

2026 Post-Election Report

November 4, 2026

This report provides an initial overview of election results and what they mean.

National Results

Voters have delivered a devastating rebuke of the Trump Administration and the Republican Congress. Democrats needed a net pickup of three seats to take the House majority, but as of 8:00 a.m. ET, they have picked up at least 20, with dozens of races still to be determined. Democratic pickups reached well beyond "battleground" races, flipping seats in states and districts that President Trump carried by double digits just two years ago. Republicans' efforts to use mid-decade redistricting to shore up their majority backfired spectacularly — Democrats were able to retain or flip many districts that were engineered to be more safely red. Some outlets are projecting that after all races are called, Democrats will ultimately have an 81-seat majority, holding 258 seats to Republicans' 177.

In the Senate, Democrats hold 54 seats to Republicans' 44, with the races in Alaska and Mississippi still too close to call: in Alaska, Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK) holds a narrow lead over former Rep. Mary Peltola (D-AK), and in Mississippi, with nearly all votes counted, Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS) is in a virtual tie with Circuit Court District Attorney Scott Colom (D). Democrats seized the Senate majority by flipping seven seats: Iowa, Kansas, Maine, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas. Democrats also held two critical open seats in Michigan and Minnesota.

Election night brought historic gubernatorial election victories, including the first-ever African Americans to lead their states: Democrat Keisha Lance Bottoms in Georgia, Republican Byron Donalds in Florida, Democrat Aaron Ford in Nevada, and Democrat David Crowley in Wisconsin. California elected Xavier Becerra, its first Latino governor, and Texas elected Gina Hinojosa, the first-ever Latina Democrat, ousting three-term incumbent Greg Abbott. Overall, Democrats gained a net of five governorships — in Georgia, Iowa, Nevada, Ohio, and Texas — giving them a majority of the nation's governorships for the first time since 2010. Two sitting senators were also elected governor:

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), who becomes Minnesota's first female governor, and Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) in Tennessee. Both will resign their Senate seats, with successors to be appointed.

What Does it Mean?

Democrats will control both chambers for the first time since 2022, giving them a unified Congress for the final two years of the Trump Administration. Trump still holds significant executive powers and veto authority, which requires a two-thirds majority in both the House and Senate to override, meaning Democrats would not have enough votes to override a veto on their own.

The size of the win matters as much as the flip. In addition to changing who holds committee gavels, margins this wide will change committee ratios: Democrats will claim more seats on every committee, and at least some of those Republicans who won reelection are likely to lose the committee assignments they currently hold.

Current House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries will be Speaker of the House and current Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer will return as Senate Majority Leader. Both leaders have promised aggressive investigations into all aspects of the Trump Administration and to push for transformational change beginning on day one of their new majority.

More than 87 seats were open going into the election, and with more than a dozen incumbents defeated (and potentially more to come), the 120th Congress will seat one of the largest freshman classes in history. This turnover presents a windfall-level opportunity to engage one of the largest and most diverse classes of newly elected Members, many of whom will seek and secure assignments to top committees.

Key Dates

The new Congress begins to take shape within days of the election, while the current Congress still faces a Dec. 11 funding deadline.

DATE	EVENT AND WHY IT MATTERS
Nov. 6, 2026, noon	**House Republican leadership candidate deadline** — Members must notify the GOP conference if they intend to seek a leadership position.
Nov. 9	**Congress returns for the lame duck** — the current Congress can still act on outstanding legislation and funding.
Nov. 10, 9:00 a.m.	**House Republican candidate forum** — Candidates for leadership will participate in a forum at the Capitol Visitor Center auditorium.
Nov. 10	**House Republican leadership elections** — Conference Members will select party leaders.
Nov. 11	**House Republican conference rules forum** — Members will discuss the rules governing their conference.
Nov. 12	**House Republican Steering Committee** — GOP leaders will determine the Steering Committee, which plays a role in committee assignments.

DATE	EVENT AND WHY IT MATTERS
Dec. 11	**Government funding and surface transportation programs expire** — none of the 12 FY2027 appropriations bills have been enacted, and highway and transit programs run on a short-term extension.
[Date TBD]	**Other party leadership and steering** — these decisions will shape party leadership and the process for selecting committee leaders.
[Date TBD]	**Committee organization** — committee leaders and assignments will shape which Members oversee issues of interest to clients.
Jan. 3, 2027	**New Congress convenes and Members are sworn in** — the House elects a Speaker and the new Congress begins its work (the constitutional date, unless Congress sets another by law).

Source: House Republican dates as reported by @Reporter_Mia on X (linked on each date). Dec. 11 deadlines per Holland & Knight (Oct. 9, 2026) and the Congressional Research Service. Other dates will be added as they are announced.

Healthcare

The election sets the balance of power for health policy in the next Congress, but the first test comes sooner. Government funding runs through Dec. 11, and more than 20 health programs and Medicare payment provisions expire Dec. 31, giving the lame-duck Congress a ready vehicle for health legislation.

With this win, House Democrats are unlikely to support a Republican appropriations package before the continuing resolution (CR) ends Dec. 11. That also significantly lowers the chance of a meaningful year-end health package, as leadership may wish to reformulate and renegotiate provisions on their own terms. Even after the health provisions enacted in February 2026, a long list of significant health policy changes remains.

A CR into the new year and the 120th Congress is likely, carrying short-term extensions for expiring programs and pushing the possibility of a healthcare package into 2027.

Party-line reconciliation bills have been used repeatedly by both parties over the past two decades to pass, or attempt to pass, sweeping legislation aimed at system transformation. Some Republicans still want a final party-line bill in the lame duck, but the votes and the calendar are working against it, and the ideas under discussion center on defense, immigration and the debt limit rather than health policy.

The 120th Congress

Rising healthcare costs and dissatisfaction with the current system are driving both parties to propose significant changes to federal healthcare policy. Democrats have largely settled on an ambitious healthcare agenda, but division over Medicare for All is already looming over the coming Democratic majorities.

While progressives will continue to push for a floor vote on the Medicare for All Act, many moderate Democrats and leadership have repeatedly expressed skepticism regarding government implementation and consensus across the entire caucus. While the party largely agrees that access to high-quality, affordable healthcare should be a right, it will face significant divisions over how to expand the federal government's role in the health system and how to bend the steep health cost curve.

Medicare for All, or something similar, won't be signed into law in the next two years, but Democrats will lay the groundwork for 2028. Democrats are more united on renewing enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies and reversing H.R. 1 Medicaid cuts. But those are likely to be largely symbolic votes, given President Trump remains in the White House.

Balance of power: Democrats will control both the Senate and the House with comfortable majorities.

In the House, the Democratic Cost-of-Living Healthcare Working Group, co-led by Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) and Terri Sewell (D-AL), outlined the strategic healthcare agenda for the 120th Congress. The September 2026 memo to Leader Jeffries sorts its recommendations for the first 100 hours, first 100 days and first year into eight categories: reversing Trump Administration healthcare actions, including H.R. 1's Medicaid cuts and the loss of ACA subsidies; building toward universal coverage by strengthening Traditional Medicare; taking on healthcare monopolies, including hospital prices and private equity ownership; expanding access to affordable, preventive care; strengthening women's, maternal and reproductive health; investing in the healthcare workforce; reclaiming the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) agenda and protecting families; and increasing access to affordable innovations. On Medicare for All, the memo commits only to examining single-payer and public option models in the first year.

A Democratic Senate is expected to put two supporters of Medicare for All in charge of key committees: Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), who caucuses with Democrats, and Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR). While not in final form, Senate Democrats are developing a comprehensive healthcare agenda, similar but not identical to the House's, focused on reversing Republican healthcare cuts, lowering costs, expanding coverage options and simplifying enrollment. Specifically, it aims to strengthen long-term and home-based care, grow the workforce, and curb insurance and corporate practices that increase costs or restrict access to care.

In addition to the above policy agenda, there are likely to be numerous investigations and inquiries regarding healthcare deals that have not been disclosed, especially in the prescription drug space. Democratic-led investigations are expected right out of the gate and will likely emphasize Trump's pharmaceutical pricing agreements, potential conflicts of interest, corporate practices that increase patient costs, Medicare Advantage denials, private equity ownership and FDA regulatory decision-making. FDA oversight is particularly relevant heading into the next round of medical product user fee reauthorizations, which must pass in 2027.

Health funding and extenders: None of the 12 FY2027 appropriations bills, including Labor-HHS, have been enacted. Another CR extending current funding into the new year and 120th Congress is more likely than an omnibus agreement for FY2027.

Additionally, expiring programs include the Community Health Center Fund, the National Health Service Corps, the Special Diabetes Programs, and the Medicare-Dependent Hospital and low-volume hospital adjustments. The temporary 2.5% physician fee schedule increase also applies only to 2026. The expiring programs are likely to hitch a ride on a short-term extension, leaving them to be dealt with by the 120th Congress. Of note, not on this list: Medicare telehealth flexibilities, which run through 2027, and hospital-at-home authority, which runs through Sept. 30, 2030.

End-of-year health package: Priority issues include physician payment, price transparency and insulin costs, along with further pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) reform beyond the changes enacted in February 2026. However, the coming change does not incentivize Democrats to agree to the compromise versions of these bills, and they will likely push to address them next year.

ACA premium tax credits: The enhanced credits expired at the end of 2025 and reviving them would require a broader political agreement than routine extenders. The House working group recommends acting in the first 100 hours on a bill that would permanently extend the credits and reverse H.R. 1's Medicaid cuts. Should the House majority pass such legislation, it would need an unlikely filibuster-proof 60 votes in the Senate. Based on previous actions by the Trump Administration, even if passed by both chambers, a veto is likely unless the President is in a dealmaking mood.

One issue stands out as a candidate for agreement. Trump continues to push Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) pricing and supports making these arrangements permanent through legislation, although such a bill faces resistance in Congress. Democrats will seek to expand Medicare's negotiation authority, with the House working group urging its reach to private insurance and could potentially incorporate international reference prices into Medicare negotiations. Notably, there is meaningful policy overlap on lowering drug prices and using international prices as leverage.

Margins of victory matter. Without enough votes to overcome the filibuster, the Senate will be a major policymaking hurdle. Even with control over both chambers, Democrats will still have to face the Trump White House for final passage of legislation.

Members and races

Congress has lost a number of health champions through retirement, primary loss or election loss. This includes long-time healthcare leaders such as Reps. Diana DeGette (D-CO), who lost a primary, Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) and Vern Buchanan (R-FL) in the House. Sens. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), who lost a primary, Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Roger Marshall (R-KS), who lost reelection, in the Senate. As of this writing, a review of the incoming freshman class finds that 13 new Members of Congress, including three who lead in the latest returns without a confirmed call, are coming to the 120th Congress with a healthcare background. The Democrats among them could play a critical role in moving forward the party's healthcare agenda, and the new senators could be influential on the Senate HELP and Finance Committees. These new Members include:

MEMBER	HEALTHCARE BACKGROUND	SEAT AND STATUS
Amish Shah (D)	Emergency physician	AZ-1: leads (uncalled)
Richard Pan (D)	Physician	CA-6: won
John Cowan (R)	Neurosurgeon	GA-11: leads
Jasmine Clark (D)	Microbiologist; clinical professor, Emory nursing school	GA-13: won
Donna Miller (D)	Former healthcare executive	IL-2: won
Abdul El-Sayed (D)	Physician-scientist	Michigan Senate: won
Donavan McKinney (D)	Former SEIU Healthcare Michigan organizer	MI-13: leads
Denise Powell (D)	Healthcare advocate	NE-2: won
Stefany Shaheen (D)	Healthcare advocate	NH-1: won
Rebecca Bennett (D)	Healthcare executive	NJ-7: won
Adam Hamawy (D)	Surgeon	NJ-12: won
Annie Andrews (D)	Pediatrician	South Carolina Senate: won
Mitchell Berman (D)	Emergency room nurse	WI-1: won

Source: Race calls and returns from AP, NBC News and CBS News as of the morning of Nov. 4, 2026; each status links to its result.

Committees: With Democrats taking both the House and the Senate, key committees of jurisdiction will have new leadership who have been vocal about their intention to reset the healthcare agenda, reverse actions by the current Administration, and focus on expanding healthcare access and coverage, lowering healthcare costs and strengthening the healthcare workforce.

While committee leadership and membership will not be decided immediately, there are likely leadership outcomes in the House. Most notably:

- The Energy and Commerce (E&C) Committee will likely see its current leaders switch roles, as Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ) takes over as Chair and Chairman Brett Guthrie (R-KY) becomes Ranking Member.

- Jockeying for chair of the E&C Health Subcommittee has already begun, with Reps. Paul Tonko (D-NY) and Raul Ruiz (D-CA) having thrown their hats in the ring. Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-VA), who currently chairs the subcommittee, is expected to serve as Ranking Member.
- Likewise, the Ways and Means Committee will see a role reversal for its top posts. Ranking Member Richard Neal (D-MA) will become Chair, and Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO) will serve as Ranking Member for the 120th Congress.
- The Health Subcommittee will need new leadership on both sides due to the retirements of Reps. Vern Buchanan (R-FL) and Lloyd Doggett (D-TX). While not final, Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA), who is seeking the gavel, is a top contender for Chair. On the Republican side, Reps. Adrian Smith (R-NE), Greg Murphy (R-NC) and Mike Kelly (R-PA) have shown interest in the top post, although Murphy's own race remained extremely close in the latest returns.

In the Senate:

- On the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, current Ranking Member Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) will take the helm. A proponent of Medicare for All, Sanders will likely focus the committee's agenda on affordability issues. The next Ranking Member is much less clear. Top contenders like Sen. Roger Marshall (R-KS) and Sen. Susan Collins (R) lost their reelection bids. Looking down the dais gets more complicated but could include Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Jim Banks (R-IN) or Josh Hawley (R-MO).
- Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) will lead the Senate Finance Committee, a critical committee for Medicare, Medicaid, the ACA, tax policy and drug pricing. We can look to the committee's agenda to include restoration of ACA subsidies and reversal of recent Medicaid policies. On the Republican side, current Chair Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID) is expected to become the Ranking Member in the 120th Congress.
- The important Senate Appropriations Committee will be chaired by Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) and its Labor-HHS Subcommittee by Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), both of whom are current Ranking Members. The current committee Chair, Collins, was not reelected, leaving it unclear who will become Ranking Member in the 120th Congress. Contenders could include Sens. John Boozman (R-AR), Katie Britt (R-AL) or even Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), who is expected to be the Labor-HHS Subcommittee Ranking Member.
- The House Appropriations Committee approved its FY2027 Labor-HHS bill in June, but the Senate committee has not marked up its version. Given the sweeping majorities in both chambers, we may see a CR into January, when the new Congress is seated. This would give the Democratic majorities the opportunity to advance their agendas through the FY2027 bills.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Surface transportation is the next major infrastructure deadline. Highway, transit and safety programs authorized by the 2021 infrastructure law now run through Dec. 11. In May, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved the BUILD America 250 Act, a $580 billion, five-year reauthorization, by a 62–2 vote, but the Ways and Means Committee has not dealt with the federal gas tax, which funds the Highway Trust Fund. Across the Capitol, the Senate has not yet released its own version of the bill, and unlike the House, there are three committees with jurisdiction over the reauthorization: Banking; Environment and Public Works (EPW); and Commerce, Science and Transportation.

Issues to watch

Balance of power: With Democrats retaking the majority in the House, Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA) is expected to become Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. David Rouzer (R-NC) is the leading contender to take the top Republican spot, following the retirement of current Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO). As of this report, Rouzer is leading in his race but has not been called. T&I subcommittees will see a massive reshuffling of leadership, as four of the six subcommittee chairs will not be returning to the 120th Congress, and Rouzer's subcommittee slot will open if he ascends as the top Republican. In the Senate, Elizabeth Warren will chair Banking; Jeff Merkley (D-OR) will likely chair EPW; and Maria Cantwell (D-WA) will chair Commerce.

Reauthorization: Full authorization is unlikely to be resolved in the lame duck session as the strong Democratic majority in both the House and Seante increases the chances of a short-term extension into 2027. New Committee chairs will see an opportunity to negotiate different priorities, including passenger rail funding, rail safety and stronger oversight of the Department of Transportation.

Still ahead: Congress also still needs to pass the biennial Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and given the overwhelming support in the House earlier this year, WRDA is a likely candidate for lame duck passage. Next year, Congress must pass the FAA reauthorization, and Democrats will look to push for advanced appropriations under the expired IIJA, a priority for Sen. Cantwell.

Tax and trade: While a full-scale rollback is unlikely, expect targeted Congressional intervention and oversight particularly as it relates to Canada and as it directly impacts cost-of-living issues for American families. For historical context, President Biden did not roll back the tariffs from Trump's first term, but rather he kept them and added to them in some cases. Traditional Democrat constituencies include steel and unions, which have historically supported strategically applied tariffs.

Sources: CRS (Sept. 2026); AASHTO Journal; Quorum.

The Lame Duck Session

Congress returns next week for the lame-duck session. Perhaps most pressing is the Dec. 11 expiration of the continuing resolution (CR) that keeps the federal government funded. Republicans could

attempt to finalize the appropriations bills, but the incoming Democratic majority will likely demand that the bills reflect Democratic priorities. The question becomes whether Congress and the Administration can avoid a government shutdown; this will be the key first test of the Trump-Jeffries-Schumer relationship. For reference: in 2018, the last time Democrats flipped the House, a 35-day partial shutdown followed. And beginning in late 2025, the Trump Administration and Republican Congress had a record 43-day shutdown.

There are many additional "must-pass" items on the docket, including the FY2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the surface transportation bill, the Farm Bill, and health extenders, among others. Several judicial and executive nominees also await Senate confirmation. Whether these measures are acted on will again be decided in the context of the incoming House and Senate Democratic majority, which will seek to limit Republican aspirations for last-minute "wins."

Next week, new Members-elect will make their way to Washington for freshman orientation to begin assembling their staffs, participate in their respective parties' leadership elections, and begin seeking support for their preferred committee assignments. Incumbent Members will also be angling for better committee assignments.

Leadership and incoming committee chairs will begin announcing their policy agenda and refining their plans for oversight and investigative targets. Both Democrats and Republicans will also set timelines for their leadership elections. While House Republicans had initially set next week for leadership elections, Democrats' overwhelming victory is likely to mean those elections will be postponed.

Retiring and defeated Members and their staffs will be moved from their offices starting next week and given little time to wind down operations. Diminishing attendance by those Members could complicate Republicans' efforts to get any legislation across the finish line.

The 120th Congress & the New Democratic Majority's Agenda

House and Senate Democrats have been planning for this election outcome, with incoming chairs formulating plans for their agenda for the first 100 hours, first 100 days, and the first year of the 120th Congress. While neither Jeffries nor Schumer will be beholden to a particular faction of their party the way Republicans often have been in recent years, the Progressive Caucus has nearly 100 Members and stands to grow in the next Congress with the election of candidates aligned with the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). Some of the first priorities will be reversing Medicaid cuts, restoring Affordable Care Act enhanced subsidies, and pushing affordability measures for housing, childcare, prescription drugs, education and utilities. These efforts will set the congressional agenda and will be the road-test of the agenda for the 2028 election.

With subpoena power in hand, Democrats will aggressively target the President, his Cabinet and every corner of their decision making. Likely known targets include the President, his family, and his family businesses; crypto and foreign-government dealings; Justice Department prosecutions of political

opponents; the Epstein files; tariff agreements; corporate deals driven by the White House; DOGE cuts; and immigration enforcement and detention. Potential impeachment proceedings are not off the table.

The larger bloc of Progressive and DSA-endorsed Members will push for Medicare for All, publicly built "social housing" and rent stabilization, taxes on billionaires, publicly owned utilities and services, and conditions on military aid to Israel. While few of these efforts will become law in this next Congress, they will shape hearings, floor debate, and the 2028 primary, and their supporters will use must-pass bills as leverage.

Implications for the Remainder of the Trump Administration

Beyond the test of the immediate spending battle in the lame duck, the Administration will be expected to lean harder into the use of executive orders, emergency authorities, rescissions and impoundment to circumvent a hostile Democratic-controlled Congress. The Administration is also likely to treat congressional subpoenas as a fight to be won in court rather than a request to be met.

If Trump's first term is a guide, we also expect some attempts at dealmaking. In 2019, during an impeachment inquiry, Trump signed a two-year budget and debt-ceiling deal with Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Leader Schumer and passed the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) with a Democratic House. A legacy-minded President in his final two years has reasons to deal again. Potential dealmaking fronts include: a healthcare package that pairs ACA subsidies or Medicaid relief with Republican priorities; infrastructure investments and reshoring incentives, including manufacturing tax provisions; a legislated floor for tariffs generally or sector- and country-specific actions; and drug pricing, where Trump and progressive Democrats share some common ground.

Republicans: Rebuilding, but Toward What?

Trump has reshaped the GOP around loyalty to him. Members who lost primaries to Trump-backed challengers are now joined by a whole group of moderate to MAGA Republicans who lost in the general election. The candidates who won hold views farther right than the Members they replace.

Going into 2028, the Republican Party must answer a question it has avoided for a decade: what comes after Trump? Vice President JD Vance is the presumptive heir, but Tuesday's election outcome will test his claim to the post. Others vying to become the party's standard-bearer will likely offer competing visions: a populist-nationalist party that keeps Trump's base; a return to Reagan-era conservatism on the economy and national security; or a personality-driven movement in search of its next leader. How Trump handles his own succession, including whether he anoints a successor or tries to stay as the party's kingmaker, may matter more than any policy debate.

The Road to 2028 Starts Now

The 2028 race for the White House and for both congressional majorities begins today. Each party now faces its own test. Democrats must show they can govern, and Republicans must decide what their party stands for without Trump on the ballot.

In just two years, the House will again be decided in a few dozen districts including where this year's Democratic gains were won but will be hardest to hold. The Senate map in 2028 bodes more challenges for incumbent Democratic seats than Republicans, and those seats line up with the critical presidential states including Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

The next two years are both a governing period and a two-year campaign. Every hearing, every deal and every shutdown fight will be staged with the 2028 presidential race and control of Congress in mind.