



The Dorchester County Democrats' Guide to Elections in 2026

How to vote, volunteer, and donate with maximum impact in 2026

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Table of Contents

Quick Start.....	3
Introduction.....	4
The Blue Wave Is Coming!.....	5
Our Key Objectives for the 2026 Election Cycle.....	6
Objective 1: Help Jessica Bright Flip County Council District 3.....	7
Objective 2: Help Dr. SOS Flip State House District 98.....	8
Objective 3: Defend Peter Smith Jr.'s County Council Seat.....	9
Objective 4: Help Montez Aiken Flip State House District 102.....	10
Objective 5: Help Nancy Lacore Flip US Congressional District 1.....	11
All Elections Happening in 2026.....	12
Local Elections.....	12
State Elections.....	14
Federal Elections.....	15
How to Participate in the 2026 Election Cycle.....	16
Vote.....	16
Volunteer.....	17
Donate.....	18
Appendix A: How the Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast Was Calculated.....	20
What the Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast Means.....	20
How the Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast Is Calculated.....	21
How to Interpret the Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast.....	22



Quick Start

If you only have a few minutes, here's how you can make the biggest impact in 2026.

1. Confirm you can vote

- a. Check your voter info online (registration, districts, polling place) by going to scvotes.gov > Voters > [Check Your Registration](#). If you moved, update your registration at your new address.
- b. Snap a photo of your polling place and key dates so you have them handy.

2. Mark these dates now

- a. Oct 19 – Oct 31: Early voting for the General Election (M–F, 8:30am–5:00pm).
- b. Nov 3: General Election Day (7:00am–7:00pm).

3. Review our Key Objectives for this year and write down 1–3 you want to focus on:

- a. County Council District 3 – flip from Republican to Democrat.
- b. State House District 98 – flip from Republican to Democrat.
- c. County Council District 1 – defend our Democratic seat.
- d. State House District 102 – flip from Republican to Democrat.
- e. US Congressional District 1 – flip our coastal House seat.

4. Take one action this week from the following options:

- a. Review the who, what, when, and where of [voting in Dorchester County](#) to make sure you're ready to vote.
- b. [See all 29 Democratic candidates](#) who will be on the ballot in Dorchester County and consider making a donation to 1-3 priority campaigns.
- c. [Explore volunteer opportunities](#) and sign up to help get out the vote (GOTV).
- d. Share the link to DCDP's "Election 2026" webpage (<https://dorchesterdemocrats.com/2026-election/>) with 3 friends.

5. Stay informed.

- a. [Sign up](#) to receive DCDP's weekly "Update" e-letter to stay abreast of local political news and events.
- b. Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/DorchesterCountyDemocrats).



Introduction

It's here folks – 2026!

This is our chance to start pushing America out of the deep, despotic ditch into which it has fallen and get back on the road to liberty and justice for all at **every** level of government.

- **Locally**, nine seats will be on the ballot in November: four on the Dorchester County Council, three on the Dorchester District 2 School Board, and two on the Dorchester District 4 School Board.
- **At the state level**, we'll be competing for eight State House seats, the Governor's Mansion, Superintendent of Schools, and six other statewide executive offices including Attorney General.
- **Federally**, we'll be fighting for a U.S. House seat and a U.S. Senate seat—votes that are desperately needed to stop Donald Trump from destroying what is left of our democracy.

We're expecting a big blue wave in 2026, so If we focus our efforts and work hard, we believe we have a realistic shot at flipping up to four seats!

This guide will help you do your part by answering the following questions:

- What are Dorchester Democrats' key objectives for the 2026 election cycle?
- Which offices are on the ballot in 2026?
- Who are the Democratic candidates running for these offices?
- How can I participate effectively in the 2026 election cycle as a citizen, a volunteer, and a donor?



The Blue Wave Is Coming!

A “blue wave” is an election cycle in which the Democratic Party performs significantly better than average.

Throughout the 2025-26 election cycle, we’ve seen this blue wave carry Democrats to decisive victories in Virginia, New Jersey, New York City, Miami, Texas and in dozens of special elections for both Congressional and state house districts throughout the country.

The question is, how big is the wave?

Based on our analysis of special election data compiled by [The Downballot](#), we believe **the typical Democratic candidate will perform 11% better in 2026** than they would have in 2024¹. E.g. a candidate who lost their race 45%-55% in 2024 would now win the same race in 2026 by a +1% margin.

We witnessed an example of this blue wave phenomenon right here in Dorchester County during the January 6th special election for State House District 98. Our candidate—Dr. Sonja Ogletree Satani—had competed for the same seat in 2024 and lost to her Republican opponent by a vote margin of 13.93%. During the 2026 special election, Sonja only lost by 0.61% (21 votes!)—an improvement of 13.32%!

It’s important to note that there are always other factors at play besides the blue wave; therefore, **the expectation that Democrats will perform 11% better in 2026 than they did in 2024 is a rough rule of thumb, not a precise prediction.** For example, Dr. Sonja was competing against a fairly popular incumbent (Chris Murphy) during the 2024 election and a relatively unpopular new Republican candidate (Greg Ford) during the 2026 election. Was her impressive 13% performance improvement due to the blue wave? ... Ford’s extremism? ... A bit of both? It’s hard to say.

Despite these limitations, we have included a “Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast” for all partisan elections that are covered by this guide. Though it’s only a rough estimate of how each election may turn out, we believe it provides helpful guidance for assessing the winnability of each race and thus for prioritizing our campaign donations and volunteer support. To learn more about how we calculated the forecast, please see Appendix A: How the Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast Was Calculated.

¹ This forecast is subject to change based on current events. We will continue to monitor The Downballot’s special election data and revise our forecast if the median vote margin difference changes by 1% or more in either direction.



Our Key Objectives for the 2026 Election Cycle

After carefully analyzing all 29 federal, state, and local offices that will be up for a vote in Dorchester County during the 2026 election cycle, we urge Dorchester Democrats to focus their efforts and donations on the following five key objectives:

1. **Flip County Council 3** (currently held by Republican Rita May Ranck)
2. **Flip State House District 98** (currently held by Republican Greg Ford)
3. **Defend County Council District 1** (currently held by Democrat Peter Smith, Jr.)
4. **Flip State House District 102** (currently held by Republican Harriet Holman)
5. **Flip Congressional District SC-01** (currently held by Republican Nancy Mace)

Two key considerations shaped our analysis of each race:

1. **Winnability**, as defined by the “Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast” below.
2. **Local Influence**, as defined by the “% of Voters in Dorchester County” below.

The following table summarizes our analysis of our top 5 threats and opportunities:

 THREAT OPPORTUNITY

	Office	Dis- trict	% of Voters in Dorch. County	Curren t Party Contro l	Republican Candidate	Democratic Candidate	Funding	Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast
1	County Council	3	100%	REP	Rita May Ranck	Jessica Bright	unknown	15%
2	State House	98	100%	REP	Greg Ford	Sonja Ogletree Safari	\$ 30,187	3%
3	County Council	1	100%	DEM	Skip Elliott	Peter Smith, Jr.	\$800	-5%
4	State House	102	25%	REP	Harriet Holman	Montez Aiken	\$ 11,264	7%
5	US Congress	SC-0 1	15%	REP	Jenny Honeycutt	Nancy Lacore	\$2,279,585	-3%



Objective 1: Help Jessica Bright Flip County Council District 3

Background

- Jessica Bright is the outstanding candidate who is running to flip Dorchester County Council District 3 Democratic. You can learn all about Jessica by [visiting her website](#) and by [reading her profile](#) on the DCDP blog site.
- County Council District 3 is located at the southeastern tip of Dorchester County and is the home of approximately 15,000 registered voters. ([View Map](#))
- Republican Rita May Ranck has served as the representative for CC-3 since 2022.
- This is by far our most winnable race in 2026 as evidenced by the fact that:
 - During the 2022 election, Ranck only won this seat by 116 votes.
 - During the 2024 Presidential Election, a greater percentage of CC-3 voters voted for Kamala Harris than for Trump (52% - 48%).

Keys to Success

1. **Campaign Donations to Improve Jessica's Name Recognition** – Though there are more Democrats than Republicans in County Council District 3, Democratic voters may not vote for Jessica if they have never heard of her. Jessica urgently needs campaign contributions to support social media ads, yard signs, and other “general awareness” campaign efforts. You can donate to Jessica's campaign at: <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/jessica-bright-1>
2. **Get Out the Vote (GOTV)** – As Election Day approaches, we will need all hands on deck to get out the vote for this critical race. To explore GOTV volunteer opportunities, go to: <https://dorchesterdemocrats.com/2026-election/volunteer/>



Objective 2: Help Dr. SOS Flip State House District 98

Background

- Dr. Sonja Ogletree Satani is the outstanding candidate who is running to flip State House District 98 Democratic. You can learn all about Dr. Sonja by visiting [her website](#) and by reading [her profile](#) on the DCDP blog site.
- District 98 lies near the southeast corner of Dorchester County and represents over 27,000 registered voters. ([View Map](#))
- During the District 98 special election that was held on Jan 6, 2026, Dr. Sonja lost this seat to Republican Greg Ford by a razor thin margin of just 21 votes!
- Greg Ford is a MAGA extremist who is unpopular even within his own party.
- Dr. Sonja is now running to defeat Ford and flip this critical State House seat.
- With two prior races under her belt and big blue wave at her back, Sonja has the experience and the network necessary to defeat Ford in the upcoming race.

Keys to Success

1. **Campaign Donations to Help Reach Disengaged & Independent Voters** – In Dr. Sonja's district, there are many "disengaged Democrats" – i.e., people who lean Democratic, but don't come out to vote. Also, there are many Independent voters who may not have heard of Dr. SOS, but would be happy to vote for her if they knew her story. To engage these disengaged voters and reach these Independents, Dr. Sonja will need funds to run social media ads, buy yard signs, print mailers, and hire staff. To support this cause go to:
<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/sonja-ogletree-satani-for-sc-1>
2. **Get Out the Vote (GOTV)** – As Election Day approaches, we will need all hands on deck to get out the vote for this critical race. To explore GOTV volunteer opportunities, go to: <https://dorchesterdemocrats.com/2026-election/volunteer/>



Objective 3: Defend Peter Smith Jr.'s County Council Seat

Background

- County Council District 1 covers all of Upper Dorchester County and is the home of approximately 18,000 registered voters. ([View Map](#))
- Historically a Democratic stronghold, District 1 flipped Republican in 2022 when Harriet Holman—originally elected as a Democrat—turned coat and became a Republican.
- In 2024, Holman left her post at County Council to pursue an opening in the South Carolina House of Representatives representing District 102, thus triggering a special election on March 25, 2025.
- Democrat Peter Smith, Jr. won the special election decisively, defeating Dorchester County GOP mainstay George Bailey by a margin of 29%.
- Despite Mr. Smith's decisive victory, the larger electoral trends in CC-1 indicate this is a heavily Republican area (Trump won 58% of the vote within the District) that will be hard to defend against a more viable Republican candidate during a regular election cycle when voters are not only casting ballots for County Council, but also for US Senate, Congress, Governor, etc.

Keys to Success

1. **Support Peter Smith, Jr.** – Peter has proven himself to be a wonderful Democratic candidate and elected official. We all need to support his re-election campaign with our time, talent, and treasure to the best of our ability.
2. **Get Out the Vote (GOTV)** – As Election Day approaches, we will need all hands on deck to get out the vote for this critical race. To explore GOTV volunteer opportunities, go to: <https://dorchesterdemocrats.com/2026-election/volunteer/>



Objective 4: Help Montez Aiken Flip State House District 102

Background

- Montez Aiken is the outstanding candidate who is running to flip State House District 102 Democratic. You can learn all about Montez by visiting [his website](#) and by reading [his profile](#) on the DCDP blog site.
- State House District 102 stretches across the entire northwestern border of Berkeley County and into upper Dorchester County where it encompasses both Ridgeville and Harleyville. ([View Map](#))
- In 2024, Republican [Harriet Holman](#) defeated Democratic Representative Joe Jefferson who had served as the District 102 Rep. for 20 years.
- Though Donald Trump won 52% of the vote in District 102 during the 2024 Presidential Election, we are very confident that a strong Democratic candidate can win the 2026 contest under blue wave conditions.

Keys to Success

1. **Campaign Donations to Help Reach Disengaged & Independent Voters** – There's a high proportion of "disengaged Democrats" in District 102 who might be inspired to vote if they knew about Montez. Also, there are many Independent voters in the district who would vote for Montez if they knew his story. To reach these disengaged and Independent voters, Montez will need funds to run social media ads, buy yard signs, print mailers, and hire staff. To support his campaign, go to: <https://www.montezaikenforsc.com/donate-1>
2. **Get Out the Vote (GOTV)** – As Election Day approaches, we will need all hands on deck to get out the vote for this critical race. To explore GOTV volunteer opportunities, go to: <https://dorchesterdemocrats.com/2026-election/volunteer/>



Objective 5: Help Nancy Lacore Flip US Congressional District 1

Background

- Congressional District SC-01 is the Lowcountry's coastal U.S. House seat. It includes all of Beaufort County and portions of Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, and Dorchester Counties—specifically parts of Summerville and North Charleston.
- Retired Admiral Nancy Lacore is the Democratic candidate running to flip this seat.
- Though Democrat Joe Cunningham flipped this seat during the blue wave election of 2018, recent redistricting has made this feat more challenging.
- After the 2020 census, the Republican-controlled state legislature redrew SC-01's lines in a way that moved tens of thousands of Black voters out of the district and replaced them with more inland, often whiter precincts—a change challenged in federal court as a racial gerrymander, though ultimately upheld by the Supreme Court.
- In 2026, SC-01 is an open seat – Rep. Nancy Mace has stepped down.

Keys to Success

1. **Support Nancy!** – The Democratic primary election for SC-01 was a hotly contested race that had seven excellent candidates competing for the nomination. Now that the people have spoken and Nancy Lacore has been elected, it's imperative that Democrats unite to support our democratically elected candidate.
2. **Get Out the Vote (GOTV)** – As Election Day approaches, we will need all hands on deck to get out the vote for this critical race. To explore GOTV volunteer opportunities, go to: <https://dorchesterdemocrats.com/2026-election/volunteer/>



All Elections Happening in 2026

Following are details regarding all 29 local, state, and federal elections that Dorchester County citizens will participate in during the 2026 election cycle.

Local Elections

A total of nine seats will be on the ballot at the local level in November, including:

- Four County Council seats (of seven)
- Three DD2 School Board seats (of seven)
- Two DD4 School Board seats (of five)

County Council

The table below lists all County Council seats that will be on the ballot in Dorchester County in 2026 and highlights key areas of threat and opportunity based on our analysis of: a) Kamala Harris's performance within each district during the 2024 Presidential Election, and b) our current best forecast of what the election margin will be under blue wave conditions.

To view a map of all County Council Districts, [go here](#).

 THREAT  OPPORTUNITY

District	Current Party Control	Republican Candidate	Democratic Candidates	Democrat Funding	Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast
1	DEM	Skip Elliott	Peter Smith, Jr.	\$800	-5%
2	REP	David Chinnis	Bryan Holman	\$900	-5%
3	REP	Rita May Ranck	Jessica Bright	unknown	15%
7	REP	Jennifer Kunda	Preston Smelt	\$4,742	-15%



School Boards

Though these seats are officially non-partisan, school boards across the country have become the epicenter of the culture wars as Moms for Liberty have attempted to take over public school systems and press for radical agendas such as book banning.

Thankfully, none of the current School Board members running for re-election in DD2 or DD4 are endorsed by Moms for Liberty; however, we need to proactively protect against this threat by recruiting and supporting candidates who align with our values.

DD2

Below are all DD2 School Board seats that will be on the ballot in Dorchester County in 2026. To view a map of DD2 School Board Districts, [go here](#).

District	Current Party Control	Current Office Holder	Democratic Candidate (at time of publication)	Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast
2	Nonpartisan	Bethanny King	N/A	Not Available
4	Nonpartisan	Evan Guthrie	N/A	Not Available
6	Nonpartisan	Ashley Wimberly	N/A	Not Available

D4

Following are all DD4 School Board seats that will be on the ballot in Dorchester County in 2026. To view a map of DD4 School Board Districts, [go here](#).

District	Current Party Control	Current Office Holder	Democratic Candidate (at time of publication)	Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast
4	Nonpartisan	Evelyn Infinger	Fred Crum	Not Available
5*	Nonpartisan	Phyllis Hughes	Justin Smith	Not Available
* Phyllis Hughes is the current Chair of the DD4 School Board.				



State Elections

In 2026, Dorchester County Democrats will participate in the election of 16 state-level officers and representatives, including:

- Eight State House of Representatives seats; and
- Eight statewide executive offices including Governor, Superintendent of Schools, and Attorney General.

South Carolina House of Representatives

The table below lists all SC House of Representatives seats that will be on the ballot in Dorchester County in 2026 and highlights key areas of threat and opportunity based on our analysis of: a) Kamala Harris's performance within each district during the 2024 Presidential Election, and b) our current best forecast of what the election margin will be under blue wave conditions.

To view a map of all SC House Districts, [go here](#).

 THREAT  OPPORTUNITY

District	% of Voters in Dorch. County	Current Party Control	Republican Candidate	Democratic Candidates	Democrat Funding	Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast
90	8%	DEM	N/A	Justin Bamberg	\$17,378	21%
94	95%	REP	Gil Gatch	Sally Hebert	\$13,609	-9%
95	16%	DEM	N/A	Gilda Cobb-Hunter	\$182,280	43%
97	59%	REP	Robby Robbins	Cathy Jaggars	\$3,387	-17%
98	100%	REP	Greg Ford	Dr. Sonja Oolettreg Satani	\$13,510	3%
102	25%	REP	Harriet Holman	Montez Aiken	\$11,264	7%
109	46%	DEM	N/A	Tiffany Spann-Wilder	\$7,017	39%
114	52%	REP	Gary Brewer	Kelly Hough	\$9,440	-5%

Statewide Executive Offices

The table below lists all statewide executive offices that will be on the ballot in 2026. With Republican voters outnumbering Democrats 59% to 41% on a statewide basis—a gap of 18%—our primary goal is to build momentum towards future elections.



THREAT
 OPPORTUNITY

Office	Current Party Control	Republican Candidate	Democratic Candidates	Democrat Funding	Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast
Governor	REP	Alan Wilson	Jermaine Johnson	\$751,357	-7%
Supt. of Education	REP	Ellen Weaver	Sylvia Wright	\$189,762	-7%
Attorney General	REP	David Stumbo	Richard Hricik	\$8,603	-7%
Treasurer	REP	Curtis Loftis	Vincent Coe	\$10,121	-7%
Comptroller*	DEM	Mike Burkhold	Tiffany Boozer	\$8,516	-7%
Secretary of State	REP	Mark Hammond	Jason Belton	\$9,900	-7%
Agriculture Commissioner	REP	Cody Simpson	DeShawn Blanding	\$32,316	-7%

Federal Elections

Dorchester Democrats will cast votes for a total of three federal-level representatives, including one US Senator and two representatives to the US House.

U.S. Senate

Four Democratic candidates are running for the US Senate seat currently held by Lindsey Graham. With Republican voters outnumbering Democrats 59% to 41% on a statewide basis, our primary goal for this election is to build momentum for the future.

District	Current Party Control	Republican Candidate	Democratic Candidates	Democrat Funding	Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast
Statewide	REP	TBD in Republican US Senate Primary on 8/11	Annie Andrews	\$10,804,040	-7%

U.S. Congress

As Nancy Mace eyes the Governor's Mansion, seven Democratic candidates have stepped forward to fill her seat as the Representative for SC-01. It will be a challenge to close the 14% vote margin needed to win this seat, but not impossible.



District	Current Party Control	Republican Candidate	Democratic Candidate	Democratic Funding	Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast
SC-01	REP	Jenny Honeycutt	Nancy Lacore	\$2,279,585	-3%
SC-06	DEM	John Peterson	Jim Clyburn	\$773,366	33%

How to Participate in the 2026 Election Cycle

Vote

Voting is the first and greatest thing you can do to participate effectively in the 2026 election cycle ... and it can be trickier than you might think.

For example, do you know ...

- Whether you are registered to vote?
- The deadline for registering to vote?
- The dates, times, and places where you can participate in early voting?
- Where you go to vote?
- What kind of photo ID is required to vote?
- What to do if you get to the polling place and someone tells you you're in the wrong place or unregistered to vote?

For the answer to these and other relevant questions about how, when, and where to vote, please visit the "Election 2026" section of the DCDP website:

<https://dorchesterdemocrats.com/2026-election/>



Volunteer

Following is a brief description of all the ways you can volunteer to help get out the vote. To sign up for specific volunteer opportunities, please visit the “Volunteer” page of the DCDP website: <https://dorchesterdemocrats.com/2026-election/volunteer/>

Text Banking

Send scripted texts to registered voters from home, on your own schedule, using our Scale to Win platform. No phone calls required—just a smartphone or laptop. Great for volunteers who prefer writing to talking. We provide training, approved scripts, and voter lists. Even an hour a week makes a real difference.

Postcards

Handwrite personalized postcards to voters, encouraging them to register, check their status, or show up on Election Day. Work solo or with friends at a postcard party. We supply cards, addresses, and messaging guidance; however, volunteers typically have to provide their own postage, which is currently about \$0.65/card.

Phone Banking

Call voters directly using an online platform called [OpenVPB](#) that guides you seamlessly through the process of calling targeted voters, sharing information that’s pertinent to them, answering questions, and recording notes that will be useful to the campaign. Sessions can be done from home or alongside fellow volunteers. Ideal for confident communicators who enjoy real-time conversations. Training provided—no experience necessary, just enthusiasm and a friendly voice.

Posting Yard Signs

Help boost visibility for our candidates by installing yard signs at high-traffic locations across Dorchester County. Requires some driving and light physical activity. We provide signs, stakes, and placement guidance. A great option for volunteers who want a hands-on role with flexible, self-directed scheduling.



Door-to-Door (Canvassing & Literature Drops)

Walk assigned neighborhoods to talk with voters directly or drop campaign literature at their doors. The most impactful way to reach voters face-to-face. We provide walk lists, talking points, and route training, and you always will be paired with a partner. Best suited for volunteers comfortable being outdoors and engaging with neighbors.

Hosting Candidate Meet-n-Greet Events

Open your home or a community space for an informal gathering where voters can meet candidates directly. We help with candidate scheduling, invitations, and promotion—you provide the space and warm hospitality. A meaningful way to build community support and give candidates a chance to connect personally with future supporters.

Donate

If you plan to make political donations in 2026, here's an idea for how to allocate those investments.

1) Prioritize Dorchester County races

Local races are often decided by small margins and run on tight budgets. In a red county like Dorchester, even modest donations can directly fund the voter contact and turnout work that determines close outcomes.

2) Give 60% to Strategic Races

DCDP has identified the **Top 5 races (out of 29)** where additional resources are most likely to help win or defend seats. We recommend that you:

- Choose **1–3 races** from the Top 5 that you are most excited to support.
- Allocate **60%** of your total political giving to those top 1–3 races.

3) Give 20% to Outstanding Candidates

Some of our very best candidates are running in districts that are dominated by Republicans. Though these candidates may not win their elections this year, they have a huge impact on our larger objectives by engaging disengaged voters in their communities and “softening the ground” for future success. It's important that we honor and encourage their efforts by supporting them however we can.



3) Give 20% to DCDP

We recommend that you invest the remaining **20%** of your political contribution budget to **DCDP** to support countywide capacity that benefits *every* Democratic campaign, including:

- year-round candidate recruitment and development
- volunteer training and voter-contact programs (calls, texts, canvassing)
- data and targeting tools (so outreach is focused on persuadable voters and turnout targets)
- a coordinated GOTV (Get Out The Vote) operation

This is how we build the durable, cycle-over-cycle strength needed to turn today's tough districts into tomorrow's winnable ones.



Appendix A: How the Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast Was Calculated

For most of the elections presented in this Guide, you will see a table of data that includes a column labeled “Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast” In this appendix we will explain what that means and how it was calculated.



District	Current Party Control	Current Office Holder	Democratic Candidates (at time of publication)	Funds Raised (at time of publication)	Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast
90	DEM	Justin Bamberg	Justin Bamberg	\$ 12,665	21%
94	REP	Gil Gatch	[NOT ANNOUNCED]		-9%
95	DEM	Gilda Cobb-Hunter	Gilda Cobb-Hunter		43%
97	REP	Robby Robbins	[NOT ANNOUNCED]		-17%
98	REP	Greg Ford	Sonja Ogletree Satani	\$ 30,187	3%
102	REP	Harriet Holman	Katie McCravy	\$ 3,743	7%
109	DEM	Tiffany Spann-Wilder	Tiffany Spann-Wilder		39%
114	REP	Gary Brewer	Kelly Hough		-5%

What the Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast Means

The Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast shows the total vote margin by which a typical Democratic candidate is expected to win or lose a race within a given district.

For example, the Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast for State House District 102 in the table above shows a total vote margin of 7%. That means we believe that the Democratic candidate in this race—Katie McCravy at time of writing—will win this race by a total vote margin of 7%, which is the same as saying we expect her to win 53.5% to 47.5% because the total gap between those 53.5% and 47.5% is 7%.



Key Takeaways:

1. **Positive Numbers Are Good!** – If you see a positive number in the Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast column, that is a race we have a strong shot at winning.
2. **Slightly Negative Numbers Aren't Bad** – Races with slightly negative numbers (e.g., District 114) will be a stretch, but may still be winnable with a great candidate and a well-executed campaign.

How the Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast Is Calculated

Here's a step-by-step breakdown of how the forecast is calculated.

1. Calculate Kamala Harris's performance in the 2024 Presidential Election for each political district.
 - a. **Why**
 - i. The turnout for presidential elections is typically much greater than for any other type of election.
 - ii. Therefore, the results of a presidential election more-or-less tell us how many active Democrats and Republicans there are within a given district.
 - b. **How**
 - i. Download the [presidential precinct data](#) for the 2024 U.S. general election that was published by the New York Times on December 5, 2024.
 - ii. Map this precinct-level data to each political district so we can see what percentage of the vote Kamala and Trump got in 2024 within each political district (e.g., County Council 1, State House District 98, Congressional District SC-01, etc.)
 - iii. Calculate the total margin between Kamala's vote share and Trump's vote share for each political district. E.g., in State House District 98, Kamala received 46% of the vote while Trump received 54%, thus Kamala's total vote margin was -8% ($46\% - 54\% = -8\%$).
2. Determine the typical blue wave margin by calculating how well Democrats have performed in special elections during the 2025-26 election cycle.
 - a. **Why**
 - i. An organization called The Downballot tracks the results of state and local elections across the county and reports how well Democrats performed in each race relative to the presidential election baseline.



For example, The Downballot data shows that Dr. Sonja Ogletree Satani lost the State House District 98 special election by a margin of -0.6% (21 votes), but *improved* on Kamala Harris's 2024 result in the same district by 6%.

- ii. According to this data, there have been 38 State House and Congressional special elections in 2025-26 where a Democrat was attempting to flip a Republican seat.
- iii. By analyzing how well these Democrats have fared in recent elections vs. how well Kamala did in 2024, we can get a good sense of the "size" of the blue wave that is coming in 2026.

b. How

- i. Calculate the median performance improvement Democratic candidates have experienced when attempting to flip Republican State House and Congressional districts since 2025.
3. Add the "blue wave margin" described in Step 2 above to Kamala Harris's performance in the 2024 Presidential Election described in Step 1 above.

EXAMPLE: State House District 98

- a. **-8%** (Kamala Harris's performance in the 2024 Presidential Election)
- b. **+11%** (typical blue wave margin determined by analyzing Downballot data)
- c. **= 3%** (Margin of victory estimated by our Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast)

How to Interpret the Democrat Win/Loss Margin Forecast

What the Forecast Tells Us

The forecast roughly tells us what percentage of all voters within a given district are Democrats.

What the Forecast Does NOT Tell Us

The forecast does NOT tell us for certain who is going to win a race or by how much. This is because the proportion of Democrats within a given district is only one of several factors that determine the outcome of a race.

Other key factors that determine the outcome of races include:

- **Candidate Quality** – A hard-working candidate who communicates authentically, effectively, and frequently can make a huge difference in election results.



- **Campaign Quality** – Some campaigns have better strategies than others, and some strategies are implemented more effectively than others. The overall design and execution of the campaign make a big difference in determining who will win a race.