PRZYBYSZ + ASSOCIATES
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

2026 Connecticut State Election Preview

Calendar

October 19- November 1: Early Voting Period. CT now allows for no-excuse absentee ballots during this period along with in-person early voting.

November 3, 2026: **Election Day** for Governor, all Constitutional Offices, all 187 General Assembly (House and Senate) seats along with all five Congressional districts.

January 6, 2027: Opening Day of the 2027 Legislative Session and the swearing in of the Governor, Constitutional Officers, and the 2027-2028 General Assembly.

June 9, 2027: Sine Die, the 2027 legislative session concludes.

Election Overview

The Gubernatorial race headlines the 2026 election ballot along with races for all of Connecticut's Constitutional Offices, all 187 legislative seats (36 Senate and 151 House) and the five Congressional districts. Midterm elections have historically been bad for the party that holds the presidency and 2026 is not expected to be different. In fact, Republicans have lost seats in just about every year since Trump was first on the ballot in 2016. Large majorities could grow into near historic supermajorities, at least since the 2008 Obama wave, and Democrats are expected to hold onto all five Congressional seats and all Constitutional offices.

The Governor is a strong favorite for a third term and would be only the second Governor in Connecticut history to be elected to a third term—the last famously did not finish that term so Lamont will potentially be record-setting in terms of longevity. Recent polls show the Governor with a commanding lead over his opponent. Republicans last won the Gubernatorial race in 2006 when Governor Rell was re-elected.

Democrats are expected to sweep the other constitutional offices and have not lost a constitutional down ballot race since 1996. Attorney General Tong and Comptroller Scanlon are seeking third terms with Secretary of State Thomas and Treasurer Erick Russell seeking second terms.

In the legislature, there is an opportunity for Democrats to expand large majorities in both the House and Senate. The Senate will see Senators Looney, McCrory, Maher, Hwang and Fazio depart with pickup opportunities in a handful of other districts. The House will also see significant turnover with senior

legislators like Reps Dillon, Mushinsky, and Steinberg all leaving and Reps. Khan, Paolillo and Fazzino likely moving upstairs to the Senate. Democrats see particular opportunities in Fairfield County suburban districts and there will be competitive races in some of the Eastern Connecticut shoreline seats. Democrats also control almost all of the Hartford-area seats and will look to retain and add seats in the more extended region, including in the Enfield, Southington and Vernon areas.

After an exciting 1st Congressional District primary that saw former Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin win the Democratic primary over incumbent John Larson, all five Democrats are expected to retain their seat. In recent years, the 5th CD has been the closest but Rep. Hayes has fended off past challenger George Logan and faces a more unknown opponent in Chris Shea. The 2nd Congressional District will continue to elect Joe Courtney but could become competitive in the future if Rep. Courtney ever decides not to run. Representatives DeLauro and Himes will see their careers continue into the next Congress and stand to play key roles. DeLauro is expected to become Appropriations Chair if Democrats win the House Majority and Himes could end up leading the Intelligence Committee.

Legislative Retirements

Senate

1. Senator Ryan Fazio (R- Greenwich)
2. Senator Tony Hwang (R- Fairfield)
3. Senator Martin Looney (D- New Haven)
4. Senator Cece Maher (D- Wilton)
5. Senator Doug McCrory (D- Hartford)

House of Representatives

1. Tim Ackert (R, Coventry)
2. Devin Carney (R, Old Saybrook)
3. Tammy Exum (D, West Hartford)
4. Jack Fazzino (D, Meriden)*
5. Henry Genga (D, East Hartford)
6. Jillian Gilchrest (D, West Hartford)
7. Irene Haines (R, East Hadaam)
8. Maryam Khan (D, Windsor)*
9. Mary Mushinsky (D- Wallingford)
10. Al Paolillo (D, New Haven)*
11. Amy Romano (R, Shelton)
12. Frank Smith (D, Milford)
13. Jonathan Steinberg (D, Westport)

*Candidates for State Senator.

Constitutional Office Races

Governor & Lt. Governor

Governor Ned Lamont and Lt. Governor Susan Bysewicz are seeking a third term. They will face off against State Senator Ryan Fazio and his running mate Matthew Corey. Lamont in recent polls has had a lead of 20% which makes the Democratic ticket the prohibitive favorite.

Attorney General

Attorney General Tong faces John Bolton, an attorney from Westport. Bolton is at a distinct disadvantage as he has not received public funding for his campaign. Tong meanwhile has high name recognition and advertisements that are boosting his campaign. Tong is expected to win.

Secretary of State

Secretary of State Stephanie Thomas will seek her second term against perennial candidate Peter Lumaj. Thomas is overseeing the expansion of early voting and no-excuse absentee ballot and is favored.

Treasurer

Tresurer Erick Russell is also seeking a second term and has gotten positive reviews, as the state's investment record has improved over his tenure. He takes on former state legislator Fred Wilms who is running on changing the investment process and authority of the Treasurer. Russell is also favored.

Comptroller

Comptroller Scanlon is seeking a third term, as he oversees the state's health insurance plan and has been a constant presence on the campaign trail. He is running against former Westport Mayor Jen Tooker. The former Mayor had been running for Governor but pivoted to the Comptroller race. As with much of the Republican ticket, there is low name recognition for her to overcome.

Congressional Races

Democrats are strongly favored to continue to hold all 5 Connecticut Congressional seats. The 5th CD has been closest in recent years but in a midterm election it is unlikely that any of the Republicans will gain enough support to win. The races on the ballot are outlined below.

1st Congressional District

Luke Bronin (D) *vs.* Amy Chai (R) *vs.* Mary Sanders (G)

2nd Congressional District

Joe Courtney (D) vs. George Austin (R)

3rd Congressional District

Rosa DeLauro (D) *vs.* Christopher Lancia (R) *vs.* Thomas Egan (I)

4th Congressional District

Jim Himes (D) *vs.* Michael Goldstein (R)

5th Congressional District

Jahana Hayes (D) *vs.* Chris Shea (R)

Highlighted State Legislative Races

Connecticut State Senate

Democrats control the State Senate with a 25-11 supermajority and an opportunity to expand their supermajority. There will be a number of new faces with four retirements, the primary loss of Senator Doug McCrory and potentially others losing in November. Here are some of the key races:

- **SD7 (East Granby, Ellington, Enfield, Granby, Somers, Suffield, Windsor, Windsor Locks)** John Kissell (R, Enfield) vs. David Kiner (D, Enfield): Senator Kissell is seeking a 17th term to the Senate and if he wins will be the most senior senator in the circle. He faces former State Rep. David Kiner who is well known in Enfield. This race could be close but Kissell is favored as the incumbent.

- **SD8 (Avon, Barkhamsted, Canton, Colebrook, Granby, Hartland, Harwinton, New Hartford, Norfolk, Simsbury and Torrington):** Paul Honig (D, Harwinton) *vs.* Michael Chriss (R, Harwinton) Senator Honig is seeking a second term in this district which had previously been represented by Republicans for over a decade. He will face Harwinton Mayor Michael Chriss who has high name recognition but has a lawsuit against the town of New Hartford that has caused internal party backlash.

- **SD16 (Cheshire, Prospect, Southington, Wolcott, Waterbury)** Rob Sampson (R, Wolcott) vs. Jack Perry (D, Southington) Senator Sampson is seeking a fifth term to the Senate after serving four terms in the House. Sampson, one of the most conservative and vocal members of the legislature, is expected to face a closer election as Southington has trended to the left in recent elections. Jack Perry originally sought the 1st Congressional District seat and is now running an aggressive self-funded campaign against Sampson.

- **SD18 (Griswold, Groton, North Stonington, Plainfield, Preston, Sterling, Stonington, Voluntown)** Heather Somers* (R, Groton) vs. Joe De la Cruz (D, Groton) Senator Somers is facing a challenge from former State Rep. De la Cruz. Both are well known locally and are campaigning hard for this southeastern CT seat. Somers has run strong campaigns and will likely need the small towns in the district to overcome Democratic votes in Groton.

- **SD20 (Bozrah, East Lyme, Montville, New London, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Salem, Waterford):** Martha Marx* (D, New London) *vs.* Lee Elci (R, New London) Senator Marx will defend her seat against radio-host Lee Elci for the New London based-district. Elci has strong name recognition in Southeastern CT and could be formidable especially in some of the other towns in the district.

- **SD28 (Bethel, Easton, Fairfield, Newtown, Weston)(Open Seat):** Rob Blanchard (D, Newtown) *vs.* Amybeth Laroche (R, Newtown) The retirement of Senator Hwang opens up this long-time held Republican seat. However, Blanchard should be favored after narrowly losing in 2024. This seat is a prime target for Democrats in the Senate to flip against Laroche, a newcomer to politics.

- **SD 35 (Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Eastford, Ellington, Stafford, Thompson, Tolland, Union, Vernon, Willington, Woodstok)** Jeff Gordon* (R, Woodstock) vs. Ethan Werstler (D, Woodstock) Senator Gordon, a doctor, has won two close elections in 2022 and 2024 and is seeking a third term. He faces Werstler, a young former UConn student Vice- President who has been active politically and run an active campaign. Senate Democrats view this as another pick up opportunity.

- **SD36 (Greenwich, New Canaan, Stamford)(Open Seat):** Joe Kelly (R, Greenwich) *vs.* Jill Oberlander (D, Greenwich) With Senator Fazio running for Governor, Republicans have nominated Joe Kelly to face Oberlander, a Greenwich RTM member and past candidate for state legislature. This seat has been held by both Democrats and Republicans in recent years and is expected to be close on election day.

Connecticut House of Representatives

Democrats hold a majority of seats (102-49) and are expected to continue to control the House under the leadership of Speaker Ritter and Majority Leader Rojas. They could see some changes to their majority but significant shifts in favor of Democrats or Republicans are unlikely. Democrats could gain more suburban seats along the shoreline, in Fairfield county and in some of the greater Hartford area. Likewise, former President Trump has boosted turnout in rural communities and there are some pick up opportunities.

Here is a list of some of the races that have interesting dynamics or are expected to be competitive on Election Day:

- **HD22 (Farmington, Plainville, Southington):** Rebecca Martinez* (D, Plainville) *vs.* Richard Mettee (R, Plainville) Martinez is a first term incumbent in what has been a swing district in recent years. She lost in 2022 before winning narrowly in 2024 and will face new opposition in Mr. Mettee, a first time candidate for this seat.

- **HD23 (Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Westbrook):** Barbara Labriola (R, Old Saybrook) vs. Jane Wisialowski (D, Old Saybrook) Incumbent Rep. Carney (R) is not seeking re-election after over a decade of service, opening up this seat. Both parties expect a competitive race between Barbara Labriola, the Republican nominee, and Jane Wisialowski, a Democratic selectwoman from Old Saybrook.

- **HD31 (Glastonbury):** Jill Barry* (I, Glastonbury) *vs.* Moise Caciedo (D, Glastonbury) *vs.* Susan Dzialo (R, Glastonbury). Incumbent Democratic Representative Jill Barry is running as an Independent candidate after Democrat Moise Caciedo received the Democratic endorsement and ultimately won the primary against a town councilman. House Republicans have expressed support for Barry but she will also have to overcome Susan Dzialo, a Republican who is also on the ballot. This will be a race to watch on election night!

- **HD34 (East Hadaam, East Hampton, Salem):** Melissa Ziobron (R, East Hadaam) *vs.* Meghan Rosenfield (D, East Hampton) The retirement of Rep. Haines has opened up this seat for a race between former Representative Melissa Ziobron, who has served as legislative staff for Republicans in recent years, and Meghan Rosenfield, a resident of East Hampton.

- **HD35 (Clinton, Killingworth, Westbrook):** Chris Aniskovich* (R, Clinton) *vs.* Cinzia Lettieri (D, Clinton). Aniskovich flipped this seat in 2022 and faces Cinzia Lettieri, an elementary school teacher who he defeated in a close 2024 matchup. This is a suburban district that is often close and could flip back to Democrats in 2026.

- **HD37 (East Lyme, Montville, Salem)** Nick Menapace (D, East Lyme) *vs.* Anne Santoro (R, East Lyme) First-term incumbent Menapace will face attorney Anne Santoro for this East Lyme based seat. Menapace picked up a former Republican held seat and could face a close race. House Republicans look at this as a pickup opportunity, especially after Menapace faced criticism for remarks he made about some of his Republican colleagues.

- **HD38 (Montville, Waterford)** Nick Gauthier* (D, Waterford) *vs.* John Foley (R, Waterford) Democrat Nick Gauthier defeated longtime incumbent Rep. McCarty two years ago in a close race. Gauthier has a very progressive record and faces pediatrician John Foley. This is expected to again be a close race.

- **HD55 (Andover, Bolton, Glastonbury, Hebron, Marlborough)** Steve Weir* (R, Hebron) *vs.* Ellen Paul (D, Glastonbury) Rep. Weir is seeking a third term in this district that encompasses several small towns in the Hartford exurbs. He is facing Ellen Paul, a librarian and head of the Connecticut Library Consortium, in what is expected to be a close race. Weir won by 10 points in 2024 so should be favored, however, in a blue wave environment this type of seat could flip.

- **HD59 (East Windsor, Enfield)** Carol Hall* (R, Enfield) vs. Rick LeBorious (D, Enfield) This race presents a rematch from what was a close 2024 election that the incumbent Rep. Hall won. Democrats see this as a pickup opportunity but have lost here in close races in recent elections.

- **HD65 (Torrington)** Joe Canino (R, Torrington) *vs.* Edward Corey (D, Torrington) Canino knocked off long-time incumbent Michelle Cook in 2024 in the closest House race of the cycle. He will look to defend his seat against Corey, a new candidate for the legislature.

- **HD81 (Southington):** Chris Poulos* (D, Southington) *vs.* Jim Morelli (R, Southington) Rep. Poulos is now seeking a third term after narrowly winning office in 2022 but expanding his support in 2024. Poulos votes against his party when necessary and is favored to win again.

- **HD83 (Berlin, Meriden):** Chad Cardillo (D, Meriden) *vs.* Bob Ham (R,Cheshire) After two terms in the House, Rep. Fazzino is moving up to the Senate. In a historically competitive seat, Cardillo, a teacher, faces Bob Ham, a retired manufacturing executive and naval officer. Cardillo is favored with strong support from unions and a positive Democratic environment.

- **HD106 (Newtown):** Mitch Bolinsky (R, Newtown) *vs.* Michelle Embree Ku (D, Newtown) Bolinsky is a longtime incumbent who has won both big and small in Newtown. This is another House rematch where his opponent Ku was within 4% in 2024. In a Democratic wave year, this suburban seat could finally flip to Democrats.

- **HD117 (Milford, Orange, West Haven):** MJ Shannon (D, Milford) *vs.* Raymond Collins (R, Milford) Shannon, another first term incumbent, has a rematch against Raymond Collins. This was a close race but Shannon will be favored for a second term.

- **HD149 (Greenwich, Stamford):** Tina Courpas (R, Greenwich) *vs.* Amiel Goldberg (D, Stamford) Rep. Courpas defeated an incumbent in 2024 and focused on fiscal issues in her first term. She faces Amiel Goldberg, a first time candidate that is active in Stamford. Many of the Greenwich-area seats have become swing districts in recent elections and this should be no different.

- **HD151 (Greenwich)** Hector Arzeno (D, Greenwich) *vs.* Michael Mason (R, Greenwich) Rep. Arzeno is seeking a third term against Mason, a town of Greenwich employee. As with the 149th, this could also be a close race. Both Gubernatorial candidates hailing from Greenwich is also likely to boost overall turnout in these races.