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SPOTLIGHT

The Tao According to Ruben Gallego

Lessons from the junior Arizona senator.

By Amelia Monroe

Despite former Vice President Kamala Harris' sweeping loss in Arizona in 2024, Sen. Ruben Gallego (D) outperformed the national party among Latinos and men, helping him secure victory in a highly contested seat.

Now, Gallego is hitting the road and giving national Democrats a crash course on how to reimagine the party's identity ahead of the upcoming midterms.

"We need to go back to the basics of who we are: A pro-worker, pro-family party that is aspirational and pushing the American dream," Gallego said in an interview with CBS News.

So far, Gallego has made stops in Iowa and Pennsylvania as he attempts to reinvigorate the party. His advice is rooted in winning over the Latino community, which was a key coalition for President Trump and a base that Gallego performed well with.

"For the first time starting around 2023, I heard this exhaustion, really from these [Latino] men ... psychologically that really clicked on in me cause I grew up in that community, I understand that mentality," Gallego said in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*. "I try to impart that to other people, other campaigns."

The 45-year-old veteran cemented his legacy as a progressive Democrat during his tenure in the House. In 2024, Gallego was 1 of 4 Democratic senators who won in battleground states that Trump flipped.

Gallego edged out his competitor, 2022 GOP nominee Kari Lake (R), by 2 points. His strategy was seemingly focused on reworking his progressive ideology to appeal to a much wider voter base that isn't comfortably Democratic—like pushing for stronger borders as a necessary means to enhance national security and touting his military background.

"Arizona is not Nancy Pelosi or Chuck Schumer country," said Paul Bentz, senior vice president of research and strategy at Highground Inc., in an interview with *Hotline*. "From [former Sen. Kyrsten] Sinema to [Sen. Mark] Kelly to Gallego, Democrats who have been successful in this state have posed themselves more as Arizonans and independent thinkers—not identifying or putting their sole identity into their Democratic background."

— Amelia Monroe

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Quote of the Day

" You have poked the bear and we will punch back. " — California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) rolling out his new map proposal, Semafor, 8/15.

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

DC attorney general sues Trump over federal takeover

By Erika Filter

DEMOCRATS: ActBlue Allows for More Independent Candidates on Platform

ActBlue's new rules allow it to include independent candidates on a "case-by-case" basis.

- **REASONS FOR DECISION.** Factors going into ActBlue's decision include whether a Democrat is already in the race, whether the Democratic Party has endorsed the independent candidate, and whether the candidate can demonstrate alignment with Democratic policies and priorities. (*Axios*)
- **ABUNDANCE MOVEMENT SPARKS RIFT IN PARTY.** "A growing number of left-wing politicians and thinkers are labeling" the "Abundance" movement "a clever rebrand by the party's corporate wing, which they blame for driving working-class voters from the party." (*Axios*)

WHITE HOUSE: D.C. AG Sues Over Federal Takeover

D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwab sued President Trump "over his executive actions asserting control over the D.C. police department and attempting to install an emergency police commissioner, one of the most extraordinary exertions of federal power in the city's half-century of home rule."

- **BACKGROUND.** The suit comes hours after Attorney General Pam Bondi "ordered sweeping changes to law enforcement policies in the city and said a Trump administration official should assume all duties and responsibilities of the police chief, drawing immediate legal pushback from Schwab and" Mayor Muriel Bowser (D).
- **DAMAGES.** "Schwab is asking a federal judge to find that Trump and Bondi's actions are unconstitutional and exceed limits on power in the D.C. Home Rule Act, which includes a provision allowing the president to declare an emergency and temporarily use local police for federal purposes, as Trump did Monday. Schwab asked the judge to block Bondi's order and keep control of police with the mayor and police chief."
- **SANCTUARY STATUS IN QUESTION.** Bondi "suspended the existing D.C. police policies that had placed guardrails on cooperation with ICE—a dramatic policy shift in a deep-blue District that, during Trump's first term, the mayor proudly called a 'sanctuary city.'" (*Washington Post*)
- **DEEPER CAUSES.** "In the more than six months since taking office," Trump's "actions, and in some cases inaction, have hobbled Washington's efforts to reduce crime, drawing complaints from city leaders who say he is now trying to solve a problem that he has actually made worse."
- **WHERE'S THE MONEY.** "City officials point to vacancies at the U.S. attorney's office in Washington and on the Superior Court—staffing controlled by the federal government—as well as budget cuts of more than \$1 billion as examples of how" Trump "has made it more difficult for law enforcement officials to combat crime." (*New York Times*)
- **OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH.** Trump's Alaskan meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin "may hinge on whether he's learned any lessons from their past summits."
- **BACKGROUND.** During his first term, after "spending two hours one-on-one with Putin, Trump surprisingly sided with the Russian leader instead of with the U.S. intelligence community on the question of whether Russia meddled in the 2016 election—even after Putin in the press conference admitted he had favored Trump in that

election.” His comments earned the president bipartisan condemnation. (George E. Condon Jr., *National Journal*)

- **GUNNING FOR AN AWARD.** “Trump and his aides are intensifying a public campaign to snag” a Nobel Peace Prize, “citing a string of peace deals while making a case that snubbing him again would be an injustice.”
- **ONE SHOT.** If Trump brokers a truce with Russia “on terms that are fair to Ukraine, that would be a diplomatic triumph that eluded both” former Presidents Obama and Biden. (NBC News)
- **WHOLESALE PRICES SOAR.** “Wholesale prices rose far more than expected in July, providing a potential sign that inflation is still a threat to the U.S. economy.” (CNBC)
- **ACCURACY CONCERNS ON THE WAY.** Trump has repeatedly tried “to undermine statistics that threaten his agenda and distorts figures to bolster his policies.” His “manipulation of government data threatens to erode public trust in facts that leaders of both parties have long relied on to guide policy decisions.” (*Washington Post*)
- **WEST WING RATES CORPORATE PROMOTION OF OBBB.** “The West Wing has created a scorecard that rates 553 companies and trade associations on how hard they worked to support and promote” the OBBB.
- **INFLUENCER MARKET.** “Factors in the rating include social media posts, press releases, video testimonials, ads, attendance at White House events, and other engagement related to” the bill. (*Axios*)
- **TRADE CHANGES CONTINUE.** Trump “plans to end a decade-old exemption from customs duties for shipments valued under \$800, which has allowed Americans to easily purchase cheap items from other countries and receive them in a few days, or even faster.”
- **SCRAMBLE TO ACT.** The order, which takes effect at the end of the month, “is raising questions among lawmakers and forcing customs officials, importers and shipping companies to sort out the details much sooner than they’d expected.” (*NOTUS*)

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

Wealthy venture capitalist to challenge Sherrod Brown in Dem primary

By Nicholas Anastácio

POLLING ROUNDUP: Poll Shows Competitive Texas GOP Primary

An Emerson College poll of the GOP primary in Texas (Aug. 11-12; 491 LVs; +/-4.4%) found Sen. John Cornyn (R) at 30%, state Attorney General Ken Paxton (R) at 29%, and 37% undecided. 5% supported someone else.

- **DEM PRIMARY.** A survey of the Democratic primary (Aug. 11-12; 370 LVs; +/-5.1%) found 2024 nominee Colin Allred (D) at 58%, three other candidates—including astronaut Terry Virts (D)—collectively at 8%, and 34% undecided. Virts received just 1% in the poll.
- **GENERAL ELECTION.** The poll (Aug. 11-12; 1,000 RVs; +/-3%) also tested two general election matchups with Allred as the Democratic nominee. In a Cornyn-Allred matchup, the senator led Allred, 45%-38%. In a Paxton-Allred matchup, the state attorney general led Allred, 46%-41%. (release)
- **HOTLINE ANALYSIS.** A neck-and-neck poll is an oddity among the several public and private polls that show Paxton comfortably ahead of Cornyn. The general election matchups also suggest that a Paxton nomination win could spur more undecided voters—not necessarily Cornyn voters—toward Allred if he’s the Democratic nominee. But don’t take one poll at face value.
- **NORTH CAROLINA.** A Harper Polling/*Carolina Journal* survey in North Carolina (Aug. 11-12; 600 LVs; +/-3.99%) found former Gov. Roy Cooper (D) at 47%, RNC Chairman Michael Whatley at 39%, and 10% undecided.
- **NAME ID PROBLEM.** The poll found 51% of voters have never heard of Whatley; For comparison, 4% of voters haven’t heard of the former governor. Cooper holds a positive favorability split of 47%-40%. (*Carolina Journal*)

- **HOTLINE ANALYSIS.** Cooper's statewide experience, past electoral success, and high name ID are giving him the advantage over the lesser-known Whatley. Republicans' main task is to bolster Whatley's name recognition ahead of the midterms, regardless if voters treat him like a generic Republican.

ENDORSEMENT ROUNDUP: Senate Hopefuls Brag About Legislative Support

Senate candidates are boasting their congressional and state legislative endorsements ahead of competitive primaries.

- **GEORGIA.** Rep. Mike Collins (R-10) received several endorsements from his House GOP colleagues: Reps. Mike Ezell (MS-04), Burgess Owens (UT-04), John McGuire (VA-05), and Derrick Van Orden (WI-03).
- **KENTUCKY.** Sen. Ted Budd (R-NC) endorsed Rep. Andy Barr (R-06) in the GOP primary to succeed retiring Sen. Mitch McConnell (R). During his 2022 Senate bid, Budd was notably supported by Club for Growth; the group opposes Barr's candidacy. (*Daily Caller*)
- **LOUISIANA.** State Sen. Beth Mizell (R) endorsed Sen. Bill Cassidy (R) for reelection. State Sen. Blake Miguez (R) is among several Republicans challenging Cassidy in the Republican primary. (release)
- **MINNESOTA.** Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan (D) received four more state legislative endorsements toward her bid to replace retiring Sen. Tina Smith (D), bringing her total to 37. State Sen. Doron Clark (D) and state Reps. Kristin Bahner (D), Ned Carroll (D), and Tina Liebling (D) are backing Flanagan. (release)

ALABAMA: Mo Brooks Not Satisfied with GOP Candidates

2022 candidate Mo Brooks (R) said another Senate run is "possible but improbable," adding he's dissatisfied with the current Republicans in the race to succeed Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R). Brooks said he isn't "persuaded that any of the candidates considering the position will do what it takes," referencing the growing national debt.

- **BROOKS SAYS:** "Personally, I hope there is another GOP candidate who has the strength of character to do what America needs doing ... If not, I will give a Senate race strong consideration."
- **THE COMPETITION.** State Attorney General Steve Marshall (R) and Rep. Barry Moore (R-01) are currently in the GOP primary. (*AL.com*)

MICHIGAN: Abdul El-Sayed Reaches Out for Alienated Male Voters

2018 GOV candidate Abdul El-Sayed (D), the sole male Democrat running to replace retiring Sen. Gary Peters (D), is targeting "male alienation" in his campaign as Democrats struggle with the voting bloc.

- **VICE.** El-Sayed said he doesn't know "any young man between the ages of 14 and 40 who doesn't have some kind of problematic relationship with one of the following: sports betting, gaming, porn, cannabis." He said that Democrats need to promote self help and target corporations directly on their contributions to addictive behaviors.
- **EL-SAYED SAYS:** "All of these working together have led to this massive MAGA-pilling of young men." (*UnHerd*)
- **PAC MONEY.** El-Sayed and state Sen. Mallory McMorrow (D) are shunning corporate PAC money as Rep. Haley Stevens (D-11) receives it. (*Detroit News*)

OHIO: Venture Capitalist Teases Challenge to Sherrod Brown in Primary

Venture capitalist Fred Ode (D) said he plans to enter the Democratic primary against Sen. Jon Husted (R), potentially challenging former Sen. Sherrod Brown (D) for the nomination. Ode, a 75-year-old entrepreneur and political unknown, said he plans to spend millions from his personal fortune toward his campaign.

- **NOT IMPRESSED.** Ode said Brown is “playing by the old rules,” arguing that Democrats need to react with greater urgency against President Trump.
- **ODE SAYS:** “If I’m laughed at and it’s obvious this isn’t going to work, I’m not going to spend a lot. I’m going to see the writing on a wall.” (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*)
- **TWINS.** Husted might not be as successful in dubbing Brown a “career politician” as Sen. Bernie Moreno (R), a former car dealer, was in 2024. Husted was first elected to office as a state representative in 2000. Brown won his first race as a state representative in 1974. (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*)
- **HIS OLD ACCOUNT.** Brown’s Dignity of Work PAC, a hybrid PAC that used to serve as his campaign account before he converted it in March, entered July with roughly \$51,000 in debt. A representative for the PAC said the late tax bill was paid in full by July. (Fox News)
- **HOTLINE ANALYSIS.** Brown is looking for a comeback that hasn’t been seen in decades. Few senators run again after they’ve left the chamber, let alone after they’ve been unseated. The most recent senator to pull off a comeback was Sen. Slade Gorton (R-WA), who lost reelection in 1986, but won a full term in 1988. Gorton would later lose reelection to now-Sen. Maria Cantwell (D) in 2000, becoming the last Senate Republican from his state. Other red-state Democrats have launched comeback bids after retiring from the Senate, but couldn’t match Gorton’s success—just ask former Sen. Bob Kerrey (NE) in 2012 or former Sen. Evan Bayh (IN) in 2016. Brown is Democrats’ best chance at Husted, but he’ll have to run against history to get there.

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

Newsom announces the California redistricting plan

By James A. Downs and Amelia Monroe

REDISTRICTING ROUNDUP: California Officially Enters the Chat

Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) and California Democrats unveiled their response to Texas’ redistricting plan. Legislative Democrats will vote on a map next week, which needs a two-thirds majority in both chambers to appear before voters as a ballot measure. Once passed, voters will decide to enact the map in a November special election.

- **WALK THE LINE.** Newsom said his plan is “mindful” of pursuing higher standards, but added Democrats cannot unilaterally disarm as President Trump refuses to play by the rules. He reiterated that if Texas backs down from its plan, the California plan will cease. Newsom also called the moment “Liberation Day” in California, mocking Trump’s tariff plan. (release/*Hotline* reporting)
- **BY THE NUMBERS.** The new map has not yet been released, but a chart shown to lawmakers details the forthcoming changes. According to the document, Reps. Doug LaMalfa (R-01), Kevin Kiley (R-03), and Ken Calvert (R-41) see their seats go from safe Republican to safe Democratic. Rep. Darrell Issa’s (R-48) deep-red seat turns to lean Democratic. The plan also shores up some Democratic incumbents and may add more Democratic voters to Rep. David Valadao’s (R-22) Central Valley district. The new map is expected to be unveiled today ahead of a vote next week. (*Playbook California*)
- **JUMBOTRON.** Newsom’s office released a video launching the campaign. The video shows footage from an earlier press conference in which the California governor calls the situation a “five-alarm fire for democracy.” It urges people to vote Nov. 4 for the Election Rigging Response Act. “We will not be complicit” while Republicans bend the rules, Newsom says. (release)
- **FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT APPEARS.** “Border Patrol agents made a show of force Thursday outside a rally where Democrats were detailing their plans to redraw California’s congressional map.” Democrats immediately condemned their appearance as a show of intimidation. The regional Border Patrol sector chief said CBP was unaware of the event taking place. (*Washington Post*)

- **MCCARTHY RETURNS.** Former Speaker Kevin McCarthy looks to raise upwards of \$100 million in an effort to oppose the California plan. He will tap former California GOP Chair Jessica Millan Patterson to lead the effort alongside GOP operative Tom Ross. Charles Munger Jr., son of billionaire Charles Munger, is considering putting \$30 million into opposing Newsom's map. Munger is active in donating to ballot measures in the state. (*California Playbook*)
- **MEET THE MAN.** Political operative Paul Mitchell was the mastermind behind the soon-to-be-released California maps. Mitchell got his start taking politics and calculus classes at community college before working on Democratic campaigns. He founded Redistricting Partners in 2010 and joined Political Data in 2012, giving him access to a treasure trove of California voter data and uniquely positioned him to draw effective maps.
- **TECHNICAL OBSTACLES.** Mitchell has to contend with the Voting Rights Act, which bars discriminatory voting procedures, and the will of Democratic incumbents, "wary of losing a grip on their districts."
- **FROM THE OPPOSITION.** Despite his Democratic roots, Mitchell has established himself as an institutionalist with respect from both sides of the aisle, particularly because his recent work has not been overtly partisan. GOP strategist Mike Madrid, who's known Mitchell since the 1990s, said he's certain the map "will be the most advantageous, politically defensible, legally defensible and airtight maps that anybody in California can produce." (*Politico California*)
- **CALIFORNIA (COME BACK TO TEXAS).** Texas Democrats said they will return to the state after the first special session concludes and after California introduces its map proposal. State House Speaker Dustin Burrows (R) is expected to gavel out the session today. Democrats have denied a quorum since fleeing the state in early August. The legislators say their lawyers "advised them to return 'to build a strong public legislative record for the upcoming legal battle'" over the maps. (*Texas Tribune*)
- **CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU.** Speaker Mike Johnson finds himself in a tough spot between members who fear redistricting will cost them their seat and the White House, who's pushing the effort as it tries to expand the House majority. Johnson has had conversations with members and relayed that information to the White House, according to a spokesperson for Johnson. The administration says "no one is getting sacrificed."
- **ON THE SIDELINES.** Johnson has "no involvement" with the "development of national redistricting strategy." Because GOP members are hesitant to publicly cross Trump, they have gone to Johnson to voice their concerns or complaints.
- **HOW IT ALL CAME TO BE.** Redistricting discussions developed during the Wisconsin Supreme Court race in April, where prominent Republicans warned a liberal win could mean a redraw in Wisconsin. When the liberal-aligned candidate won, the White House contacted and briefed Texas Republicans on a redistricting scheme that would offset the Badger State. (*Washington Post*)
- **ANOTHER NO.** New Jersey redistricting remains a pipe dream for 2026, but it "would be possible for New Jersey to put a redistricting amendment on the ballot for the 2028 cycle." The offices of the Senate and Assembly leader declined comment, and the only remaining legislator who served on the last redistricting commission said he opposes changing the process. State Sen. Vin Gopal (D) also said he "has not heard anything from legislative leadership about the idea." (*New Jersey Playbook*)
- **INDIANA GOES TO THE WHITE HOUSE.** Indiana Republicans continue to resist joining the rapidly escalating arms race. Many state legislators have said they oppose mid-decade redrawing. Trump invited "all Republican state legislators from Indiana to the White House Aug. 26" to try to convince them to pursue changes. (*Punchbowl News*)
- **IN THE FIELD.** "A new survey—that was distributed via texts to some Hoosiers—has three questions on redistricting." The first question asks if voters support Gov. Mike Braun (R) calling a special session to give "Republicans a better chance of winning two additional seats in Congress." The second gauges whether voters would be more or less likely to support their state legislator if they voted for redistricting. The final suggests a property tax cut enacted earlier this year could be threatened if Braun called a special session. (*Indiana Capital Chronicle*)
- **MARYLAND ENTERS THE DISCUSSION.** Maryland Senate President Bill Ferguson (D) said a "similar battle could be waged in Maryland" as California begins its campaign for a new map. Gov. Wes Moore (D) said the

same during a radio interview Thursday. Moore said “all options are on the table” for their response to Texas. Maryland’s House majority leader already said he would sponsor redistricting legislation if Texas and other GOP-led states commit to their mid-decade remap. (WBAL)

- **BRING IT ON.** Rep. Andy Harris (R-01), Maryland’s sole Republican, said “Democratic attempts to draw him out of his seat will probably elicit a lawsuit akin to one in 2022 that ended with the map being ruled overly partisan and illegal.”
- **HARRIS SAYS:** “If the Democrats want to roll the dice, let them roll the dice. I look forward to having more Republican colleagues from the state in Congress, and I think that’s what the result is going to be.” (*Washington Post*)
- **OBAMA INVOLVED.** Former President Obama and former Attorney General Eric Holder joined Texas Democrats on a call to commend their efforts to fight the maps. Obama said the “struggle” will be long and will take “the American people understanding the stakes and realizing that we cannot take our freedoms and our democracy for granted.” Holder, who chairs the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, “updated the caucus on his committee’s plans to push back” on GOP efforts. (ABC News)
- **AS SEEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY.** Organizers say they’ve planned 200 demonstrations across 34 states in protest of Trump’s power grab. The protests, dubbed “Fight the Trump Takeover,” have the backing of “dozens of organizations,” including the DNC and Planned Parenthood. (*Axios*)

PENNSYLVANIA 08: Bresnahan Faces Online Harassment Before Wedding

Rep. Rob Bresnahan (R) and his fiancée “were threatened on social media ahead of their upcoming wedding on Saturday.” People posted comments to varying degrees of threat to their wedding website.

- **EXAMPLE.** “One of the most concerning of those comments was a post reading, ‘Be seeing you soon!’ and signed ‘Luigi,’ a likely reference to Luigi Mangione, the man accused of murdering UnitedHealthcare’s CEO earlier this year.” (*Scranton Times-Tribune*)
- **HOW IT BEGUN.** A group called Pennsylvania Together organized an Aug. 5 wedding-themed town hall to protest Bresnahan’s vote for the GOP reconciliation bill. The event “with a mock wedding ceremony.” But comments spilled over onto the couple’s registry and gift page, which was public for a brief period of time. In response to questions, the event organizer did not “address the harassment or threats the couple says they faced in the wake of the event.” (*Washington Examiner*)

SOUTH CAROLINA 01: Early Start for State Representative

State Rep. Mark Smith (R) announced he will run for the seat vacated by Rep. Nancy Mace (R), who’s running for governor. Smith, a former Mount Pleasant Town councilor, said he will “stand with President Trump” and fight for border security. (WCIV)

- **RIGHTWARD SHIFT.** The Charleston-area district has leaned more Republican in recent election cycles. In 2024, then-Rep. Mace beat her Democratic opponent, businessman Michael Moore with more than 58% of the vote.
- **COMPETITIVE PRIMARIES.** Smith is the second Republican candidate to enter the race. On the other side of the aisle, three candidates have entered the ring, including the South Carolina Democratic Party second vice chair Mayra Rivera-Vasquez (D). (*Hilton Head Island Packet*)

TEXAS 28: A Few Dominoes Fall Cuellar’s Way

A federal judge dismissed two of the 14 charges alleging Rep. Henry Cuellar (D) and his wife accepted \$600,000 in bribes from the Azerbaijan government and a Mexican bank. “Cuellar’s legal team is still seeking a dismissal of the entire indictment, arguing the two charges dismissed Thursday cannot be easily excised from the remaining dozen.”

- **RESPONSE.** The dismissal comes as Attorney General Pam Bondi narrowed “the enforcement of laws relating to foreign lobbying and bribery.”
- **MARK YOUR CALENDAR.** The judge also pushed the trial to early April of 2026. It was slated to begin in September. (*Texas Tribune/AP*)
- **HOTLINE ANALYSIS.** Notwithstanding the map change that targets Cuellar’s seat, this is undoubtedly excellent news for Cuellar and Democrats, as the trial will begin after the March 2026 primary. That means it’s increasingly likely Cuellar will appear on the ballot, giving Democrats a fighting chance if the district lines change.

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

Virginia's gubernatorial nominees can't agree on a debate

By Abby Turner

ILLINOIS: Second Republican to Mount Challenge to Pritzker

Wirepoints President Ted Dabrowski (R) announced “he will launch a campaign for governor in the coming weeks.” DuPage County Sheriff James Mendrick (R) is currently the lone Republican running. Gov. JB Pritzker (D) is seeking a third term. (*Capitol News Illinois*)

MICHIGAN: Attorney Facing Charges in Election Probe to Run for Attorney General

Attorney Matt DePerno (R), “who's facing criminal charges linked to an alleged plot to examine voting equipment after the 2020 election, formed a fundraising committee Wednesday to run for attorney general.”

- **TRIED BEFORE.** “DePerno was the Republican nominee for attorney general in 2022” and lost by 8 points to state Attorney General Dana Nessel (D), who is now term-limited. (*Detroit News*)

MINNESOTA: Democrats Float GOV Runs at Walz Considers Third Term

Gov. Tim Walz (D) “is privately wavering on whether to seek reelection after previously signaling he was likely to run,” prompting “jockeying among Democrats with ambitions for higher office.” Walz “pushed back self-imposed deadlines to announce his plans from the early summer to after Labor Day.”

- **ON DECK.** Some “party insiders widely believe” Secretary of State Steve Simon (D) and state Attorney General Keith Ellison (D) “could both run for governor if Walz steps aside.” St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter (D) is also “strongly considering running for governor.” (*Minnesota Star Tribune*)

NEW YORK: Adams Vows to Stay in Mayoral Race Without Clear Path to Victory

New York City Mayor Eric Adams (I) “plans to stick with his fraught reelection bid to the very end” and says “he will not drop out of the race to stop” Assemblyman Zohran Mamdani (D), even as Adams trails Mamdani, former Gov. Andrew Cuomo (I), and Guardian Angels founder Curtis Sliwa (R) in recent polls.

- **WHAT’S THE PLAN.** “At the moment, the mayor does not have a clear path to victory. If he remains in play, though, he could very well impact the outcome of the race, drawing votes away from Cuomo and easing the way for Mamdani.”
- **ADAMS SAYS:** “The people who are running—they are harmful to our city and the progress we’ve made. And I owe it to New Yorkers to get my story out to them and to run a campaign.” (*Politico*)

PENNSYLVANIA: RSLC Runs Digital Ads in Effort to Flip State Supreme Court

The RSLC's Judicial Fairness Initiative launched social media ads in a bid to flip control of Pennsylvania's Supreme Court.

- **RUN IT BACK.** A digital ad, a part of the RSLC's "NoInNovember" campaign, leans into how Republicans flipped the state red in 2024 and can do it again in the courts this year.
- **IMPLICATIONS FOR REDISTRICTING.** "Democrats currently hold a 5-2 majority on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and Republicans would need voters to successfully vote against the three justices in order to have a chance of flipping the court prior to the start of the 2030 redistricting process, which is controlled by the court."
- **FOOTING THE BILL.** The "Commonwealth Partners Chamber of Entrepreneurs, a non-profit organization funded by" billionaire Jeff Yass' PACs, donated \$30,000 to the RSLC this year. A super PAC funded by Yass gave the organization \$2 million in 2024. (*The Keystone Newsroom*)

VIRGINIA: Abigail Spanberger, Winsome Earle-Sears Can't Agree on a Debate

Former Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D) declined an invitation for a debate hosted by CNN that Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears (R) accepted. Spanberger's campaign said they declined the offer from CNN to prioritize Virginia broadcasters. Earle-Sears "declined an invitation to participate in The People's Debate sponsored by AARP Virginia" that Spanberger accepted. (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*)

- **A POTENTIAL COMPROMISE.** "Both candidates have criticized the other for not accepting these invites, but they appear to be in agreement on participating in a debate hosted by WAVY News." Earle-Sears' campaign accepted an invite, while "the Spanberger campaign said they are in active negotiations for participation." No date is set for the debate yet. (*Virginia Scope*)
- **SPEAK A LIL ESPAÑOL.** Spanberger released her first Spanish-language radio ad yesterday as she works "to make inroads with Latino voters" in Virginia after "Democrats across the country are working to regain the Latino support the party lost in the 2024 elections." Spanberger makes an economic pitch in the ad as she "has promised to work to lower the costs of health care and prescription drugs, housing and energy, as governor." (CBS News)

OVERLOOKED

The Law Enforcement Threat

By Amelia Monroe

The 12-day Democratic-led broken quorum in Texas may soon come to an end. Since August 3, state Republicans have used far-reaching methods to convince their Democratic adversaries to return to the state: from financial penalties to threatening to "hunt down" each missing lawmaker with both state and federal law enforcement, Republicans have tried many methods to convince their counterparts to cooperate. This isn't the first time law enforcement has been utilized to get the ball rolling faster in the Lone Star State: In 1870, 13 state senators were arrested after leaving the Capitol to stop a vote. In 2003, then-Gov. Rick Perry (R) sent law enforcement as far as state lines to detain more than 50 Democrats who fled.