EDITION 007 MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2026

MIND CLUB

Worldview

Intelligence

WORLD ATLAS · PDMC.WORLD

SPECIAL COVERAGE · THE EDITION IN FOUR SQUARES

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Your concern. Who has the power?

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What would challenge our calls: Republicans holding toss-up House seats in states that count quickly, or Democrats losing ground in seats rated as leaning their way.

THIS EDITION

US midterms: what Tuesday can change

HUMANITY

THE US MIDTERMS IN THREE MINUTES

Understand what you're choosing, what to watch, and what the results can actually tell you. Reporting cutoff: Monday 11.02.2026, 6:00 am Pacific (9:00 am Eastern). Market and forecast readings carry their own timestamps.

US HOUSE · NOW	US SENATE · NOW	GOVERNORS	STATE CHAMBERS
218 to 214	**53 to 47**	**36**	**88 of 99**
R TO D · 1 IND · 2 VACANT 218 NEEDED	R TO D AND ALLIES 35 SEATS ON THE BALLOT	ON THE BALLOT 18 HELD BY EACH PARTY	HOLDING ELECTIONS IN 46 STATES
US CPI · SEPT	**REAL WAGES · SEPT**	**FIRST POLLS CLOSE**	**NEW CONGRESS**
3.7%	**−0.7%**	**6 pm ET**	**01.03.2027**
YEAR ON YEAR CORE 2.6%	HOURLY, YEAR ON YEAR NOMINAL +3.0%	PARTS OF IN AND KY LAST: 1 AM ET, ALASKA	20TH AMENDMENT DATE UNLESS SET BY LAW

HOW TO READ THIS EDITION

Every important claim carries a label: FACT supported by the cited source, ASSESSMENT our reasoned reading, FORECAST our own dated, scoreable call, DISCOURSE someone else's argument or estimate, and EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT when the evidence can't settle it. Our calls sit in 09, each with the markets' and models' odds beside it, and will be scored. Badges: GOV government, court or election authority DATA dataset ORG an organization's release PRESS journalism MKT prediction market. No party, candidate or vote is recommended. In this edition, red and blue mark parties only; the house accents are set in grey.

The US midterms in 90 seconds

01 **The House.** All 435 seats, each a district, each on a two-year term. A majority is 218. The Clerk lists 218 Republicans, 214 Democrats, one independent (Kevin Kiley of California, who left the Republican Party in March and said he would caucus with Republicans for the rest of the term, CBS News reported) and two vacancies. FACT

02 **The Senate.** 35 of 100 seats: the regular 33, plus special elections in Ohio and Florida. Republicans hold 53; Democrats and two independents who caucus with them hold 47. FACT

03 **The states.** 36 governors, 88 of 99 state legislative chambers, attorneys general, judges, mayors, school boards and ballot measures, depending on where you live. FACT

04 **Not on the ballot.** The presidency. President Trump's term runs to January 2029. FACT

05 **Why it matters.** Chamber control decides which bills get a vote, who runs investigations and, in the Senate, which nominees and judges are confirmed. It doesn't decide everything: vetoes, the Senate filibuster, the courts and state governments all limit what any majority can do. ASSESSMENT

READING PRIORITY INDEX

3 MINUTES This page

MUST READ — Your concern. Who has the power? (00S) · Three possible governing outcomes (04) · Read election night without getting misled (15)

KNOW IT — The core issues beneath the campaign (03) · How these elections work (04) · Calls and what to expect on Election Day (09) · The parties in their own words (08) · Red Team / Blue Team (07B) · The view from elsewhere (01B)

SCAN — How to read the election map (15) · This week in five sentences (18) · Ask Mind Club (19)

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YOUR CONCERN. WHO HAS THE POWER?

Most campaign promises touch things no single office controls. Start from the worry, then follow it to the people who can act, what Tuesday could change and how long it might take.

Read the last column as a range, not a promise. "Months" assumes a bill passes and is carried out on time, which most aren't.

CONCERN	WHO CONTROLS IT?	WHAT THIS ELECTION COULD CHANGE	WHAT CONSTRAINS ACTION	WHEN EFFECTS MIGHT SHOW
Housing and rent	Mostly states and cities: zoning, permits, rent rules, property tax. Federally: housing tax credits, HUD funding, mortgage agencies. Mortgage rates follow markets and the Fed.	Governors, legislatures, mayors and local ballot measures set the rules that decide how much gets built. Congress can change funding and tax credits.	Local approval processes, construction costs, interest rates. Congress doesn't set market rents.	Rules: months. New supply: years.
Prices, wages and affordability	No one office. The Fed sets short-term rates and decides policy independently, under a mandate Congress sets. Congress sets taxes, spending and can limit some tariffs. The president sets most current tariffs under trade laws Congress passed.	Tax and spending bills; how much room Congress gives or takes on tariffs; state minimum wages and taxes.	Global oil and food prices, the Fed, vetoes, the Senate's 60-vote rule for most bills.	Tax changes: next filing year. Prices: hard to trace to any one vote.
Healthcare costs and access	Congress: Medicare, Medicaid funding rules, ACA subsidies. States: Medicaid design, insurance rules. Employers: most private plans.	Whether to restore the ACA subsidies that expired at the end of 2025; how Medicaid work requirements due by 12.31.2026 are carried out.	Budget rules, vetoes, state choices, insurers' annual pricing cycle.	Premiums: next enrollment year. Medicaid: as states roll out.
Jobs, education and opportunity	States and school districts run schools and colleges. Congress funds student aid and sets loan law. The economy decides most hiring.	Student aid funding, loan terms, state education budgets, job-training money.	Business cycles, technology, state budgets that must balance.	Aid rules: the next school year. Hiring: no direct line.
Immigration	Congress writes the law and funds enforcement. The president runs enforcement, sets refugee ceilings and decides most deportation priorities. Courts rule on both.	Enforcement funding, any change to the law, and how hard Congress pushes oversight of executive action.	The president's executive power, court rulings, the filibuster.	Funding: next budget cycle. Law changes: rare.
Rights and institutional accountability	Courts interpret rights. States set many of them, including abortion law and voting rules. Congress holds oversight power and the Senate confirms judges.	State ballot measures; which party chairs investigating committees; the pace of Senate confirmations.	Court rulings, state constitutions, the two-thirds Senate vote to remove an impeached official.	Ballot measures: often within weeks. Courts: years.

The pattern in the table is the point, with two exceptions. On most of the issues voters rank highest, Tuesday mainly changes who can propose, block and investigate, while the outcomes people feel run through markets, states and time. Health subsidies and taxes are different: there, a federal vote can change what a household pays within a year, as the expired ACA credits showed (see 03). ASSESSMENT

Reader question: "Who can actually make housing more affordable?" Nobody alone. The largest levers on new supply sit with states and cities; the largest lever on mortgage costs sits with markets and the Fed. Freddie Mac's 30-year rate averaged 7.24% in the week to 10.29, against 6.17% a year earlier. FACT

SOURCE · KFF (10.06) ORG · KFF, RECONCILIATION LAW (07.23) ORG · FREDDIE MAC PMMS (10.29) DATA · FEDERAL RESERVE (10.28) GOV

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THE CORE ISSUES BENEATH THE CAMPAIGN

What voters say matters is measured. What a policy would do is our reading. We keep the two apart.

A Affordability: what voters report

The economy tops every national survey we checked. In Pew's poll of 3,917 registered voters (09.28 to 10.04), 84% called it very important to their vote. AP-NORC (1,119 adults, not only voters, 10.08 to 10.12, margin ±3.9) found 85% naming the economy and 84% the cost of living among their most important issues. FACT

Priorities split by party below the top line. In Pew's data, health care was very important to 82% of Democratic supporters and 53% of Republican supporters; immigration to 72% of Republican supporters and 53% of Democratic ones. In Gallup's poll (1,057 registered voters, 10.01 to 10.19, margin ±4 for the full sample), Democrats put health care near the top; among Republicans, immigration and crime were about even, and no issue reached a majority. FACT

Reader question: "If inflation falls, why does everything still feel expensive?" Because inflation is the speed prices rise, not their level. Consumer prices rose 3.7% in the year to September. The level is what people pay: the CPI stood at 336.940 in September against 261.582 in January 2021, about 28.8% higher (our arithmetic on BLS index values; any starting month is a choice, and a different one gives a different number). Slower inflation would mean prices rise more slowly, not that they fall. FACT

Paychecks are the other half. Average hourly pay rose 3.0% in the year to September before inflation and fell 0.7% after it. Those are national averages; a renter, a retiree and a job-changer can sit on very different sides of them. FACT

Sour economic readings and an unhappy electorate sit side by side this fall. That they coincide doesn't show how much one drives the other. ASSESSMENT

B Healthcare

Two changes are concrete. The enhanced ACA premium tax credits expired at the end of 2025; KFF estimates marketplace enrollees' net premium payments rose 58% on average, a figure held down by people dropping coverage or switching to cheaper, higher-deductible plans; effectuated (paid) enrollment fell from 21.8 million to 19.2 million. The 2025 reconciliation law requires Medicaid work requirements for expansion adults by 12.31.2026, with possible extensions to 2028. FACT

Revisiting either would take a bill both chambers pass and the president signs, or a veto override. ASSESSMENT

C Immigration, rights and institutions

Courts have set much of this year's frame. On 06.30.2026 the Supreme Court held the birthright-citizenship executive order unconstitutional. Federal judges in Washington (10.31.2025) and Massachusetts (06.24.2026) blocked parts of the 2025 executive order on elections, including a proof-of-citizenship requirement. FACT

In Pew's poll, 73% of registered voters called democracy very important to their vote. In Gallup's, 47% called "the situation in Iran" extremely important. The two use different scales and shouldn't be compared. FACT EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT on what "democracy" means to each side; one survey item can't tell us.

D Jobs and opportunity, and younger voters

Unemployment was 4.2% in September. Payrolls grew by 29,000 in a first estimate, and the same release revised July and August down by a combined 60,000. For ages 20 to 24, unemployment was 8.0%, up from 7.1% the month before

but below 9.2% a year earlier; monthly figures for this group swing. The October report comes out 11.06, after the vote. FACT

Younger Americans aren't one bloc, and surveys measure different things. The Harvard Youth Poll (2,024 people aged 18 to 29, 09.30 to 10.07) found 33% saying they will definitely vote, against 40% at this point in 2018 and 2022; 64% saw AI replacing jobs as a serious threat to their finances. CIRCLE's survey of 5,549 people aged 18 to 29 (01.26 to 02.12) put the cost of living first, then health care and housing costs. Stated intent isn't turnout: CIRCLE's later estimate put youth turnout at 28% in 2018. FACT

Reader question: "Can this election affect my first job?" Indirectly. Congress shapes student aid, job training and tax rules; it doesn't hire. Student loans are already changing regardless of Tuesday: the SAVE plan has ended and a new Repayment Assistance Plan opened 07.01.2026, according to the Education Department. One Stanford study of payroll data found employment of 22- to 25-year-olds in the most AI-exposed jobs running about 19% below trend; its authors call that a correlation, not proof AI caused it. FACT

SOURCE · PEW (10.08) ORG · AP-NORC (10.15) ORG · GALLUP (10.29) ORG · BLS CPI (10.14) GOV · CPI-U INDEX, FRED DATA · BLS REAL EARNINGS (10.14) GOV · BLS EMPLOYMENT SITUATION (10.02) GOV · BLS TABLE A-10 GOV · KFF EHBS (10.22) ORG · CRS LSB11468 GOV · ABC NEWS (06.24) PRESS · HARVARD YOUTH POLL (10.22) ORG · CIRCLE (05.21) ORG · US EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GOV

HOW THESE ELECTIONS WORK

A House member represents one district of roughly equal population and serves two years, so every seat is up. A senator represents a whole state and serves six years; terms are staggered, so about a third of the Senate faces voters every two years. Whichever party wins 218 House seats elects the Speaker. In the Senate, 51 seats is a majority; at 50 to 50, the vice president breaks ties. FACT

The two chambers count people differently. Each state has two senators whatever its size: in the 2020 census California had 39,538,223 residents and Wyoming 576,851, and each elects two. House seats are shared out by population. Because only about a third of the Senate faces voters in any election, the seats on this year's ballot are set mostly by the six-year cycle, not by where the national mood happens to be. FACT

For reading results, the practical point is that a party can win more votes nationally and still lose Senate seats, or the reverse, depending on which states are voting. That's one reason the markets give a weaker reading for the Senate than for the House. ASSESSMENT

National vote share doesn't convert neatly into seats. Each district is a separate contest, so how voters are spread across districts matters as much as the total. District lines matter too: Texas, California, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida, Tennessee, Louisiana and Utah are voting on new congressional maps this year, while courts kept Missouri and Virginia on their earlier maps. FACT

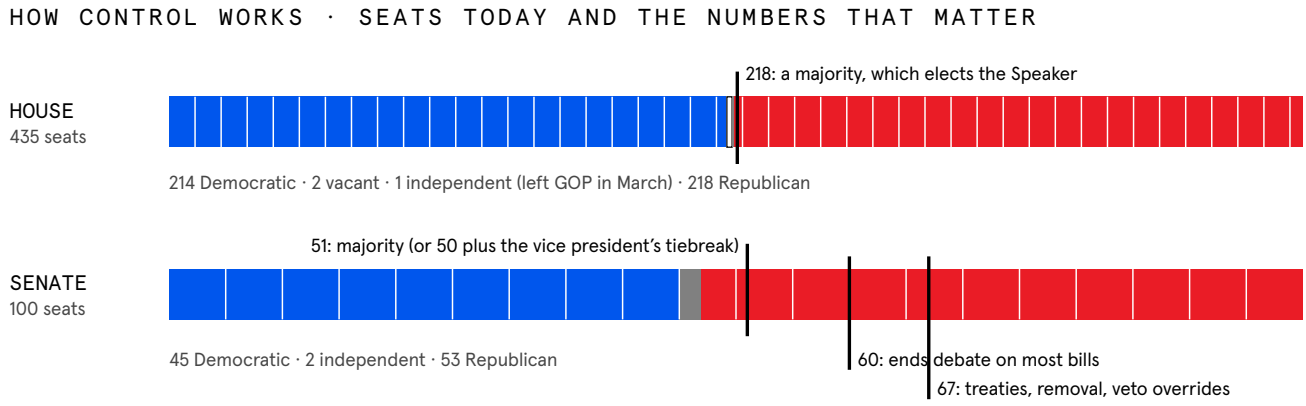
Redrawing maps this often is unusual. House districts are normally redrawn once a decade, after the census, and the last census was in 2020. In 2025 Texas Republicans redrew their map aiming to pick up five seats, at President Trump's urging. California answered on 11.04.2025, when voters approved Proposition 50, setting aside maps drawn by the state's independent commission in favor of a legislature-drawn map that gives Democrats a shot at as many as five more seats. FACT

Each side presents its new map as a response to the other's. The same national vote could therefore produce a different House than it would have under the old maps. How many seats the changes move can't be known before results, and the Texas and California changes may partly offset each other. ASSESSMENT

States and counties run elections, not Washington. That's why ballots and counting rules differ, and why one voter may see a Senate race, a governor's race and five ballot measures while a neighbor across the state line sees none of them. FACT

Reader question: "Does my vote matter outside a competitive congressional district?" Most ballots carry more than one contest. Statewide races for Senate and governor count every vote in the state the same way, and state legislative, local and ballot-measure contests are often decided by small margins. Which of these is on your ballot depends on your state and county. FACT

How control works, in one picture



Thresholds assume every seat is filled. White dividers mark every 10 House seats and every 5 Senate seats.

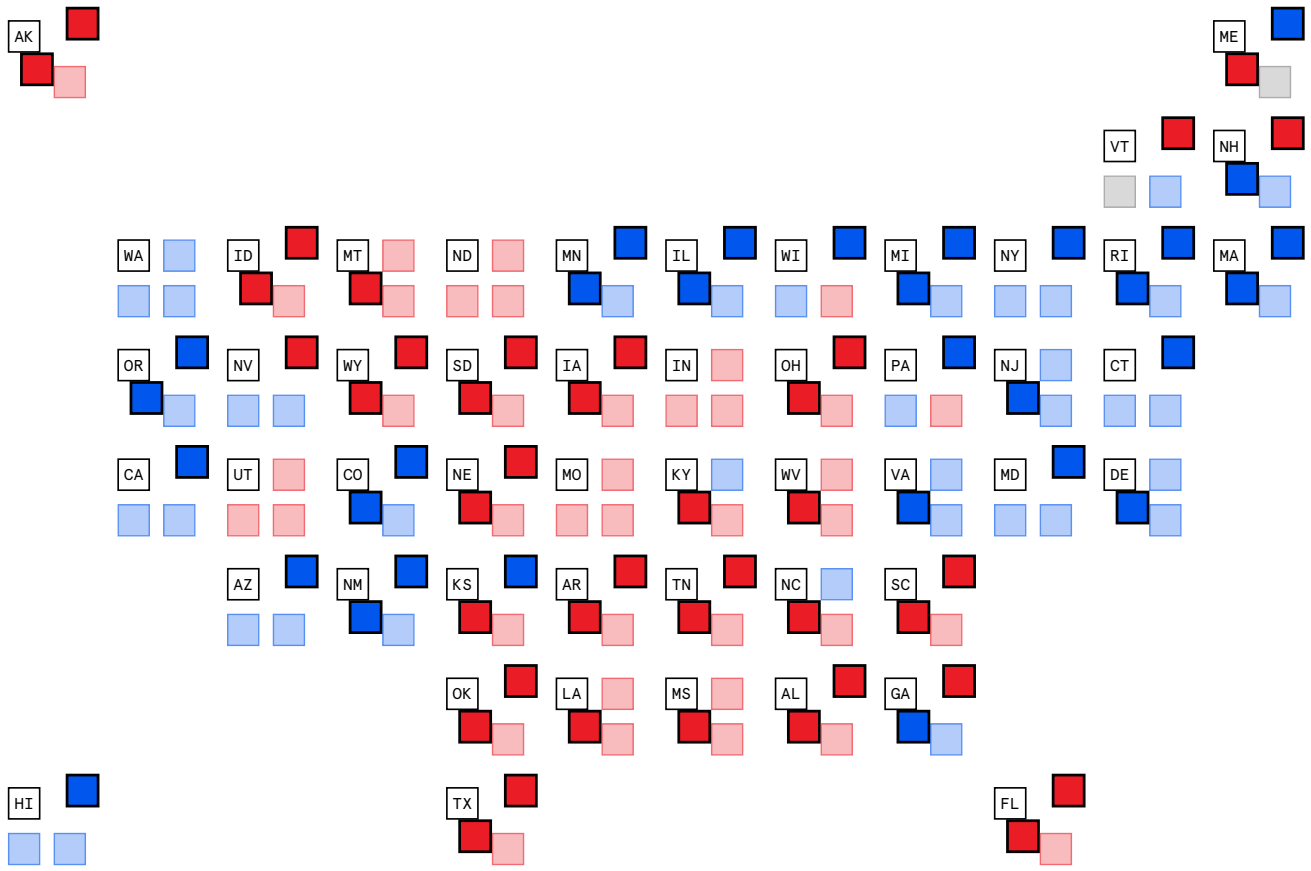
Bars show seats held today by party. Each tick is a number that changes what a party can do on its own. FACT

The map before the vote

Each state below is drawn as the Mind Club four-square mark. The top-left square names the state, the top-right square is its governor and the bottom two are its Senate seats. A square pulled out of the grid is on the ballot this year: 35 Senate seats, 22 held by Republicans and 13 by Democrats, and 36 governorships, split 18 and 18. FACT

BEFORE · WHO HOLDS THE SEATS ON 11.02.2026

Senate 53 Republican, 45 Democratic, 2 independent · Governors 26 Republican, 24 Democratic



ST

Top left: state · Top right: governor
Bottom row: the state's two US Senate seats
Pulled out of the grid, outlined: on the ballot 11.03
Faint: not on the ballot this year

Republican
Democratic
Independent, caucuses with Democrats

One tile per state; tiles don't scale with population.

We don't project races state by state, so there is no "after" map here; the next edition prints the map again from projected and certified results. Maine's and Vermont's independent senators caucus with Democrats. House seats aren't shown, because districts don't map onto state tiles. Sources: Ballotpedia (Senate 2026; governors), House Clerk. FACT

Three possible governing outcomes

Winning a chamber is not the same as passing a policy. Most bills need 60 Senate votes to clear a filibuster; budget reconciliation bills need only a simple majority but are limited mainly to taxes, spending and the debt limit. Revenue bills must always start in the House. The president can veto, and an override needs two-thirds of both chambers. The new Congress is due to meet on 01.03.2027 under the 20th Amendment, unless Congress sets another day by law; until then, the current Congress keeps its powers, including the funding deadline of 12.11.2026 set by the stopgap law signed in September. FACT

The 60-vote rule is a Senate rule, not part of the Constitution. Under Senate Rule XXII, ending debate on most legislation takes three-fifths of the Senate, 60 senators when no seats are vacant; without them, a minority can keep a bill from ever reaching a final vote. The Senate has lowered the bar before without rewriting the rule. On 11.21.2013 a Democratic majority set a simple majority for most presidential nominations by overturning a ruling from the chair, a move often called the "nuclear option." In April 2017 a Republican majority extended it to Supreme Court nominations. FACT

That history cuts both ways. The filibuster is the main reason a narrow majority can't pass most of its agenda, and it's also a rule a determined majority could change again, as each party has done once for nominations. Whether a future majority would do that for legislation is a political choice, not a legal limit. Our Red Team / Blue Team (07B) argues it both ways. ASSESSMENT

OUTCOME	LEGISLATION AND BUDGETS	OVERSIGHT	CONFIRMATIONS AND TREATIES
Both chambers with the president	The majority can move tax and spending bills through reconciliation without the other party. Other bills still face the filibuster.	Committees led by the president's party; fewer subpoenas aimed at the executive.	Nominees and judges need a simple majority, so they move faster. Treaties still need two-thirds.
Split: House opposed, Senate with the president	The House can block bills and must agree to every funding law, which adds a second place where funding talks can stall.	House committees can subpoena and investigate. The House alone can impeach; removal needs two-thirds of the Senate.	Unchanged: the Senate keeps confirming nominees.
Split: Senate opposed, House with the president	The Senate can block bills and funding. Reconciliation needs both chambers.	Senate committees gain subpoena power.	The opposition can slow or reject nominees, including judges.
Both chambers opposed	Congress can pass its own bills, but vetoes stand unless two-thirds override. Funding requires a deal with the White House.	Investigations in both chambers.	Nominees face an opposition Senate.

In every row, the president keeps executive powers that don't depend on Congress: enforcement priorities, many tariffs, foreign policy and executive orders, all subject to the courts. For most policy, a change in Congress changes the brakes and the spotlight more than the steering wheel. The exceptions are real: the power of the purse, tax law and lifetime judicial confirmations, which outlast any Congress. ASSESSMENT

The table's split rows add a place where funding talks can stall, but recent history shows unified control doesn't remove the risk. The longest shutdown on record ran from 10.01.2025 to 11.12.2025, while Republicans held the House, the Senate and the White House. From 09.19.2025, fourteen Senate votes on the Republican funding bill fell short of the 60 needed, and seven votes on a Democratic bill to extend the ACA subsidies failed too. FACT

The filibuster gives the Senate minority a block on most funding bills under any arrangement. A split adds a second blocking point in the House. Both can produce shutdowns. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · HOUSE CLERK GOV · CBS NEWS, KILEY PRESS · BALLOTPEDIA, SENATE 2026 ORG · BALLOTPEDIA, REDISTRICTING (10.28) ORG · SCOTUSBLOG (09.25) PRESS · 20TH AMENDMENT, NATIONAL ARCHIVES GOV · CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE II GOV · BALLOTPEDIA, GOVERNORS ORG · FEDTOOLS, P.L. 119-103 (10.28) DATA · CENSUS BUREAU (04.26.2021) GOV · PBS/AP, PROP 50 (11.04.2025) PRESS · CRS R43331 GOV · BALLOTPEDIA, 2025 SHUTDOWN ORG

RED TEAM / BLUE TEAM

Proposition: the Senate should keep the 60-vote filibuster for legislation, whichever party wins on 11.03. Blue defends it; Red attacks it. We don't pick a winner.

A note on colors. Here, as in every edition, the colors are war-game roles, not parties. Neither team speaks for Republicans or Democrats. Both parties have argued both sides of this question as their hold on power changed.

BLUE TEAM · DEFENDS · THE FEDERALIST NO. 63 (1788)

The theory. The Federalist No. 63, generally attributed to Madison, defends the Senate as a check on passing majorities: "there are particular moments in public affairs when the people, stimulated by some irregular passion" may demand what they later regret, and a slower body lets "the cool and deliberate sense of the community" prevail (Avalon Project). DISCOURSE

Applied this week. With narrow majorities likely to change hands, a 60-vote bar forces laws that some members of both parties can accept, so they're less likely to be reversed at the next election. ASSESSMENT

Best evidence. When the president urged ending the filibuster on 10.30.2025, the Senate majority leader's office said his "position on the importance of the legislative filibuster is unchanged"; in January 2022 a rules change to bypass it failed 52 to 48. FACT That shows majorities of both parties choosing to keep the rule; it doesn't by itself show that the rule produces more lasting law. ASSESSMENT

What would make Blue give ground. Evidence that the 60-vote rule mostly blocks measures with broad public support, rather than forcing compromise.

RED TEAM · ATTACKS · THE FEDERALIST NO. 22 (1787)

The theory. In The Federalist No. 22, Hamilton attacked rules requiring more than a majority: "what at first sight may seem a remedy, is, in reality, a poison," producing "tedious delays; continual negotiation and intrigue; contemptible compromises of the public good" (Avalon Project). DISCOURSE

Applied this week. Voters will hand one party or the other a majority; a minority veto means that majority can be blamed for an agenda it can't pass, which weakens accountability at the next election. ASSESSMENT

Best evidence. The Senate's own counts show 24 cloture motions filed in the 92nd Congress (1971 to 1972) and 294 in the current 119th, as of 10.31.2026. FACT Those counts include nominations, which now need only a simple majority, so they overstate the 60-vote rule's use on bills; the growth still suggests that ending debate has become a routine step rather than an occasional one. ASSESSMENT

What would make Red give ground. Evidence that laws passed by narrow majorities are reversed so often that the instability costs more than the delay.

Where they really disagree. Whether a majority's agenda deserves a vote it can be judged on, or broad agreement deserves to be the price of lasting law. It's partly a question of evidence (what blocked bills would have done) and partly a judgment about how much the losers of an election should still be able to stop. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · CBS NEWS (10.31.2025) PRESS · AP VIA PENINSULA CLARION (01.2022) PRESS · US SENATE, CLOTURE COUNTS GOV · CRS R43331 GOV · CRS R44819 GOV

THE PARTIES IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Each party's case on the three issues voters rank highest, stated so its own advocates would recognize it, then what nonpartisan sources find. The majority party is listed first. Party claims are their claims, not ours.

A Affordability, taxes and tariffs

REPUBLICAN CASE

The 2025 law Republicans call the Working Families Tax Cuts ended tax on tips and overtime, cut taxes for seniors and, they say, prevented what they call the largest tax increase in US history. Costs are coming down, wages are rising and manufacturing is returning. Speaker Mike Johnson, 10.13: "We are bringing down the cost of living." DISCOURSE

DEMOCRATIC CASE

Costs promised to fall on day one rose instead, for groceries, gas and housing. Tariffs act as a tax on households, and the 2025 law moved costs onto working families to pay for tax breaks at the top. House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, 10.08: "Costs haven't gone down. Costs have gone up." DISCOURSE

What nonpartisan sources find. Consumer prices rose 3.7% in the year to September, led by energy, so the price level is still rising; food prices rose 2.5% and grocery prices (food at home) 1.8%, below the headline rate (BLS). FACT The Tax Foundation's model estimates tariffs will cost the average household about $820 in 2026, after the Supreme Court's ruling removed the emergency tariffs; other modelers estimate more. DISCOURSE

B Health care

REPUBLICAN CASE

The expired ACA credits were temporary pandemic-era subsidies with no income cap that sent money to insurers; support should go to patients. The 2025 law protects Medicaid for those it was meant for, through work requirements for able-bodied adults and eligibility checks, and funds a rural health program. President Trump, quoted by the White House, 09.10: "the big insurance companies lose and the people of our country win." DISCOURSE

DEMOCRATIC CASE

Republicans let the ACA credits lapse, and premiums and deductibles jumped. The 2025 law made what Democrats call the largest Medicaid cut in history, squeezing rural hospitals and costing millions their coverage; Democrats would restore the credits. House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, 10.08: "Donald Trump and Republicans refused to extend the Affordable Care Act tax credits." DISCOURSE

What nonpartisan sources find. KFF reports marketplace enrollment fell from 21.8 million to 19.2 million after the credits expired. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that a permanent extension would cost about $350 billion over ten years, and, as summarized by KFF, that the 2025 law would leave about 10 million more people uninsured by 2034. Both parties point to these figures for different reasons. FACT

C Immigration

REPUBLICAN CASE

The border is secure: the White House says illegal crossings fell 95% from the previous administration's levels and about 1.2 million people have been removed. Democrats, they argue, want to defund the agencies that enforce the law. Speaker Johnson, 10.13: "We have a secure border." DISCOURSE

DEMOCRATIC CASE

Enforcement has become heavy-handed and unaccountable, and no more money should go to it without structural reforms that make immigration agents answer to the same rules as other police. Mass deportation also hurts the economy; Democrats back broader reform with a path to citizenship. Jeffries, 10.26: "not to give a dime to Donald Trump's violent mass deportation machine." DISCOURSE

What nonpartisan sources find. Little that tests either case directly. The crossing and removal figures come from the administration itself. Estimates of the overall effect differ: the Congressional Budget Office's January 2026 outlook, as reported by AP, put 2025 net immigration at about 410,000, while a Brookings and AEI team estimated a net outflow. DISCOURSE EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT on the enforcement-conduct claims at the center of the Democratic case, and on the crossing figures beyond the administration's own data.

Neither party speaks with one voice. Some Democrats go further than their leaders and back abolishing the main immigration enforcement agency, and some Republican senators have resisted the president on the filibuster. The cases above are the leadership's.

SOURCE · SPEAKER JOHNSON (10.13) GOV · LEADER JEFFRIES (10.08) GOV · WHITE HOUSE (09.10) GOV · WHITE HOUSE (10.20) GOV · TEXAS PUBLIC RADIO (10.26) PRESS · TAX FOUNDATION (09.10) ORG · KFF, CBO ESTIMATES OF THE 2025 LAW ORG · CBO, ACA CREDITS GOV · AP VIA WTOP (01.2026) PRESS · AP VIA DAILY HERALD, BROOKINGS AND AEI ESTIMATE (01.13) PRESS · BLS CPI DETAIL (10.14) GOV

09 / FORECASTING LAB SPECIAL EDITION: THE OUTSIDE VIEW AND A SHORT WATCHLIST

OUR CALLS, AND WHAT TO EXPECT ON ELECTION DAY, 11.03

Our calls first, with the markets' and models' odds beside them, then the history behind them and a five-race watchlist chosen because those races could decide the Senate, not because they represent the country.

Our calls

Method. We start from the average of the markets and models we could check and move off it only for a stated reason, rounded to the nearest 5 points. Each call is dated 11.02.2026, will be scored against the result with a Brier score beside the market price, and appears in the next regular edition's Forecast Ledger. Six calls are too few to judge our calibration on their own; the Ledger adds them to the running record. Probabilities in this brief, including our own scored calls, are estimates, not projections or certainties. Prediction-market prices are cited as data only. Mind Club does not encourage trading or wagering on any event and receives no payment from any prediction market or betting service. These are judgments about outcomes, not preferences: we don't recommend a party, candidate or vote. Race-by-race candidate calls are left out on purpose.

#	CALL	OURS	OUTSIDE VIEW	WHY WE DIFFER, IF WE DO	RESOLVES
SE-1	Democrats win a House majority (218 or more seats).	90%	Markets 94% (Kalshi and Polymarket, 11.01, 9:11 am ET); Silver Bulletin about 95% (11.01); Decision Desk HQ 84% (11.02, 3:39 am).	Rounded from the three-source average of about 91%. No adjustment.	When AP projects the 218th seat.
SE-2	Democrats control the Senate in the new Congress.	70%	Markets 72% (11.01, 9:11 am ET); Silver Bulletin 80.1% (as reported by Newsweek, 11.02); Decision Desk HQ 64% (11.02, 3:39 am).	Just below the market. Democrats need a net gain of four. Eight races have RealClearPolitics averages within 3 points as of 11.01, five led by Democrats and three by Republicans. G. Elliott Morris found that August Senate polls missed by about 3 to 7 points in either direction from 2014 to 2024, so a single shared polling miss could swing several at once. A 50 to 50 split leaves Republicans in control through the vice president's tiebreak. Independents in Nebraska and Montana add uncertainty: Nebraska's has pledged not to join either party's caucus.	The party holding the majority under the organizing resolution adopted in 01.2027. At 50 to 50, the vice president's party.
SE-3	AP projects House control by 11:59 pm ET on Wednesday 11.04.	55%	No market found.	In 2018, a wave year, Democrats' House win was clear on election night. In the closer years since, the call took seven days (2020), eight days (2022: AP called it on 11.16) and eight days (2024). The ratings point to a margin between those, and California's slow count could hold up a narrow result. We lean slightly toward an early call.	AP's timestamp.

#	CALL	OURS	OUTSIDE VIEW	WHY WE DIFFER, IF WE DO	RESOLVES
SE-4	Senate control is still not projected by AP at 11:59 pm ET on Wednesday 11.04.	55%	No market found.	The eight races within 3 points, Maine's possible ranked-choice count and Alaska's tabulation set for 11.18. In 2022 Senate control was projected on 11.12.	AP's timestamp.
SE-5	Alaska's Senate race goes to a ranked-choice tabulation.	70%	No market found.	Four candidates are on the ballot and the head-to-head average is within 1.2 points; a first-round majority is possible but would take a clear win.	Alaska Division of Elections, on or after 11.18.
SE-6	Georgia's Senate race goes to a 12.01 runoff.	5%	No market found.	Only two candidates appear on the ballot, plus write-ins, and the polling average is outside the usual error range, so a sub-50% winner is unlikely.	Georgia Secretary of State.

All six calls carry the FORECAST label. The markets' prices and the models are other people's estimates, and markets can move on thin trading. DISCOURSE MKT

The history behind them

Forecasters and markets lean one way. Cook Political Report rates 220 House seats as favoring Democrats, with 17 toss-ups, and projects a Democratic gain of 12 to 22 seats; Inside Elections projects 20 to 30. DISCOURSE

In the 20 midterms from 1946 to 2022, the president's party lost an average of about 26 House seats, with a median of 22 (our arithmetic on American Presidency Project data); it gained seats only in 1998 and 2002. The Senate record is more mixed: the president's party gained Senate seats in six of those 20 midterms, depending on which seats were up. FACT

History records the pattern but doesn't explain it, and political scientists have argued over the reasons for decades. One account, "surge and decline," holds that turnout is higher in presidential years and midterm results drift back toward a normal vote. Another treats the midterm as a referendum on the president's record and the economy. Robert Erikson argued in 1988 that the data best fit a plain penalty for holding power: "At every midterm, the electorate turns against the presidential party for being the party in power." DISCOURSE

The difference matters for Wednesday. If the penalty is mostly automatic, a big swing says little about any single policy; if it's mostly a referendum, the result says more about how voters judge the record. Results alone can't tell the two apart. ASSESSMENT

That history leans the same way as the markets, but it isn't a second, independent signal: markets and models already price it in. This year's mid-decade map changes also make the comparison looser. And consensus has missed before: in 2022, PredictIt and UK bookmakers priced a Republican Senate majority at roughly 70% to 80% in the final days, and Democrats kept it. ASSESSMENT

What would challenge our calls: Republicans holding toss-up House seats in states that count quickly, or Democrats losing ground in seats rated as leaning their way. One early result, in either direction, is not a trend. ASSESSMENT

The Senate watchlist

Scope: five Senate races only. Governor, House and state legislative races aren't covered race by race in this edition; the map above shows every governorship and Senate seat on the ballot.

RACE	WHY IT MATTERS	EVIDENCE AND UNCERTAINTY	POLLS CLOSE (ET)	COUNTING THAT AFFECTS TIMING
Maine Collins (R) v. Jackson (D) Jackson named by party convention on 07.25 after the primary winner withdrew	An incumbent Republican in a state the ratings call close.	Toss-up for Cook and Sabato.	8 pm	Ranked-choice voting for federal races. If no one tops 50%, ballots go to Augusta for a central tabulation, which takes days.
Ohio (special) Husted (R) v. Brown (D)	An appointed incumbent against a former senator.	Toss-up for Cook and Sabato.	7:30 pm	Mail ballots must now arrive by Election Day; the old grace period is gone.
Texas Paxton (R) v. Talarico (D)	A large state rarely in play for Democrats.	Toss-up for Cook and Sabato.	8 pm; 9 pm in the far west	Two time zones, so the full picture comes later.
Michigan (open) Rogers (R) v. El-Sayed (D)	An open seat held by Democrats.	Ratings split: Toss-up (Cook), Leans D (Sabato).	8 pm; 9 pm in the west	Larger towns may process absentee ballots up to eight days early, which can speed the count.
Alaska Sullivan (R) v. Peltola (D)	An incumbent Republican in a ranked-choice state.	Ratings split: Toss-up (Cook), Leans D (Sabato).	Midnight; 1 am in the Aleutians	If no one tops 50%, ranked-choice tabulation is scheduled for 11.18; certification targeted for 11.25. A measure to repeal ranked-choice voting is also on the ballot.

Also watch Georgia's rule: a candidate without a majority goes to a runoff on 12.01. Cook also rates Iowa and Kansas as Senate toss-ups. Early-vote totals and party registration don't tell you who won; they tell you who voted early. FACT

Ranked-choice voting is rare in US federal elections, so the Maine and Alaska rows need a word of explanation. Voters rank candidates instead of picking one. If no one has a majority of first choices, the last-place candidate is dropped and those ballots move to each voter's next choice, and the count repeats until one candidate has a majority of the remaining votes. Alaska adopted the system through Ballot Measure 2 in 2020, which passed 50.55% to 49.45%; a 2024 repeal failed by 664 votes. In Maine's 2024 House race, the ranked-choice result came 10 days after the vote, and the first-round leader won. FACT

So a Tuesday-night lead in Maine or Alaska is provisional in a way a lead elsewhere isn't. The system itself is contested: Alaska votes on repealing it again this year. ASSESSMENT

SOURCE · DECISION DESK HQ (11.02) ORG · RCP SENATE AVERAGES VIA ELECTION CENTRAL (11.01) PRESS · FORBES ON COOK (10.23) PRESS · ROLL CALL ON INSIDE ELECTIONS (10.31) PRESS · G. ELLIOTT MORRIS (08.21) ORG · FIVETHIRTYEIGHT (2018) PRESS · PBS, 2020 CALL PRESS · ROLL CALL, 2022 CALL (11.16.2022) PRESS · PBS, 2024 CALL PRESS · ERIKSON, JOURNAL OF POLITICS (1988) PEER · CASINO.ORG, 2022 ODDS PRESS · BALLOTPEDIA, ALASKA MEASURE 2 (2020) ORG · MAINE PUBLIC (11.15.2024) PRESS · NPR VIA WPLN (11.01) PRESS · SPECTRUM NEWS ON COOK RATINGS (10.29) PRESS · SABATO'S CRYSTAL BALL (10.27) ORG · KALSHI AND POLYMARKET PUBLIC PRICES, 11.01, 9:11 AM ET, AS OBSERVED BY US VIA A PUBLIC TRACKER (NOT LINKED) MKT · SILVER BULLETIN (11.01) ORG · NEWSWEEK ON SILVER BULLETIN (11.02) PRESS · AMERICAN PRESIDENCY PROJECT DATA · THE CONVERSATION, 2022 MARKETS PRESS · FOX NEWS, POLL CLOSINGS (11.01) PRESS · MAINE SECRETARY OF STATE GOV · MAINE SECRETARY OF STATE, WITHDRAWALS AND REPLACEMENTS (09.22) GOV · AP VIA ABC7, MAINE CONVENTION (07.25) PRESS · SIGNAL OHIO (05.12) PRESS · NCSL ORG · ALASKA PUBLIC MEDIA (10.05) PRESS · ROCKDALE COUNTY, GEORGIA GOV

THE VIEW FROM ELSEWHERE

Abroad, the question isn't who wins the House. It's whether anything changes for us.

OUTLET	COUNTRY	FRAMING	IN THEIR WORDS
AFP, Brussels PRESS agency with public funding	France	EU and NATO officials doubt a change in Congress would restrain the White House on Ukraine, tariffs or troops.	"We don't think the unpredictability is going to change" (unnamed senior EU diplomat)
Al Jazeera PRESS state-funded	Qatar	A Democratic gain could have side effects for Europe, including pressure on Ukraine to settle.	"Trump is basically clinching deals with Putin as fast as he can" (Catherine Fieschi, Carnegie Europe)
t-online PRESS private; in German	Germany	A domestic story: a president who may become a "lame duck," with the Iran war and fuel prices as backdrop.	"Verliert der Präsident seine Mehrheit im Kongress, droht er zur 'lame duck' zu werden" (If the president loses his majority in Congress, he risks becoming a "lame duck")
Infobae México PRESS private; in Spanish	Mexico	Trade talks carry on regardless; the open item is Section 232 tariffs on cars, steel and aluminum.	"Ese trabajo no se interrumpe" (That work doesn't stop) (President Sheinbaum)
Outlook India PRESS private	India	Tariffs, Russian oil, Pakistan and H-1B visas; more oversight in Washington, but no reversal of tariffs.	"a chastened Trump would be in India's interests" (Milan Vaishnav, Carnegie)
TASS PRESS state-owned	Russia	Kyiv cast as an actor in the US campaign.	"trying to undermine Republicans before the midterms" (envoy Kirill Dmitriev, of President Zelensky)
Xinhua PRESS state-owned	China	Wire photos of early voting; we found no commentary on stakes.	"Early voting underway in Atlanta ahead of U.S. midterm elections" (headline, 10.31)

Where they converge and split. The facts line up: the date, the polling lead, trade talks waiting on the result. The split is about consequence. European coverage expects the White House to keep its course on Ukraine and trade whatever Congress looks like; Mexico and India frame the vote through tariffs and visas; Russian state media folds Ukraine into the US campaign; Chinese state media stays on pictures. ASSESSMENT

Why the world is watching, by mechanism. Each lever has a different owner.

01 **Trade.** The Constitution gives Congress power over duties, but most tariffs rest on laws delegating power to the president. The Supreme Court ruled on 02.20.2026 that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act doesn't authorize tariffs; tariffs under Sections 232 and 301 remain. Congress could narrow those delegations, subject to a veto. The USMCA, the North American trade deal, faces annual reviews after the US declined a 16-year extension on 07.01.2026. FACT

02 **Security.** Congress funds aid and writes floors into defense law: the FY2026 defense bill requires an assessment before US forces in Europe drop below 76,000 and sets a 28,500 floor in Korea. The House passed $8 billion for Ukraine on 06.04.2026; the Senate hasn't taken it up. On Iran, the Senate adopted a war-powers concurrent resolution 50 to 48 in June, after the House adopted it on 06.03; such a resolution doesn't go to the president, and whether it binds him is disputed. A later attempt failed 49 to 50 in September. FACT

03 **Migration.** Congress funds enforcement and writes the law; the president sets priorities and refugee ceilings; courts check both. FACT

04 **Climate and technology.** Reversing the 2025 law's phase-out of wind and solar credits would take a new law and a signature. Chip export controls run through the Commerce Department under a 2018 law Congress can amend; a December 2025 executive order targets state AI laws, but an order alone can't override them. ASSESSMENT

We read German and Spanish coverage this week, and English editions elsewhere. EVIDENCE INSUFFICIENT on Chinese- and Russian-language commentary, and on British, French and Japanese framing, which we couldn't retrieve before the cutoff.

SOURCE · WHITE & CASE (07.02) ORG · TAX FOUNDATION (02.25) ORG · FOX NEWS, NDAA (12.08.2025) PRESS · KYIV INDEPENDENT (06.04) PRESS · AL JAZEERA (06.24) PRESS · CBS NEWS, JUNE RESOLUTION PRESS · CBS NEWS, SEPTEMBER VOTE PRESS · LAWFARE ORG

HOW TO READ THE ELECTION MAP

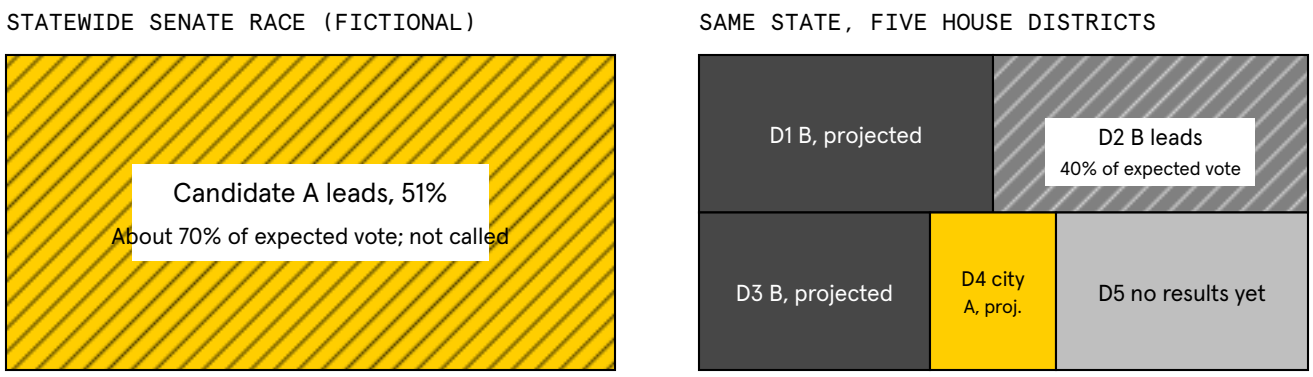
Check the office, the legend, the timestamp and what remains uncounted before interpreting the color.

WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS	WATCH FOR
Red	Republican. US outlets have assigned the colors consistently only since the 2000 election.	In many other countries red is the left. Check the legend.
Blue	Democratic.	Same caution.
Light and dark shades	Margin, competitiveness or forecast confidence, depending on the outlet.	Darker doesn't automatically mean more ballots counted.
Purple	Sometimes a close or divided place.	Not a standard; some outlets don't use it at all.
Gray or unfilled	No results yet, no projection, no data, or no race for that office.	Gray can mean "not counted" or "not voting for this office."
Stripes, checks, stars	Projected winners, flipped seats or other statuses.	Each outlet defines its own symbols.

Know what kind of map you're looking at. A **forecast map** shows expectations before votes are counted. A **historical map** shows a past election. A **live results map** shows votes counted so far, which may show only a **current lead**. A **media projection** is a news organization's call. An **officially certified result** comes later, from state officials. FACT

Size misleads. County maps show land, not people, so large areas of one color don't necessarily hold more votes. A state can elect a senator of one party while most of its House districts go the other way. And "precincts reporting" is not the

same as “estimated votes counted”: one fully reported rural precinct can hold fewer ballots than a single city block. FACT



The small city district holds as many people as each large rural one. More B-colored area does not mean more votes, and the statewide lead can still change as the rest is counted.
ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY. FICTIONAL STATE AND CANDIDATES, NO PARTIES. SOLID: PROJECTED. HATCHED: LEADING, NOT CALL

READ ELECTION NIGHT WITHOUT GETTING MISLED

Leads move because ballots are counted in batches, not at random. Some states count early and mail ballots first, others count Election Day ballots first, and mail ballots that arrive late are counted last where state law allows. Pennsylvania can’t start processing mail ballots until 7 am on Election Day; California counts ballots postmarked by Election Day that arrive up to seven days later; Nevada up to four. Since a 06.29.2026 Supreme Court ruling, states may keep such grace periods; 14 states and the District of Columbia have one. FACT

So the ballots counted first may not look like the ballots still out. A changing lead is how counting works; it isn’t evidence of misconduct. Specific problems, when they’re alleged, should be judged on their own evidence. ASSESSMENT

Four different things happen after polls close. **Race calls** are news organizations’ projections; the AP says its calls “are not predictions” and are not official. **Canvassing** is officials’ formal tally, then **certification**: Georgia’s state deadline is 11.20, Pennsylvania’s counties face 11.23. **Recounts** follow state thresholds: automatic in Pennsylvania at 0.5% or less statewide, automatic in Michigan at 0.1% or less statewide. **Audits** check that machines and procedures worked. **Legal challenges** are a separate track in the courts. FACT

Reader question: “How do I check a political clip or election claim?” Find the original: who posted it first, and when. Check the date and place against the event. For anything about voting or counting, go to the state or county election office’s own site. Reverse-search images. Be wary of anything that claims a result before the count it depends on is finished. ASSESSMENT

WHO RUNS THE COUNT, AND WHO WATCHES IT

States and counties run and count the vote. This year the Justice Department says it will send about 1,000 monitors to all 50 states, its largest effort on record. A department letter to Pennsylvania said: “Our monitors only observe and take notes.” Monitors may enter polling places only with local officials’ permission and must follow state rules. Critics, including the Campaign Legal Center, warn that monitors drawn from outside the Civil Rights Division “may inadvertently intimidate voters or election officials.” FACT Separately, the FBI and CISA warned on 10.16 that “election officials, candidates, and their political organizations are attractive targets” for cyber criminals, including AI-assisted schemes. For anything about where and how to vote, or about the count, the state or county election office is the authority. FACT

WHAT WE MAY STILL NOT KNOW ON WEDNESDAY

Control of the Senate, if Maine or Alaska goes to ranked-choice tabulation (Alaska's is scheduled for 11.18). Any Georgia race in which no one wins a majority (runoff 12.01). Close House seats in states that accept mail ballots after Election Day, such as California and Nevada. Recount triggers in tight statewide races. And what any majority can actually pass, which depends on the filibuster, the veto and the deal due by 12.11. FACT

SOURCE · LIVE SCIENCE (11.02.2020) PRESS · VOTEBEAT, DOJ MONITORS (10.31) PRESS · CBS NEWS, DOJ MONITORS PRESS · FBI AND CISA, PSA I-101626 (10.16) GOV · CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE GOV · NEVADA INDEPENDENT (06.29) PRESS · VOTEBEAT ON WATSON V. RNC (06.29) PRESS · AP EXPLAINER, VIA WJXT (03.03) PRESS · CAMPAIGN LEGAL CENTER, GEORGIA GUIDE ORG · CAMPAIGN LEGAL CENTER, PENNSYLVANIA GUIDE ORG · MICHIGAN MCL 168.880A GOV

THE US MIDTERMS IN FIVE SENTENCES

01 Americans vote Tuesday for all 435 House seats, 35 Senate seats and 36 governors, with Republicans holding narrow majorities in both chambers of Congress. FACT

02 Voters rank the economy and the cost of living first, as consumer prices rose 3.7% over the past year and real hourly pay fell 0.7%. FACT

03 Markets and models lean toward Democrats in the House and, less firmly, in the Senate; our own scored probabilities are in 09, and they are probabilities, not projections: news organizations project winners and states certify them. DISCOURSE

04 Control of Congress changes who can block, fund and investigate far more than it changes rents, grocery bills or interest rates, which run mostly through markets, the Fed and the states; health subsidies and taxes are the main exceptions. ASSESSMENT

05 Expect leads to shift as batches are counted, races to be called by news organizations before states certify, and some Senate seats to stay open past Wednesday. ASSESSMENT

ASK MIND CLUB

A QUESTION WE EXPECT

"Which rights depend on my state?"

More than many readers outside the US assume. Since 2022, abortion law has been set state by state, and this year's ballots include abortion measures in Nevada, Virginia, Missouri and Idaho, among others. Voting rules, from ID to mail-ballot deadlines, are also set by states within federal law. Several states vote on voter ID or noncitizen-voting measures, and Virginia votes on restoring voting rights to people with felony convictions on release. FACT

Your own state's election office is the place to check what's on your ballot. Questions for the next edition are welcome.

CORRECTIONS LOG

No new corrections in this edition.

SOURCE · STATE COURT REPORT (07.27) ORG · FOX NEWS, BALLOT MEASURES (11.01) PRESS

SOURCES

CHECKED BEFORE PRINT

Twelve claims checked against their sources on 11.01.2026; forecast readings refreshed 11.02.2026. Reporting cutoff: Monday 11.02.2026, 6:00 am Pacific.

#	CLAIM AS PRINTED	SOURCE	THE PASSAGE	VERDICT
S01	House: 218 R, 214 D, 1 independent, 2 vacancies	House Clerk GOV	"Republicans: 218 / Democrats: 214 / Independents: 1 / Vacancies: 2"	MATCH
S02	35 Senate seats on the ballot, including specials in Ohio and Florida	Ballotpedia ORG	"Thirty-three of the 100 seats in the chamber are up for election and another two seats are up for special election."	MATCH
S03	36 governors on the ballot	Ballotpedia ORG	"There are 36 gubernatorial offices on the ballot in 2026."	MATCH
S04	CPI up 3.7% in the year to September; core 2.6%	BLS (10.14) GOV	"Over the last 12 months, the all items index increased 3.7 percent before seasonal adjustment"	MATCH
S05	Real average hourly earnings down 0.7%	BLS (10.14) GOV	"real average hourly earnings decreased 0.7 percent, seasonally adjusted"	MATCH
S06	Unemployment 4.2%; payrolls up 29,000	BLS (10.02) GOV	"Both nonfarm payroll employment (+29,000) and the unemployment rate (4.2 percent) changed little"	MATCH
S07	Cook: Democrats favored in 220 House seats, 17 toss-ups	NPR via WPLN (11.01) PRESS	"The latest ratings from the Cook Political Report finds Democrats favored in 220 seats, 17 listed as 'toss-ups'"	MATCH
S08	Maine tabulates ranked-choice ballots centrally in Augusta	Maine SOS GOV	"securely transported to a central tabulation site in Augusta"	MATCH
S09	California counts ballots postmarked by Election Day that arrive within seven days	California SOS GOV	"Mailed ballots must be postmarked on or before Election Day and received not later than 7 days after Election Day."	MATCH
S10	14 states and DC have mail-ballot grace periods	Votebeat (06.29) PRESS	"Fourteen states and the District of Columbia currently have such grace periods."	MATCH
S11	AP calls are not predictions and not official results	AP via WJXT (03.03) PRESS	"The AP's race calls are not predictions and are not based on speculation."	PARTIAL
S12	Red and blue assigned consistently only since 2000	Live Science PRESS	"it's only since the 2000 election that red and blue have been assigned to the political parties consistently."	MATCH

S11 is Partial because the quoted passage supports "not predictions"; "not official" rests on the same explainer's description of the gap before certification.

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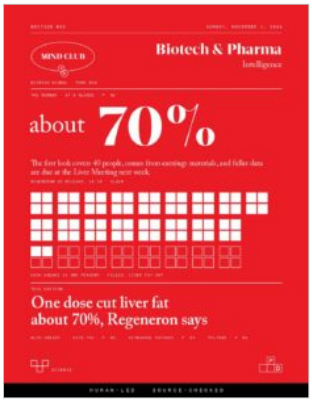
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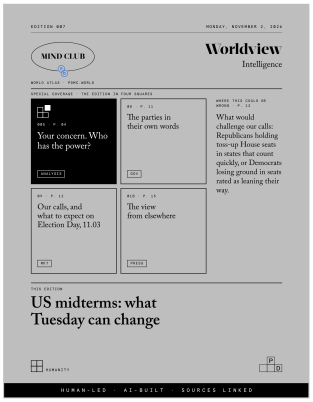


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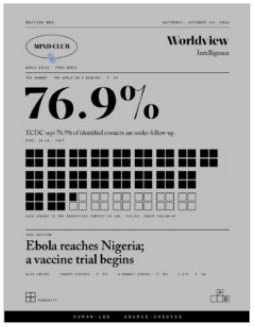
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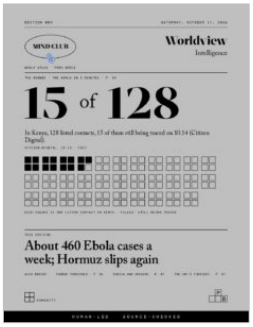
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