



Minnesota Primary Congressional Guide

This guide covers Minnesota's congressional races in the upcoming August 14 primary. Early voting for the primary started on June 29, by mail-in ballot, with in-person voting available at limited locations. While Minnesota has long been hailed as a "blue" state, Republicans have made significant gains across the state. Both parties are investing resources into protecting seats currently held, as well as flipping vulnerable seats. With some of the most competitive congressional races in the country, Minnesota will be a state to watch.

U.S. House of Representatives

1st Congressional District—OPEN

The race for CD1 is open after Rep. Tim Walz (DFL) entered the race for governor. The rural district encompasses much of southern Minnesota, including the cities of Mankato, Rochester, and Worthington. In 2016, President Trump won the district by 15%, while Walz won by just under 3,000 votes, demonstrating the "purple" nature of CD1. Cook Political Report declared the open seat a "Democratic toss-up," just one of two in the nation (the other is Minnesota CD8).

- **Dan Feehan (DFL endorsed):** Feehan is a first-time candidate, Red Wing native, Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, and former Obama administration Pentagon official.
- **Jim Hagedorn (GOP endorsed):** Hagedorn, a third-time candidate, came within .7% of beating Walz in 2016. His father, Tom Hagedorn, served in the U.S. Congress 1975-83.
- **Carla Nelson (GOP):** Nelson is a current state senator from Rochester, former state representative, former teacher, and small business owner.

2nd Congressional District

The race for CD2 is a rematch of 2016 between Rep. Jason Lewis and Angie Craig. CD2 contains the Twin Cities southern suburbs and all of Scott, Dakota, Goodhue, and Wabasha counties. Lewis squeaked past Craig by 1.8% in 2016, which has made CD2 one of the two dozen "Republican toss up" seats in the Cook Political Report.

- **Angie Craig (DFL endorsed):** Craig is a former executive at St. Jude Medical.
- **Jason Lewis (Incumbent, GOP endorsed):** Lewis is a former radio talk show host.

3rd Congressional District

CD3 is shaping up to be a competitive race, with first-time candidate Dean Phillips looking to unseat five-term Representative Erik Paulsen. CD3 includes most of the western suburbs, stretching from Waconia to Rogers to Bloomington. Cook calls this seat a "Republican toss up."

- **Dean Phillips (DFL endorsed):** Phillips is a Twin Cities businessman and former CEO of Phillips Distilling Company.
- **Erik Paulsen (Incumbent, GOP endorsed):** Paulsen was first elected to the U.S. House in 2008. He also served as House majority leader in the Minnesota Legislature.

4th Congressional District

CD4 includes Saint Paul and the eastern suburbs of Maplewood, Lake Elmo, Woodbury, and Mahtomedi. The seat is listed as a “solid [Democratic] seat” by Cook Political Report.

- **Betty McCollum (Incumbent, DFL endorsed):** A former teacher and Minnesota state representative, Rep. McCollum is seeking a 10th term. She serves on the House Appropriations Committee.
- **Greg Ryan (GOP endorsed):** A plumber by trade who owns Ryan Plumbing and Heating in Saint Paul. This is his second time challenging McCollum.

5th Congressional District—OPEN

Current CD5 Representative Keith Ellison’s last-minute decision to run for Minnesota attorney general has ignited a DFL primary battle. CD5 is a blue stronghold that includes all of Minneapolis and some inner ring suburbs. The district is listed as a “solid [Democratic] seat” by Cook Political Report.

- **Jamal Abdi Abdulahi (DFL):** Abdulahi is a Somali refugee who graduated from Augsburg and was a policy fellow at the Humphrey School.
- **Frank Drake (DFL):** While previously a Republican, Drake has switched parties in his second shot at taking CD5. He is a realtor.
- **Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL):** Kelliher was speaker of the House in the state legislature and was the endorsed DFL candidate for governor in 2010, losing to Mark Dayton in the primary. She is currently president of the Minnesota High Tech Council.
- **Ilhan Omar (DFL endorsed):** Omar is the current, first-term representative for HD60B.
- **Patricia Torres Ray (DFL):** Torres Ray is the state senator for SD63, first elected in 2006. She is also a former candidate for lieutenant governor, running with John Marty in 2010.
- **Jennifer Zielinski (GOP endorsed):** Zielinski is a health care worker.

6th Congressional District

CD6 is a Republican stronghold. The district includes the northwest, northeast, and west Twin Cities suburbs and extends to St. Cloud. CD6 is listed as a “solid [Republican] seat” by Cook Political Report.

- **Ian Todd (DFL endorsed):** Todd is a veteran and served in the U.S. Air Force as a geospatial intelligence analyst.
- **Tom Emmer (Incumbent, GOP endorsed):** Emmer is an attorney who served in the Minnesota House of Representatives.

7th Congressional District

One of Minnesota’s “purple” districts, CD7 is currently represented by a Democrat despite Trump carrying the district in 2016. CD7 encompasses almost the entire western half of Minnesota down to Rock County, in the southwest corner of the state. The seat is listed as “likely Democratic” by Cook Political Report.

- **Collin Peterson (Incumbent, DFL endorsed):** The former CPA and state senator is vying for his 15th term. He is the ranking member on the House Agriculture Committee.
- **Dave Hughes (GOP endorsed):** Hughes is a U.S. Air Force veteran who currently works at General Atomics, where he is a military drone pilot instructor.

8th Congressional District—OPEN

The CD8 election has historically been one of the hottest races to watch around the country. With incumbent Rick Nolan stepping down and running for lieutenant governor, this race is seen as an opportunity for Republicans to pick up a seat. The race is listed as a “Democratic toss-up” by Cook Political Report.

- **Joe Radinovich (DFL):** Radinovich is a former state legislator and the campaign manager for Rick Nolan’s 2016 U.S. House campaign. He also worked for the AFGE union.
- **Michelle Lee (DFL):** Lee is a former news anchor in the Duluth area, where she appeared on television for 33 years.
- **Jason Metsa (DFL):** Metsa is a state legislator from House District 6B, just north of Duluth. He is a small business owner.
- **Pete Stauber (GOP):** Stauber is a former collegiate and professional hockey player. He is also a former police officer and a current St. Louis County Board member.

U.S. Senate

In the U.S. Senate are three classes of senators, elected in different years. In Minnesota, we have a class 1 senator and a class 2 senator. In 2018, class 1 senators are up for reelection, but in Minnesota both seats are up due to a special election for the class 2 seat, previously held by Senator Al Franken and currently held by Governor Dayton’s appointee, Senator Tina Smith.

Class 1

The race is listed as “solid Democrat” by Cook Political Report.

- **Amy Klobuchar (Incumbent, DFL endorsed):** First elected in 2006, Klobuchar is a former Hennepin County prosecutor.
- **Jim Newberger (GOP endorsed):** Newberger is a third-term state representative and has served as a paramedic for 30 years.

Class 2—SPECIAL ELECTION

The seat is listed as “lean Democrat” by Cook Political Report.

- **Nick Leonard (DFL):** Leonard is a progressive activist, an attorney, and a volleyball coach.
- **Richard Painter (DFL):** Painter is a former Republican, now a Democrat, and a current professor at the University of Minnesota Law School. He served as the chief ethics lawyer for the Bush (II) administration. Painter is well known as a pundit on cable news channels and as a frequent contributor to several national newspapers.
- **Tina Smith (Incumbent, DFL endorsed):** Smith is a former nonprofit executive and lieutenant governor. She is seeking election for the seat she was appointed to by Governor Dayton.
- **Karin Housley (GOP endorsed):** Current state senator Housley is a former TV news producer, and is a radio host, author, and realtor.