

SCAG Post-Election Federal Update

November 2026

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Agenda

- Overview of Election Results + New Leadership
- Changes to SCAG Delegation
- 120th Congress Committee Leadership
- Administrative Actions Summary
- Potential Lame-Duck Items
- 120th Congress Democratic Priorities

Overview of Election Results + New Leadership

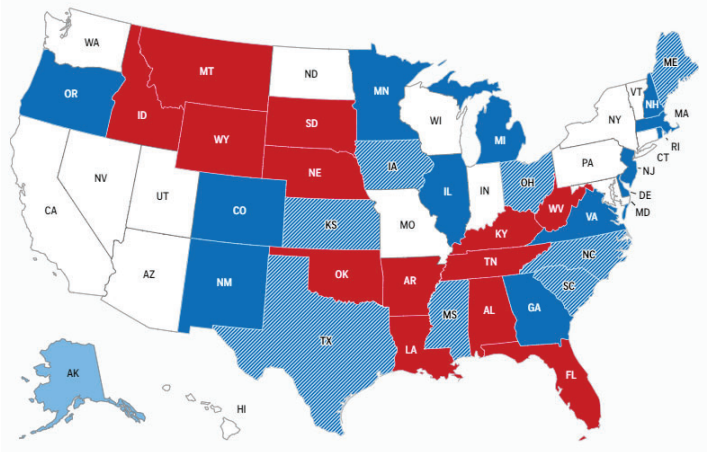
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Democrats Win Senate and House Majority

Senate

35 seats were up for reelection

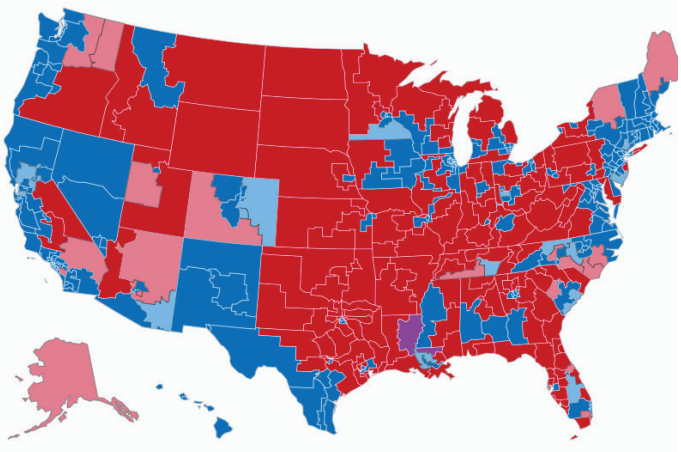
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House

All seats were up for reelection

256-170



Source: Associated Press

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U.S. Senate – Trends

Democrats will enter the 120th Congress with control of the Senate after flipping at least eight Republican-held seats.

- Republicans had 22 contested seats, and they held just 13 of them. Democrats, however, held all 13 of their own contested seats and have picked up seven more, with Alaska and Mississippi still counting.
- Democrats will have their largest majority in the Senate since the 113th Congress (2013-2015).
- The last time Democrats won seven or more Senate seats in a midterm was 1986.
- The number of Black senators will increase from five to a record seven.
- Incoming Sen. Abdul El-Sayed (D-MI) will be the first Muslim senator, and Chris Pappas (D-NH) will be the first openly gay man to be elected to the Senate.

U.S. House – Trends

So far, Democrats have flipped 48 seats previously held by Republicans.

It is highly likely that the final Democratic House majority will meet or exceed 260 members.

- The 120th Congress will feature one of the largest incoming House freshman classes of the past decade.
- A record-breaking 159 women are set to serve in the 120th Congress, surpassing the previous high of 152 set in 2024; 36 women are in the freshman class.
- The number of Latinas in Congress will increase by approximately 30% between the 119th and 120th Congresses.

U.S. House – Trends

House Democrats

- 73 new members of the House Democratic Caucus.
- At least 37 incoming House Democrats will represent districts that President Trump won in 2024.
- New Dem Coalition: 142 members, including 40 new members (30 of which were flips).
- Progressive Caucus: Approximately 125 members.
- DSA: Six members elected, bringing the total to eight.

House Republicans

- 30 new members of the House Republican Caucus.
- Freedom Caucus: shrunk by at least two members, with more races yet to be called.
- Problem Solvers Caucus: 12 members lost their races, and four more could potentially lose in races that have yet to be called.

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Senate Leadership

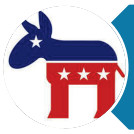
Presumptive Democratic Leadership



Majority Leader
Chuck Schumer (D-NY) is vying to lead Democrats in the Senate; he's being challenged by Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD).



Majority Whip
Brain Schatz (D-HI) will likely succeed Dick Durbin (D-IL) as the Majority Whip.



Conference Chair
TBD



DSCC
Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) is seeking reelection as DSCC Chair.

Republican Leadership



Minority Leader
Sen. John Thune (R-SD)



Minority Whip
Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY)



Conference Chair
Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR)



NRSC
Sen. Bernie Moreno (R-OH)

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House Leadership

Presumptive Democratic Leadership



House Speaker
Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY)



Majority Leader
Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA)



Majority Whip
Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-CA)

DCCC Chair
Reps. Liccardo, Schneider, Stanton, Horsford and Fletcher are contenders for the position.

Republican Leadership



House GOP Leader
Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH)



Minority Whip
Rep. Tom Emmer (R-MN)



Conference Chair
Rep. Lisa McClain (R-MI)



NRCC Chair
Rep. Brian Jack (R-GA)

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Changes to SCAG Delegation

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Changes to SCAG's House Delegation in 120th Congress

SCAG's House delegation currently is a **24 D, 1 R** split.

District	119th Congress	120th Congress	Shift
CA-23	*Has not been called. Republican incumbent Jay Obernolte currently leading against Democrat Tessa Hodge.*	*TBD*	*TBD*
CA-26	Julia Brownley (D)	Jacqui Irwin (D)	Blue → Blue (Hold)
CA-34	Jimmy Gomez (D)	Angela Gonzales-Torres (D)	Blue → Blue (Hold)
CA-38	Linda Sánchez (D)	Hilda Solis (D)	Blue → Blue (Hold)
CA-40	Young Kim (R)	Ken Calvert (R), *previously represented CA-41*	Red → Red (Hold)
CA-41	Ken Calvert (R)	Linda Sánchez (D)	Red → Blue

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120th Congress Committee Leadership

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Presumptive Congressional Leadership – Appropriations

Senate Appropriations Committee



Chair

Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) is set to chair the Senate Appropriations Committee.



Ranking Member

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) will run to succeed Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME).

SCAG delegation membership: Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA) is anticipated to become a member on the Senate Appropriations Committee.

House Appropriations Committee



Chair

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) is set to chair the House Appropriations Committee.



Ranking Member

Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK) is set to become ranking member for the committee.

SCAG delegation membership: Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CA-40) (Chair of Defense Subcommittee); Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-CA-33); Rep. Norma Torres (D-CA-35)

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Presumptive Congressional Leadership – Senate EPW

Senate EPW Committee



Chair

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) will become Chair. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) will move to chair Judiciary.



Ranking Member

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) is set to become ranking member of the committee.

SCAG Delegation Membership Returning in 120th Congress

- **Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)** is a member. He serves on the Clean Air, Climate, and Nuclear Innovation and Safety; Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife; and the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittees.
- **Sen. Adam Schiff (D-CA)** is also a member on the EPW Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee and currently Ranking Member of the Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife Subcommittee.

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Presumptive Congressional Leadership – House T&I

House T&I Committee



Chair

Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA) is set to chair the House T&I Committee.



Ranking Member

Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC) is set to become ranking member for the committee.

SCAG Delegation Membership Returning in 120th Congress

- **Rep. Salud Carbajal** (D-CA-24)
- **Rep. Laura Friedman** (D-CA-30)
- **Rep. Robert Garcia** (D-CA-42)
- **Rep. Dave Min** (D-CA-47)

U.S. Senate – Additional Presumptive Committee Leadership

Senate Committee	Notable Membership	Chair	Ranking Member
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs	N/A	Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA)	Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC)
Budget	Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)	Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA)	Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)
Commerce, Science, Transportation	N/A	Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA)	Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX)
Finance	N/A	Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)	Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID)

U.S. House – Additional Presumptive Committee Leadership

House Committee	Current SCAG Delegation Membership	Chair	Ranking Member
Budget	Rep. Robert Garcia (D-CA-42)	Rep. Brendan Boyle (D-PA)	Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R-PA) or Rep. Blake Moore (R-UT), *Rep. Jodey Arrington (R-TX) retired*
Energy and Commerce	Rep. Jay Obernolte (R-CA-23) Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA-25) Rep. Nanette Barragán (D-CA-44)	Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ)	Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY)
Financial Services	Chair Maxine Waters (D-CA-43) Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA-32)	Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA) or Rep. Sean Casten (D-IL)	Rep. French Hill (R-AR)
Oversight and Government Reform	Rep. Dave Min (D-CA-47)	Rep. Robert Garcia (D-CA)	Rep. Pat Fallon (R-TX), *Rep. James Comer (R-KY) term-limited*
Science, Space, and Technology	Rep. Jay Obernolte (R-CA-23) Rep. George Whitesides (D-CA-27) Rep. Laura Friedman (D-CA-30)	Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)	Rep. Brian Babin (R-TX)
Ways and Means	Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA-28) Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA-34) Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA-38)	Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA)	Rep. Jason Smith (R-MO)

Administrative Actions Summary

Administrative Actions

Authorization	Description	Status
OMB Proposed Rule	OMB's proposed Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance would substantially revise the Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 governing federal grants and cooperative agreements, including award administration, allowable costs, and grant termination.	Implementation delayed until Dec. 11, 2026.
Census Proposed Rule	The Census Bureau proposed rule would change residence criteria for the 2030 Census, including excluding certain noncitizens who are neither U.S. citizens nor lawful permanent residents from the population used for congressional apportionment. It would also establish new standards and restrictions for demographic questions used in the decennial census.	Comment period closed Nov. 2, 2026.
Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Proposed Rule	The FTA proposed guidance would overhaul the CIG process for New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity projects, including changes to project development requirements, ratings, financial evaluation, and the methodology used to determine the federal CIG funding share.	Comment period closed Nov. 16, 2026.

Potential Lame-Duck Items

The Lame-Duck

The House and Senate now have **15 overlapping vote days** remaining in the lame-duck session.

Must Address

Appropriations: Funding expires December 11, 2026. A second CR is likely to avert a shutdown and allow more time for FY 2027 appropriations.

Surface Transportation: Three House committees approved bills. The Senate has not released text. The CR extends authorization to December 11, 2026.

Additional Priorities

- **Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)**
- **National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)**

Surface Transportation Reauthorization Update

- Congress continues to work to advance the next surface transportation reauthorization bill as the current authorization expires on September 30, 2026. The CR extends the current authorization through December 11th.
- The House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee approved the BUILD America 250 Act (H.R.8870) by a 62-2 vote on May 22, 2026. The Energy & Commerce and Science, Space, & Technology committees have also approved their portions of the bill. However, Ways & Means has not acted and the Chairman has said he will not waive his jurisdiction over the bill.
- Another extension is expected post-December 11th.
- Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA), the presumptive chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, said he plans to build on the BUILD 250 Act in developing surface transportation reauthorization legislation in the 120th Congress.



Notable Nominations



Mark Aesch

Administrator, Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Mr. Aesch is the founder and CEO of TransPro, a consulting firm that advises public-sector agencies on performance and financial turnarounds. He also previously led the Rochester Genesee Regional Transportation Authority.



Loren A. Smith

Assistant Secretary of Transportation

Mr. Smith is currently the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the Department of Transportation (DOT). He also previously spent four years as President of Skyline Policy risk Group, a research and consulting firm specializing in supply chain issues.

120th Congress Democratic Priorities

120th Congress Look Ahead

Democrats campaigned on issues such as:



Ending the war in Iran



Rolling back tariffs



Tackling corruption



Reducing health care costs



Addressing housing affordability



Building guardrails for AI/data centers

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Key Democratic Priorities in the 120th Congress

Since Democrats won control of the Senate and House, priorities in the 120th Congress include:

Oversight and Investigations	Increased oversight of Administration actions, executive orders, federal contracting, tariff policies, agency spending decisions, and ethics and transparency matters.
Affordability	Affordability is expected to serve as a central organizing theme for broader economic and domestic policy initiatives, with a renewed focus on lowering the cost of housing, health care, prescription drugs, child care, energy, and household goods.
Road to 2028	Focusing on big ideas that lay the groundwork for a future Democratic administration; actions that help to preserve and expand the Democratic majority in 2028.

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120th Congress Look Ahead – Appropriations

- Federal funding for programs Democrats prioritize, including CDBG/community development, housing, transit, public health and environmental infrastructure are expected to receive stronger congressional protection and support.
- Administrative actions such as proposed rules, program changes and reorganizations will be harder to implement with increased oversight from appropriators, and the ability to prohibit implementation through the appropriations process.
- House Democrats may expand FY 2028 Community Project Funding (CPF) opportunities by reopening accounts for workforce programming and small business development projects. They could also expand entities eligible to participate in the process, allowing non-profits to fully participate.

120th Congress Look Ahead – Transportation

- Congress will pass another extension of current surface transportation programs in the lame-duck session.
- Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA), the presumptive Chair of the House T&I Committee, is expected to use the bipartisan BUILD America 250 Act as the foundation for a new bill, while pursuing changes related to transit and climate.
- The Committee will hold two reauthorization hearings early in the new Congress to solicit input from new and returning members, followed by a markup and a goal of House floor consideration by June 2027.
- The Senate may wait for the House to advance its bill before moving its own legislation, potentially pushing final enactment to later in 2027.

120th Congress Look Ahead – Housing

- The House Democratic Housing Working Group outlined an agenda for the 120th Congress that includes investigating the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- In a separate 32-page policy roadmap, the group proposes actions to:

Expand Housing Supply	Modernize Regulations	Improve Financing Tools	Strengthen Consumer Protections

- The House Financial Services and Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committees are expected to work on another package of housing bills – building off their recent success in passing the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act.
- Members are expected to closely track HUD, Treasury and other agencies' implementation of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act.

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120th Congress Look Ahead – AI/Data Centers

Democrats will now have potential to heavily influence federal policy on AI / data centers for the first time since the issue gained national attention in recent years and are expected to take a stronger stance to regulate them.

More than **40 data center referendums** appeared on local ballots across the country, with **nearly all of them passing.**

Ratepayer Protection Act

Congress could revisit House-passed legislation aimed at preventing data center-related infrastructure costs from being passed on to residential and small-business ratepayers. The measure failed to clear a procedural hurdle in September amid Democratic concerns that its protections are insufficient.

Data Center Transparency

Strong opposition to the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) between developers and local officials will continue to fuel Congress to advance policy to prohibit NDAs and increase transparency of project construction.

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Key Takeaways

Divided Government

With President Trump in the White House and Democrats controlling Congress, bipartisan negotiations will be essential to advancing legislation.

Pressure on Democrats to Deliver

Democrats will face heightened expectations to demonstrate tangible results on affordability, housing, health care and other voter priorities, despite the challenges of divided government.

Must-Pass Legislation Takes Center Stage

Appropriations, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and major reauthorizations will be critical vehicles for advancing federal funding and local policy priorities.

Greater Congressional Oversight

Expect increased scrutiny of Trump Administration policies, federal funding decisions, agency actions and regulatory changes.

Key Takeaways (cont'd.)

Executive Action Continues

The Trump Administration will retain significant authority over federal agencies, regulations and grant implementation despite increased congressional oversight.

Significant Congressional Turnover

A large incoming class of new members and changes in committee leadership create opportunities to establish relationships early and elevate local priorities.

Looking Ahead to 2028

Both parties will increasingly focus on laying the groundwork for the presidential election, with potential candidates building national profiles and shaping policy agendas. Presidential politics could complicate bipartisan negotiations as the election approaches.

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Questions?