

FOCUS

ELECTIONS 2020

GUBERNATORIAL & ATTORNEYS GENERAL

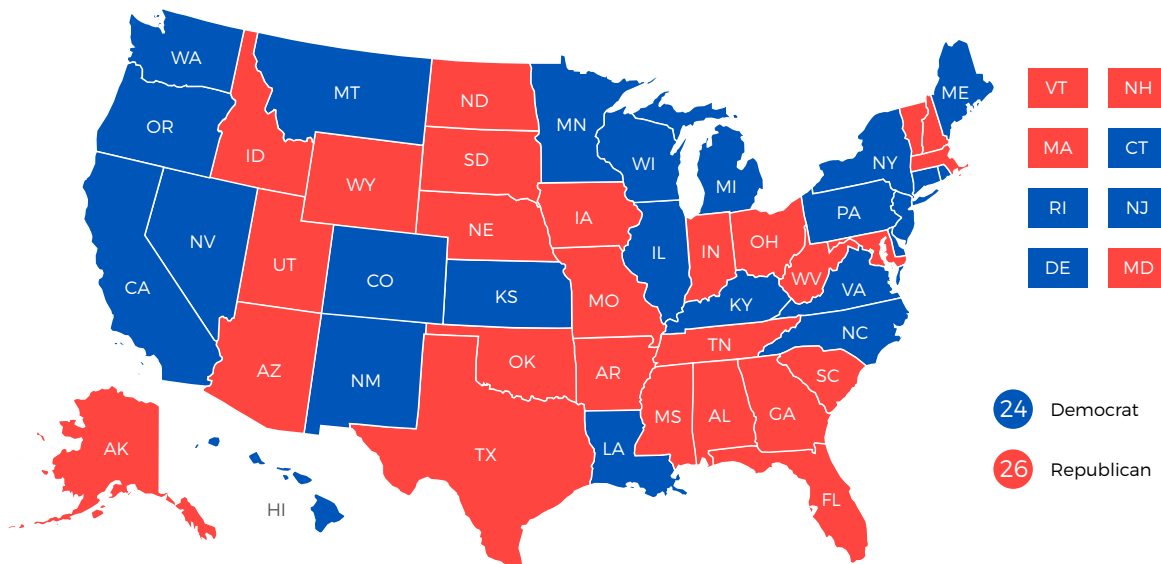
GUBERNATORIAL

Of the 11 states holding gubernatorial elections this November, seven of the seats are currently held by Republicans and four are held by Democrats. Incumbent governors are running for re-election in nine states, with six incumbent Republicans and three Democrats.

Republicans, who are looking to pick up one or two governorships in traditionally red states, are defending seven seats in **Indiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Utah, Vermont** and **West Virginia**. Despite being governors of states that will likely vote Democratic for president, New Hampshire Republican Gov. Chris Sununu and Vermont Republican Gov. Phil Scott both look like locks for re-election. Democrats are defending four seats in **Delaware, Montana, North Carolina** and **Washington**. North Carolina Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper is a target for Republicans but has held a steady polling lead over his challenger.

Montana is the only race considered to be somewhat competitive this year. Democrats have held the governor's office for the last 16 years, but Republican nominee U.S. Rep. Greg Gianforte has held a slight advantage in polling and has outraised Democratic nominee Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney.

PRE-ELECTION GUBERNATORIAL PARTY AFFILIATION





DELAWARE

Democratic incumbent Gov. John Carney is seeking re-election against Republican attorney Julianne Murray. Like many states the COVID-19 crisis has emerged as a central issue in the campaign with Governor Carney touting the success of the state's emergency restrictions and Murray, who joined the race following a lawsuit she filed against Carney's short term rental ban, pledging to repeal the state of emergency on day one of her term, [WBOC](#) reports. Governor Carney held a 29-point lead in a recent poll over Murray, reports the [University of Delaware](#).

INDIANA

While Republican incumbent Gov. Eric Holcomb is likely to hold on to the state's top job, the COVID-19 crisis has added a twist to the race. Governor Holcomb's continuation of a statewide mask mandate has given rise to the campaign of Libertarian Donald Rainwater, a Navy veteran and software engineer, who is firmly opposed to both the mandate and restrictions on non-essential businesses. Democratic nominee Woody Meyers, a former Indiana Health Commissioner and the only Black gubernatorial candidate nationwide, has suffered from meager fundraising and has done little advertising. According to [Politico](#), recent polling shows Governor Holcomb leading with 36 percent compared to Meyers at 30 percent and a rising Rainwater with 24 percent.

MISSOURI

Republican incumbent Gov. Mike Parson is running against Democratic challenger, State Auditor Nicole Galloway. According to the [Call Newspapers](#), Governor Parson has focused his campaign on policies relating to the opposition of Medicaid expansion, infrastructure and fiscal conservatism. Galloway has an uphill battle against Governor Parson and the state is expected to maintain its Republican trifecta, reports the [St. Louis Business Journal](#). President Donald Trump has endorsed Governor Parson.

MONTANA

Democratic Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney will face Republican U.S. Rep. Greg Gianforte in the governor's race. [The Washington Post](#) reports that several issues being brought to the forefront of the race include public land conservation, labor protections and COVID-19. According to [NBC Montana](#), a recent poll found Representative Gianforte, who has been endorsed by President Trump, leading by seven percentage points. This is the only gubernatorial race rated as a toss-up by [The Cook Political Report](#).



NEW HAMPSHIRE

Republican Gov. Chris Sununu is running for his third term against Sen. Dan Feltes, D-Concord. The candidates recently debated on [New Hampshire Public Radio](#) over issues such as COVID-19, the state's economic recovery and health care. Governor Sununu has maintained a large polling lead over Senator Feltes as well as a fundraising advantage, according to [New Hampshire Public Radio](#).

NORTH CAROLINA

Democratic incumbent Gov. Roy Cooper is running for re-election against Republican Lt. Gov. Dan Forest. The race is largely seen as a referendum on Governor Cooper's response to COVID-19, according to [The News & Observer](#). Governor Cooper maintains an average lead of 9.3 percent over Lieutenant Governor Forest, reports [The News & Observer](#). President Trump has expressed support for Forest in the race.

NORTH DAKOTA

Republican incumbent Gov. Doug Burgum is facing Democrat Shelley Lenz, a veterinarian, in the governor's race. The campaign issues have included infrastructure spending and COVID-19. Governor Burgum is a heavy favorite, according to the [Grand Forks Herald](#), and has been endorsed by President Trump.

UTAH

Republican Gov. Gary Herbert is not running for re-election after 10 years in office. Republican Lt. Gov. Spencer Cox will face Democrat Chris Peterson, a law professor. According to the [Deseret News](#), one of the major issues in the campaign has been the state's response to COVID-19. Cox plans to continue Governor Herbert's policies, while Peterson has called for a mask mandate. An [October poll](#) showed Cox beating Peterson 50 percent to 26 percent.

VERMONT

Republican incumbent Gov. Phil Scott is seeking re-election to a third term against Democratic/Progressive Lt. Gov. David Zuckerman. According to [Northeast Public Radio](#), one prominent campaign issue is the expansion of rural investment and broadband. Both candidates agreed on the importance of these issues but disagree over how to finance them. Other areas of disagreement between the two candidates include climate policy



and school funding. If Lieutenant Governor Zuckerman wins the election, it will secure a Democratic trifecta. A September [Vermont Public Radio](#) poll found Governor Scott leading Zuckerman 55 percent to 24 percent.

WASHINGTON

Democratic incumbent Gov. Jay Inslee is seeking a third term after a failed run for the presidency in 2020, reports [The Spokesman Review](#). He faces Republican nominee Loren Culp, a former police chief. According to [The News Tribune](#), one of the most contentious issues between the candidates is the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Inslee has defended his record as doing what's necessary to stem further infections, while Culp supports letting Americans do what they feel is right. Governor Inslee has taken to supporting strong efforts for renewable energy, education issues and expanding healthcare access. Culp has put forward plans to respond to homelessness, environmental concerns, taxation, state budgeting and more. According to an October poll from [SurveyUSA](#), Governor Inslee leads Culp by 14 percent. Governor Inslee's re-election would allow for a continued Democratic trifecta in the state.

WEST VIRGINIA

Republican incumbent Gov. Jim Justice is facing off against Democratic challenger Ben Salango, a Kanawha County Commissioner. Primary issues for Governor Justice, according to his [campaign website](#), include expanding jobs and the economy, expanding the state's vehicle infrastructure and tackling the opioid epidemic. Salango supports a number of different issues, according to his [campaign website](#), including consumer issues, growing the economy, education, environmental issues and health care. An October poll by [Triton Polling & Research](#) gave Justice a lead of 18 percent over Salango. Governor Justice has been endorsed by President Trump.



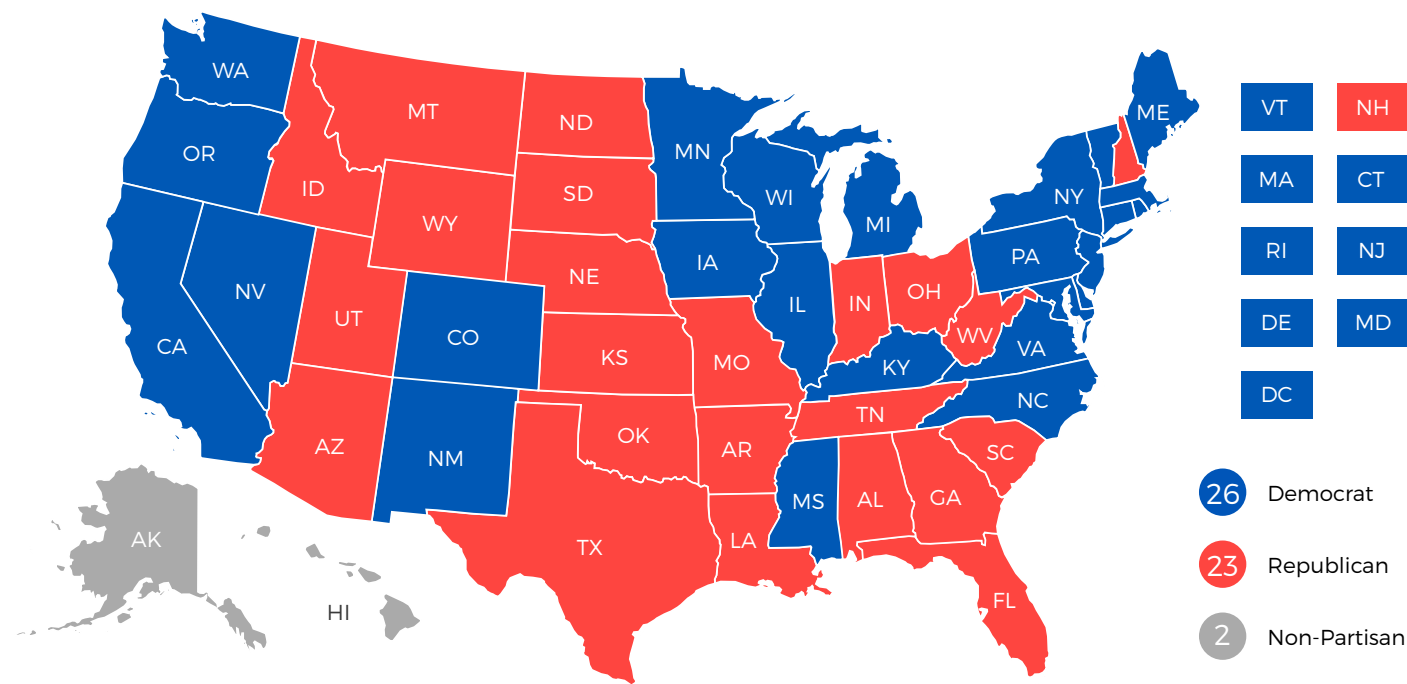
ATTORNEYS GENERAL

Of the 10 states holding elections for attorney general this year, five of the seats are currently held by Republicans and five are held by Democrats. Incumbent attorneys general are running for re-election in eight states, with three incumbent Republicans and five Democrats.

Republicans are defending five seats in **Indiana, Missouri, Montana, Utah** and **West Virginia**. Democrats are defending five seats in **North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont** and **Washington**.

The role of the state attorney general has become more prominent in recent years. Multi-state lawsuits are a popular way for attorneys general to oppose, and potentially end, the policies of a president of the opposing party. The increase in prominence of attorneys general has resulted in elections that are more competitive, partisan and see more involvement from outside groups.

PRE-ELECTION ATTORNEYS GENERAL PARTY AFFILIATION





INDIANA

Republican incumbent Attorney General Curtis Hill was defeated at the state's Republican convention by former Secretary of State Todd Rokita. Hill had his law license criminally suspended after the state Supreme Court found that he had criminally battered four women. Rokita, who entered the race at the last minute, faces former Democratic Evansville Mayor Johnathan Weinzapfel who has the backing of many national groups that saw an opportunity to flip the office following Hill's misconduct. Rokita supports Indiana's continued participation in a lawsuit to eliminate the Affordable Care Act, whereas Weinzapfel would pull the state out of the lawsuit. According to [WFYI](#), the race is likely to be the most competitive statewide race in Indiana this cycle.

MISSOURI

Republican incumbent Attorney General Eric Schmitt is running against Democrat Rich Finneran, a former federal prosecutor. Attorney General Schmitt's policies include a focus on aggressively prosecuting violent crime and overturning the Affordable Care Act, while Finneran would protect Medicaid expansion and the Affordable Care Act in court, reports [St. Louis Public Radio](#). [The Cook Political Report](#) rates the race as solid Republican. President Trump has endorsed Schmitt.

MONTANA

Former Republican House Speaker Austin Knudsen is running against Democrat Raph Graybill, Governor Steve Bullock's chief legal counsel. Graybill listed his top priorities as defending the Affordable Care Act and expanding access to public lands, reports the [Great Falls Tribune](#). Knudsen's priorities include fighting crime and illegal drugs. [The Cook Political Report](#) rates the race as a toss-up.

NORTH CAROLINA

Democratic incumbent Attorney General Josh Stein is running for re-election against Republican Forsyth County District Attorney Jim O'Neil. While Attorney General Stein promotes a focus on public health, public safety and the environment, O'Neil has vocalized his support for battling the opioid epidemic and defending death penalty murder convictions, reports the [Winston Salem-Journal](#). President Trump has endorsed O'Neil. Stein has stated that his fate is somewhat tied to the governor's and he expects that if one is re-elected, the other will be as well. This race is currently a toss-up, reports [WXII 12](#).



OREGON

Democratic Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum is seeking her third term in office. Attorney General Rosenblum is facing Republican Michael Cross, a self-employed software designer, who ran an unsuccessful recall attempt against Democratic Gov. Kate Brown in 2019. During her tenure Rosenblum's office has been hit with a sexual harassment scandal involving some of her senior staff, [Oregon Public Broadcasting](#) reports. Meanwhile Cross does not hold an active law license and was convicted in 2006 of two counts of fourth degree assault. Cross said he would use the office to address the state's housing and homelessness crisis, while Rosenblum would use her third term to address police accountability. Rosenblum enjoys a significant fundraising advantage over Cross and is almost certain to retain her position with speculation that she may eventually run for governor.

PENNSYLVANIA

Democratic Attorney General Josh Shapiro is running for re-election against Republican Heather Heidelbaugh, a lawyer and former member of the Allegheny County Council. [Billy Penn](#) reports that Attorney General Shapiro's priorities in a second term would include pursuing legal action against pharmaceutical companies for their role in the opioid crisis, fighting for consumer protections and challenging federal policies. Heidelbaugh's priorities would include combating the opioid crisis, strengthening consumer protections and rooting out corruption. [The Cook Political Report](#) rates the race as likely Democratic.

UTAH

Attorney General Sean Reyes is running for re-election against Democrat Greg Skordas, a defense attorney. According to the [Deseret News](#), one of the biggest issues in the campaign has been Attorney General Reyes' decision to join a multistate lawsuit to undo the Affordable Care Act. Reyes, on the other hand, has gone after Skordas for his legal career, highlighting negative reviews from clients, reports the [Deseret News](#). A [September poll](#) found Reyes beating Skordas 47 percent to 24 percent.

VERMONT

Democratic incumbent Attorney General T.J. Donovan is seeking his third term this November. Attorney General Donovan will face perennial candidate H. Brooke Page. Donovan has long [advocated](#) during his time in office as both Attorney General and previously Chittenden County State's Attorney for stronger public safety initiatives, criminal justice reform and government transparency. Page's listed [issues](#) of importance include agriculture issues, finance and tax issues, healthcare and more. [The Cook Political Report](#) rates the race as solid Democratic.



WASHINGTON

Democratic incumbent Attorney General Bob Ferguson is running against Republican Matt Larkin, chief legal counsel for his family business. Attorney General Ferguson has used the office to build a new civil rights division and strengthen consumer protections, reports [The Columbian](#). Larkin is looking to tackle violent crime, homelessness and drugs. An October [Public Policy Polling](#) survey found Ferguson leading the race with 53 percent of the vote.

WEST VIRGINIA

Republican incumbent Attorney General Patrick Morrisey will face Democratic challenger Sam Brown Petsonk, a non-profit lawyer. According to his [campaign website](#), Attorney General Morrisey looks to tackle issues including the opioid crisis, taxation, broadband, healthcare and law enforcement. Petsonk's priorities, according to his [campaign website](#), include expanding public education and higher education, employment and labor issues and healthcare. An October poll found Morrisey leading 53 percent to 41 percent, reports [The Intelligencer and Wheeling News Register](#).