

2008 Election Preview — A Brief Look at the Races

FLEISHMAN
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
HILLARD



Last Updated July 21

Table of Contents

2008 Open House Seat Race Overview.....3

Individual Open House Seat Races.....4-24

Election Overview

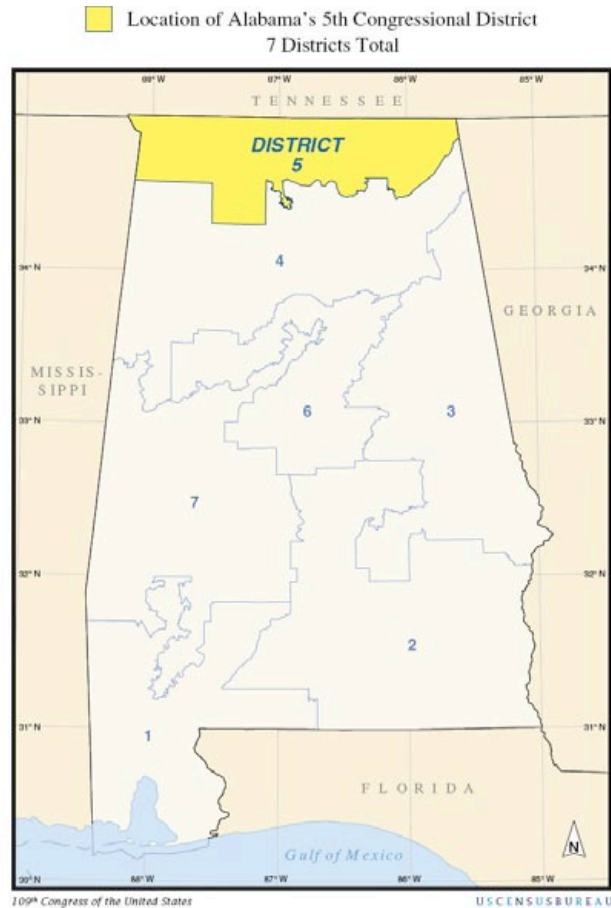
Elections will be held on November 4, 2008 for all 435 seats in the United States House of Representatives to serve in the 111th United States Congress from January 3, 2009 until January 3, 2011. Voter turnout in 2008 is expected to be significantly higher than the 2006 elections given the presidential, senate, and gubernatorial elections. The House currently has 236 Democrats and 199 Republicans.

On paper, Democrats are positioned to gain seats in 2008 because of numerous retirements by entrenched Republican incumbents. In addition, national polling indicates that many voters feel this is a “change” election due to a slow economy and the war in Iraq.

Three special elections were held earlier this year for open Republican seats, and may foreshadow Democratic gains in the general election. The fourteenth district of Illinois (formerly held by Dennis Hastert), the sixth district of Louisiana (formerly held by Richard Baker) and first district of Mississippi (formerly held by Roger Wicker) were all traditionally “red” districts held by strong incumbents. However, Democrats won all three elections.

A total of 35 House districts are open seats this year, meaning there is no incumbent due to retirement or resignation. This document will analyze 20 of the most competitive open seat races this election cycle. Sources for this information include the [Cook Political Reports \(http://www.cookpolitical.com/races/house/chart.php\)](http://www.cookpolitical.com/races/house/chart.php), [Rothenberg Political Report \(http://www.rothenbergpoliticalreport.blogspot.com/\)](http://www.rothenbergpoliticalreport.blogspot.com/), and [Congressional Quarterly \(http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?parm1=5\)](http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?parm1=5).

For more information about this election overview, or any other service provided by the Fleishman-Hillard Public Affairs Task Force, contact Bill Black at 202-828-8889 or bill.black@fleishman.com.



Candidates

State Senator Parker Griffith — Democrat
Cheryl Baswell-Guthrie — Republican
Wayne Parker — Republican

Overview

To the surprise of many, nine-term Congressman Bud Cramer announced his retirement in 2008. While this congressional district has been represented by a Democrat in Congress in almost every term since the Civil War, it usually votes Republican in presidential elections. On the Republican side, Parker (who ran in both 1994 and 1996) and Baswell-Guthrie (a local attorney) are headed to a primary runoff election, with Parker considered the strong favorite to be the nominee. The Democratic nominee is State Senator Griffith.

2006 Results

Bud Cramer (D) ran unopposed in 2006.



2006 Results

GOP — Rick Renzi	88,760	50%
Dem — Ellen Simon	75,257	44%

Candidates

State Representative Ann Kirkpatrick — Democrat
Mayor Allen Affeldt — Democrat
Howard Shanker — Democrat
Mary Kim Titla — Democrat
Sydney Ann Hay — Republican
State Representative Lucy Mason — Republican

Overview

At this point, this race is best described as a scrum with no clear party candidates or favorites. Congressman Rick Renzi narrowly won re-election in 2006 (even though President Bush won this district by a comfortable margin two years earlier), and was considered vulnerable even before he announced he would not seek re-election after the FBI raided his family business. His withdrawal touched off multiple announced candidates, and the picture remains foggy heading into the September 2nd primary date. Notable Democratic candidates include Winslow Mayor Affeldt, State Representative Kirkpatrick, local attorney Shanker, and former Phoenix newscaster Titla. Notable Republican candidates include public affairs consultant Hay (who ran unsuccessfully in 2002) and State Representative Mason.

CALIFORNIA

DISTRICT 52

Location of California's 52nd Congressional District - 53 Districts Total



Candidates

- Army Captain Duncan Duane Hunter, Jr. — Republican
- Retired U.S. Navy Commander Mike Lumpkin — Democrat

Overview

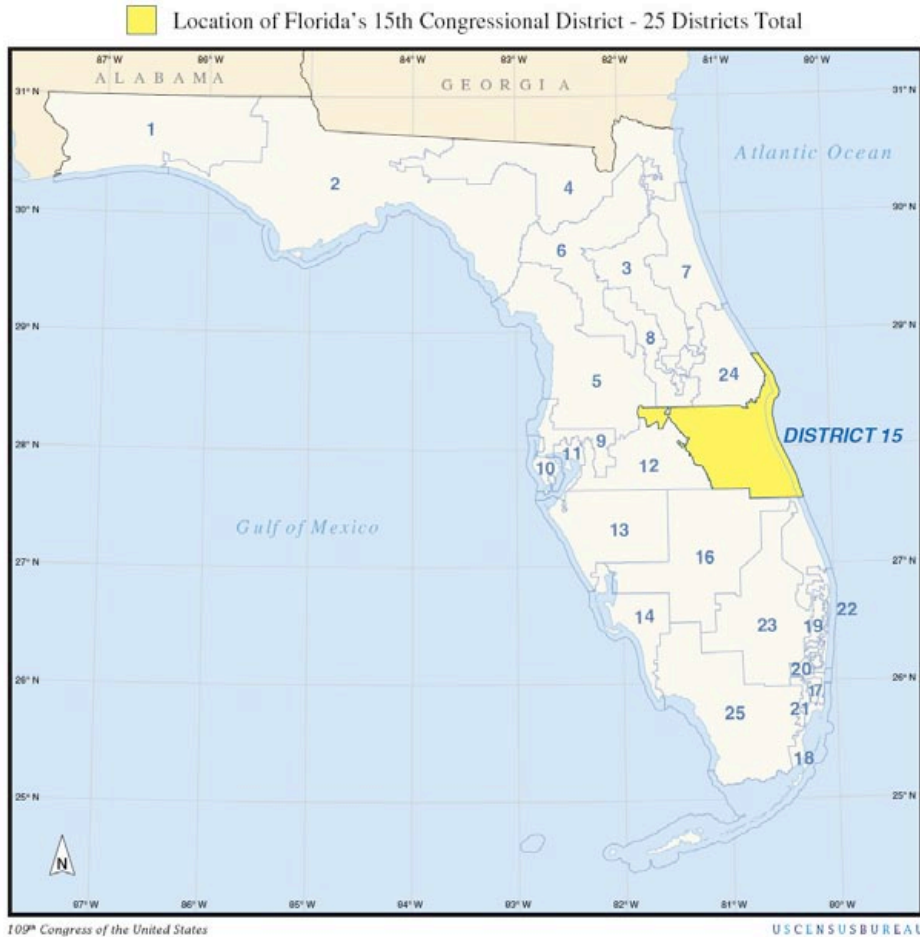
Nine-term Congressman Duncan Hunter vacated this seat to unsuccessfully pursue the Republican presidential nomination. While Hunter enjoyed winning by sizeable margins in his last seven elections, this may be attributable to his stature as Chair of the House Armed Services Committee in a district dominated by military bases, families, and industries. In a year considered a referendum on the war in Iraq, backlash may help the Democratic candidate, Iraq veteran and retired Navy Commander Lumpkin. In addition, a Libertarian candidate is running in the general election and may siphon votes away from the Republican nominee, Army Captain (and son of the incumbent) Hunter, Jr., However, the Republican nominee is also an Iraq veteran and his name may resonate with voters accustomed to the Hunter surname.

2006 Results

GOP — Duncan Hunter	106,363	65%
Dem — John Rinaldi	51,702	32%

FLORIDA

DISTRICT 15



Candidates

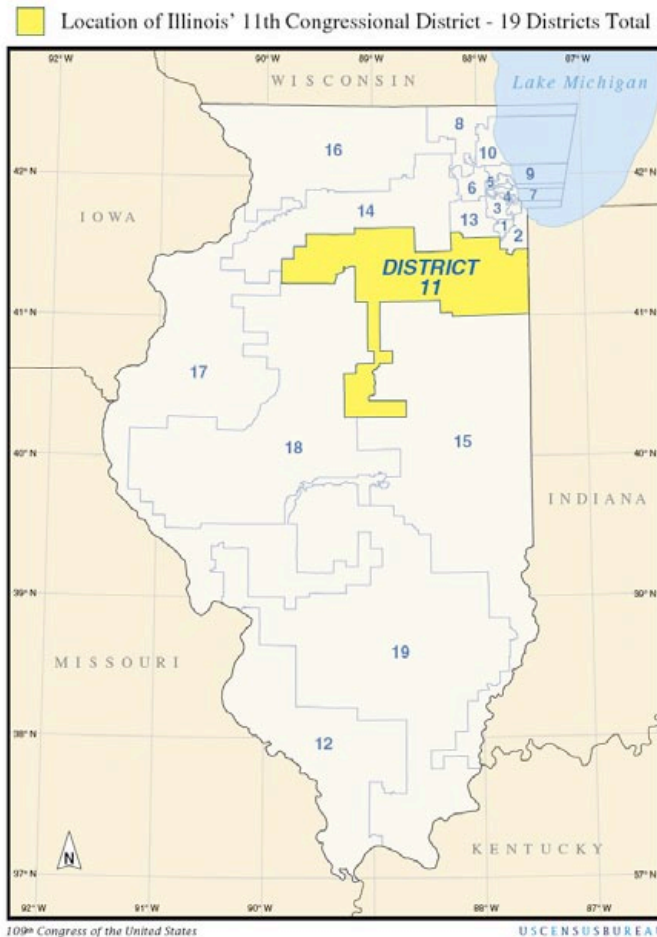
- Steven Blythe — Democrat
- Army Lt. Colonel Paul Rancatore — Democrat
- State Senator Bill Posey — Republican

Overview

Seven-term Congressman Dave Weldon enjoyed easy reelections for the past decade, but his retirement has very much put this district into play in 2008. While this district has reliably voted Republican in recent years (President Bush won 57 percent of the vote here in 2004), much of this trend is credited to Weldon, and the race for his seat may be more competitive than past elections indicate. Two announced candidates, local physician Blythe and Lt. Col. Rancatore, are vying for the Democratic nomination in the August 26th primary. On the Republican side, State Sen. Posey has been endorsed by Weldon and the Florida Republican Party, and enjoys positive name recognition.

2006 Results

GOP — Dave Weldon	120,070	56%
Dem — Robert Bowman	93,662	44%



Candidates

State Senate Majority Leader Debbie Halvorson — Democrat
Martin Ozinga — Republican

Overview

In 2006, Congressman Weller won 55 percent of the vote in a district that narrowly favored President Bush in 2004, and would have been favored for re-election, but instead opted not to run again. The early Republican nominee, New Lenox Mayor Tim Baldermann, was considered a strong candidate, but he announced in February that he was dropping out of the race. Local businessman Ozinga was chosen to replace him as the Republican candidate, but has low name recognition. State Senate Majority Leader Halvorson is the Democratic nominee, and is favored to win this seat due to her strong positive name recognition and stature in the State Senate.

2006 Results

GOP — Jerry Weller	108,375	55%
Dem — John Pavich	88,179	45%



Candidates

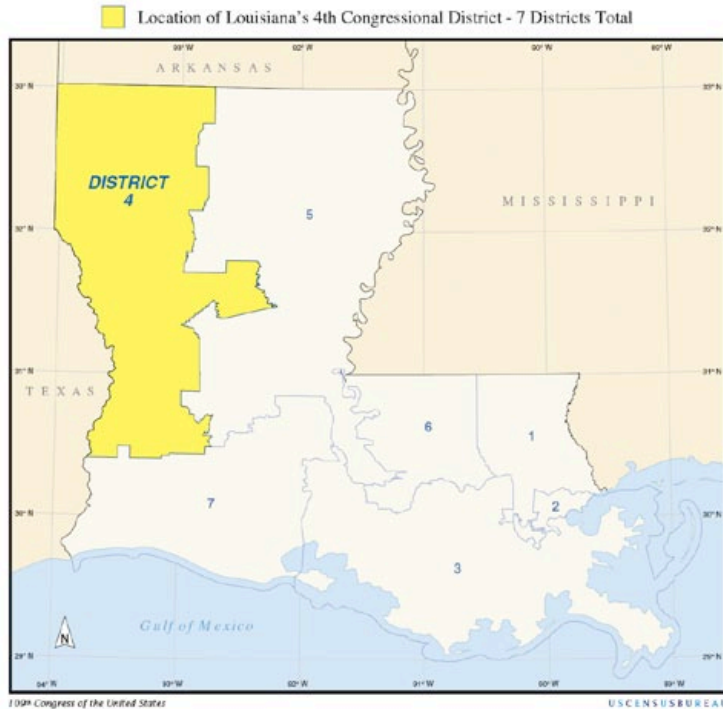
State Senator David Boswell — Democrat
State Senator Brett Guthrie — Republican

Overview

Congressman Ron Lewis withdrew his reelection bid hours before the filing deadline, to the surprise of many in his party. Some speculated that he intended to be succeeded by his Chief of Staff, Daniel London. However, State Senator Guthrie learned of Lewis's retirement just before the deadline and managed to file in time. After Guthrie won some key endorsements, London withdrew from the race, leaving Guthrie unopposed for the Republican nomination. Still, this behind-the-scenes imbroglio suggests a fracture may exist within the local GOP base. State Senator Boswell is the Democratic nominee, and has a united party behind his candidacy. Both candidates enjoy positive name recognition, but this district was represented by a Democrat for 40 years before Lewis' tenure, so many pundits consider this race to be closer than the final 2006 results.

2006 Results

GOP — Ron Lewis	117,424	55%
Dem — Mike Weaver	94,191	45%



2006 Results

GOP — Jim McCrery	76,976	58%
Dem — Artis R. Cash	22,702	17%
Dem — Patti Cox	17,750	13%
GOP — Chester Kelley	16,637	12%

Candidates

District Attorney Paul Carmouche —
Democrat

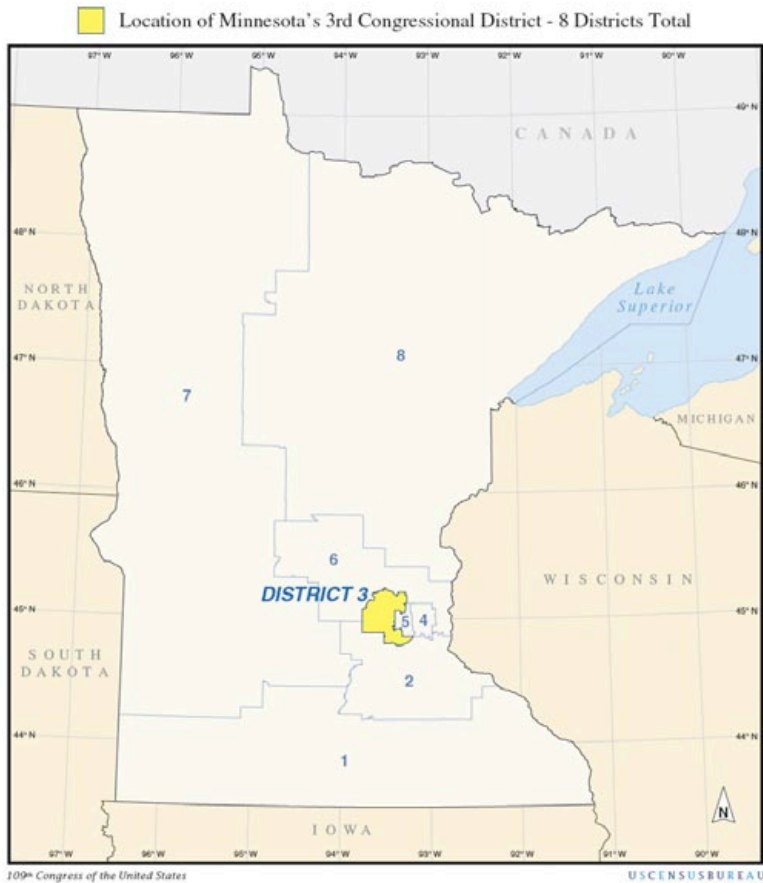
City Attorney Jeff Thompson — Republican

Overview

Congressmen Jim McCrery comfortably held this seat since 1988, but announced his retirement earlier this year. Louisiana's political system is anything but conventional, and with multiple primary elections in September and October, as well as the potential for several candidates to appear on the general election ballot, it's difficult to predict which party will win the vacant seat. Caddo Parish District Attorney Carmouche is considered the leading Democratic candidate, but Patti Cox, a local party organizer, environmental consultant and 2006 candidate, might run again. Bossier City Attorney Thompson is the leading Republican candidate, and has been endorsed by McCrery. Further complicating matters, the district split its vote between recent Republican and Democratic presidential candidates, and a Democrat recently won a special election for Congress in a heavily-Republican neighboring district.

MINNESOTA

DISTRICT 03



Candidates

Ashwin Madia — Democrat
State Representative Erik Paulsen —
Republican

Overview

This district will feature a very competitive and tough race in 2008. Eight-term Congressman Jim Ramstad was re-elected by comfortable margins, but he never truly faced a strong challenger. With an open seat, the district's demographics and voting trends become interesting. President Bush underperformed when compared to Ramstad's vote total and barely won the district with 51 percent of the vote in 2004. In addition, the district has a mixed demographic makeup with distinct blue-collar, middle-class, and high-income enclaves. Both parties have rallied around consensus candidates, sensing an opportunity. Iraq War veteran Madia won the Democratic nomination and will face Republican State House Majority Leader Paulsen. On paper, Paulsen enjoys an advantage due to his name recognition, but an Independent Party candidate is also running for the seat. This race may ultimately hinge on how many votes the third-party candidate garners, and from which major party candidate those votes come from.

2006 Results

GOP — Jim Ramstad	184,353	65%
Dem — Wendy Wilde	99,599	35%

NEW JERSEY

DISTRICT 03

Location of New Jersey's 3rd Congressional District
13 Districts Total



2006 Results

GOP — Jim Saxton	120,061	58%
Dem — Richard Sexton	84,310	41%

Candidates

Mayor Chris Meyers — Republican
State Senator John Adler — Democrat

Overview

In a district dominated by military bases and families, retiring Congressman Jim Saxton comfortably retained this seat for 14 years due to his stature on the House Armed Services committee and ability to keep those bases open during previous BRAC rounds. This district is historically Republican, but its demographics have recently trended more Democratic. Democrats have targeted this district on a national and congressional level for several years, and it has swung between presidential candidates in recent elections (President Bush won with 51 percent in 2004 and Vice President Gore won by a significant margin in 2000). Democrats have recruited the stronger candidate, State Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Adler, and his ties to the local party infrastructure are formidable. However, the Republican nominee, Medford Mayor Meyers, has strong roots in a large district municipality and is a Gulf War veteran. Both national parties have targeted this district, and it will be a race to watch this year.

NEW JERSEY

DISTRICT 07

Location of New Jersey's 7th Congressional District
13 Districts Total



109th Congress of the United States USCENSUSBUREAU

2006 Results

GOP — Mike Ferguson	95,830	49%
Dem — Linda Stender	92,591	48%

Candidates

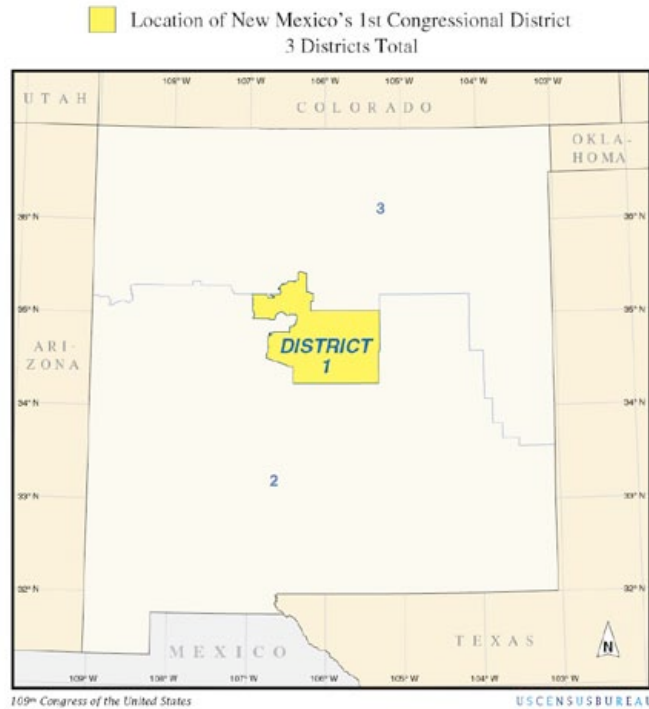
State Senator Leonard Lance — Republican
State Assemblywoman Linda Stender — Democrat

Overview

This may be one of the most competitive and close House elections in 2008. Congressman Mike Ferguson barely won his 2006 re-election bid, edging state Assemblywoman and former Union County Freeholder Stender by less than 4,000 votes. They were expected to rematch this year, but in a major surprise, Ferguson announced that he would not run for re-election. State Senator, outgoing Senate Minority Leader, and former county elected official Lance is a strong candidate with deep ties in the western part of the district. His strength is countered by Assemblywoman Stender, who has strong ties in the more populous eastern part of the district.

NEW MEXICO

DISTRICT 01



Candidates

City Councilor Martin Heinrich — Democrat
Sheriff Darren White — Republican

Overview

This district featured one of the closest congressional elections in 2006, when Congresswoman Heather Wilson won re-election over State Attorney General Madrid by 861 votes. However, with the retirement of longtime U.S. Senator Pete Domenici, Wilson has given up her seat to run for the Senate. Senator Kerry won this Albuquerque-based district with 52 percent of the vote in 2004, and this has clearly become a swing district. This will once again be a very close election in 2008, as both national parties are targeting this district for the House, Senate, and Presidential elections. The Democratic nominee is Albuquerque City Councilor Heinrich and the Republican nominee is Bernalillo County Sheriff White. Both candidates enjoy name recognition and strong party backing, and this race is considered too close to call.

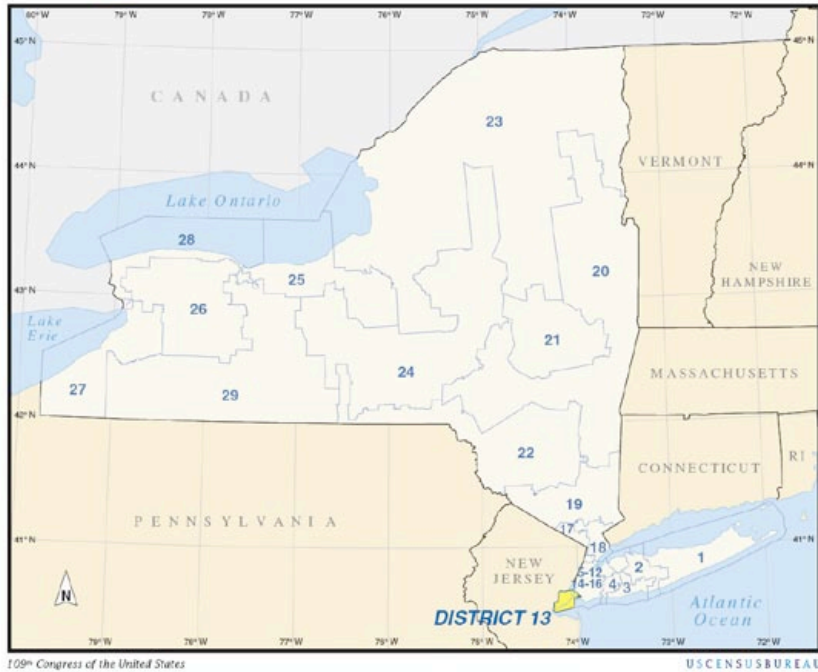
2006 Results

GOP — Heather Wilson	105,916	50%
Dem — Patricia Madrid	105,037	50%

NEW YORK

DISTRICT 13

Location of New York's 13th Congressional District - 29 Districts Total



Candidates

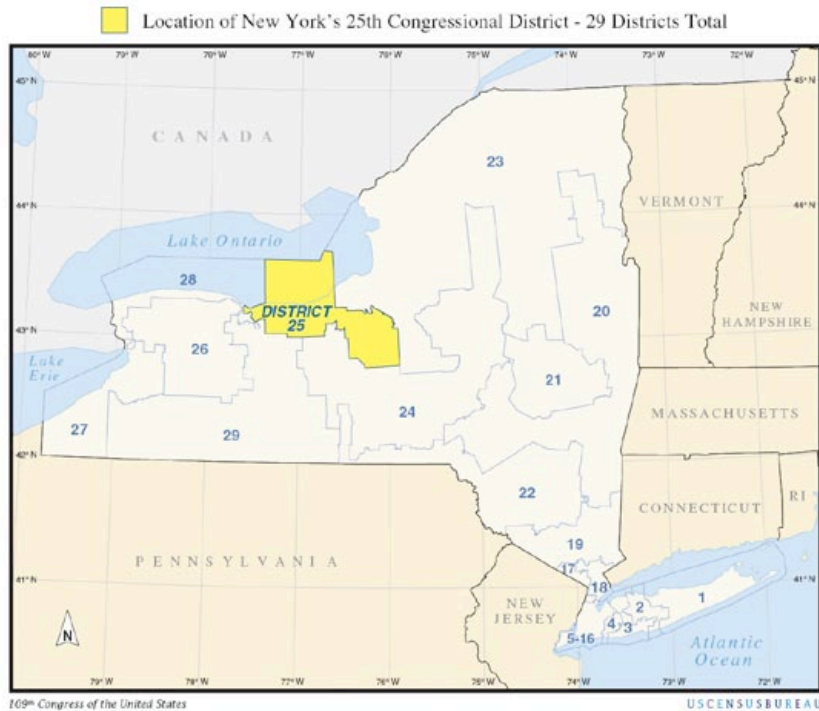
- Television personality Lisa Giovinazzo — Republican
- City Councilman Vincent Ignizio — Republican
- Former Congresswoman Susan Molinari — Republican
- City Councilman Michael McMahon — Democrat
- Steve Harrison — Democrat

Overview

At the beginning of 2008, this Staten Island district was considered a lock for Republicans. Congressman Vito Fossella won re-election by solid margins since first being elected in a 1997 special election. However, he suddenly announced his retirement in May after a series of scandals erupted around him. His announcement touched off a scramble to find candidates before the September primary. On the Republican side, several potential candidates are rumored to be considering a run, including NY1 anchorwoman Giovinazzo, Councilman Ignizio, and former Congresswoman Molinari. Among Democrats, attorney Harrison and Staten Island City Councilman McMahon are running. This district is considered the most conservative part of New York City, but it has voted for local and state Democrats in many elections, and the race will not truly take form until after the primary.

2006 Results

GOP – Vito Fossella, Jr.	55,981	57%
Dem – Stephen Harrison	42,739	43%



Candidates

Dale Sweetland — Republican

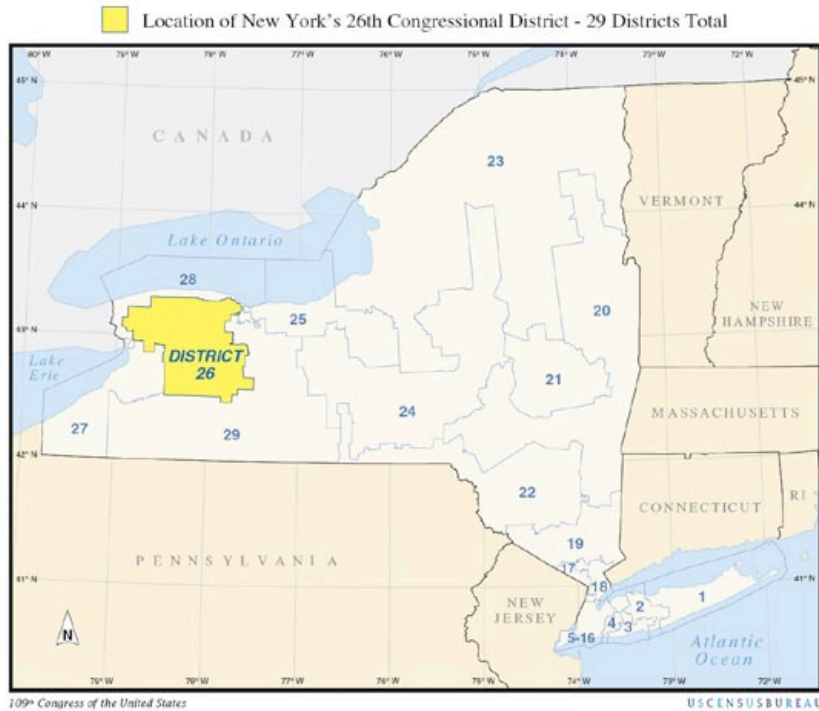
Dan Maffei — Democrat

Overview

This district, which includes Syracuse, has become a battleground for both parties, with Congressman Jim Walsh winning by 51 percent in 2006 while Senator Kerry won the district by seven percentage points in 2004. In January, Walsh announced he would not seek reelection. His 2006 opponent, local businessman Maffei, will run again and seek to capitalize on his near-win two years ago. On the Republican side, former Onondaga County Legislature Chairman and farmer Sweetland has been endorsed by Walsh, and is considered the presumptive nominee, with all other major opponents exiting the primary contest after Walsh's endorsement.

2006 Results

GOP – Jim Walsh	105,235	51%
Dem – Dan Maffei	101,322	49%



Candidates

- Jack Davis — Democrat
- County Legislator Kathy Konst — Democrat
- Alice Kryzan — Democrat
- Chris Lee — Republican

Overview

Many expected this race to be a third consecutive contest between Congressman Tom Reynolds, the former head of the National Republican Congressional Committee, and industrialist Jack Davis. Reynolds beat Davis by 11 percentage points in 2004, but only won a rematch by 4 points in 2006 after being caught up in the Mark Foley scandal and subsequent targeting by national Democrats. Davis is not considered an especially strong opponent by state party officials, but is running again. He will face three challengers in the primary: Iraq war veteran Powers, County Legislator Konst, and local attorney Kryzan. Meanwhile, the GOP has decided on a consensus candidate, as the seven district Republican county chairmen, the state GOP, and Reynolds have all endorsed millionaire businessman Lee. This historically Republican district, which includes the wealthy suburbs of Buffalo and Rochester, gave President Bush 55% of the vote in 2004, and Republicans consider the close 2006 election an anomaly based on the Foley scandal. Ultimately, the internal division among Democrats may fracture their party base and provide Republicans an advantage in November.

2006 Results

GOP – Tom Reynolds	102,846	52%
Dem – Jack Davis	95,449	48%



2006 Results

GOP — Deborah Pryce	110,712	50%
Dem — Mary Kilroy	109,657	50%

Candidates

State Senator Steve Stivers — Republican
County Commissioner Mary Jo Kilroy — Democrat

Overview

This battleground district provided one of the closest elections in 2006, with Congresswoman Pryce narrowly edging Democratic Franklin County Commissioner Kilroy by 1,062 votes. Pryce decided not to run for reelection in 2008, but Kilroy is once again the Democratic nominee and will seek to capitalize on her strong showing in 2006. Republican State Senator and Iraq War veteran Stivers is the Republican nominee, and won his party's primary with 65 percent of the vote. President Bush barely won here in 2004 with 50.3 percent of the vote, and both national parties will pour resources into this district for the Presidential and Congressional elections. This race is currently considered too close to call.



Candidates

State Senator John Bocchieri — Democrat
State Senator Kirk Schuring — Republican

Overview

Congressman Ralph Regula had become a fixture in this district and was a sure bet for re-election every two years, but he announced his retirement in 2008 after 36 years in Congress. State Senator Schuring won a close Republican primary and will now face Democratic State Senator and Iraq War veteran Bocchieri in the general election. Changing demographics, a split Republican base, and a relatively close outcome in the 2004 presidential election combined with Regula's departure make this race one to watch in 2008.

2006 Results

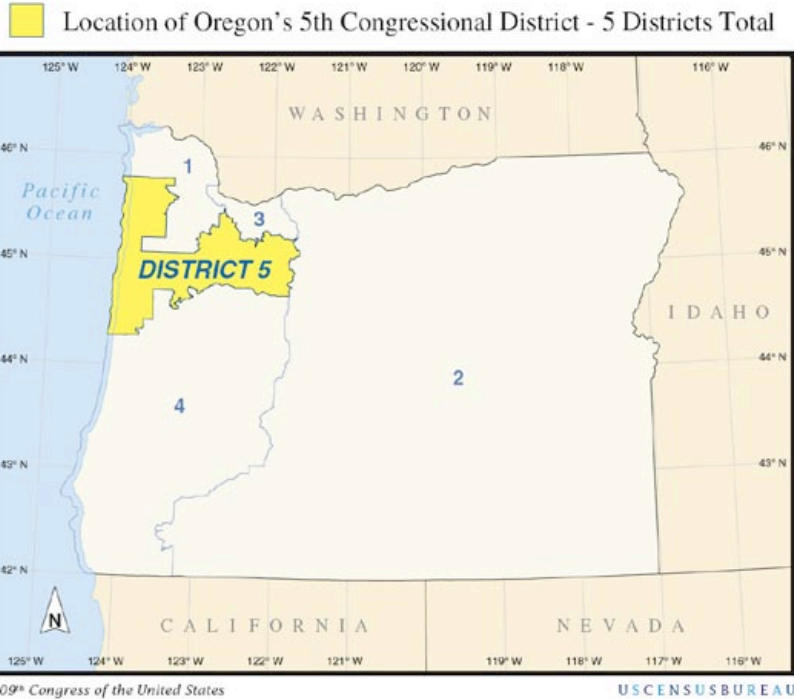
GOP — Ralph Regula	124,886	59%
Dem — Thomas Shaw	88,089	41%

Candidates

State Senator Kurt Schrader — Democrat
Mike Erickson — Republican

Overview

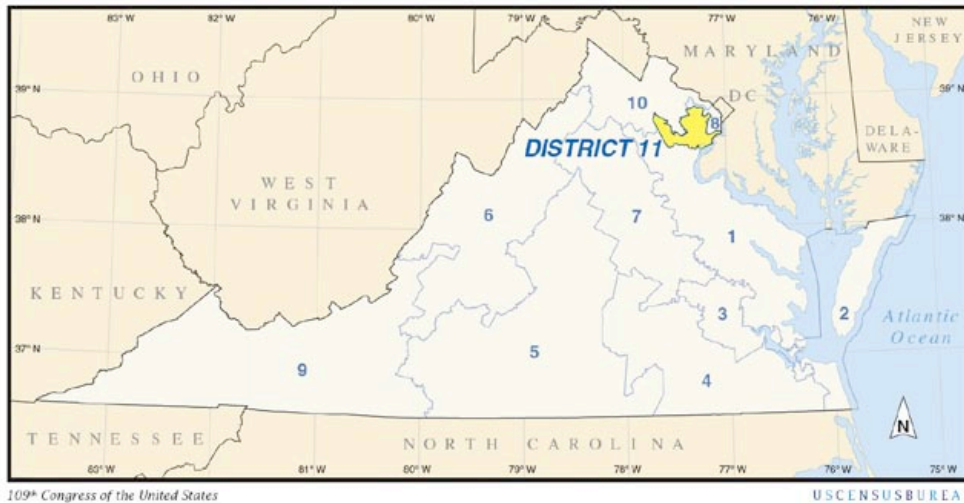
This district has been competitive since it was created after redistricting in 1982, and 2008 will be no exception. Congresswoman Darlene Hooley won re-election in 2006 with 54 percent of the vote in a four-way race, even though President Bush narrowly won the district (under two percent) in 2000 and 2004. Hooley's decision to retire sparked wide-open primaries in both parties. Her 2006 opponent, businessman Erickson, overcame a strong challenge to emerge as the Republican nominee. On the Democratic side, State Senator Schrader defeated several candidates to win his party's nomination. Oregon will be a battleground state in 2008, and both candidates are expected to benefit from resources entering the state for the U.S. Senate and Presidential elections. Ultimately, this race may come down to which national party has the longest coattails.



2006 Results

Dem — Darlene Hooley	138,387	54%
GOP — Mike Erickson	109,285	43%

Location of Virginia's 11th Congressional District - 11 Districts Total



Candidates

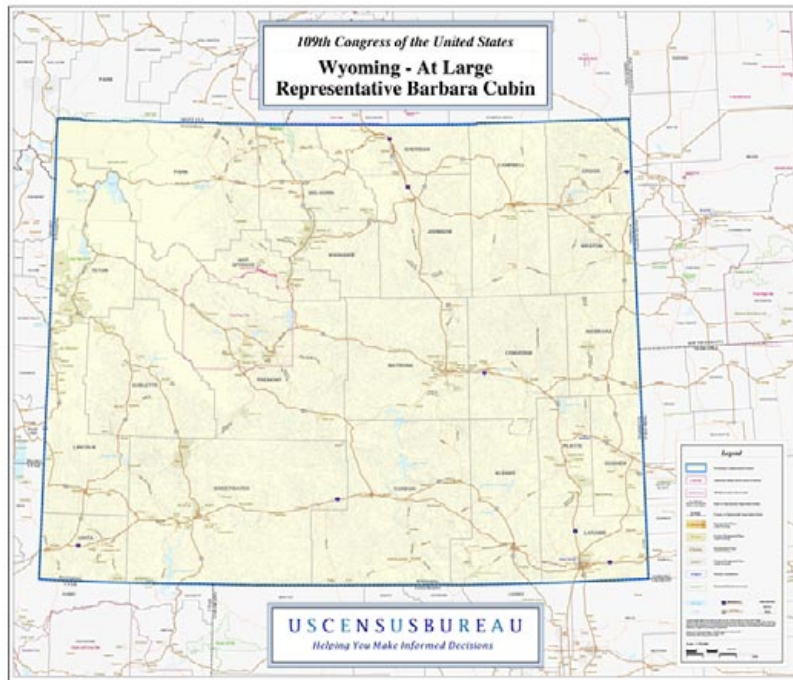
County Supervisor Gerry Connolly — Democrat
 Keith Fimian — Republican

Overview

Congressman Tom Davis rarely faced serious opposition in his many years in office and was considered a fixture in the House. However, his traditionally-Republican district, located in the wealthy Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., has shifted demographically and become increasingly Democratic over the years. President Bush barely won this district with 50 percent of the vote in 2004, and Democratic Senator Jim Webb won it in 2006. Many speculate this demographic shift, along with his wife's loss in a 2007 state senate race, led to Davis' decision to retire. The Republican nominee is local business magnate Fimian, who has extensive personal wealth to support his candidacy. The Democratic nominee, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Connolly, enjoys strong positive name recognition in the more populous section of the district, and is considered a formidable opponent. Virginia will be one of the most targeted battleground states in the 2008 presidential election, and both candidates will enjoy national party resources in their contest.

2006 Results

GOP — Tom Davis	130,207	56%
Dem — Andrew Hurst	102,334	44%



2006 Results

GOP — Barbara Cubin	93,197	48%
Dem — Gary Trauner	92,227	47%

Candidates

- County School Board Chairman Gary Trauner — Democrat
- Bill Winney — Republican
- Cynthia Lummis — Republican
- Mark Gordon — Republican

Overview

Surprisingly, Wyoming has become competitive for both parties on the state and Congressional level in recent years. Even though Wyoming overwhelmingly votes for the Republican presidential candidate by 2-1 margins (President Bush won the state with 69 percent in 2004), the state elected Democratic Governor Dave Fruententhal with 70 percent of the vote in 2006. Six-term Congresswoman Barbara Cubin is retiring after narrowly beating her 2006 Democratic opponent, Teton County School Board Chairman Trauner, by only 1,012 votes. Cubin's retirement sparked several candidacies for her seat. On the Democratic side, Trauner already said that he will run again and does not face a primary opponent. However, the Republican nominee is far from clear. Candidates include former State Treasurer Lummis, rancher and businessman Gordon, and retired naval captain and 2006 candidate Winney, who garnered 40% of the vote against Cubin in that primary. Lummis and Gordon are considered the primary frontrunners, due to Lummis' experience and name recognition, and Gordon's large war chest. A February 2008 poll showed this race in a dead heat with Trauner slightly edging Lummis 41% to 40%.

Other open seat House elections

(not considered competitive)

ALABAMA 02

COLORADO 02

COLORADO 06

ILLINOIS 18

MAINE 01

MARYLAND 01

MARYLAND 04

MISSISSIPPI 03

MISSOURI 09

NEW JERSEY 01

NEW MEXICO 02

NEW MEXICO 03

NEW YORK 21

OHIO 07

PENNSYLVANIA 05