

18 IN '18 RACES TO WATCH





As state-level Republicans have reached modern highs in legislative majorities and statewide offices held, the RSLC has brought attention to outstanding Future Majority Project (FMP) and Right Women, Right Now (RWRN) candidates running in critical races by highlighting them through the “Races to Watch” program since 2014. In years past, candidates featured in our campaigns proved to be essential majority makers and this cycle is no different. In Kentucky, 16 in ‘16 featured candidate Melinda Prunty helped Republicans flip the Kentucky House for the first time in 95 years. In Connecticut, 16 in ‘16 candidates Heather Somers and George Logan helped Republicans achieve split control in the state Senate, bringing Republicans to 69 chambers controlled. Meanwhile, candidates in Colorado, Maine, New York and Washington all played integral roles helping Republicans retain crucial Senate majorities in 2016 and expand our map.

This round of “Races to Watch” includes LGBTQ candidates and incumbents in competitive races alongside female and minority candidates and incumbents. In total the RSLC featured 90 down ballot candidates with its five editions of the “Races to Watch” list who are changing the face of the Republican Party at the state level and are breaking barriers in state legislatures and statewide offices.



CALIFORNIA

Ronda Baldwin-Kennedy California Assembly District 44

Members of the California Assembly represent approximately 465,000 people making it the largest population-per-representative ratio of any state's lower chamber.

voterbk.com



Ronda Baldwin-Kennedy is a wife and working mom who believes California has all of the potential to be an amazing place where she can continue to raise her children, and where they can build wonderful lives for themselves. California has lost its way due to the decisions being made on a daily basis by its representatives. Ronda is running because California should no longer be near the bottom of the nation when it comes to education and quality of life, while only leading the country in high taxes and poverty. As an attorney and small business owner, she has seen regulations that are keeping local employers from having successful businesses in California. The cost of doing business in California continues to rise, and the "tax and spend" philosophy in Sacramento does not represent the hardworking people in Ventura County. California is becoming unaffordable for working families, and impossible for young people to be able to plan a future in the state. She was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and is the granddaughter of the first African-American elected to the Wisconsin state legislature. She is currently a practicing lawyer in Ventura County as well as the Dean of a California law school.

This district was represented by a Republican representative as recently as 2012.

CALIFORNIA

Henry Nickel California Assembly District 40

Republicans need to flip two seats in the California Assembly to end the Democrats' supermajority in the chamber which would significantly hinder their abilities to pass legislation increasing taxes.

www.henrynickel.com



San Bernardino City Councilman Henry Nickel was first elected in 2014. Henry serves as Mayor Pro Tempore. He is known for his keen ability to bridge political divides. Henry serves on the League of California Cities' Transportation, Communication, and Public Works Policy Committee. He is also a member of the Leagues Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Local Officials (GLBTLO) Caucus, providing GLBT municipal officials and their colleagues a forum to share ideas and develop leadership experience. As a councilman, Henry worked faithfully to bring San Bernardino out of bankruptcy. Elected as a reformer following the city's 2012 bankruptcy filing, Henry supported investment in law enforcement, fiscal discipline and accountability to a city historically plagued by crime, poverty, and dysfunction. Henry won a resounding re-election victory in 2015. Henry's two-decade career includes service with the US Treasury Department in Washington, DC, coordination of overseas voter registration with Republicans Abroad in Germany during the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, and more than eight years as a regional transportation analyst. Henry met his husband Anner in 2008. They married in 2013 and remain neighbors with Henry's mother. In 2017, Anner received approval to immigrate to the US from El Salvador.

This district is held by a Republican despite overwhelming voting for Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in 2016 and 2012.



CONNECTICUT

John Scott

Connecticut House District 40

Republicans have grown their caucus in each election since 2008 and have the opportunity to flip the chamber to Republican control if they can flip five Democrat-held districts.

www.johnscott2018.com

Born and raised in southeastern Connecticut, John Scott has devoted his life to public service. John has served in many different capacities in Groton and Ledyard from the Groton Town Council and the Groton RTM to the Zoning Commission and the Beach and Parks Commission. During his two-year term serving Groton and part of Ledyard, John was vocal in the fight against Governor Dan Malloy's and legislative Democrats' tax and spend policies. John was also a strong voice for the local school districts, who were unfairly targeted by Governor Malloy. A small business owner, John worked tirelessly to support business owners and proposed legislation to reduce unnecessary taxes placed on job creators. With the state's economy continuing to spiral out-of-control and a record number of businesses and residents leaving the state, John has decided to throw his hat into the state Representative race for the 40th District. John is a Paul Harris Fellow and currently serves as treasurer of the Groton Rotary Club. He is also a past president of the club. John lives in Mystic with his husband, Rafael, and their miniature schnauzers Haley and Zoey.

In 2014, John upset longtime State Representative Edward Moukawsher, becoming the first openly gay Republican to serve in the General Assembly. John proudly served the 40th General Assembly district from 2014 to 2016.



HAWAII

Kurt Fevella

Hawaii Senate District 19

Republicans are hoping to regain a presence in the Hawaii Senate this cycle as the lone Republican state Senator was defeated in 2016.

fevella4ewa.com

A life time resident of the Ewa Beach community on the island of Oahu, Kurt is known and appreciated for his tireless community service on behalf of Ohana. Ohana means "family" in Hawaiian and Kurt is the communities' biggest advocate for children, seniors, and families. Kurt's mother served as an ideal example of service to others. For 32 years, Kurt has followed in her footsteps by heading various organizations and spearheading committees to better schools and local institutions. As the President of the Lions Club and elected member of the Ewa Neighborhood Board, Kurt has been recognized and lauded for the many countless hours he has spent cleaning our parks and beaches, organizing parades, and combating homelessness. Working together with businesses, churches, and non-profits, Kurt knows it takes a "village" chief and leader to take care of OHANA.

Senate District 19 is one of only two Senate districts in Hawaii where President Trump received over 40% of the Presidential vote in 2016.



ILLINOIS

Tonia Khouri Illinois House District 49

In 2016, Republicans ended the Democrat supermajority in the state House which prevented Democrats from overriding Governor Rauner's vetoes.

toniakhouri.com

Tonia Jane Khouri is currently a DuPage County Board Member and Chairman of Economic Development. She has done a commendable job on the County Board, always passing a balanced budget and cutting the overall budget by \$36.5M saving taxpayers \$110M. This was accomplished through governmental reforms like consolidation, shared services, and joint procurement. Khouri plans on using her skills and experience on the County Board to reform state government as well. Tonia Khouri is also a business owner. She and her husband own a household services company that they started with literally one man and one truck. After many years of 15-hour days, sleepless nights, and many sacrifices, they grew their business to serve 27,000 customers in the Chicagoland area and employ over 150 local residents. Tonia Khouri knows how business works, knows how to balance a budget, and will be a great asset to the House of Representatives in Springfield. Tonia Jane Khouri resides in Aurora with her husband, Joe, and their three children.

Tonia Jane Khouri has received the endorsement from all three major area newspapers: Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, and the Daily Herald.



IOWA

Ann Meyer Iowa House District 9

Republicans regained their majority in the state House after the 2010 midterms in which they flipped 14 districts.

annmeyer.win.gop

Ann Meyer grew up in Redford Township, a bordering community of Detroit. She graduated in 1987 from University of Detroit Mercy with her BSN and has been advocating for patients for over 30 years. She relocated to Fort Dodge, Iowa with her husband, Jim, in 2000. Ann has worked for the Iowa Heart Center and Iowa Central Community College as an adjunct nursing instructor in Fort Dodge. She has served many volunteer roles in the community, including 12 years on the local hospital auxiliary board. She decided to run for Iowa House District 9 to work on the problems surrounding the health care system. After knocking on thousands of doors and connecting with Iowans one-on-one, she found that inadequate mental health services was one of the biggest problems the community faced. Ann is passionate about improving the mental health system and access to health care in Iowa. A career in nursing has given her great organizational skills, a flair for multi-tasking, a commitment to listening to the people of her district, and a strong desire to problem solve. In her (limited) free time, Ann loves to entertain friends and family, and enjoys live music as often as possible.

The 9th House District is currently represented by a Democrat despite President Trump carrying the district by 15% over Hillary Clinton in 2016.



INDIANA

Connie Lawson Indiana Secretary of State

Republicans have held the Secretary of State office in Indiana since 1994.

www.voteconnielawson.com



Since taking office, Connie Lawson has used her experience as a former state Senator, former County Clerk, and small-business owner to make the Secretary of State's office as voter-friendly and business-friendly as possible. The Secretary of State's office oversees four divisions: Elections, Business Services, Auto Dealer Services, and Securities. After serving in the State Senate for sixteen years, chairing the Senate Elections Committee, and serving as Hendricks County Clerk for eight years, Connie understands the importance of election integrity. During the 2013 session, Connie worked with the Indiana General Assembly to pass election reforms that increased transparency and accountability in the election process. In an effort to increase efficiency for Hoosier businesses, Connie and the Business Services division of her office are working to provide business owners with convenient, user-friendly resources online. In addition, the Auto Dealer Services division works closely with car dealers throughout the state to improve services and to provide Hoosiers with up-to-date information on licensed dealers. Connie and her husband, Jack, live in Danville and have two children and six grandchildren.

After getting appointed as the Secretary of State by then-Governor Mitch Daniels in 2012, Lawson ran for a full term in 2014 and beat her Democrat opponent by over 15%.

MAINE

Matthew Stone Maine Senate District 14

Republicans hold a slim one vote majority in the Maine Senate.

www.facebook.com/stoneformaine



Born and raised in Central Maine, Matthew is a life-long Mainer who attended public schools in the state. His dad was a cop and his mom owned and operated a convenience store, and together they raised a family of four children. His dad is the one who sparked his interest in politics, regularly regaling him with tales of his political hero, Ronald Reagan, growing up. His heroes are his parents. He started his political career working on campaigns for governor and US Senate. After working on campaigns, he found a new lease on life working at a credit union in Southern Maine. There he helped everyday Mainers find long-term solutions to their financial problems. He was also exposed to the struggles of working-class people and the elderly. This led him to spearhead financial literacy efforts in high schools as well as raise money for food pantries throughout Maine. In 2016, he was asked to run as a replacement candidate for the legislature after the original candidate received a cancer diagnosis just weeks before the election. It was a long-shot campaign, but he felt the people he had served at the credit union deserved better from their elected officials. He ended up losing the race, but he gained a lot of friends, as well as a renewed faith in the political process. In 2017, a job opportunity allowed him to move closer to family in Central Maine. After much thought - and some gentle prodding from friends in the legislature - he decided to throw his hat in the ring a second time and run for office.

Senate District 14 is a Democrat-held district that President Trump won by 3% in 2016.



MARYLAND

Patty Ewing

Maryland House of Delegates District 32

Republicans are hoping to end the Democrat supermajority in the House of Delegates by flipping six districts held by Democrats.

pattyewing.com

People will always take precedence over ideology for Patty. Patty's decision to seek public office is a direct result of her concern for the community – all the members of the community – from the wealthiest to those with the least resources. She is running for state Delegate because “in Maryland we must reform the way our tax dollars are spent, do a better job keeping our communities safe, and we certainly must improve our schools.” Patty and her husband, Mark, have four daughters and 13 grandchildren. While Patty raised her girls, she ran a successful design business and volunteered in the community. She became politically active in 2015: “I have volunteered in the community my entire adult life—especially reading and tutoring in underperforming schools—but something changed watching the 2015 Baltimore riots. I love Maryland and I wanted to contribute on a larger scale.” Patty Ewing grew up in a working-class family—her father sold insurance and her mother was a teacher. She has a heritage of deeply committed Christian parents and grandparents who instilled in her a high value for education, hard work and doing good.

This district currently elects three Democrats to the 32nd District but a Republican candidate in 2014 narrowly missed winning the third slot.



MINNESOTA

Regina Barr

Minnesota House District 61

Republicans hold their largest majority in the House following a presidential election year with their 77-member majority.

www.reginaforhouse.com

Regina Barr is the daughter of a single working mother who taught her the value of hard work, fiscal responsibility and personal accountability. Those values helped Regina earn a BBA, MBA, and MA, helped her successfully navigate the corporate sector as a marketing executive, and then launch a corporate consulting, speaking, and coaching business for the past 15 years. Two years ago, Regina was a political newcomer who stepped up to serve her community because she was a concerned citizen and a problem solver. Working together with colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Regina supported legislation to lower health care costs and expand plan choices, cut taxes for middle-class families, and invest in schools. One of her biggest accomplishments was to secure funding for a grant to expand existing publicly-owned wastewater infrastructure which helped her community attract a \$200 million private-sector investment that will redirect wastewater out of the Mississippi River to a new facility for cutting-edge industrial reclamation use. During her next term, Regina plans to continue her work on increasing consumer protections, addressing sexual harassment in the workplace, and providing middle class tax relief.

Representative Barr won her election in 2016 by only 121 votes and is the first Republican to hold this seat in over half a century and the first woman to represent Inver Grove Heights.



MISSOURI

Jean Evans

Missouri House District 99

Since the 2012 elections Republicans have maintained a supermajority in the lower chamber.

www.electjeanevans.com



Jean has 25 years of experience as a business and community leader before being elected as a state representative. Her professional life has been spent helping people manage their real estate and other assets while her community involvement has grown to cover various St. Louis area organizations, as well as coaching HS volleyball. During her first term as a legislator, Jean worked diligently to pass a child marriage ban, ban the shackling of pregnant inmates, and help minority and women-controlled non-profits. Jean is the mom of Danielle and son-in law, David.

Rep. Evans out ran the top of the ticket in 2016 by over 8%, easily defeating her Democrat opponent by 15%.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Dan Innis

New Hampshire Senate District 24

Republicans hold a 14-10 majority in the Senate and have held the majority in 2016 despite Hillary Clinton carrying the state.

www.innisforsenate.com



Senator Dan Innis is a businessperson and a Professor of Marketing and Hospitality Management at the University of New Hampshire. He is the former Dean of UNH's Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics. Dan earned his Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 1991. He was the driving force behind the new state-of-the-art Peter T. Paul College building, a \$50 million project and the first academic building constructed at UNH with no direct state capital support. Dan also co-founded the Ale House Inn and the Hotel Portsmouth with his husband, Doug. He resides in New Castle and has three children, two of whom are UNH graduates. Dan is also a board member for the Log Cabin Republicans which is the nation's original and largest organization representing LGBT conservatives and straight allies who support fairness, freedom, and equality for all Americans.

Innis defeated his Democrat opponent in 2016 by 5% despite President Trump narrowly losing the district at the top of the ticket.



PENNSYLVANIA

Patty Pat Kozlowski Pennsylvania House District 177

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives, with 203 members, is the largest full-time legislative body in the country.

www.facebook.com/pattypat177



Patty Pat Kozlowski was born and raised in Philadelphia. For the past twenty years she has served as a community leader fighting to improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods of the river wards and lower northeast. She has been involved with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Philadelphia, the Police Athletic League as well as countless civic associations across the district. Patty Pat most recently worked as director of park stewardship at the Philadelphia's Department of Parks and Recreation. She has seen firsthand the toll the heroin epidemic and increased crime has had on the city and its residents, spending mornings before work removing needles from playgrounds so that children could have a safe place to play. Seeing the community, she loves so much face such difficult issues propelled Patty Pat to run for office. She is committed to fighting the heroin epidemic by providing law enforcement with more resources to get dealers off the streets, supporting addiction treatment centers, opposing safe injection sites and revitalizing the community.

In 2016, the then-Republican incumbent won this district by 11% even though Hillary Clinton won the district by 17%.

PENNSYLVANIA

Natalie Mihalek Pennsylvania House District 40

Republicans flipped control of the Pennsylvania House during the 2010 midterms and have held a steady majority in every election since then.

www.nataliemihalek.com



Born and raised in southwestern Pennsylvania, Natalie Mihalek learned the value of hard work and public service early in life. Natalie boarded a flight to boot camp for the United States Navy one week after graduating high school, qualifying to serve in the Navy's elite Nuclear Power Program, where less than 1% of all female sailors are admitted. Returning home from active duty, Natalie earned a degree from the University of Pittsburgh and went on to earn her law degree. Her legal career began with the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office, where she worked closely with victims and police to prosecute criminal cases and to put violent offenders in jail. Eventually, she started her own successful small business and now works for a large financial institution. She lives in Upper St. Clair with her husband, Jeremy, and their three children, Petra, Naila, and Dresden.

This district is open for the first time in 21 years as the incumbent Republican representative is retiring.



OREGON

Justin Hwang Oregon House District 49

Republicans are just five seats away from split control in the Oregon House of Representatives.

justinhwang.org



Justin Hwang is a husband, son, and local business owner, who currently resides in Gresham with his wife, Jeannie, and his dog, Lulu. Born in South Korea in 1984, he and his family emigrated to America at a young age. He spent a majority of his youth on the West Coast, primarily in the Los Angeles and Seattle areas. In 2003, his family relocated to Gresham, Oregon and opened their very first restaurant that year. Justin spent his late-teens and early 20s attending culinary school in California with a focus on hospitality management to help with his family business. More importantly, he also obtained his U.S. citizenship when he was 18. In 2006, his parents loaned him enough money to open his very own Joy Teriyaki restaurant and spent the first year at his business working 7 days a week. Today, Justin has been able to grow his business to 22 different restaurants thanks to the overwhelming support of all the communities that have welcomed him. When he's not busy in the kitchen, Justin has been a force in the community for quite some time. Whether it is helping feed the homeless at Zarephath Church in Gresham, serving on the Mount Hood Community College Foundation Board, or helping out with the Korean Veterans Association; Justin always has the community in his best interest.

This seat was held by a Republican representative as recently as 2012.

WASHINGTON

Sharon Brown Washington Senate District 8

Republicans have the opportunity to return the chamber to Republican control if they flip two seats in November.

sharonbrown.src.wastateleg.org



As a business lawyer and mother raising children, concern for her community inspired Sharon to run for city council, and then for the state Senate. Since 2013, she has been a strong conservative voice for eastern Washington. She has made a point of using her position in leadership and as Vice Chair on the budget committee to help protect the most vulnerable Washingtonians, with a focus on mental health resources. Senator Brown has led the fight to defeat the governor's energy tax and state income tax initiatives and she is the Senate's leading advocate for regulatory reform to support small business and create jobs. Sharon has also become known as the Legislature's leading expert and advocate for nuclear energy and is an International Speaker on Nuclear Energy. Sharon graduated from Drew University where she earned her undergraduate degree, and then went on to obtain a degree in JD Law from the University of New Hampshire-the Franklin Pierce Center for Intellectual Property. Before her appointment to the state Senate in 2013, Sharon served as the Mayor Pro Tem of Kennewick, WA.

Senator Brown, appointed to her seat in 2013, won a full term in 2014 with 75% of the vote.



WASHINGTON

Mario Lotmore Washington Senate District 21

Despite the liberal lean of the state, voters in Washington have a history of electing Republicans to down ballot offices in districts where they also overwhelmingly support Democrat statewide candidates.

www.mariolotmore.com

Mario Lotmore is originally from The Bahamas and for the last six years has called Mukilteo, WA his home. Having lived in every region of the United States has exposed him to various cultures, people, and approaches to life. Lotmore is an industrial engineer by trade and proven success implementing and managing lean accountable processes and policies within his eighteen years of operations excellence, strategic development, and project management in the aerospace, manufacturing, and banking industries. Over his career he has saved and created hundreds of union and non-union jobs. Lotmore is the President of a \$1.8M Homeowner Association, an active Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics volunteer in his community, and former Boeing 747 Diversity Council leader. Mario's talent is finding "that recipe" of shared destiny to effectively improve the quality of life for others.

Democrat candidates in this district have tended to under perform the top of the ticket in 2014 and 2010.



WASHINGTON

Michelle Caldier Washington House District 26

Republicans have steadily gained seats in the state House chamber in every election since 2008 and only need to flip two districts to regain the majority for the first time since 1998.

www.caldierforstaterepresentative.com

Representative Michelle Caldier is currently serving her 2nd term in the Washington state House of Representatives. Michelle has lived in Washington state her entire life and entered the foster care system as a child. She earned her doctorate and became a dentist who cared for the nursing home population. While serving in Olympia, Representative Caldier has worked on bills to increase access to rape kits for sexual assault survivors, reforms to the foster care system, and fixing how we fund K-12 education in our state. In addition to her daughter, Cassandra, Michelle became a foster parent and is the proud mother of Alicia and Sophia. She has been blessed with four grandchildren: Shawn, Tyson, Giselle, and Kayden. Her children and grandchildren motivate her in Olympia to ensure that all children have the same educational and economic opportunities that she had when she was their age. Representative Caldier was featured on the RSLC's "14 in '14: Races to Watch" list in her 2014 campaign.

Legislative District 26 is one of the swingiest districts in the state as the margin between presidential candidates in 2016 and 2012 was under 1% in both races.





ABOUT FMP

The Republican State Leadership Committee's (RSLC) Future Majority Project (FMP) seeks to identify, recruit and support candidates who better reflect the full diversity of our nation. Launched in 2011, FMP supports men and women from diverse communities as they run to grow the economy, support job creators and focus on ways to keep more money in the pockets of working families. The efforts are helping to build a strong bench of current and future Republican leaders. In the 2013-2014 cycle, FMP recruited 244 new candidates of all diverse backgrounds and successfully helped elect 43 to office in states nationwide, with an investment totaling more than \$6 million – in partnership with Right Women, Right Now. In 2015-2016, FMP invested \$7 million – in partnership with the RSLC's Right Women, Right Now (RWRN) – to identify and recruit 174 new, diverse candidates in 36 states. Through these efforts, FMP and RWRN saw 22 new candidates of diverse ethnicity elected, as well as 165 new women. FMP also saw 18 diverse elected officials enter leadership. Since its founding in 2011, the RSLC has with an over \$20 million investment helped elect over 500 women and over 100 diverse candidates.



ABOUT RWRN

The Republican State Leadership Committee's (RSLC) Right Women, Right Now (RWRN) initiative serves to identify, recruit and support women candidates nationwide in order to help elect more Republican leaders who better embody the electorate of our country, where women are 53 percent of the voters. RWRN offers candidate trainings, mentorship matchings and digital organizing tools for our candidates' campaigns for state-level office. Since its founding in 2012, RWRN has recruited hundreds of women candidates, elected over 500 new women to office and continues working to grow the largest caucus of Republican elected women in the country. RWRN is co-chaired by Tennessee Speaker of the House Beth Harwell and Arizona Secretary of State Michele Reagan. In the 2015-2016 election cycle, RWRN shattered its recruitment goal of 500 candidates by identifying and recruiting 690 new, women candidates to run for state-level office. RWRN saw 165 of those candidates appointed or elected in 37 states. In partnership with the RSLC's Future Majority Project (FMP), which aims to elect candidates from all diverse communities, RWRN invested \$7 million between 2015-2016 to identify, recruit and support these candidates.

