

7 races to watch



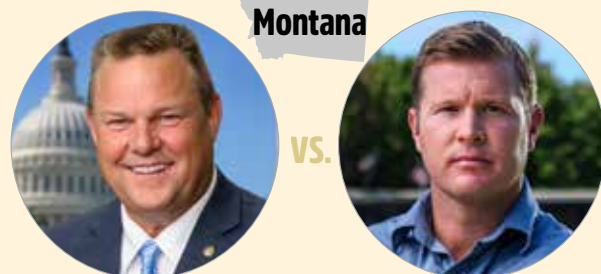
Hallie Jackson

Besides voting to select the next US President on Election Day, people will also cast ballots for candidates running for other important positions at the national, state, and local levels. "The Presidential election gets lots of attention—and rightfully so," NBC News anchor and senior Washington correspondent Hallie Jackson told *The Week Junior*. "But the races taking place in the US Congress and in each state can also affect the daily lives of Americans." *The Week Junior* asked Jackson to comment on seven interesting races across the country.

Democrat Republican

US Senate

Two people are elected to the US Senate (one half of Congress) by voters in each state. Senators serve six-year terms and can run for re-election. Every two years, about one third of the Senate's seats are up for election.



Jon Tester is the incumbent (person who currently holds the position). He has held the office since 2007.

Tim Sheehy is the challenger. He is a business owner and former Navy SEAL.

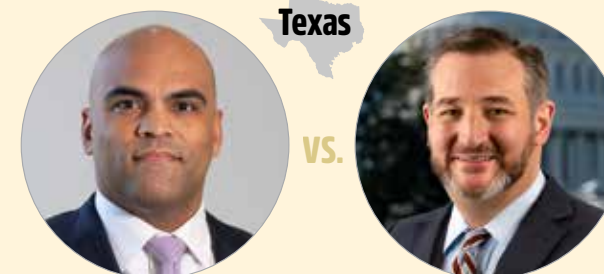
Why this race is significant: "Tester, a Democrat, is well liked in Montana and has been able to hold onto his office for many years, even though voters in this state mostly support Republican candidates," said Jackson. Former President Donald Trump won the state twice, so Republicans are hoping that could help Sheehy defeat Tester. Montana's other US senator is Republican Steve Daines, who is up for re-election in 2026.



Jacky Rosen is the incumbent and the only Jewish woman in the Senate.

Sam Brown is the challenger. He is a former US Army officer.

Why this race is significant: "When it comes to Presidential elections, Nevada is a bellwether state, meaning it can reflect national election trends," Jackson said. For example, in 10 of the past 12 Presidential elections, the candidate who won Nevada became President. Rosen is trying to show voters that she is a bipartisan leader, while Brown hopes his military experience convinces voters to give him a shot, said Jackson. Nevada's other US senator is Catherine Cortez Masto, a Democrat, who is up for re-election in 2028.



Colin Allred is the challenger. He has served Texas in the House of Representatives since 2019.

Ted Cruz is the incumbent. He has represented Texas in the US Senate since 2013.

Why this race is significant: As the population of Texas grows and becomes more diverse, some political observers think the state could shift from reliably supporting Republican candidates to voting more Democrats into office. However, Cruz has fended off strong Democratic challengers in previous elections. The state's other US senator is Republican John Cornyn, who will be up for re-election in 2026.

US House of Representatives

The US House of Representatives (one half of Congress) is made up of 435 members, each from a different area of a state, called a district. Terms are for two years, and all 435 seats are up for election this year. Members can run for re-election.



Mondaire Jones is the challenger. However, he was elected to represent this district in 2020, serving a two-year term.

Mike Lawler is the incumbent. He won the seat in 2022 and previously served in the New York State Assembly.

Why this race is significant: This district strongly supported Joe Biden for President in 2020, but then Lawler narrowly won the district's House seat in 2022. "This will probably be one of the most watched House races in the country," Jackson said. Experts are saying it could go either way.



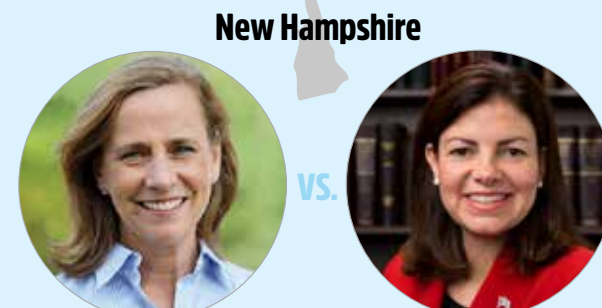
Marie Gluesenkamp Perez is the incumbent, and she narrowly defeated Joe Kent in 2022. She owned a small business before running for office.

Joe Kent is the challenger. He hopes to defeat Marie Gluesenkamp Perez after losing to her in 2022. He is a former member of the US military.

Why this race is significant: Gluesenkamp Perez won this district by less than 1% in 2022. It's also a district that former President Donald Trump won in 2020. Election experts consider this race to be extremely tight and difficult to call.

Governor

A governor is the top leader of a state. States have different rules on how long a governor's term lasts and how many terms a governor can serve. This year, 11 states are holding races for governor.



Joyce Craig was the first female mayor of Manchester, the state's largest city, from 2018 to 2024.

Kelly Ayotte was New Hampshire's first female attorney general. She served the state in the US Senate.

Why this race is significant: New Hampshire's current governor, Republican Chris Sununu, decided not to run for re-election this year, opening up the race to two newcomers. Like Nevada, New Hampshire is a bellwether state that can reflect broader national voting trends. The candidate New Hampshire voters choose for their governor could reveal which party is stronger in that state.



Jennifer McCormick has led Indiana's public schools. She was a Republican for many years before changing parties.

Mike Braun is one of the two politicians who represent Indiana in the US Senate and was previously a state lawmaker.

Why this race is significant: The current governor of Indiana, Republican Eric Holcomb, can't run for re-election due to term limits. Indiana has not had a Democratic governor in nearly 20 years. But some recent polls have indicated that the race between McCormick and Braun is tight and that McCormick has a chance of winning.