



## Control of the U.S. Senate and House Hangs in the Balance as Democrats Outperform Expectations in Several Key Battleground States

The 2022 United States midterm elections are over, and the results are continuing to pour in. As of now, the balance of power in both chambers of Congress has yet to be officially determined, although control of the U.S. House of Representatives is leaning towards a slim Republican majority. The GOP now holds a total of 209 seats, while Democrats hold 191. It is expected that Republicans will most likely reach the needed 218 seats to gain control. The Senate, on the other hand, is anyone's game, and many election analysts anticipate that control could ultimately be determined by the extremely tight U.S. Senate race in Georgia - which is headed to an early December runoff since neither candidate was able to reach the necessary 50% threshold. Republicans have won 49 seats to 48 for Democrats, with the outcomes of the Arizona, Nevada, and aforementioned Georgia races yet to be determined. In the races for governor, there are currently 24 Republican and 22 Democratic governors. These results are all circumstantial, as most states have not finished counting votes, and with Georgia expecting a runoff in their Senate race. It will still be a while before all votes are tallied.

Whether majority control goes to the GOP or to the Democrats will have an impact on domestic issues such as inflation, crime, abortion, and immigration. These topics are the ones most dominating candidates' platforms. If the Republicans gain control of the Senate, a Republican president in 2024 would benefit greatly. This is especially true since the Senate holds certain rights such as the right to approve presidential appointments and approve treaties. The Senate can refuse appointments for key positions such as Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense that play a vital role in foreign policy. The Senate also runs the Foreign Relations Committee which is crucial in making U.S. foreign policy decisions. Thus, whichever party runs the Senate has the most influence on foreign policy-related issues in the United States.

The biggest surprise of the midterm elections has been the absence of the expected "red wave." Although Republicans will likely still gain control of the House, they are now expected to gain anywhere from 7 to 12 seats, which is at the low end of the 8-20 estimated by Inside Elections and a very far cry from the 20+ many Republicans predicted. Historically speaking, this is in fact looking to be a very poor performance for the party out of power. Even when the president's approval is above 50%, the opposition party has averaged a gain of 28 seats in a president's first midterm election since World War II. When approval ratings are below 50%, as Biden's are, the gain has been 43 seats on average.

Many Democratic incumbents proved themselves to be resilient. Although Republican Monica De La Cruz won Texas District 15 in the Rio Grande Valley, Democrats held on in other border districts. In Minnesota and Maine's highly-contested 2nd districts, Democrats also put on strong performances, with incumbent Angie Craig securing a tight race in Minnesota and Jared Golden ahead in Maine with 95% reporting. That race, however, will likely take a while to call, as no candidate has won a majority of the votes and will now move to rank choice. In Ohio's 1st district, 26-year Republican incumbent Steve Chabot was ousted by Democratic challenger Greg Landsman with some help from re-drawn district lines. However, Republicans also scored key victories. In Iowa's 3rd district, Republican Zach Nunn beat Democrat Cindy Axne by just over 2,000 votes in a race in which over 300,000 were cast. As a result, all of Iowa is now Republican-controlled. Florida, which has 28 electoral votes, also upped its GOP affinity this cycle. Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar again won Florida's 27th congressional district, which is home to Miami. Salazar won the race by a much larger margin than she did in 2020. At the gubernatorial level, Ron DeSantis became the first Republican to win Miami-Dade County since 2002.



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In the Senate, several key races are still undecided and will determine control of the chamber. Of the five races expected to determine the outcome, only two have been called. Incumbent Republican Ron Johnson narrowly defeated Democrat and Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes in Wisconsin, and in Pennsylvania, Democratic Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman was victorious over Republican TV personality Mehmet Oz. This means that Republicans will need to win two of the three races in Georgia, Arizona, and Nevada. Although Raphael Warnock came out on top in Georgia, he failed to attain a majority of votes, meaning that a runoff election will take place next month. In Arizona, Democrat Mark Kelly leads Republican Blake Masters by five points with 70% reporting. In Nevada, Republican Adam Laxalt leads Democrat Catherine Cortez Masto by just under 2 points with 83% of the vote in. There are clearly a lot of votes left to count in both Arizona and Nevada, but if the current standing persists, all eyes will be on Georgia to determine the fate of the U.S. Senate.