single category. Two of the shifts between categories benefited the Democrats (one congressional district in Maine, which shifted from lean Republican to tossup, and Nevada, which shifts from tossup to lean Democratic) and three benefited the Republicans (New Hampshire moving from lean Democratic to tossup, and Indiana and Missouri moving from lean Republican to likely Republican).

Here's the full breakdown, with new rating shifts in bold:

Safe Republican (86 electoral votes)

Alabama (9), Arkansas (6), Idaho (4), Kansas (6), Kentucky (8), Louisiana (8), Mississippi (6), Montana (3), Nebraska (4 of 5 electoral votes), North Dakota (3), Oklahoma (7), South Dakota (3), Tennessee (11), West Virginia (5) and Wyoming (3)

Likely Republican (71 electoral votes)

Texas (38), Alaska (3), South Carolina (9), **Missouri (10; shifts from lean Republican)**, **Indiana (11; shifts from lean Republican)**

Lean Republican (29 electoral votes)

Utah (6), Nebraska (1 of 5 electoral votes), Georgia (16), Iowa (6)

Tossup (78 electoral votes)

Ohio (18), Arizona (11), **Maine (1 of 4 electoral votes; shifts from lean R)**, Florida (29), North Carolina (15), **New Hampshire (4; shifts from lean Democratic)**

Lean Democratic (91 electoral votes)

Nevada (6; shifts from tossup), Colorado (9), Wisconsin (10), Michigan (16), Pennsylvania (20), Maine (2 of 4 electoral votes), Virginia (13), Minnesota (10), New Mexico (5)

Safe Democratic (183 electoral votes)

California (55), Connecticut (7), Delaware (3), District of Columbia (3), Hawaii (4), Illinois (20), Maine (1 of 4 electoral votes), Maryland (10), Massachusetts (11), New Jersey (14), New York (29), Oregon (7), Rhode Island (4), Vermont (3) and Washington state (12)

Click the map to create your own at 270toWin.com

GOVERNORS

Currently, Republicans hold a historically large 31-18 lead in governorships. (There's one independent, Alaska's Bill Walker.)

We made only one change since our last handicapping in October, shifting the Missouri gubernatorial from lean Democratic to tossup.

Democratic victories in each of the competitive contests would produce a two-seat gain, reducing the GOP's lead to 29-20. By contrast, a Republican sweep of all competitive seats would result in a six-seat gain and a strikingly dominant overall GOP edge of 37-12.

As usual, the most likely outcome is somewhere in the middle. But regardless of how 2016 shakes out, the GOP will end the year with a continued big lead in governorships.

Here's the rundown, with new rating shifts in bold:

Safe Republican

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert (R)

North Dakota: Open seat (R)

Tossup

Missouri: Open seat (D); shifts from Tossup

Vermont: Open seat (D)

West Virginia: Open seat (D)

Montana Gov. Steve Bullock (D)

New Hampshire: Open seat (D)

North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory (R)

Indiana: Open seat (R)

Likely Democratic

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee (D)

Safe Democratic

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown (D)

Delaware: Open seat (D)

ATTORNEYS GENERAL

Nationally, the GOP holds 27 AG offices and the Democrats hold 23. If the GOP can run the table of competitive races, its national lead in AG offices would jump to a dominating 30-20. Democrats, by contrast, look likely to have a shot, at best, of making a net gain of one seat. In the absence of a strong national partisan tide, the GOP stands to gain a seat or two.

We've changed the ratings in one race since our last handicapping in September, shifting the West Virginia AG race from lean Republican to tossup.

Here's the full rundown, with new rating shifts in bold:

Safe Republican

Utah AG Sean Reyes (R)

Montana AG Tim Fox (R)

Likely Republican

Indiana: Open seat (R)

Tossup

West Virginia AG Patrick Morrisey (R); shifts from lean R

Missouri: Open seat (D)

North Carolina: Open seat (D)

Lean Democratic

Pennsylvania: Open seat (D)

Safe Democratic

Vermont: Open seat (D)

Oregon: AG Ellen Rosenblum (D)

Washington state: AG Bob Ferguson (D)

LEGISLATURES

Currently, the GOP controls 68 legislative chambers to the Democrats' 30.

We see 26 chambers as competitive -- 18 currently held by Republicans and eight held by Democrats. That's down by one competitive chamber since our last handicapping in October.

Of the 18 chambers held by Republicans, six are rated as tossups, 11 as lean Republican and one as lean Democratic. Of the eight chambers held by Democrats, one is rated lean Republican, two are rated as tossups and five as lean Democratic.

Without a one-sided wave, Democrats could regain control of a half-dozen chambers this cycle. But a larger or smaller number is certainly possible.

Since our last handicapping, we've shifted one chamber towards the Democrats (the New Mexico Senate, from lean Democratic to likely Democratic) and two toward the Republicans (the Kentucky House, from tossup to lean Republican, and the Iowa Senate, from lean Democratic to tossup).

Here's our state-by-state summary, with new rating shifts in bold:

Alabama

Neither chamber is contested this year.

Alaska

Senate: Projected Likely R

House: Projected Likely R

Arizona

Senate: Projected Lean R

House: Projected Lean R

Arkansa

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

California

Senate: Projected Safe D

Assembly:Projected Safe D

Colorado

Senate: Projected Tossup

House: Projected Lean D

Connecticut

Senate: Projected Tossup

House: Projected Lean D

Delware

Senate: Projected Safe D

House:Projected Safe D

Florida

Senate: Projected Likely R

House: Projected Likely R

Georgia

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

Hawaii

Senate: Projected Safe D

House:Projected Safe D

Idaho

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

Illinois

Senate:

House:

Indiana

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

Iowa

Senate: Projected Tossup **(shift from lean D)**

House: Projected Likely R

Kansas

Senate: Projected Likely R

House: Projected Likely R

Kentucky

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Lean R **(shift from Tossup)**

Louisiana

Neither chamber is contested this year.

Maine

Senate: Projected Tossup

House: Projected Lean D

Maryland

Neither chamber is contested this year.

Massachusetts

Senate: Projected Safe D

House:Projected Safe D

Michigan

Senate: No Races

House: Projected Lean R

Minnesota

Senate: Projected Lean D

House: Projected Lean R

Mississippi

Neither chamber is contested this year.

Missouri

Senate: Projected Likely R

House: Projected Likely R

Montana

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

Nebraska

Nebraska's unicameral legislature is officially nonpartisan; *Governing* doesn't handicap it.

Nevada

Senate: Projected Tossup

Assembly: Projected Lean D

New Hampshire

Senate: Projected Tossup

House: Projected Lean R

New Jersey

Neither chamber is contested this year.

New Mexico

Senate: **(shift from lean D)**

House: Projected Tossup

New York

Senate: Projected Tossup

Assembly:Projected Safe D

North Carolina

Senate: Projected Lean R

House: Projected Lean R

North Dakota

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

Ohio

Senate: Projected Likely R

House: Projected Likely R

Oklahoma

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

Oregon

Senate: Projected Safe D

House:

Pennsylvania

Senate: Projected Likely R

House: Projected Likely R

Rhode Island

Senate: Projected Safe D

House: Projected Safe D

South Carolina

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

South Dakota

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

Tennessee

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

Texas

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

Utah

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

Vermont

Senate: Projected Safe D

House:Projected Safe D

Virginia

Neither chamber is contested this year.

Washington

Senate: Projected Lean R

House: Projected Lean D

West Virginia

Senate: Projected Lean R

House: Projected Likely R

Wisconsin

Senate: Projected Lean R

Assembly: Projected Lean R

Wyoming

Senate: Projected Safe R

House: Projected Safe R

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http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/gov-democrats-gain-on-republicans-state-legislatures.html

Democrats Poised to Eat Into GOP's Lead in State Legislatures

Republicans can take some comfort that their state legislative dominance is unlikely to evaporate in a single election cycle.

BY LOUIS JACOBSON | MAY 2, 2018

Congress isn't the only legislative body up for grabs during the upcoming November midterms. Control of the nation's state legislatures are also being contested. And as we've seen in our other handicappings, it's shaping up to be a good year for Democrats.

According to our first handicapping of state legislatures this cycle, Republicans currently have more chambers at risk, 10, than the Democrats' seven. Connecticut's tied Senate is also at risk of a party switch.

That adds up to 18 competitive chambers at this point -- identical to the number of competitive chambers in 2014, which was the most recent election cycle to feature a strong partisan wave. It was the Democrats who were on the run back then, with 11 Democratic-held chambers rated competitive compared to just seven for the Republicans.

RELATED

Can Democrats Flip Crucial Governors' Seats?How Might a 2018 Democratic Wave Affect Governor's Races?Republicans on the Hot Seat in AG Races

During past wave elections, we've tended to see additional chambers become vulnerable to a party switch as time goes on, almost always for the party facing the wave. So unless the political environment changes significantly, expect the number of competitive Republican chambers to rise as November approaches.

That'll be a big change from the past few cycles, during which Republicans have tightened their grip on the nation's state houses and senates.

Currently, the GOP holds more than two-thirds of the nation's legislative chambers -- 66 in all, compared to 31 for the Democrats. For housekeeping's sake, this tally counts New York's Senate as Republican and Alaska's House as Democratic; both states are led by bipartisan coalitions. Meanwhile, Nebraska's unicameral legislature, which is nonpartisan, isn't included in our count.

The consolidation of GOP control has been striking. As recently as the run-up to the 2010 election, the Democrats held a 62 to 36 advantage in chambers.

It's worth noting that the degree of Republican vulnerability in 2018 is less than it was for the Democrats in 2010, both in the sheer number of vulnerable chambers and in the degree of the partisan tilt. In 2010, we considered 25 Democratic chambers to be in play. Of course, that election was held prior to the post-2010 Census round of redistricting, which bolstered Republican legislative prospects in a number of previously competitive states. Those post-2010 lines continue to protect Republicans in many states, limiting Democratic options for flipping chambers this year.

Our Ratings Summary

As always, our assessment is based on interviews with dozens of state and national political sources. We rate chambers on the following scale: safe Republican, likely Republican, lean Republican, tossup, lean Democratic, likely Democratic and safe Democratic.

The categories labeled "lean" and "tossup" are considered competitive or in play. Chambers in either of the "likely" categories are not expected to change party control on Election Day, but it's possible that the minority party could net a non-trivial number of seats and nibble into the majority's margins.

All told, we rate five Republican-held chambers as tossups: the Colorado Senate, the Maine Senate, the New Hampshire Senate and House, and the New York Senate.

We rate an additional five GOP-held chambers as lean Republican -- not yet as vulnerable as the tossup chambers, but worrisome for the GOP nonetheless. Those chambers are the Arizona Senate, the Florida Senate, the Iowa House, the Michigan House and the Wisconsin Senate.

We don't rate any Democratic-held chambers as tossups for now, but we do consider seven of them to be in the lean Democratic category: the Alaska House, the Colorado House, the Connecticut House, the Delaware Senate, the Maine House, and the Washington Senate and House.

If historical patterns hold and the Democratic wave solidifies, we may eventually drop many of these Democratic chambers from the competitive category.

Finally, we rate the tied Connecticut Senate as a tossup.

Rating	Held by D	Held by R	Total
Lean Republican	0	5	0
Tossup	0	5	1
Lean Democrat	7	0	0
Total	7	10	1

Estimating Possible Gains

In a neutral political environment -- one without a partisan wave -- our handicapping might produce a net Democratic gain of two to three chambers. But Election Day 2018 is not shaping up to be a neutral political environment.

If a wave ultimately only favors the Democrats modestly, we might see a four- to seven-chamber gain for the Democrats. If a larger wave materializes, Democrats could take a bigger bite out of the GOP's state-by-state advantage: a net switch of eight to 14 chambers. But to make that latter scenario possible, Democrats would need to move a bunch of chambers we currently rate as likely Republican into the lean Republican or tossup category.

We see seven chambers currently rated likely Republican that are worth watching for possible movement toward the Democrats. They are: the Arizona House, the Iowa Senate, the Michigan

Senate, the Minnesota House, the North Carolina Senate, and the Pennsylvania Senate and House.

All in all, Democrats have reason to feel optimistic about gains at this point. Still, it's worth injecting a note of caution. Even a net switch of 14 chambers toward the Democrats -- the absolute maximum shift we can envision at this stage of the campaign -- would still leave Republicans with a national edge in chambers of 52-46. So don't expect the Democrats to seize a majority of state legislative chambers in 2018 alone.

Ratings: State By State

Listed below are our ratings, with state-by-state summaries.

The data for the current partisan breakdown in each chamber comes from the National Conference of State Legislatures; seats that are vacant or held by third-party politicians are not included in the totals.

ALABAMA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 27-7 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 70-33 R

While Republicans' ultimately hurt themselves by nominating Roy Moore in a losing bid for a U.S. Senate seat, the state is so red that it will take more than a Democratic wave to change the partisan status quo in the legislature.

ALASKA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 14-6 R

House: Projected Lean D; Current 22-18 D (cross-party coalition)

With Alaska's Senate safely in Republican hands, the Democrats look to maintain control of the House. It is currently governed by a narrow, Democratic-led coalition. If oil prices stay relatively

high, as they are now, voters may be less likely to rock the boat and the status quo in the House could continue. If not, the chamber could move to tossup.

ARIZONA

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 17-13 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 35-25 R

Democrats are three seats away from flipping the Arizona Senate, and they feel good about Democratic voter enthusiasm. But to take control, they would have to unseat some battle-tested Republican lawmakers. They may be able to do it by seizing on education and teacher pay, an issue that Democrats have found resonant in states even redder than Arizona -- and that is already causing GOP Gov. Doug Ducey heartburn.

ARKANSAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 23-9 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 75-24 R

Democrats might be able to snag a few extra seats this fall, but the GOP's majorities are big enough to remain secure.

CALIFORNIA

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 26-13 D

Assembly: Projected Safe D; Current 52-25 D

Democrats, who already possess lopsided control of both chambers in California, may be able to expand their margins slightly this fall, due to President Trump's unpopularity in the state.

COLORADO

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 18-16 R

House: Projected Lean D; Current 36-29 D

The Democrats have high hopes of flipping the GOP-controlled Colorado Senate. If the open-seat gubernatorial race turns in the Democrats' favor, they could pull it off.

CONNECTICUT

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 18-18

House: Projected Lean D; Current 79-71 D

The key question about Connecticut voting patterns this fall will be who the electorate dislikes the most: Trump or two-term Democratic Gov. Dannel Malloy. If anti-Trump sentiment wins out, then Democrats can probably seize full control of the currently tied Senate. But if voters are more preoccupied with Malloy, the GOP is still in the game -- at least in the Senate. There are four open seats, several of which will be hotly contested.

DELAWARE

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 11-10 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 25-16 D

It's hard to imagine the blue state of Delaware losing Democratic seats in 2018. But out of an abundance of caution, we'll keep the narrowly divided state Senate rated as competitive.

FLORIDA

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 23-15 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 75-40 R

For the first time in a quarter-century, Florida Democrats have a genuine chance of seizing control of a state legislative chamber - and they're acting like it, contesting more seats than they have in recent election cycles. While the Democrats stand a good chance of picking up seats in both chambers, they'd have to make up too much ground in the House to make it genuinely competitive.

The much closer Senate, though, should be in play. That said, the higher-profile Florida races on the ballot -- for governor and U.S. senator -- could drain money and attention away from legislative races. It's also not clear that the Democratic nominee for either office will have strong enough coattails to bring a new legislative majority with them. Not even Barack Obama was able to pull that off when he won the state twice. So to start, we give the Republicans a modest edge to keep control of the Senate.

GEORGIA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 37-19 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 116-64 R

It's reasonable to expect some Democratic gains this fall, especially in the Atlanta suburbs where there's been some Democratic growth. Still, the margins in Georgia are too wide for Democrats to be optimistic about flipping either chamber in 2018. Continued demographic and partisan evolutions in the state could give the party some hope further down the road, though.

HAWAII

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 25-0 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 45-5 D

During the Trump era, Republican numbers have sunk to extreme lows in the Hawaii Legislature. In fact, the state House has already seen one of its few Republican lawmakers switch to the Democratic Party, specifically naming Trump as the reason for the move. These are two of the safest Democratic chambers in the nation.

IDAHO

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 29-6 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 59-11 R

There's a possibility of minor Democratic gains given the few GOP retirements and departures, but nothing big enough to change the makeup of either chamber.

ILLINOIS

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 37-22 D

House: Projected Safe D Current 67-51 D

With Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner facing a rough reelection battle -- and with the state unhappy with Trump -- this doesn't look like the year for Republicans to make significant gains in either chamber. A bonus for Democrats is that gubernatorial nominee J.B. Pritzker is heavily funding his own campaign, leaving pro-Democratic outside groups able to devote their money and time to shoring up control of the legislature.

INDIANA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 41-9 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 70-30 R

The GOP edge in the Indiana Senate is big enough to withstand even a Democratic hurricane, but it's possible that Democrats could gain some modest ground in the House, especially due to Republican retirements and a series of intraparty challenges supported by the aggressively anti-abortion group, Hoosiers for Life. Still, both chambers will remain in Republican hands.

IOWA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 28-20 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 59-41 R

The GOP remains favored in the House -- the more vulnerable of Iowa's two chambers -- but Democratic enthusiasm and several retirements could make it interesting. The competitive gubernatorial race hasn't really heated up yet, so the battle for the legislature remains hard to handicap.

KANSAS

Senate: No Races; Current 31-9 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 85-40 R

The Kansas House, the only chamber to be contested this fall, will remain in Republican hands. But if moderate Republicans manage to gain enough ground, they can work with Democrats to shape key bills.

KENTUCKY

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 27-11 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 63-37 R

Kentucky, which has all but completed its transition into a solidly Republican state, is not promising territory for Democrats to gain back legislative ground, even in a favorable year like 2018. Expect continued Republican control in both chambers.

LOUISIANA

Senate: 25-14 R

House: 61-41 R

Neither chamber in Louisiana is contested this year.

MAINE

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 18-17 R

House: Projected Lean D; Current 74-70 D

Both gubernatorial primaries in June are crowded and unsettled. What's more, there are several credible third-party contenders. Given the uncertainty, we're rating Maine's Senate a tossup and the House lean Democratic. However, if Democrats look strong in the race for governor -- an office the GOP has controlled for eight years -- that could change our view.

MARYLAND

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 32-14 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 91-50 D

Both chambers in Maryland are solidly Democratic. The only issue is whether Republican Gov. Larry Hogan -- who's popular in the state despite his party affiliation -- can help oust enough incumbents to sustain vetoes. Currently, both chambers are veto-proof; the Democrats have more than the 85 representatives and 29 senators they need to override Hogan's vetoes.

MASSACHUSETTS

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 31-7 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 121-34 D

Bank on it: Massachusetts' lopsidedly Democratic chambers will be solid in 2018.

MICHIGAN

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 27-10 R

House: Projected Lean R; Current 63-46 R

In the Senate, 27 of 38 seats will be open due to term limits, most of them Republican. Still, it's unclear at this point whether Democrats can win enough of them to flip the chamber this fall. But if they gain momentum as the cycle progresses, we may move it a notch.

In the House, a smaller percentage of seats are open, but there are about an equal number of seats that are marginally Democratic and marginally Republican, boosting the Democrats' odds of seizing the lower chamber.

MINNESOTA

Senate: No Races; Current 34-33 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 77-57 R

Minnesota has lots of big races on the ballot this fall -- two U.S. Senate seats, several competitive U.S. House seats and all statewide offices, including the governorship. At the same

time, the GOP will have to defend a bunch of competitive House seats, primarily in the Twin Cities suburbs. If a Democratic wave develops, we may push the House to lean Republican.

MISSISSIPPI

Senate: 33-19 R

House: 73-48 R

Neither chamber in Mississippi is contested this year.

MISSOURI

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 24-9 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 115-47 R

Missouri's Republican governor, Eric Greitens, is facing charges stemming from alleged sexual impropriety and may be impeached. Could Democrats benefit from a backlash? Maybe. But the GOP's margins are too big, it seems, to lose control in one cycle.

MONTANA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 32-18 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 59-41 R

While Trump's popularity in the state has waned somewhat in recent months, it's not likely to affect legislative races in Montana.

NEBRASKA

Senate: Unicameral/Nonpartisan

Nebraska's unicameral legislature is officially nonpartisan, so we don't handicap it.

NEVADA

Senate: Projected Likely D; Current 10-8 D

Assembly: Projected Likely D; Current 27-14 D

In the Senate, despite the tight margin, Democratic incumbents look solid. The Assembly, meanwhile, doesn't appear to have enough vulnerable Democratic seats to flip, either.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 14-10 R

House: Projected Tossup; Current 218-175 R

In recent election cycles, New Hampshire has been one of the nation's most closely divided and swingiest states. A flip to Democratic control is quite possible, but it's still early. What is certain is that both chambers will be competitive this fall. For now, we'll put them at tossup.

NEW JERSEY

Senate: 25-15 D

Assembly: 52-26 D

Neither chamber in New Jersey is contested this year.

NEW MEXICO

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 26-16 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 38-32 D

New Mexico is a state where the Democrats can expect a boost this fall. With Democrats already in control of both chambers, modest gains are possible.

NEW YORK

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 32-31 R (cross-party coalition)

Assembly: Projected Safe D; Current 102-37 D

Special elections on April 24 gave state Senate Democrats -- long the chamber's minority -- a numerical edge. But it didn't matter, since one Democrat, Simcha Felder, said he would continue to caucus with the GOP. If Democrats run strong in November, his decision may be irrelevant. Still, there's enough murkiness that we're keeping this in the tossup category for now.

NORTH CAROLINA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 35-15 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 75-45 R

The Democrats are poised to pick up seats in both chambers in North Carolina, especially in the House. But either way, there would have to be a significant wave for the GOP to lose control. The more urgent question is whether the Democrats can pick up enough seats to break the GOP supermajority in either chamber, handing Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper a weightier veto threat. In the House, the Democrats would need to net four seats to break the supermajority and would need six in the Senate.

Democrats are hoping that without a marquee statewide election on the ballot, turnout will be relatively low, giving them a boost. Moreover, by fielding more candidates than in the past, the Democrats should be able to take advantage of wave conditions. As in other states, suburban legislative districts could be decisive, particularly seats in populous Wake and Mecklenburg counties, which include Raleigh and Charlotte, respectively.

NORTH DAKOTA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 38-9 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 81-13 R

North Dakota's strong Republican margins are not in danger of eroding this year.

OHIO

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 24-9 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 66-33 R

Only half the seats in the Ohio Senate are up in any cycle, which makes it less susceptible to wave conditions. The House is a bit more vulnerable (and is being buffeted by scandal and leadership squabbles). But the GOP edge in the House is wide and should be able to survive even a sizable Democratic wave.

OKLAHOMA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 40-8 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 72-28 R

The Oklahoma Senate is certain to stay in Republican hands, with only 24 of 48 seats up this cycle and a big GOP edge. But dissatisfaction with GOP Gov. Mary Fallin has been brewing, and a battle over education funding has energized Democrats. If any Democratic gains are to materialize, it's likelier to happen the House. But for now, Republican dominance does not seem to be seriously threatened.

OREGON

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 17-13 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 35-25 D

The Democratic margins in the Oregon Legislature are modest, but it's a blue enough state in a blue enough year to be considered safe for now. Democrats may even be able to secure the one seat in each chamber that they need to gain a three-fifths supermajority. Going in the Democrats' favor is that the most competitive seats are in districts where Republican incumbents are leaving and where Democrats have been gaining ground.

PENNSYLVANIA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 34-16 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 119-81 R

The Democrats should be able to gain seats in both chambers. Party strategists believe they have a path to taking over the state House this year, but it's premature to say that's a likely outcome.

It's worth remembering that unlike the congressional district map, which was recently overturned by the state supreme court as an invalid partisan gerrymander, the lines in both state legislative chambers remain favorable to the GOP.

RHODE ISLAND

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 33-4 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 64-11 D

Despite a competitive gubernatorial race, the large Democratic majorities in the state legislature look solid for 2018. That said, there could be an ideological shift to the left within the Democratic caucus.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Senate: No Races; Current 28-18 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 79-44 R

In the House, the GOP will be in good shape to retain its sizable majority, with only modest, if any, erosion.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 29-6 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 60-10 R

The Republicans are in no danger of losing significant ground in this solidly red state.

TENNESSEE

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-5 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 74-25 R

There may be a few more seats than usual in play in Tennessee, and former Democratic Gov. Phil Bredesen is making a credible run for an open U.S. Senate seat. But significant Democratic gains look unlikely for now.

TEXAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 20-11 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 93-56 R

Even though Democrats are excited about Beto O'Rourke's chances at knocking off Republican U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, don't expect major Democratic gains in the legislature. In the Senate, only one seat is considered genuinely in play, and that district leans Republican.

Democratic gains are likelier in the House, where Democrats are contesting an unusually large number of seats. That said, a double-digit increase seems like a stretch. Perhaps more important is the question of who might succeed the retiring speaker, Joe Straus, a moderate Republican backed by a mix of Democrats and Republicans.

UTAH

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 24-5 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 62-13 R

Democrats might be able to make some marginal gains, but Utah Republicans are in no danger of losing significant clout.

VERMONT

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 21-7 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 83-53 D

Democrats will hold on to both chambers in Vermont. The most pressing question is whether Republicans lose more than two seats in the House, a result that would leave them with too few votes to sustain a veto by GOP Gov. Phil Scott.

VIRGINIA

Senate: 21-19 R

House: 51-49 R

Virginia does not have elections this year.

WASHINGTON STATE

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 26-23 D

House: Projected Lean D; Current 50-48 D

Both chambers in Washington state should remain blue this fall. Still, given narrow margins, we're keeping both chambers lean Democratic.

WEST VIRGINIA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 22-12 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 64-36 R

West Virginia remains Trump country, and the GOP's margins in both chambers are sizable. Democratic gains, if any, will be minor.

WISCONSIN

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 18-14 R

Assembly: Projected Likely R; Current 63-35 R

Democrats are optimistic about their chances in the state Senate, where they only need to net three seats to take control. The Democrats flipped one GOP-held Senate seat earlier this year, and on June 12 they hope to flip another. If they succeed, we may shift the chamber from lean Democratic to tossup.

By contrast, the GOP's margin in the Assembly should be large enough to hold, despite the possibility of some modest losses.

WYOMING

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 27-3 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 51-9 R

The Republican majorities in Wyoming have nothing to worry about in 2018.

Louis Jacobson | Contributor | ljacobson@poynter.org | @loujacobson

http://www.governing.com/topics/politics/gov-2018-state-legislatures-democrats-gains.html

A Month Before Election Day, Democrats Poised for Legislative Gains

While they likely won't win a majority nationwide, the party is poised to gain control of some chambers. How many depends on the size of the potential blue wave.

BY LOUIS JACOBSON | OCTOBER 8, 2018

The last time we handicapped the state legislatures in May, the Democrats were in a good position to gain ground this fall. Five months later, their chances look even better.

Since then, Democrats' chances of gaining the majority have improved in nine chambers, compared to just one for the Republicans. Republicans currently have 11 chambers at risk of flipping party control, compared to just four for the Democrats.

In addition, we're rating the Minnesota Senate for the first time this cycle. After a vacancy emerged in late May, the previously Republican-held chamber became tied. A special election in November will decide control. We're rating it lean Republican.

RELATED

After More Than 30 Years, the Leader of State Legislatures to Step DownWith Primary Season Over, Democrats Poised to Gain 3 to 7 Governors' SeatsAs Sexual Harassment Reforms Stall in Congress, Statehouses Take the LeadNovember's Most Important Ballot MeasuresWhere Independents Could Shake Up Races for Governor

Our assessment is based on interviews with dozens of state and national political sources. We rate chambers on the following scale: safe Republican, likely Republican, lean Republican, tossup, lean Democratic, likely Democratic and safe Democratic. The categories labeled "lean" and "tossup" are considered competitive or in play.

All told, we see 17 competitive chambers at this point, very close to the number of competitive chambers in May and to the number in 2014 -- the most recent election cycle with a strong partisan wave.

Of those competitive chambers that are controlled by Republicans, three lean Democratic (the New Hampshire Senate and House and the New York Senate); three are tossups (the Colorado

Senate, the Maine Senate and the Wisconsin Senate); and five lean Republican (the Arizona Senate, the Florida Senate, the Iowa House, the Michigan House and the Minnesota House).

Among the competitive Democratic-held chambers, none currently lean Republican, and only one rates as a tossup -- Alaska's House. Three others are vulnerable enough to fall into the lean Democratic category: the Connecticut House, the Delaware Senate and the Maine House.

There are two tied chambers -- the senates in Connecticut and Minnesota -- that are also in play. Connecticut is a tossup and Minnesota is lean Republican.

Rating	Held by D	Held by R	Tied	Total
Lean Republican	0	5	1	6
Tossup	1	3	1	5
Lean Democrat	3	3	0	6
Total	4	11	2	17

Of the nine chambers moving in the Democrats' direction since our May ratings, three are no longer considered competitive and are rated likely Democratic: the Colorado House and the Washington state House and Senate. Three chambers moved out of tossup and into the lean Democratic category: both chambers in New Hampshire and the New York Senate. And one chamber moved from lean Republican to tossup -- the Wisconsin Senate.

The only chamber moving in the Republicans' direction since May is the Alaska House, which moves from lean Democratic to tossup.

How Big Will the 2018 Blue Wave Be?

Currently, the GOP holds control of more than two-thirds of the nation's legislative chambers: 65 in all, compared to 31 for the Democrats. (This tally counts New York's Senate as Republican

and Alaska's House as Democratic, but both states are led by bipartisan coalitions. Meanwhile, Nebraska's unicameral legislature, which is nonpartisan, isn't included in our count.)

It's worth noting that the degree of Republican vulnerability in 2018 is smaller than it was for the Democrats in 2010. That year, we considered 25 Democratic chambers to be in play. Of course, that election was held prior to the 2010 Census round of redistricting, which ultimately bolstered Republican legislative prospects in a number of previously competitive states. Those 2010-drawn lines now protect Republicans in many states, limiting Democratic options for flipping chambers this year.

In a neutral political environment -- one without a partisan wave -- our handicapping might produce a net Democratic gain of two to three chambers. But Election Day 2018 is not shaping up to be a neutral political environment.

As we wrote in May, if a wave only favors the Democrats modestly, we might see a four- to seven-chamber gain for the Democrats. If a larger wave materializes, Democrats could take a bigger bite out of the GOP's state-by-state advantage -- a net switch of eight to 14 chambers.

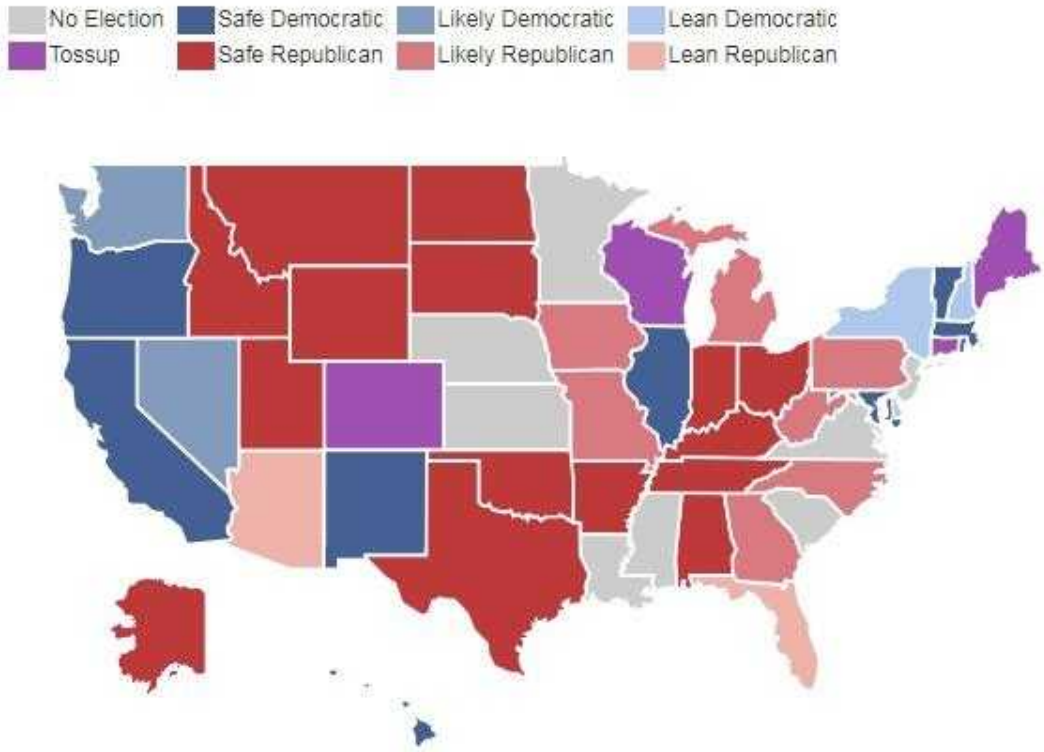
Despite the Democrats' strong position, it's worth injecting a note of caution. Even a net switch of 14 chambers toward the Democrats would leave Republicans with a national edge in chambers of 51-46.

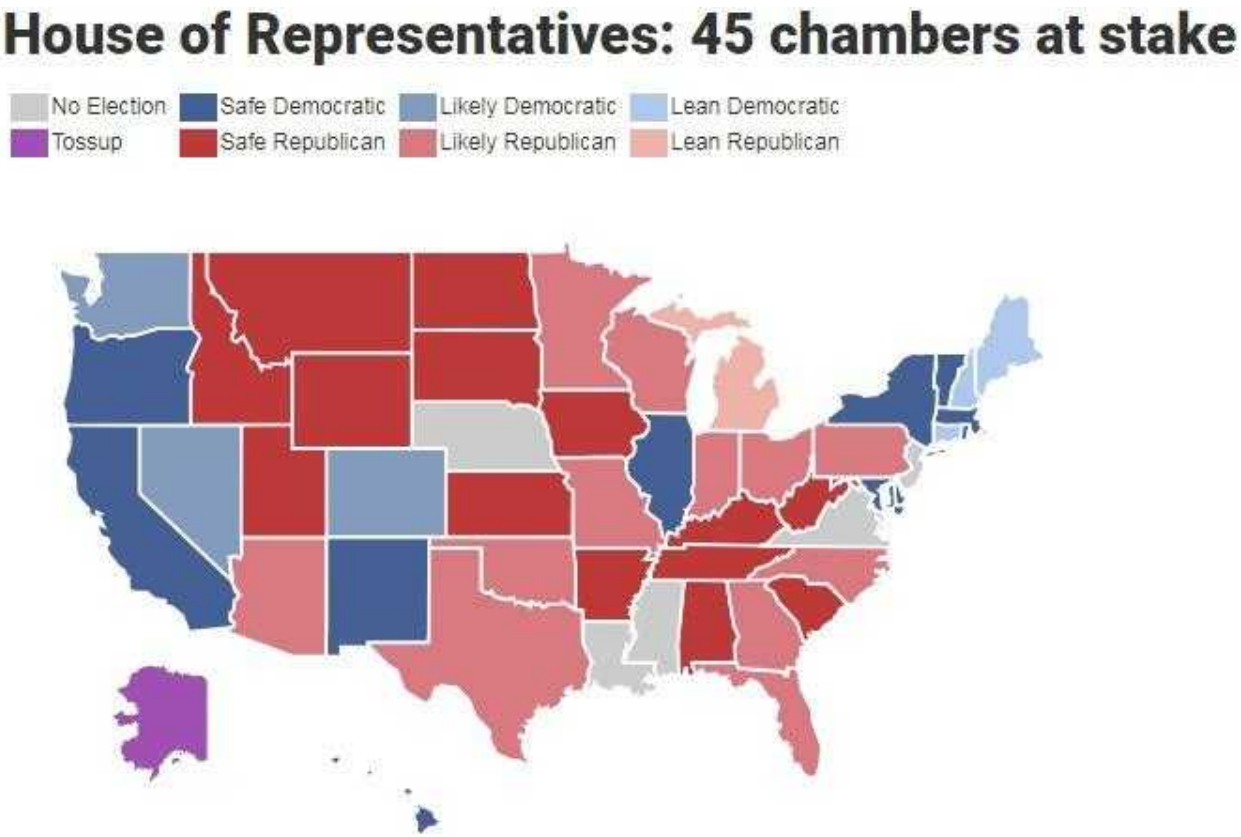
Legislative Ratings: State by State

Listed below these maps are our ratings, with state-by-state analysis. For a more interactive version of the maps, and ratings for other races, click here.

The data for the current partisan breakdown in each chamber comes from the National Conference of State Legislatures; seats that are vacant or held by third-party politicians are not included in the totals.

Senate: 42 chambers at stake





ALABAMA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 25-8 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 72-32 R

Alabama is so red that it will take more than a Democratic wave to change the partisan status quo in the legislature.

ALASKA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 14-6 R

House: Projected Tossup; Current 21 R-17 D (Democrats control in a cross-party coalition; shift from lean Democratic)

Alaska's Senate is safely in Republican hands, but control of the House -- governed by a narrow, Democratic-led coalition -- is up for grabs. A wide lead by Republican gubernatorial nominee Mike Dunleavy in the three-way race against incumbent Independent Gov. Bill Walker and Democrat Mark Begich could boost Republican chances for a takeover.

ARIZONA

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 17-13 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 35-25 R

Democrats are three seats away from flipping the Arizona Senate. But to ultimately take control, they would have to unseat some battle-tested Republican lawmakers. In addition, early indicators suggest that enthusiasm among Latino voters, a crucial electorate for Democrats, is not as strong as has been expected. Unless they turn out, the Arizona Senate could stay in Republicans' hands.

ARKANSAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 25-9 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 75-24 R

Arkansas Democrats might be able to snag a few extra seats this fall, but the GOP's majorities are wide enough to remain secure.

CALIFORNIA

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 25-14 D

Assembly: Projected Safe D; Current 55-25 D

Thanks to President Trump's unpopularity in the state, Democrats, who already possess lopsided control of both chambers, may be able to expand their margins even further this fall.

COLORADO

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 18-16 R

House: Projected Likely D; Current 36-29 D (shift from lean Democratic)

The Democrats continue to have high hopes of flipping the GOP-controlled Colorado Senate. Democratic allies, including EMILY's List, have been spending millions in an effort to flip the closely held chamber.

Meanwhile, with Democratic gubernatorial nominee Jared Polis ahead by a few points in recent polls, the GOP's hope of flipping the Democratic-held House faces longer odds.

CONNECTICUT

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 18-18

House: Projected Lean D; Current 80-71 D

Thanks to a close race for governor, both chambers are in play. Democratic Gov. Dannel Malloy's unpopularity has been a major source of concern for his party. But Democrats are breathing a little easier since polls showed their nominee, Ned Lamont, leading Republican nominee Bob Stefanowski by the low-double digits.

DELAWARE

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 11-10 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 25-16 D

Ten of the Senate's 21 seats are up this year. It's hard to imagine the blue state of Delaware losing Democratic seats in 2018, but as early as 2017, the chamber was been tied when a special election for a vacant seat was held. The stakes then were so serious that the contest drew national attention and money. Given that a single seat flipping to Republicans could change control, this remains lean Democratic.

FLORIDA

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 23-16 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 76-41 R

For the first time in a quarter-century, Florida Democrats have a genuine chance of seizing control of a state legislative chamber -- contesting more seats than they have in recent election cycles. While the party stands a good chance of picking up seats in both chambers, they'd have to make up too much ground in the House to make it genuinely competitive.

The much closer Senate, though, should be in play. The deciding factor will be the governor's race, which pits a staunch liberal against a staunch conservative. Its impact on turnout is uncertain; it's possible we could shift either or both chambers further in the Democrats' or Republicans' direction before Election Day. But until the situation clarifies itself, we're keeping both chambers' ratings unchanged.

GEORGIA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 37-19 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 116-64 R

Like Florida, Georgia has a sharp ideological contest for governor this fall, with an uncertain impact on turnout. But demographic changes and political shifts should produce some Democratic gains this fall, especially in the Atlanta suburbs. That said, the margins in Georgia remain too wide for Democrats to be optimistic about flipping either chamber outright in 2018.

HAWAII

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 24-0 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 46-5 D

The extreme Democratic lead in both chambers make the Hawaii Legislature among the safest in the nation for Democrats.

IDAHO

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 29-6 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 59-11 R

There's a possibility of minor Democratic gains given the few GOP retirements and departures -- but nothing big enough to change the makeup of either chamber.

ILLINOIS

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 37-22 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 66-50 D

With Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner facing a rough reelection battle -- and the state unhappy with President Trump -- this doesn't look like the year for Republicans to make gains in either chamber. A bonus for Democrats is that gubernatorial nominee J.B. Pritzker is heavily funding his own campaign, leaving pro-Democratic outside groups able to devote their money and time to shoring up control of the legislature.

Pritzker is going through a bad patch, though. Earlier this month, Cook County's inspector general declared that Prizker cheated taxpayers through fraudulently representing his mansion to secure $330,000 in property tax breaks. Still, Rauner is in such a big hole that it may not be enough to stop Pritzker's juggernaut.

Republicans, meanwhile, are less than unified as they grapple with an internal war between establishment Republicans and a more staunchly free-market wing championed by deep-pocketed donor Richard Uihlein. In a strong year for Democrats, this will hurt them even further. Rauner already struggled to beat an underfunded rival running to his right during the primary.

INDIANA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 41-9 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 70-30 R

The Democrats are targeting five Republican seats in the Senate, but while they could ultimately flip a few, the GOP edge is so big that it won't matter. In the House, the Democrats could flip anywhere from five to nine seats, but again, the GOP margin is wide enough to maintain the majority.

IOWA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 29-20 R

House: Projected Lean R; Current 58-41 R (Shift from safe Republican)

Iowa, which shifted dramatically toward Trump in the 2016 election, appears to be swinging back in the other direction this year. In the Senate, Republicans may be able to maintain or increase their majority. But Democrats are poised to eat into the GOP's margin in the House. With the combination of Republican retirements and Democratic enthusiasm, they have an outside chance of taking the majority.

KANSAS

Senate: No Races; Current 31-9 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 85-40 R

The Kansas House, which is the only chamber in the state to be contested this fall, will remain in Republican hands. But if moderate Republicans manage to gain enough ground, they could work with Democrats to shape key bills.

KENTUCKY

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 27-11 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 63-37 R

Kentucky, which has all but completed its transition into a solidly Republican state, is not promising territory for Democrats to gain back legislative ground, even in a favorable year like 2018. Expect continued Republican control in both chambers.

LOUISIANA

Senate: 25-14 R

House: 61-40 R

Neither chamber in Louisiana is contested this year.

MAINE

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 18-17 R

House: Projected Lean D; Current 74-70 D

Both chambers in this swing state remain in play, especially with a highly competitive gubernatorial race. A few more House Republicans are term-limited this year than are House Democrats, opening up some opportunities for the party. In the Senate, though, a competitive race by Republican gubernatorial nominee Shawn Moody may help Republicans keep their narrow lead.

MARYLAND

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 33-14 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 91-50 D

Both chambers in Maryland are solidly Democratic. The only issue is whether Republican Gov. Larry Hogan -- who's popular in the blue state despite his party affiliation -- can run well enough to oust enough incumbents to sustain vetoes. Currently, both chambers are veto-proof; the Democrats have more than the 85 representatives and 29 senators they need to override Hogan's vetoes.

MASSACHUSETTS

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 31-7 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 117-34 D

Massachusetts' lopsidedly Democratic majorities remain solid in 2018 and beyond.

MICHIGAN

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 27-10 R

House: Projected Lean R; Current 63-46 R

In the Senate, 27 seats will be open due to term limits, most of them Republican. Still, the GOP margin is solid enough that a flip in control is unlikely.

A smaller percentage of seats are open in the House. But since it is more narrowly divided than the Senate, it could be in play -- especially with the governor's race leaning the Democrats' way.

MINNESOTA

Senate: Projected Lean R; Current 33-33 (special election)

House: Projected Lean R; Current 77-56 R (shift from likely Republican)

The tied state Senate will be decided by a special election for a seat that became vacant in late May after Republican Michelle Fischbach was appointed lieutenant governor. The seat is in a Republican-friendly district, but both sides are throwing everything at the seat since it's the key to controlling the chamber.

As for the House, one of the most competitive seats has already effectively flipped after the GOP candidate withdrew amid allegations of sexual assault from his daughter. In addition, at least 15 suburban GOP members are facing a significant backlash thanks to Trump's growing unpopularity there. We're shifting the rating from likely Republican to lean Republican.

MISSISSIPPI

Senate: 33-19 R

House: 73-47 R

Neither chamber in Mississippi is contested this year.

MISSOURI

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 23-9 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 112-47 R

With Missouri's Republican governor, Eric Greitens, out of the way -- he resigned after allegations of sexual impropriety -- Democrats don't look as likely to benefit in legislative races. The party may be able to gain a few seats, but the GOP's margins are too big to lose control in one cycle.

MONTANA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 32-18 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 59-41 R

While Trump's popularity in the state has waned somewhat in recent months, it's not likely to affect legislative races in Montana.

NEBRASKA

Senate: Unicameral/Nonpartisan

Nebraska's unicameral legislature is officially nonpartisan, so we don't handicap it.

NEVADA

Senate: Projected Likely D; Current 10-8 D

Assembly: Projected Likely D; Current 27-14 D

In the Senate, despite the tight margin, Democratic incumbents look solid. The Assembly, meanwhile, doesn't appear to have enough vulnerable Democratic seats to flip, either.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 14-10 R (shift from tossup)

House: Projected Lean D; Current 214-170 R (shift from tossup)

In recent election cycles, New Hampshire has been one of the nation's most closely divided states and most likely to swing. Despite the state House's enormous size, it has been known to flip control during wave elections. And even with GOP Gov. Chris Sununu showing an edge in

his reelection bid, independent observers think Democrats are gaining momentum in legislative races. We're shifting both chambers from tossup to lean Democratic.

NEW JERSEY

Senate: 25-15 D

Assembly: 54-26 D

Neither chamber in New Jersey is contested this year.

NEW MEXICO

Senate: No elections this year. Current 26-16 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 38-31 D

New Mexico is a state where the Democrats can expect a boost this fall. They are already in control of both chambers, and modest gains in the House are possible; Democrats are favored in the gubernatorial race following two terms by Republican Gov. Susana Martinez, and the national Democratic environment doesn't hurt.

NEW YORK

Senate: Projected Lean D; Current 32 D-31 R (cross-party coalition; shift from tossup)

Assembly: Projected Safe D; Current 104-41 D

The state Senate has long been under Republican control, even when that required forming a cross-party coalition with renegade Democrats. But that increasingly looks likely to come to an end. There are numerous open seats, many of them in competitive areas such as the Hudson Valley, and progressive candidates exhibited substantial energy in primaries. We're shifting the chamber from tossup to lean Democratic.

NORTH CAROLINA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 34-15 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 75-45 R

The Democrats are poised to pick up seats in both chambers, especially in the House. The national energy has helped the party field candidates in every legislative district. There would have to be a significant wave for the GOP to lose control -- the GOP-drawn map gives Republicans an edge -- but it's looking likelier than a few months ago that the Democrats could pick up enough seats to break the GOP supermajority in either chamber, handing Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper a weightier veto threat.

NORTH DAKOTA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 38-9 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 81-13 R

North Dakota's strong Republican margins are not in danger of eroding this year.

OHIO

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 24-9 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 64-33 R

The House is vulnerable to GOP losses thanks to scandals and leadership squabbles. But the GOP edge in the House is wide and should be able to outlast even a sizable Democratic wave.

Only half the seats in the Ohio Senate are up in any cycle, which makes it less susceptible to wave conditions. But the Democrats could gain a modest number of seats in the chamber.

OKLAHOMA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 39-8 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 72-28 R

The Oklahoma Senate is certain to stay in Republican hands, with only 24 of 48 seats up this cycle and a big GOP edge. But dissatisfaction with Republican Gov. Mary Fallin and a battle

over education funding has energized Democrats, producing a surprisingly close gubernatorial race. If any Democratic gains are to materialize, it's likelier to happen the House.

OREGON

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 17-13 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 35-25 D

The Democratic margins in the Oregon Legislature are modest, but it's a blue enough state in a blue enough year to be considered safe. Democrats may even be able to secure the one seat in each chamber that they need to gain a three-fifths supermajority. But amid a closer-than-expected gubernatorial race for incumbent Democrat Kate Brown, the chances of that happening have diminished somewhat since our last ratings.

PENNSYLVANIA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 33-16 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 121-82 R

One might think that Pennsylvania would be a good prospect for flipping a Republican chamber or two, given the Democrats' strong edge in races for U.S. senator, governor and several House seats. But redistricting has provided legislative Republicans some insurance even in a difficult political environment. Still, the Democrats should be able to gain back a modest number of seats.

RHODE ISLAND

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 33-4 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 64-11 D

Despite a competitive gubernatorial race, the large Democratic majorities in the state legislature look solid for 2018. That said, there could be an ideological shift to the left within the Democratic caucus, and that could provoke a leadership fight that unseats Speaker Nick Mattiello.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Senate: No Races; Current 27-18 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 80-44 R

In this solidly red state, the GOP will be in good shape to retain its sizable majority in the House.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-6 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 59-10 R

The open-seat gubernatorial contest is turning surprisingly competitive for the Democrats, but the Republicans are in no danger of losing significant ground in legislative races. The only contest of note will be between conservative Republicans and very conservative Republicans.

TENNESSEE

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 28-5 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 73-25 R

There may be a few more seats in play than usual in Tennessee, thanks in part to former Democratic Gov. Phil Bredesen's credible run for the U.S. Senate. Still, significant Democratic gains are unlikely in this formidably red state.

TEXAS

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 20-11 R

House: Projected Likely R; Current 93-55 R

Even though Democrats are excited about Beto O'Rourke's chances of knocking off Republican U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, don't expect major Democratic gains in the state legislature. In the Senate, only one seat is considered genuinely in play, and that district leans Republican.

Democratic gains are likelier in the House, though, where Democrats are contesting an unusually large number of seats. That said, a double-digit increase seems like a stretch. Perhaps more important is the question of who might succeed the retiring speaker, Joe Straus, a moderate Republican backed by a mix of Democrats and Republicans.

UTAH

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 24-5 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 61-13 R

Democrats might be able to make some marginal gains, but Utah Republicans are in no danger of losing significant clout in this red state.

VERMONT

Senate: Projected Safe D; Current 21-7 D

House: Projected Safe D; Current 83-53 D

Democrats will hold on to both chambers in Vermont. The more pressing question is whether Republicans will lose enough races to lose their ability to sustain a veto by GOP Gov. Phil Scott.

VIRGINIA

Senate: 21-19 R

House: 51-49 R

Neither chamber in Virginia is contested this year.

WASHINGTON STATE

Senate: Projected Likely D; Current 26-23 D (shift from lean Democratic)

House: Projected Likely D; Current 50-48 D (shift from lean Democratic)

Even Republicans in the state are downbeat about the prospects of flipping either chamber in a blue state in a blue year. Despite the narrow margins, we're moving both chambers in this blue state from lean Democratic to likely Democratic.

WEST VIRGINIA

Senate: Projected Likely R; Current 22-12 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 64-36 R

West Virginia remains Trump country, and the GOP's margins in both chambers are sizable. Democratic gains, if any, should be modest.

WISCONSIN

Senate: Projected Tossup; Current 18-15 R (shift from lean Republican)

Assembly: Projected Likely R; Current 64-35 R

Democrats are optimistic about their chances in the state Senate, where they need only net two seats to take control. They've already flipped two seats in special elections. Democrats are benefiting from Trump's unpopularity in the suburbs and a competitive governor's race between GOP Gov. Scott Walker and his Democratic opponent, Tony Evers. Given this, we're shifting the Senate to tossup. By contrast, the GOP's margin in the Assembly should be large enough to hold, despite the possibility of some modest losses.

WYOMING

Senate: Projected Safe R; Current 27-3 R

House: Projected Safe R; Current 51-9 R

The Republican majorities in Wyoming have nothing to worry about in 2018.

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Handicapping the 2020 State Legislature Races

January 15, 2020 | Louis Jacobson

Over the past few election cycles, America's increasingly polarized political culture has ironed out many partisan outliers in the state legislatures. These days, reliably blue states at the presidential level tend to have reliably Democratic legislatures, and strongly red states tend to have strongly Republican legislatures.

This has left roughly a dozen states — mostly battlegrounds in the presidential race — that will play host to competitive fights over legislative control in one or both chambers.

This is our first handicapping of state legislative control of the 2020 election cycle — and the project's return to the Cook Political Report, where it began in 2002. (Subsequent editions appeared in the Rothenberg Political Report, Stateline.org, and Governing magazine.)

As always, our assessment is based on interviews with dozens of state and national political sources. We rate chambers on the following scale: Solid Republican, Likely Republican, Lean Republican, Toss Up, Lean Democratic, Likely Democratic and Solid Democratic. The categories labeled "Lean" and "Toss Up" are considered competitive or in play. "Likely" chambers aren't expected to shift partisan control, but they could see seat gains by the minority party.

Currently, the GOP controls 58 legislative chambers while the Democrats control 40 chambers. (For this tally, we counted the Alaska House's coalition leadership as a Democratic-held chamber, even though Republicans nominally control more seats.)

That's down from the 65 chambers controlled by the GOP prior to the 2018 election. In turn, that was down from the 68 chambers the GOP controlled just before the 2016 election.

The GOP edge in state legislative chambers has been consistent for a decade. As recently as the run-up to the 2010 election, Democrats held a 62-to-36 advantage in chambers, but that degree of Democratic control has suffered from a combination of a strong GOP redistricting cycle in 2010 and the slow but permanent loss of yellow-dog Democratic chambers in the South.

Nebraska's unicameral legislature, which is nonpartisan, isn't included in our count.

At this point for the 2020 cycle, we see 15 competitive chambers – close to, but slightly less than, the 17 we saw as competitive in our final handicapping prior to the 2018 election.

All of the chambers we're placing in the lean Republican or lean Democratic categories are currently controlled by the party they lean towards. To put it another way, in these chambers, the party that controls the chamber is playing defense in 2020.

We see seven Republican-held chambers in the lean Republican category: the Florida Senate, the Iowa House, the Michigan House, the North Carolina Senate, the Pennsylvania Senate, the Pennsylvania House, and the Texas House. The Democrats are playing defense in just three lean Democratic chambers: the Maine Senate, the Minnesota House, and the New Hampshire House.

Meanwhile, the tossup chambers are close to evenly split between the parties. We see five chambers as tossups: the Alaska House (where Democrats lead a bipartisan coalition), both chambers in Arizona (which are currently held by the GOP), the New Hampshire Senate (which is currently held by the Democrats), and the Minnesota Senate (which is currently held by the GOP).

The chambers we came close to rating as competitive — but have held off for now – are the North Carolina House and the Wisconsin Senate. Both are held by the GOP and currently rate as likely Republican. But depending on how the political winds develop, they could shift later to lean Republican.

Here's a table that breaks down the competitive chambers on our list:

	R-held	D-held	Total
Lean R	7	0	7
Toss Up	3	2	5
Lean D	0	3	3
Total	**10**	**5**	**15**

The GOP needs to defend more competitive chambers this fall — by a two-to-one margin. That suggests that Democrats might be able to post net gains of a couple chambers when all is said and done.

On the other hand, if Republicans can keep a Democratic wave from developing, the total shift in partisan control seems unlikely to be dramatic. If the lean Republican and lean Democratic seats remain with the party currently in control and the tossup chambers end up splitting roughly evenly between the parties, the net change would be small — maybe a chamber or two.

Of course, the presidential race is poised to play a significant impact on state legislative races.

All but one of our competitive chambers is in a state that's shaping up to be a presidential battleground for 2020. (The exception is Alaska.) That means that spending on the presidential race — and the identity of the nominees leading each party's ballot — could have a significant influence on downballot races like legislative seats.

Will an energized Trump base in rural areas of states like Florida, Iowa, Michigan, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania help the GOP maintain vulnerable legislative chambers? Or will the Democrats succeed in flipping some of those Trump-won swing states, aiding the party's quest to flip GOP held chambers? No one knows yet.

A key factor at stake this year: The 2020 election cycle will be the last one before the state-by-state lineups are set in advance of post-2020 Census redistricting. In 2010, Democrats seemed to be asleep at the switch in legislative races, allowing Republicans

ALASKA

Senate: Solid R
House: Toss Up

Alaska's Senate — like the state in most ways — is solidly Republican. But for several cycles running, the Democrats have worked with a splinter faction of moderate Republicans to control the state House. Alaska politics is particularly hard to predict, so for now, we're calling the chamber a tossup.

ARIZONA

Senate: Toss Up
House: Toss Up

Democrats were thrilled with their 2018 performance in this once solidly Republican state, which was driven by dissatisfaction among suburban and Hispanic voters about Trump. This might just be the year when the Democrats manage to flip control of one or more Arizona legislative chamber. (The closest the Democrats have gotten in recent years is a tie two decades ago, and it lasted just two years.) As recently as 2011-2012, the GOP held supermajorities in both legislative chambers, but now Democrats are within striking distance in both. Already, House Democrats were just a few hundred votes shy of forcing a 30-30 split after the 2018 elections. The House looks slightly more likely to flip control than the Senate in 2020, both we're rating both chambers tossup.

ARKANSAS

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Arkansas Republicans, who first achieved a majority in 2012, will remain firmly in control in 2020 and beyond.

CALIFORNIA

Senate: Solid D
Assembly: Solid D

California Republicans are as endangered these days as the California condor, and with demographics and national political trends going the Democrats' way, there's no reason to think they'll lose much if any ground in the legislature in 2020.

COLORADO

Senate: Likely D
House: Solid D

In just a few election cycles, Colorado has transitioned from a purple state to one that's increasingly in the Democrats' camp. In many an election cycle recently, one Colorado chamber or the other has been on our competitive list. No longer. Unless clouds emerge on the Democratic horizon later in the cycle, the party should be able to keep its hold on both Colorado legislative chambers.

CONNECTICUT

Senate: Likely D
House: Likely D

Going into the 2018 elections, the Connecticut Senate was tied, and the GOP was in striking distance of taking over the House. The Democratic wave of 2018 put the kibosh on Republican hopes of consolidating power, with Democrats taking sizable leads in both chambers. Connecticut voters haven't been especially happy with their Democratic governors in recent years – first Dannel Malloy and now Ned Lamont – due to sluggish economic growth and troubles with the state budget. But in 2020, any Republican momentum from state worries is likely to be outweighed by the drag from Trump's presence on the ballot.

DELAWARE

Senate: Likely D
House: Solid D

Delaware has become a solidly Democratic state in recent years, so despite the close margin in the state Senate – which produced a tie with one vacancy as recently as 2017 – the Democrats are odds-on favorites to keep control in both chambers.

FLORIDA

Senate: Lean R
House: Likely R

Despite its perennial swing state status and close races for numerous statewide offices in recent years, Florida Democrats haven't controlled either chamber since the mid-1990s, and it is unlikely that they will pick up the 14 seats they need in 2020 to take control in the state House. In the Senate, however, netting three seats (to force a tie) or four seats (to win outright control) is not out of the question.

GEORGIA

Senate: Likely R
House: Likely R

Georgia is a state where Democrats have high hopes for the future, but while the Atlanta suburbs are driving the party's recent surge of optimism, those gains are not likely to produce a legislative takeover in just one cycle. Look for some Democratic advances in both chambers, but continued minority-party status is expected for a little longer.

HAWAII

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

The Democrats' ridiculously wide margins in the Hawaii legislature are safe for the foreseeable future.

IDAHO

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

The Republicans have nothing to worry about in solidly red Idaho.

ILLINOIS

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

The Democrats are in good shape in Illinois, thanks to the imbalance between populous Chicagoland and more sparsely settled downstate, as well as to the increasingly bluish tint to the once-red Chicago suburbs.

INDIANA

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Not much over a decade ago, the Democrats controlled the Indiana House. Since then, though Indiana Republicans have solidified their stronghold on both chambers of the legislature. Today, both chambers are safe for the GOP.

IOWA

Senate: Likely R
House: Lean R

While Iowa leaned heavily into Trump in 2016, the state is looking more competitive in 2020, especially given the Trump trade policy's impact on Iowa's significant farm sector. The margin in the state Senate is probably too wide for the Democrats to overcome in one cycle, but the state House is a different story. In 2018, the Democrats picked up five seats in the chamber, and a longtime Republican legislator switched parties. The GOP maintains an edge in the chamber, but narrowly.

KANSAS

Senate: Likely R
House: Likely R

There's little question that the Republicans will maintain numerical majorities in both chambers after the 2020 election, but the more salient question is how sizable the contingent of moderate Republicans proves to be. Kansas has a long history of moderate Republicans teaming up with Democrats, rather than their more conservative

fellow Republicans, to pass centrist-oriented policies. The 2018 election of a moderate Democratic governor, Laura Kelly, could intensify that process. Another wild card is the possible GOP nomination of staunch conservative Kris Kobach for a U.S. Senate seat, which could lead some ordinarily GOP-leaning voters to defect at the top of the ballot and put pressure on Republicans running downballot.

KENTUCKY

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

A Democrat, Andy Beshear, won the 2019 gubernatorial race in Kentucky, but don't expect his narrow victory in this solidly red state to make much of a difference on state legislative control. The GOP has a firm grip on both chambers.

MAINE

Senate: Lean D
House: Likely D

Maine Democrats have decent margins in both chambers, and they are coming off a 2018 election in which a Democrat, Janet Mills, took back the governorship. But Trump's ability to win an electoral vote in 2016 from the more rural of Maine's two congressional districts could have an impact downballot in 2020. For now, Democrats should maintain control, but the closer of the two chambers, the Senate, looks like it will be competitive.

MASSACHUSETTS

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

The Democrats have a stranglehold on the Massachusetts legislature, and that's not changing any time soon.

MICHIGAN

House: Lean R

Michigan has no Senate races this year, but each of the 110 seats in the House will be up in 2020. (Maps from a newly created independent redistricting commission will not be in effect until the 2022 election.) Michigan will be heavily contested by both parties in the presidential race, and that contest is sure to have downballot effects. In 2018, the Democrats picked up six House seats, mainly in southeastern Michigan, that they had not won in a long time, but Republicans won one in the more rural Upper Peninsula, so on balance the Democrats netted five. Republicans feel they can win some of those seats back, and they have achieved better fundraising totals than the Democrats have. The House looks like it will be competitive, but the GOP starts with an edge.

MINNESOTA

Senate: Toss Up
House: Lean D

Currently, Minnesota is the only state other than Alaska in which one party controls one state legislative chamber and the other party controls the other one. For 2020, both chambers in Minnesota should be competitive, and it's not inconceivable that either party could consolidate their control. With a surprisingly close presidential contest in the state in 2016, both parties will be paying attention to Minnesota, with a possible impact on legislative races. The best news for the state Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party is that most of the competitive seats in both bodies will be based in the Twin Cities suburbs – a region where the Democrats have been on the march during the Trump era. In the Senate, meanwhile, the path to DFL control runs through a few Republican-held seats where Trump's support is soft.

MISSOURI

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Missouri has been trending heavily Republican in recent election cycles, and the GOP margins in both chambers are sizable. Unless Democratic challengers gain significant traction in the 2020 gubernatorial contest, the GOP should be in good shape in the Missouri legislature.

MONTANA

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Montana this fall will be home to competitive races for governor, state attorney general, and secretary of state, but the fight for control of the state legislature won't be in doubt. Both chambers will be safely Republican.

NEVADA

Senate: Likely D
Assembly: Likely D

For years, Nevada had competitive fights to control its legislative chambers. No longer, as Nevada has become an increasingly blue state. The Democrats have a supermajority in the Assembly and are one short of a supermajority in the Senate. (Of course, with a Democratic governor, Steve Sisolak, that's not as important a benchmark as it is in some states.) Any Republican gains would be marginal; Democratic control after 2020 looks solid.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senate: Toss Up
House: Lean D

New Hampshire, with a small Senate but an enormous House, is known for its wild electoral swings. Add to this the reality that Hillary Clinton barely beat Trump in 2016 in the state and you have the recipe for uncertainty for 2020. At stake is control of the redistricting process, which Republicans were able to leverage successfully in 2010. Since this is the last election before the 2020 Census, the New Hampshire GOP will make an aggressive play to take over both chambers this fall. With just a small seat gain needed to flip control in the Senate, we're calling that a tossup. With a much larger shift required in the House, we're rating that lean Democratic.

NEW MEXICO

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

The Democrats should be able to maintain control in both chambers in New Mexico. In the House, the Democrats picked up a handful of swing seats in 2018 cycle, so the party will be focused on keeping those in the fold. Meanwhile, in the Senate, the biggest story will be primary challenges from the left against a handful of moderate Democrats.

NEW YORK

Senate: Solid D
Assembly: Solid D

After a long run of GOP control in the New York Senate (sometimes aided by breakaway Democrats), the Democrats now have a comfortable edge in the chamber, in a state that's remained solidly blue. Neither chamber is vulnerable to a party switch in 2020.

NORTH CAROLINA

Senate: Lean R
House: Likely R

With a competitive presidential race this year, as well as contests for U.S. Senate, governor, and a bevy of statewide offices, North Carolina will be a big focus of political attention in 2020. The state will be using new legislative maps that are a bit more favorable to Democrats than the previous GOP-drawn map, but Republicans will start with the edge to keep control after 2020. Democrats will be focused on keeping the GOP below 30 seats in the state Senate and 72 seats in the state House, to avoid a Republican supermajority that could thwart Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper. A Democratic takeover of one or both chambers is possible, but likelier in the Senate. In fact, it will be a crucial goal for the party, which wants to assert some leverage in the post-2020 Census redistricting.

NORTH DAKOTA

Senate: Solid R
Assembly: Solid R

The Republicans are on ultra-safe ground in solidly red North Dakota.

OHIO

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Regardless of how competitive Ohio becomes in the presidential race, the Republicans have wide margins in both legislative chambers and a significant money advantage.

OKLAHOMA

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

There's no indication that the Democrats will take back any significant ground from the GOP in Oklahoma.

OREGON

Senate: Likely D
House: Likely D

Both chambers should remain in Democratic hands, but the party needs to worry about its supermajority status. The Oregon Senate will have at least five open seats, including one given up by a Democrat in a GOP-leaning district. A Republican win there could help reduce the Democratic threshold below supermajority status. The House, meanwhile, should have at least a dozen open seats, with the GOP needing a net gain of two seats to break the supermajority.

PENNSYLVANIA

Senate: Lean R
House: Lean R

Pennsylvania may be a swing state in higher offices, but it's been pretty solidly red for a long while at the legislative level. The Democrats had a tie in the Senate about three decades ago, and they mustered narrow leads in the House after the 2006 and 2008 elections. Now, the Democrats have a shot at taking over at least one chamber, although the GOP starts the cycle with an edge. The Democrats picked up five Senate seats and

11 House seats in 2018. Pennsylvania will a major focus of national attention in 2020, potentially producing unpredictable downballot effects.

RHODE ISLAND

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

The Democrats will keep their insurmountable lead in both chambers in Rhode Island in 2020.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

South Carolina is reliably red, and the GOP is in no danger of losing much ground, if any, in 2020.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

The GOP will have no problem maintaining its wide lead in South Dakota.

TENNESSEE

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Tennessee's legislative chambers were controlled by the Democrats as late as the mid-2000s, but those days are long gone. Today, Republicans have dominant control.

TEXAS

Senate: Likely R
House: Lean R

to put together a wave that cemented GOP gains for the better part of a decade.

This time, it should be more of an even fight between the parties. A Democratic redistricting initiative headed by Barack Obama and Eric Holder has raised $52 million since it was founded, Politico reported in December.
(https://www.politico.com/news/2019/12/19/democrats-cash-state-redistricting-fight-087889)

Listed below are our ratings for each state, with a thumbnail analysis.

The data for the current partisan breakdown in each chamber comes from the National Conference of State Legislatures
(https://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/Elections/Legis_Control_2019_Post-Election%20Nov%2022nd.pdf) ; seats that are vacant are not included in the totals.

2020 State Legislative Control Ratings

		Upper House				Lower House		
State	Legislative Control	Dems	Reps	Other	Rating	Dems	Reps	Other
Alabama	Rep	8	27	-	n/a	28	76	-
Alaska	Divided	7	12	-	Solid R	15	23	2
Arizona	Rep	13	17	-	Toss Up	29	31	-
Arkansas	Rep	9	26	-	Solid R	24	75	-
California	Dem	29	11	-	Solid D	61	19	-
Colorado	Dem	19	16	-	Likely D	41	24	-
Connecticut	Dem	22	14	-	Likely D	91	60	-
Delaware	Dem	12	9	-	Likely D	26	15	-
Florida	Rep	17	23	-	Lean R	47	73	-
Georgia	Rep	21	35	-	Likely R	75	105	-
Hawaii	Dem	24	1	-	Solid D	46	5	-
Idaho	Rep	7	28	-	Solid R	14	56	-
Illinois	Dem	40	19	-	Solid D	74	44	-
Indiana	Rep	10	39	-	Solid R	33	67	-
Iowa	Rep	18	32	-	Likely R	46	53	-
Kansas	Rep	11	28	1	Likely R	41	83	-
Kentucky	Rep	9	29	-	Solid R	39	61	-

Louisiana	Rep	13	26	-	n/a	35	68	2
Maine	Dem	21	14	-	Lean D	89	56	6
Maryland	Dem	32	15	-	n/a	99	42	-
Massachusetts	Dem	34	6	-	Solid D	127	32	1
Michigan	Rep	16	22	-	n/a	52	58	-
Minnesota	Divided	32	35	-	Toss Up	75	59	-
Mississippi	Rep	16	36	-	n/a	46	75	1
Missouri	Rep	10	24	-	Solid R	48	114	-
Montana	Rep	20	30	-	Solid R	42	58	-
Nevada	Dem	13	8	-	Likely D	28	13	-
New Hampshire	Dem	14	10	-	Toss Up	233	165	1
New Jersey	Dem	25	15	-	n/a	50	30	-
New Mexico	Dem	26	16	-	Solid D	46	24	-
New York	Dem	40	23	-	Solid D	106	43	1
North Carolina	Rep	21	29	-	Lean R	55	64	-
North Dakota	Rep	10	37	-	Solid R	15	79	-
Ohio	Rep	9	24	-	Solid R	38	60	-
Oklahoma	Rep	9	39	-	Solid R	24	77	-
Oregon	Dem	18	12	-	Likely D	38	21	-
Pennsylvania	Rep	21	28	1	Lean R	93	110	-
Rhode Island	Dem	33	5	-	Solid D	66	9	-
South Carolina	Rep	19	27	-	Solid R	44	80	-
South Dakota	Rep	5	30	-	Solid R	11	59	-
Tennessee	Rep	5	28	-	Solid R	26	72	-
Texas	Rep	12	19	-	Likely R	68	82	-
Utah	Rep	6	23	-	Solid R	16	59	-
Vermont	Dem	22	6	2	Solid D	95	43	12
Virginia	Dem	21	19	-	n/a	55	45	-
Washington	Dem	29	20	-	Likely D	57	41	-
West Virginia	Rep	14	20	-	Likely R	41	59	-
Wisconsin	Rep	14	19	-	Likely R	36	63	-
Wyoming	Rep	3	27	-	Solid R	9	50	1

The Democratic gains in Texas in 2018, driven by electoral strength among suburban and minority voters, are poised to recur in 2020. Will they be big enough to flip the state House? Maybe, though it will be an uphill battle. Seat-by-seat analysis from Rice University shows that the Democrats would have to win two GOP-held seats now considered lean Democratic, three GOP-held seats now in the tossup category, and four of the eight GOP-held seats rated as lean Republican. Whether the Democrats can manage to do that will depend heavily on how big the Democratic presidential nominee's coattails are.

UTAH

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Red-state Utah may not be in love with Trump, but it likes its homegrown Republicans just fine. The GOP will easily control both chambers of the legislature for the foreseeable future.

VERMONT

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

While GOP Gov. Phil Scott remains favored to win the election, he is unlikely to have much of a coattail effect in legislative contests. The Democrats should maintain their big margins in the Vermont legislature.

WASHINGTON

Senate: Likely D
House: Solid D

Most of the GOP's competitive seats in the House got wiped out in 2018, and Trump, who's unpopular in the state, will be heading the ballot this fall, mostly to local Republicans' detriment. The main question is whether Democrats can secure a two-thirds supermajority this year. The margin in the Senate is closer; it's possible that the GOP could gain a seat or two.

WEST VIRGINIA

Senate: Likely R
House: Solid R

The GOP has taken West Virginia by storm in recent years, and with the popular Trump on the ballot in 2020, it doesn't look like a year in which Democrats can make major legislative inroads, despite the modest margins in the Senate.

WISCONSIN

Senate: Likely R
Assembly: Likely R

Wisconsin, which may be poised to be the decisive state in the 2020 presidential election, will be a huge focus of political attention this year. However, the current GOP-drawn maps make it challenging for Democrats to seize either chamber, despite winning the governorship and other state executive offices in 2018. Of the two chambers, the numerical margin is closer in the Senate, so it's possible it could shift to lean Republican later in the cycle.

WYOMING

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Wyoming is solidly Republican; expect no major changes at the state legislative level in 2020.

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July Update: Handicapping the 2020 State Legislature Races

July 22, 2020 | Louis Jacobson

If the arc of the 2020 election continues as it has for the past few months, the Democrats can look forward to gains in the state legislatures.

This is the conclusion of our second handicapping of state legislative control this election cycle; we published the first on Jan. 15 (https://cookpolitical.com/analysis/governors/statehouse/handicapping-2020-state-legislature-races) . We're shifting eight chambers, six of which are currently held by the GOP, in the Democrats' direction.

Our rating shifts are dictated by a national political environment in which President Donald Trump's chances of winning a second term have deteriorated amidst the coronavirus pandemic, the resulting economic downturn, and racial justice protests following the death in police custody of George Floyd.

In the key midwestern battleground of **Michigan**, a surge by presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden leads us to shift the state House – the only chamber being contested in the state this cycle – from Lean Republican to Toss Up. We're also shifting towards the Democrats three chambers in southern presidential battleground states where Biden is running tight with Trump. In **North Carolina**, we're shifting the House from Likely Republican to Lean Republican, where it joins the state Senate, which had already been in the Lean Republican category. In **Georgia**, we're shifting both chambers from Likely Republican to Lean Republican. As a precaution, we're shifting

both chambers in **Ohio** from Solid Republican to Likely Republican, following the arrest of the Republican House speaker. Finally, we're moving the **Connecticut** House and Senate, both currently controlled by the Democrats, from Likely Democratic to Solid Democratic.

As always, our assessment of the nation's legislative chambers – which we've published several times a cycle since 2002 – is based on interviews with dozens of state and national political sources. We rate chambers on the following scale: Solid Republican, Likely Republican, Lean Republican, Toss Up, Lean Democratic, Likely Democratic and Solid Democratic. The categories labeled "Lean" and "Toss Up" are considered "in play." "Likely" chambers aren't expected to shift partisan control, but they could see some seat gains by the minority party.

Currently, the GOP controls 58 legislative chambers while the Democrats control 40 chambers. Nebraska's unicameral legislature, which is nonpartisan, isn't included in our count. (For this tally, we counted the Alaska House's coalition leadership as a Democratic-held chamber, even though Republicans nominally control more seats.)

The GOP's edge has narrowed from the 65 chambers the party controlled prior to the 2018 elections. That was already down from the 68 chambers the GOP controlled just before the 2016 elections.

The GOP has held the lead in state legislative chambers for a decade. As recently as the run-up to the 2010 election, Democrats held a 62-to-36 advantage in chambers, but that degree of Democratic control has suffered from a combination of a strong GOP redistricting cycle in 2010 and the slow but permanent loss of yellow-dog Democratic chambers in the South.

At this point for the 2020 cycle, we rate 18 chambers as competitive – slightly more than the 17 we saw as competitive in our final handicapping prior to the 2018 election. Ominously for Republicans, the GOP holds 13 of the vulnerable chambers on our list, compared to just five for the Democrats. This suggests that the Democrats are positioned to net at least a few chambers this fall.

Each of the chambers we're placing in the lean Republican or lean Democratic categories are currently controlled by the party they lean towards. To put it another way,

in these chambers, the party that controls the chamber is playing defense in 2020.

We have placed nine Republican-held chambers in the lean Republican category: the Florida Senate, the Georgia Senate, the Georgia House, the Iowa House, the North Carolina Senate, the North Carolina House, the Pennsylvania Senate, the Pennsylvania House, and the Texas House.

By contrast, the Democrats are playing defense in just three chambers we rate as lean Democratic: the Maine Senate, the Minnesota House, and the New Hampshire House.

The Toss Up chambers are more of a mix. The Democrats control two chambers at sufficient risk to qualify as Toss Ups: the Alaska House (where, as we noted, the Democrats lead a bipartisan coalition) and the New Hampshire Senate. The Republicans, meanwhile, control four of the chambers we rate as Toss Ups: the Arizona Senate, the Arizona House, the Michigan House, and the Minnesota Senate.

Here's the breakdown by category:

	R-held	D-held	Total
Lean R	9	0	9
Toss Up	4	2	6
Lean D	0	3	3
Total	**13**	**5**	**18**

Looking ahead, the political dynamics this year suggest that the Democrats are likelier to put additional chambers into play than Republicans are.

Notably, we continue to rate several chambers in presidential battleground states as Likely Republican, even though Biden is polling well in those states. These include the Florida House and the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly. The reason the Republicans remain favored to hold these chambers is that these states have GOP-friendly maps in place. Still, we won't rule out the possibility that one or more of these chambers could shift to Lean Republican as Election Day approaches.

ALASKA

Senate: Solid R
House: Toss Up

Alaska's Senate — like the state in most ways — is solidly Republican. But for several cycles running, the Democrats have worked with a splinter faction of moderate Republicans and independents to control the state House. The Republican Party leadership is primarying a few of these breakaway Republicans; the primary is on August 18, and the results may provide more clarity about the chamber's outlook. For now, though, there are too many moving parts, so we're keeping the Alaska House at Toss Up.

ARIZONA

Senate: Toss Up
House: Toss Up

As recently as 2011-2012, the GOP held supermajorities in both legislative chambers in Arizona, but now Democrats are within striking distance in both, following a strong election cycle in 2018 that was driven by dissatisfaction about Trump among suburban and Hispanic voters.

In the 2018 elections, the Democrats were just a few hundred votes shy of forcing a 30-30 split in the House. The party now needs two seats to flip the House and three to flip the Senate, and the environment for the Democrats is, if anything, even stronger than in 2018. Democratic U.S. Senate challenger Mark Kelly has maintained a strong lead over Republican Sen. Martha McSally, and GOP Gov. Doug Ducey is grappling with a spiraling coronavirus outbreak.

It's premature to say the chambers lean Democratic, so we're keeping the ratings Toss Up for both.

ARKANSAS

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Arkansas Republicans, who first achieved a majority in 2012, will remain firmly in control in 2020 and beyond.

CALIFORNIA

Senate: Solid D
Assembly: Solid D

In this solidly Democratic state, there's no reason to think the Democrats will lose much if any ground in the legislature in 2020.

COLORADO

Senate: Likely D
House: Solid D

In just a few election cycles, Colorado has transitioned from a purple state to one that's increasingly Democratic. The party should be able to keep its hold on both Colorado legislative chambers.

CONNECTICUT

Senate: Solid D *(shift from Likely D)*
House: Solid D *(shift from Likely D)*

Going into the 2018 elections, the Connecticut Senate was tied, and the GOP was in striking distance of taking over the House. The Democratic wave of 2018 put the kibosh on Republican hopes of consolidating power, with Democrats taking sizable leads in both chambers.

Today, the possibility of Republican gains in Connecticut look even dimmer. While Connecticut voters haven't been especially happy with their Democratic governors in recent years due to sluggish economic growth, Republican candidates for the legislature will have trouble breaking through on state issues, due to the widespread dissatisfaction

with Trump. In a May poll by home-state pollster Quinnipiac University, Biden led Trump by 23 points.

At this point, Republicans are as likely to lose seats in both chambers of the legislature as they are to gain them. We're shifting the rating of both chambers from Likely Democratic to Solid Democratic.

DELAWARE

Senate: Likely D
House: Solid D

Delaware has become a securely Democratic state in recent years, so despite the close margin in the state Senate – which produced a tie with one vacancy as recently as 2017 – the Democrats are odds-on favorites to keep control in both chambers.

FLORIDA

Senate: Lean R
House: Likely R

Despite its perennial swing state status, Florida Democrats haven't controlled either chamber since the mid-1990s. Could that change this year? The Democrats would need 14 seats to flip the House and four to flip the Senate.

Some of the elements are slipping into place for Democratic gains. Biden has jumped out to nearly a seven-point lead over Trump in the state, a far wider margin than either party has achieved in key statewide election results in recent years. Moreover, Biden has been polling unexpectedly well among seniors, of which Florida has plenty. And the state is experiencing a major coronavirus outbreak, which poses risks for the political strength of GOP Gov. Ron DeSantis and his Republican majorities.

We're keeping the Senate at Lean Republican and the House, with a heavier lift, at Likely Republican. However, if the Florida GOP keeps taking hits, we might eventually shift the House to Lean Republican.

GEORGIA

Senate: Lean R *(shift from Likely R)*
House: Lean R *(shift from Likely R)*

At the time of our last assessment, it did not seem that Georgia Democrats were likely to produce a legislative takeover in just one cycle. That's still probably the case, but recent developments have given the party some optimism.

Thanks to demographic and partisan developments in the Atlanta suburbs, Biden has pulled into a virtual tie with Trump in the presidential race, and Democrats were pleased to see high and enthusiastic turnout in the June primary. In addition, the coronavirus is spreading quickly in Georgia, with risks for Republican Gov. Brian Kemp, who has been among the governors most aggressively pushing to open businesses.

The Democrats would need 16 seats to take control of the House and eight to take the Senate. There probably aren't enough competitive races for either chamber to flip, but it's no longer impossible. We're shifting both chambers to Lean Republican.

HAWAII

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

The Democrats' wide margins in the Hawaii legislature are safe for the foreseeable future.

IDAHO

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

The Republicans have nothing to worry about in solidly red Idaho.

ILLINOIS

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

Ethical problems are swirling around legendary and long-serving Democratic House Speaker Mike Madigan, as federal prosecutors this month settled with Commonweath Edison over allegations that the utility had given jobs and contracts to associates of Madigan. While Madigan has not been personally implicated, the case will only worsen the state's reputation for less-than-clean politics.

But will this matter electorally this year? Probably not. The Democrats have built up a solid cushion in Illinois, thanks to the imbalance between populous Chicagoland and more sparsely settled downstate, as well as to the increasingly bluish tint to the once-red Chicago suburbs. This is the fifth election under a strongly Democratic map, and because of staggered terms, only one-third of the Senate seats are even up this year. The Democrats have a big cash edge over the GOP, and Republican candidate recruiting has been underwhelming.

If legislative Democrats show any weakness as the election approaches, we'll adjust our rating. But for now, we're keeping both chambers at Solid Democratic.

INDIANA

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Not much over a decade ago, the Democrats controlled the Indiana House. Since then, however, Indiana Republicans have solidified their stronghold on both chambers of the legislature. Today, both chambers are safe for the GOP.

IOWA

Senate: Likely R
House: Lean R

While Iowa voted for Trump by 10 points in 2016, the state is a virtual Toss Up in recent presidential polls. The margin in the state Senate is probably too wide for the Democrats to overcome in one cycle, but the state House is a different story; the Democrats would need to net four seats to take the chamber.

In 2018, the Democrats picked up five seats in the chamber, and a longtime Republican legislator switched parties. Still, we're not quite ready to call it a Toss Up. We're keeping the chamber at Lean Republican for now.

KANSAS

Senate: Likely R
House: Likely R

There's little question that the Republicans will maintain numerical majorities in both chambers after the 2020 election, but the Democrats only need to gain one state House seat and two state Senate seats to break GOP supermajorities, which would aid Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly.

Making those gains is now a real possibility. Indeed, the relative strength of Biden in the state and the strong U.S. Senate candidacy of Democrat Barbara Bollier could bring out strong suburban turnout in swing areas such as Johnson County near Kansas City. That could have a ripple effect for Democrats in legislative races.

The legislature could become more conservative even if Democrats gain enough seats to break the supermajority if moderate Republicans lose to more conservative challengers in the August primaries.

KENTUCKY

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Democrat Andy Beshear may have won the 2019 gubernatorial race in Kentucky, but the GOP has a firm grip on both chambers.

MAINE

Senate: Lean D
House: Likely D

Maine Democrats have decent margins in both chambers, and they are coming off a 2018 election in which a Democrat, Janet Mills, took back the governorship. As the electoral map slips away from Trump, there's less reason for his campaign to expend resources to win the single electoral vote he took in 2016 in Maine's 2nd Congressional District.

We're keeping the more narrowly divided Senate at Lean Democratic for now, but it could end up joining the House as Likely Democratic before Election Day.

MASSACHUSETTS

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

The Democrats have a stranglehold on the Massachusetts legislature, and that's not changing any time soon.

MICHIGAN

House: Toss Up *(shift from Lean R)*

Michigan has no Senate races this year, but each of the 110 seats in the House will be up in 2020, and the Democrats would need to net four seats to flip the chamber. (Maps from a newly created independent redistricting commission will not be in effect until the 2022 election.)

As one of the trio of key states Trump flipped in 2016 to win the presidency, Michigan was going to be heavily contested by both parties this year. But Biden has jumped out to nearly a double-digit lead in the state, and Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has majority approval after her efforts to handle the coronavirus outbreak.

If the GOP writes off Michigan down the stretch, the Democrats may be able to pick up the handful of seats they need to flip the state House. We're moving the chamber from Lean Republican to Toss Up.

MINNESOTA

Senate: Toss Up
House: Lean D

Currently, Minnesota is the only state other than Alaska in which one party controls one state legislative chamber and the other party controls the other one. Both chambers in Minnesota should be competitive in 2020, and it's possible that either party could consolidate their control.

There are wild cards: The impact of the death in police custody of George Floyd and the unrest in Minneapolis that followed, as well as how well Democratic Gov. Tim Walz manages the coronavirus crisis as schools start up again.

Biden seems to be maintaining a double-digit lead in Minnesota, and if we see signs of softening support, we'll adjust our ratings. But for now, we're keeping the Senate at Toss Up and the House at Lean Democratic.

MISSOURI

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

After trending heavily Republican in recent election cycles, the national Democratic swing is even reaching Missouri this year. That could lead to some GOP legislative losses on the margins. However, the Republican edge in both chambers is too big for even a Democratic wave to flip control. So we're keeping Missouri's chambers at Solid Republican.

MONTANA

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Montana this fall will be home to competitive races for U.S. senator, governor, state attorney general, and secretary of state, but the fight for control of the state legislature won't be in much doubt. We're keeping both chambers at safely Republican.

NEVADA

Senate: Likely D
Assembly: Likely D

For years, Nevada had competitive fights to control its legislative chambers. No longer; Nevada has become a state with a modest but distinct blue lean. The Democrats have a supermajority in the Assembly and are one short of a supermajority in the Senate. (With a Democratic governor, Steve Sisolak, that's not as important a benchmark as it is in some states.)

Frustration with the coronavirus and its economic fallout, which has hit hospitality-heavy Nevada particularly hard, make it possible that the Republicans could pick up a seat or two in the Assembly, but they have little shot at taking the Senate. Barring a coronavirus-driven backlash against Sisolak and the Democratic legislature, it looks like Democratic control after 2020 should continue.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Senate: Toss Up
House: Lean D

New Hampshire, with a small Senate but an enormous House, is known for its wild electoral swings. The Democrats control both chambers, and Trump's polling deficit in the state has expanded in recent months to the high single digits. Republican Gov. Chris Sununu is significantly better positioned to win another term, but it's unclear whether his coattails will be enough to flip either chamber.

With just a small seat gain needed to flip control in the Senate, we're calling the chamber a tossup. With a much larger shift required in the House, we're rating that lean Democratic.

NEW MEXICO

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

The most notable development so far in New Mexico's legislative campaign cycle occurred in the June primary, when five of seven progressive Democratic challengers

ousted veteran Democrats with more moderate-to-conservative profiles.
For the general election, at least three of these progressive primary winners will be defending rural seats, giving the GOP some opportunity to play offense. But Republicans will also be defending three seats in the Albuquerque area that will be at risk due to the suburban gravitation away from the GOP.

The Trump campaign has repeatedly shown an interest in contesting New Mexico despite double-digit polling leads for Biden. Even if they do, it's not clear that their efforts would have much of a down-ballot impact. We're keeping both chambers in the Solid Democratic column.

NEW YORK

Senate: Solid D
Assembly: Solid D

After a long run of GOP control in the New York Senate (sometimes aided by breakaway Democrats), the Democrats now have a comfortable edge in the chamber in a state that's remained solidly blue. Neither the Assembly nor the Senate is vulnerable to a party switch in 2020.

NORTH CAROLINA

Senate: Lean R
House: Lean R *(shift from Likely R)*

With a competitive presidential race this year, as well as contests for U.S. Senate, governor, and a bevy of statewide offices, North Carolina will be a major focus of political attention in 2020. The state will be using new legislative maps that are a bit more favorable to Democrats than the previous GOP-drawn maps, but Republicans start with an edge to keep control after 2020.

Democrats need to keep the GOP below 30 seats in the state Senate and 72 seats in the state House to avoid a Republican supermajority that could thwart Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper. But with Biden maintaining a modest but consistent lead in the state and Cooper looking strong for reelection, Democrats are now thinking even bigger.

For Democrats to flip the Senate chamber, the easier of the two, they would need to seize two of the six seats that currently lean Republican, in-state analysts say. To flip the House, the Democrats would need to pick off five of 12 seats that lean Republican.

If a Democratic wave reaches North Carolina, they might be able to seize one or both chambers. But ticket-splitting is more common in the Tarheel State than in many places. We're keeping the Senate at Lean Republican, where the House now joins it.

NORTH DAKOTA

Senate: Solid R
Assembly: Solid R

The Republicans are on ultra-safe ground in solidly red North Dakota.

OHIO

Senate: Likely R *(shift from Solid R)*
House: Likely R *(shift from Solid R)*

As we were finishing our ratings, news broke that Ohio House Speaker Larry Householder was arrested as part of a $60 million bribery case. The Republicans have wide margins in both legislative chambers (and Householder was actually elected speaker with the support of Democrats and some Republicans). The GOP has wide leads in both chambers, but the uncertainty about the impact of the bribery case, combined with Ohio's return to battleground status in the presidential race, leads us to move both chambers to Likely Republican.

OKLAHOMA

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

There's no indication that the Democrats will take back any significant ground from the GOP in Oklahoma.

OREGON

Senate: Likely D
House: Likely D

While Democrats in Oregon may need to worry a bit about their legislative supermajority status, both chambers should remain in Democratic hands. Any GOP pickups could be balanced out by Democratic gains, especially in a presidential year in a strong Democratic environment. The protest clashes in Portland — and the Trump administration's efforts to crack down on them — are a possible wild card.

PENNSYLVANIA

Senate: Lean R
House: Lean R

Pennsylvania may be a swing state for higher offices, but it's been pretty solidly red for a long while at the legislative level. The GOP starts with an edge at keeping control, but the Democrats will probably be able to add this fall to their 2018 pickup of five Senate seats and 11 House seats. The Democrats would need to net nine seats to flip the House and four to flip the Senate.

Biden has jumped out to a lead in the high single digits in Pennsylvania, and his Scranton roots could win back some voters in reddish areas who supported Trump when he won the state in 2016. That could trickle down to help Democrats running for legislative seats, but it remains to be seen whether the Democratic tide is sufficiently strong to flip enough seats to shift control of one or both chambers.

We see two X factors. First, for the first time in a legislative cycle, Pennsylvania will not have a straight-party voting option. And second, the state will also be grappling with the shift to heavy mail balloting, which could have unpredictable effects on turnout patterns.

RHODE ISLAND

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

The Democrats have an insurmountable lead in both chambers in Rhode Island in 2020.

All but one of the chambers we currently rate as competitive is in a state that's become a presidential battleground for 2020. (The exception is Alaska.) That means that the presidential race should have a significant influence on how downballot races shake out. This includes legislative seats, which are some of the most generically partisan contests, meaning they could be influenced to an unusual degree by national political tides.

A key factor at stake this year: The 2020 election cycle will be the last one before the state-by-state lineups are set in advance of post-2020 Census redistricting. In 2010, Democrats seemed to be asleep at the switch in legislative races, allowing Republicans to amass a wave that cemented GOP gains for the better part of a decade. Democrats would like nothing more than to return the favor in 2020.

Listed below are our ratings for each state, with a thumbnail analysis.

The data for the partisan breakdown in each chamber come from Ballotpedia (https://ballotpedia.org/Partisan_composition_of_state_legislatures) ; seats that are vacant are not included in the totals.

2020 State Legislative Control Ratings

		Upper House				Lower House		
State	Legislative Control	Dems	Reps	Other	Rating	Dems	Reps	Other
Alabama	Rep	8	27	-	n/a	28	75	-
Alaska	Divided	7	13	-	Solid R	15	23	2
Arizona	Rep	13	17	-	Toss Up	29	31	-
Arkansas	Rep	9	26	-	Solid R	23	75	-
California	Dem	29	11	-	Solid D	61	17	1
Colorado	Dem	19	16	-	Likely D	41	24	-
Connecticut	Dem	22	14	-	Solid D	91	60	-
Delaware	Dem	12	9	-	Likely D	26	15	-
Florida	Rep	17	23	-	Lean R	46	73	-
Georgia	Rep	21	34	-	Lean R	75	105	-
Hawaii	Dem	24	1	-	Solid D	46	5	-
Idaho	Rep	7	28	-	Solid R	14	56	-
Illinois	Dem	40	19	-	Solid D	73	44	-

Indiana	Rep	10	40	-	Solid R	33	67	-
Iowa	Rep	18	32	-	Likely R	47	53	-
Kansas	Rep	11	29	1	Likely R	41	84	-
Kentucky	Rep	10	28	-	Solid R	38	62	-
Louisiana	Rep	12	27	-	n/a	35	68	2
Maine	Dem	21	14	-	Lean D	89	56	6
Maryland	Dem	32	15	-	n/a	99	42	-
Massachusetts	Dem	36	4	-	Solid D	127	31	1
Michigan	Rep	16	22	-	n/a	51	58	-
Minnesota	Divided	32	35	-	Toss Up	75	59	-
Mississippi	Rep	16	35	-	n/a	45	73	1
Missouri	Rep	10	24	-	Solid R	48	113	-
Montana	Rep	20	30	-	Solid R	42	57	-
Nevada	Dem	13	8	-	Likely D	29	13	-
New Hampshire	Dem	14	10	-	Toss Up	231	158	1
New Jersey	Dem	25	15	-	n/a	52	28	-
New Mexico	Dem	26	16	-	Solid D	45	24	-
New York	Dem	40	21	-	Solid D	103	42	1
North Carolina	Rep	21	28	-	Lean R	55	65	-
North Dakota	Rep	10	37	-	Solid R	15	79	-
Ohio	Rep	9	24	-	Likely R	38	61	-
Oklahoma	Rep	9	38	-	Solid R	23	77	-
Oregon	Dem	18	12	-	Likely D	38	22	-
Pennsylvania	Rep	21	28	1	Lean R	93	109	-
Rhode Island	Dem	33	5	-	Solid D	66	9	-
South Carolina	Rep	19	27	-	Solid R	44	79	-
South Dakota	Rep	5	30	-	Solid R	11	59	-
Tennessee	Rep	5	28	-	Solid R	26	73	-
Texas	Rep	11	19	-	Likely R	67	83	-
Utah	Rep	6	23	-	Solid R	16	59	-
Vermont	Dem	22	6	2	Solid D	95	43	12
Virginia	Dem	21	19	-	n/a	55	45	-
Washington	Dem	29	20	-	Likely D	57	41	-
West Virginia	Rep	14	20	-	Likely R	41	58	-
Wisconsin	Rep	13	18	-	Likely R	35	63	-
Wyoming	Rep	3	27	-	Solid R	9	49	1

SOUTH CAROLINA

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

South Carolina is reliably red, and the GOP is in no danger of losing much ground, if any, in 2020.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

The GOP will have no problem maintaining its wide lead in South Dakota.

TENNESSEE

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Tennessee's legislative chambers were controlled by the Democrats as late as the mid-2000s, but those days are long gone. Today, Republicans have dominant control.

TEXAS

Senate: Likely R
House: Lean R

The Democratic gains in Texas in 2018, driven by electoral strength among suburban and minority voters, are poised to recur and maybe even strengthen in 2020. Will they be big enough to flip the state House? Maybe, though it remains an uphill battle.

Seat-by-seat analysis from Rice University shows that the Democrats would have to win one GOP-held House seat now considered lean Democratic, plus five GOP-held seats now in the tossup category and three of the five GOP-held seats rated as lean Republican. Whether the Democrats can manage to do that will depend heavily on how big the Democratic presidential nominee's coattails are.

The state Senate has fewer competitive seats, although the Democrats are reasonably well positioned to pick up at least one GOP-held seat. Still, the Democrats aren't expected to put a lot of effort into state Senate races, since their focus is on the state House. Winning the House would at least give the party a seat at the table as the post-2020 Census round of redistricting gets under way.

UTAH

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Ruby-red Utah may not be in love with Trump, but it likes its homegrown Republicans just fine. The GOP will easily control both chambers of the legislature for the foreseeable future.

VERMONT

Senate: Solid D
House: Solid D

While GOP Gov. Phil Scott remains favored to win reelection, he is unlikely to have much of a coattail effect in legislative contests. The Democrats should maintain their big margins in the Vermont legislature.

WASHINGTON

Senate: Likely D
House: Solid D

Most of the GOP's competitive seats in Washington's state House got wiped out in 2018, and Trump, who's unpopular in the state, will be heading the ballot this fall, mostly to local Republicans' detriment. The odd campaign environment during a pandemic makes it even harder for the minority party to make their case in a generally unfriendly state.

The main question is whether Democrats can secure a two-thirds supermajority this year. The margin in the Senate is closer than the one in the House; it's possible that the GOP could gain a seat or two.

WEST VIRGINIA

Senate: Likely R
House: Solid R

The GOP has taken West Virginia by storm in recent years, and with the popular Trump on the ballot in 2020, it doesn't look like a year in which Democrats can make major legislative inroads, despite the modest margins in the Senate. The Democrats would need to net four seats to flip the chamber, but that is a decidedly uphill climb.

WISCONSIN

Senate: Likely R
Assembly: Likely R

Wisconsin, which Trump won narrowly in 2016, has somewhat unexpectedly seen Biden open up a high-single-digit lead. Superficially, this would seem to put both GOP-held legislative chambers in play, but the current GOP-drawn maps make that challenging.

Of the two chambers, the numerical margin is closer in the Senate – the Democrats would need to net two seats to flip. However, the Democrats will also have to defend a couple of vulnerable seats, making it harder for the party to focus on playing offense.

We'll reassess later in the cycle, but for now, we don't see enough movement to shift either the Wisconsin Senate or Assembly to Lean Republican.

WYOMING

Senate: Solid R
House: Solid R

Wyoming is solidly Republican; expect no major changes at the state legislative level in 2020.

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