Mapetsi's Initial Post-Midterm Election Report

American voters swept Democrats into large majorities in the U.S. House of Representatives and the United States Senate on Election Day. The seismic wave – the size of which continues to grow – washed out some longstanding Senators and House Members across the map, including in deep red states.

This memo shares additional details about the House and Senate majority, updates on the Native American candidates who ran for federal office, a brief look at potential congressional action during the upcoming lame duck session, and a brief early outlook for what to expect in the 120th Congress after the new members get sworn into office on Sunday, January 3, 2027.

Watergate Level Wave

Votes continue to be counted in dozens of races, but House Democrats are on track to win 255-260 seats – which will be the largest House majority since the 1974 Watergate midterm elections when Democrats held 291 seats.

To date, Democrats have gained 39 seats in the House of Representatives. The pickups were nationwide across 21 states from Arizona to Wisconsin. Democrats flipped five (5) seats in both California and North Carolina and four (4) seats in Pennsylvania.

Republican efforts to redraw House maps through mid-decade redistricting flopped. Not a single incumbent Democrat in a gerrymandered seat lost. (*Republicans did pickup two open seats subject to redistricting in Texas and Tennessee*). Republicans lost 4 of the 5 redrawn seats in Texas and zero of the four seats in Florida. Republican gerrymandering efforts energized Democratic voters throughout the south. The starkest example came in Alabama where incumbent Rep. Shomari Figures (D-AL-02) won by nine points.

Senate Democrats will hold at least 54 seats with the potential for 56. Democrats won in deep red states that President Trump won by double digits in 2024, including South Carolina (Trump +18 in 2024), Texas (+14), Kansas (+16), Iowa (+13), and Ohio (+11). They also flipped or held several seats by wide margins that Trump won in 2024 in Georgia (Ossoff +18), Michigan (El-Sayed +8), and North Carolina (Cooper +20). And finally, Maine Democrat Troy Jackson defeated long-time incumbent Senator Susan Collins by 6 points.

Senate races in Alaska and Mississippi remain too close to call.

Scott Colom, the Democratic nominee for Senate in Mississippi, holds an 1,138-vote lead over incumbent Republican Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith. The Mississippi Secretary of State said that approximately 3,600 mail ballots, if postmarked on or before Election Day, will be counted by November 10th, and stated that there are "an unknown number of affidavit ballots that will be processed within the 10-day window counties have to certify results."

Alaska also remains too close to call. With 75 percent of the votes counted, former Rep. Mary Peltola (Yup'ik)(D) leads incumbent Republican Senator Dan Sullivan by 637 votes (102,962 to 102,325 votes). The two other candidates (*Alaska holds a top 4 nonpartisan primary*) Gerald Heikes (R) and Dan Sullivan Jr. (I) trail far behind with 4,800 and 3,600 votes respectively. Alaska state law requires counting of eligible absentee ballots for 15 days – November 18th. If no candidate receives more than 50 of the vote, the election goes to ranked choice on November 18, when votes for the bottom two candidates are reviewed and given to the candidate that is the voters' second choice.

Native Candidates Make History

Nine Native American candidates were on the ballot on Election Day—three Native women running for the United States Senate and six Native candidates running to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

On January 3, 2027, Minnesota Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan (White Earth Nation) will be the first Native American woman to be sworn in to serve in the United States Senate since the body first convened in March of 1787. Flanagan defeated Republican challenger / former NFL reporter Michelle Tafoya by a solid 10-point margin.

So far, at least five Native Americans won their races to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. Rep. Sharice Davids (Ho Chunk)(D-KS-03) handily won with 60 percent of the vote in this purple district. Dean of the House Native American Caucus, Rep. Tom Cole (Chickasaw)(R-OK-04) and Rep. Josh Brecheen (Choctaw(R-OK-02) won their races with 58% and 68% respectively. Two new Members of Congress will join these veterans. Representative-elect Claire Valdez (Ysleta del Sur Pueblo)(D-NY-07) cruised to victory with 83% of the vote. And Rep.-elect Sean McCann (D-MI-04) defeated long-time incumbent Rep. Bill Huizenga (R) to serve Michigan's Fourth District, winning a tough race by approximately 7,000 votes.

Two important races involving Native candidates remain too close to call. As noted above, it could take until November 18th to determine the outcome of Mary Peltola's senate race in Alaska. In addition, votes continue to be counted in Arizona's Second District where former Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez (D-AZ-02) remains in a close race with incumbent Rep. Eli Crane (R).

At the State level, former U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (Laguna Pueblo)(D) handily won her race to serve as Governor of New Mexico. She will be the first Native woman ever to serve as a state Governor. And TW Shannon (Chickasaw) (R) won his race to serve as Lt. Governor of Oklahoma. Hundreds of other Native candidates won state-level races throughout the nation.

Key Factors in the Midterm Election

As expected, American voters were focused the high cost of living, the Iran war – which is tied to high gas, diesel, and heating oil prices, and corruption as their top issues.

Early exit polls showed significant swings from the 2024 Presidential Election, where young voters swung sharply back to favor Democrats and Hispanic voters – especially in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas – rebuked Republicans.

The significant cash advantage that Republicans held over Democrats did not overcome the epic wave that favored Democrats. And finally, the polls and polling averages were mostly correct. If anything, the pollsters over-adjusted to account for the reluctance of Republican voters to answer their polls.

Below is the list of Election Day polling averages in what were expected to be the closest Senate races. Democrats significantly overperformed the polls. Senators-elect Brown ended up winning by 5 points, El-Sayed by 7, Talarico by 12, Turek by 5, Alaska TBD, Jackson in Maine by 8, Hamilton by 5, Pappas by 14, and Ossoff by 18.

Real Clear Politics Final Senate Polling Averages (November 3, 2026)

Senate	Polymarket	RCP Average
Ohio	D 72%	Brown +2.8
Michigan	D 77%	El-Sayed +5.3
Texas	D 72%	Talarico +2.6
Iowa	D 51%	Tie
Alaska	D 71%	Peltola +1.0
Maine	D 69%	Jackson +3.6
Minnesota	D 91%	Flanagan +5.2
Kansas	D 63%	Hamilton +4.1
New Hampshire	D 95%	Pappas +8.0
Florida	R 88%	Moody +6.3
Georgia	D 97%	Ossoff +8.6

WHAT'S NEXT?

Lame Duck Session – November 9 – December 31?

Congress will return to Washington, D.C. for a lame duck session that opens on Monday, November 9th and extend into December.

The first item on the Senate agenda is a cloture vote that was filed in late September to vote on a bill to drastically rewrite federal permitting laws. The so-called "Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act" (BAAJA) would amend the National Historic Preservation Act, NEPA, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act by significantly cutting time frames for tribal government comment, closing off any opportunity to challenge illegal actions in court, and set back federal Indian affairs policy nearly a half-century by

authorizing the federal takeover of Tribal Historic Preservation Office programs and transferring the federal obligation to consult with tribal governments to the state governments.

Mapetsi has shared information about BAAJA and the dangerous precedent that it would set, and we will continue to work the bill and report any updates. Please contact us if you have any questions or need additional information on this bill.

On November 10th, House and Senate Republicans will select their leadership for the 120th Congress. Current Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) stated his intention to run for Minority Leader, which is he expected to win. Yesterday, Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) announced that he is stepping down from leadership. Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA) and Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) put their names forward to serve as the House Minority Leader.

While some incoming Democrats stated that they will not support current leaders Schumer and Jeffries, given the size of the wave on Election Day, Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) is expected to easily gain support to serve as Senate Majority Leader in the next Congress, and Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) will be elected the next Speaker of the House.

The remainder of the lame duck session is wide open. One must-do item on the list is finalizing negotiations and votes on the annual National Defense Authorization Act, which comes amid clear voter discontent with an unpopular war. The other must-pass piece of legislation is the annual appropriations bill for FY'2027, which started on October 1, 2026. The current continuing resolution expires on December 11, 2026. Appropriations will require bipartisan support. Democrats are unlikely to agree to the current spending levels set by Republicans. Many expect the final vote on a FY'27 package to be pushed to February of 2027. However, again – given the size of the midterm wave – Republicans may be willing to put forward a compromise that Democrats could accept.

Hegseth impeachment? House Republicans left the chamber early in September to avoid a privileged motion filed by outgoing Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Kentucky) to impeach Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth. Massie has stated he plans to reintroduce or force a vote on the impeachment charges as soon as lawmakers return to Washington, D.C., following the November 9, 2026, midterm elections, provided Hegseth is not pushed out in advance of that vote.

Brief Look Ahead to the 120th Congress

Soon to be Speaker of the House Hakeem Jeffries outline the Democrats top priorities for the 120th Congress in the coming week. That bill, H.R.1, will likely include a mix of measures to address the costs of health care, reclaiming Congress' authority over tariffs, ending the war in Iran, and addressing corruption. At the same time, Democrats are expected to fill the void in congressional oversight by calling Administrative officials to

account for a wide variety of actions ranging from DOGE to ICE to alleged pay for play activities that have occurred over the past two years.

Oversight = corruption, ICE, DOJ, DOD,

Gavels

In early to mid-December, House and Senate leaders will appoint new chairs and ranking members of the various committees.

Most important to Indian Country, the new Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee will be Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA) with Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez serving as Chair of the Committee's Indian Affairs Subcommittee. Rep. Pete Stauber (R-MN) may be selected to serve as the next Ranking Member (top Republican) of the Committee.

In the Senate, we expect Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) to serve as Chair of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Democrats will likely add at least one and possibly two seats to the Committee. One will almost certainly be filled by Senator-elect Peggy Flanagan who would fill the spot left open by retiring Senator Tina Smith.

On the funding front, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) will take over as Chair of the full House Appropriations Committee. Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME) will move back into the Chair of the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee. On the Republican side, Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK) will move to Ranking Member, and Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID) could move from Chair to Ranking Member of the Interior Subcommittee.

These decisions will be finalized by House and Senate leadership by early to mid-December. Once those chairmanships are filled, Senate leaders will then dole out appointments to fill out the remaining committee member spots.

Mapetsi will closely monitor these decisions and share information as Congress prepares to kick off the 120th Session of Congress.