

U.S. SENATE - 2010
Updated October 29, 2010

Currently, the U.S. Senate has 57 Democrats, 41 Republicans and 2 Independents. Since the Independents, Joe Lieberman of Connecticut and Bernie Sanders of Vermont, caucus with the Democrats, the lineup is effectively 59-41. The question this year is, will the Republicans gain enough seats to take control of the Senate?

This year, there are 37 seats up for election.

19 are currently held by Democrats

18 are currently held by Republicans

14 seats will have a new Senator, either because the incumbent was defeated in a primary, retired, or the seat is currently held by a temporary caretaker. Of these, 7 are currently held by Democrats and 7 by Republicans. The Republicans will probably hold all 7 of their seats and win 2 of the Democratic seats (in Indiana and North Dakota), while the Democrats will hold 2 of their 7 seats (Connecticut and Delaware). The other 3 current Democratic seats are going to be very close (Illinois, Pennsylvania and West Virginia).

Overall, the Republicans need to hold all 18 of their current seats and win 10 of the 19 currently held by Democrats in order to have a 51-vote majority in the Senate.

Here is how the 37 seats shape up, as of this writing:

Safe/Very Likely Democratic (8)

Connecticut (Richard Blumenthal)

Delaware (Christopher Coons)

Hawaii (Daniel Inouye)

Maryland (Barbara Mikulski)

New York (Kirsten Gillibrand)

New York (Charles Schumer)

Oregon (Ron Wyden)

Vermont (Patrick Leahy)

Safe/Very Likely Republican (19)

Alabama (Richard Shelby)

Arkansas (John Boozman)

Arizona (John McCain)

Florida (Mark Rubio)

Georgia (Johnny Isakson)

Iowa (Charles Grassley)

Idaho (Michael D. Crapo)

Indiana (Daniel Coats)

Kansas (Jerry Moran)

Louisiana (David Vitter)

Missouri (Roy Blunt)

New Hampshire (Kelly Ayotte)

North Carolina (Richard M. Burr)

North Dakota (John Hoeven)

Ohio (Rob Portman)

Oklahoma (Tom Coburn)

South Carolina (Jim DeMint)

South Dakota (John Thune)

Utah (Mike Lee)

Alaska – Lisa Murkowski, Republican incumbent

In the Republican primary, Tea Party and Sarah Palin favorite Joe Miller defeated Lisa Murkowski. With Murkowski now running as an Independent write-in candidate, polls show a very tight race between these two. The Democratic Mayor of Sitka, Scott McAdams, trails both by about 10 points. It seems hard to believe that everyone who says they will take the trouble to write in a candidate's name will actually do so. However, one recent poll puts Murkowski ahead.

Prediction: **REPUBLICAN MILLER HOLDS SEAT**

Note: (If Murkowski wins the seat, she will still be a Republican)

California – Barbara Boxer, Democratic incumbent

Carly Fiorina has kept this race very close throughout the campaign that seems to me to have been rather uninspired by the Boxer campaign. Boxer should have won this fairly easily, but will probably hold on in a too-close election.

Prediction: **DEMOCRAT BOXER HOLDS SEAT**

Colorado – Michael Bennett, Democratic incumbent

All the polls have had this as a very close election for weeks. It is a real toss-up between appointed incumbent Michael Bennett and Republican tea partier Ken Buck.

Prediction: **DEMOCRAT BENNETT HOLDS SEAT**

Illinois – Open seat; currently held by Democrat Roland Burriss

This is President Obama's old seat and is another extremely tight contest between Republican Congressman Mark Kirk and Democratic State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias... Most polls have had this virtually tied for a very long time. Perhaps the Democrats will reap the benefit of the ghost of Richard Daley, Sr. (and others buried in Chicago cemeteries) and hold this seat.

Prediction: **KIRK PICKS UP SEAT FOR REPUBLICANS**

Kentucky – Open seat, currently held by Republican Jim Bunning

This is the seat where the son of Cong. Ron Paul, Dr. Rand Paul, became the first major Tea Party favorite to win a Republican Senate primary. While the Democrat, State Attorney General Jack Conway might be closing the gap, he still has a ways to go.

Prediction: **REPUBLICAN PAUL HOLDS SEAT**

Nevada – Harry Reid, Democratic incumbent

Another seat where the Republican is a Tea Party favorite, Sharron Angle. The race has been close from the beginning, with Angle usually having a small lead in most polls. If enough Democrats are frightened by the possibility of Angle's election and there is a good GOTV (Get Out The Vote) effort, the Democrats might carry Reid safely through this one. But don't bet the house on it.

Prediction: **ANGLE PICKS UP SEAT FOR REPUBLICANS**

Pennsylvania – Open seat, currently held by Democrat Arlen Specter

After Arlen Specter switched parties and became a Democrat, he was defeated in the primary by Cong. Joe Sestak. His opponent, Republican Pat Toomey, has held a slight lead throughout the campaign, although most polls have this one tightening up.

Prediction: **TOOMEY PICKS UP SEAT FOR REPUBLICANS**

Washington – Patty Murray, Democratic incumbent

Republican Dino Rossi has twice lost very close elections for Governor and is now giving Murray a very tough fight. Most polls had given Murray a lead throughout the campaign, although not a very large one, but the latest ones show this as a dead heat.

Prediction: **DEMOCRAT MURRAY HOLDS SEAT**

West Virginia – Open seat; caretaker Demo. senator after death of Robert Byrd

This is another extremely close and definite toss-up election between Republican John Raese and Democratic Governor Joe Manchin. As in some other states, the polls have had this one neck and neck throughout the fall, although the latest polls give Manchin a slight lead. Another one that could go either way.

Prediction: **DEMOCRAT MANCHIN HOLDS SEAT**

Wisconsin: - Russ Feingold, Democratic incumbent

From 2000 miles away, it is hard to believe that the progressive state of Wisconsin is ready to turn out Russ Feingold, but that is what is going to happen. Although Feingold seems to be closing, it is probably too late.

Prediction: **JOHNSON PICKS UP SEAT FOR REPUBLICANS**

FINAL PREDICTED TOTALS

Democrats win 12 seats

Republicans win 25 seats

Senate will have: 50 Democrats
 48 Republicans
 2 Independents (who caucus with Democrats)

Final Thoughts (If you are a Tea Party supporter you probably should skip this)

The elections in 2008 were much easier to predict. This year, there are several very close elections that truly could go either way. As a lifelong Democrat, per usual, I am hoping for the Democrats to win all the close races.

The videos showing the brown shirt tactics of Paul supporters attacking a woman in Kentucky, along with Alaska's Miller having a reporter handcuffed, combined with the unparalleled glorification of ignorance and stupidity as embodied by the "Tea Party" movement, is especially scary. There are voters who will cast ballots for candidates who are "birthers," who truly believe that President Obama is a secret Muslim bent on destroying this country, who do not believe in the separation of church and state, and who believe we should do away with public education. But the scariest part may be that intelligent Republicans, like Richard Lugar, Olympia Snowe, Susan Collins and millions of others are allowing the party of Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, and Dwight Eisenhower to be taken over by the Sarah Palins, Joe Millers, Christine O'Donnells, Rand Pauls, and Glenn Becks.