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SPOTLIGHT

Senate Democrats' Recruitment Coup

They might not win the majority, but they're winning the recruitment wars.

By Kirk A. Bado

Senate Democrats face a difficult map next year, but Minority Leader Chuck Schumer has notched recruitment wins like his party is in the driver's seat.

Democrats have landed their star recruits in marquee races in North Carolina and New Hampshire, and reports indicate that former Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) will make another go in Ohio after Schumer met with him several times.

Meanwhile, big name Republicans in Georgia—term-limited Gov. Brian Kemp—and New Hampshire—former Gov. Chris Sununu—passed on Senate bids. Republicans also lack a serious candidate for the open-seat race in Minnesota, a state that shifted toward President Trump. GOP strategists have also told *Hotline* they're not thrilled that 2024 nominee Mike Rogers (R) is making another go in Michigan.

Just because you win your fantasy football draft, however, doesn't mean you'll win the league. Democrats still need to net four seats while defending seats in swingy Georgia and Michigan. If Democrats defend all their seats and flip their top targets in North Carolina and Maine, they'll still be two seats short of the majority. Landing a star recruit like Brown doesn't mean the race will be a slam dunk. Sen. Bernie Moreno (R-OH) decisively beat the former senator last year and Republicans are predicting a repeat performance.

"Sherrod Brown has spent his entire career collecting a government paycheck, and now just eight months into retirement and after a date night with Chuck Schumer, he's begging taxpayers for more," GOP-aligned SLF Chairman Cory Gardner said in a statement. "Ohioans firmly rejected Sherrod after he oversaw Biden's disastrous inflation crisis as Banking Chairman, and they'll gladly do it again."

The last remaining puzzle pieces are in Alaska and Maine. Democrats are waiting for outgoing Maine Gov. Janet Mills (D) to decide on if she'll challenge Sen. Susan Collins (R) and former Rep. Mary Peltola (D-AK) is weighing either a run for governor or a challenge to Sen. Dan Sullivan (R). Maybe Schumer has enough miles from flying back-and-forth to Ohio to cover an Alaska excursion.

— Kirk A. Bado

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Quote of the Day

" Fighters will be warming up in the White House. " — UFC Owner Dana White on a fight next year on the South Lawn, Wall Street Journal, 8/12

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

Trump administration looks for new ways to collect jobs data

By Erika Filter

DEMOCRATS: DNC Considers Response to War in Gaza

The DNC "will consider two Gaza-related resolutions at its meeting this month, including one that asks the party to impose an arms embargo on Israel."

- **THE OPTIONS.** "One urges a ceasefire and a return of hostages held by Hamas; the other asks the party to commit to 'suspension of military aid to Israel' and its elected leaders to support establishing a Palestinian state." (*Semafor*)
- **REDRAWN LINES.** The Democratic response to GOP redistricting efforts across the country is "precisely what the rank and file want to see from a party they're fed up with and disappointed in." (NBC News)
- **THE DEMONSTRATION GAME.** Dozens of liberal groups, including the DNC, the Human Rights Campaign PAC, and Planned Parenthood, plan "to hold around 50 events across 20 states to protest Republican redistricting efforts in Texas." (NBC News)

WHITE HOUSE: Administration Looks for New Ways to Collect Jobs Data

"In a series of closed-door discussions in recent days, White House aides and Labor Department officials have weighed new options for" collecting jobs data, "as well as new technologies that could make the process more efficient" with the goal of improving response rates to surveys from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- **GET IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME.** President Trump "has complained publicly and privately that jobs-report data is designed to hurt him politically, taking aim at large revisions to the numbers that have complicated his contention that the economy is soaring in his second term. Trump has told his advisers that he doesn't want large revisions to the data in the future." (*Wall Street Journal*)
- **BEHIND THE D.C. CRACKDOWN.** "Trump has been talking about the country's violent urban areas for years, fueling his political ascent with dire and often exaggerated and inaccurate portraits of violent crime in big cities. ... As a result, the MAGA movement has embraced the critique as a core tenet." (*Washington Post*)

2028 WATCH: Beshear Stuns Democrats at Annual Fundraising Event

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear (D) reportedly left Democrats at House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries' "annual California fundraising event last week convinced" he is running for president.

- **TRACK RECORD.** "Beshear's biggest applause line came when he explained why he vetoed a bill in 2023, when he was up for reelection, that restricted some medical care and bathroom use for transgender people."
- **BESHEAR SAYS:** "There are some things worth losing over." (*Axios*)

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

North Carolina Dems tie Michael Whatley to Mark Robinson

By Nicholas Anastácio

POLLING ROUNDUP: Pro-Raja Krishnamoorthi Dem Primary Poll Shows Him Ahead

A Z to A Research poll (Aug. 8-10; 615 LVs; +/-3.95%) commissioned in Illinois by the Impact Fund, the affiliated PAC of Indian American Impact and a supporter of Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi's (D-o8) Senate bid, found the congressman at 38%, Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton (D) at 17%, and Rep. Robin Kelly (D-o2) at 7% in a hypothetical Democratic primary. 37% were undecided.

- **CHOOSE SOMEONE.** With undecided voters pushed to choose a candidate, Krishnamoorthi got 51%, Stratton got 28%, and Kelly got 13%. (*Inside Elections with Nathan L. Gonzales*)
- **HOTLINE ANALYSIS.** Krishnamoorthi's massive war chest and ad bonanza is aiding him in the three-person primary to replace retiring Sen. Dick Durbin (D). Gov. JB Pritzker (D) is expected to financially support Stratton, but it'll need to kick in soon if he wants the lieutenant governor to catch up to the congressman.
- **ALABAMA.** A Cygnal poll (July 20-22; 400 LVs) commissioned in Alabama by the Business Council of Alabama found state Attorney General Steve Marshall (R) at 24%, Auburn basketball coach Bruce Pearl (R) at 13%, Rep. Barry Moore (R-o1) at 9%, and former Navy SEAL Jared Hudson (R) at 3% in a hypothetical GOP primary. 51% were undecided. (*Alabama Daily News*)
- **HOTLINE ANALYSIS.** Marshall is the current frontrunner for the GOP nomination to replace Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R) as he runs for governor. Moore will need to boost his name ID and his fundraising chops to compete with the state attorney general.
- **MAINE.** An Upswing Research & Strategy poll (March 21-25; 600 LVs; +/-4%) conducted in Maine for former congressional staffer Jordan Wood (D) found him and Sen. Susan Collins (R) neck and neck in a hypothetical matchup. The survey found Collins at 43%, Wood at 42%, and 15% undecided. (*Hotline* reporting)
- **HOTLINE ANALYSIS.** A lot has changed since Wood's internal poll was conducted in March, including Collins' vote against the OBBB. Collins could certainly be vulnerable to a generic Democrat like Wood, but it's uncertain which Democrat will take on the senator as Gov. Janet Mills (D) considers a bid.

GEORGIA: Mike Collins Touts 159-County Organization

Rep. Mike Collins (R-10) is boasting his grassroots support from 413 "Convoy Captains" across the state's 159 counties as he faces former Tennessee football coach Derek Dooley (R) and Rep. Buddy Carter (R-o1) in the GOP primary to take on Sen. Jon Ossoff (D). In a press release, Collins compared his statewide organization to that of Gov. Brian Kemp (R), who's supporting Dooley, in 2022. (release)

KENTUCKY: Pro-Andy Barr Super PAC Attacks Nate Morris on Air

Keep America Great PAC, the super PAC supporting Rep. Andy Barr (R-o6), is launching a \$1.2 million ad buy against waste removal entrepreneur Nate Morris (R).

- **DONATE CAREFULLY.** The 30-second spot describes Morris as "fake," questioning his MAGA credentials while calling attention to his past donations to Sen. Mitch McConnell (R) and 2024 presidential candidate Nikki Haley (R). The ad concludes by calling Morris "fully woke and full of sh*t." (*Politico*)

LOUISIANA: State GOP Considers Withholding GOP Primary Endorsement

"A member of Louisiana's Republican Party governing board is proposing a resolution to prohibit the central committee from endorsing a candidate in the state's 2026 Senate closed GOP primary." The move would be a blow to Sen. Bill Cassidy (R), who's running in the primary.

- **A RARITY.** State Rep. Mark Bayham (R)—a known Cassidy critic—defended his resolution, saying it wasn't targeting a specific candidate. Bayham added that he couldn't recall the state GOP ever withholding an endorsement from a Republican member of Congress.
- **NOT SO FAST.** State GOP Chairman Derek Babcock said he wouldn't back Bayham's proposal, which requires a two-thirds vote from the rules committee to pass on Thursday. If the rules committee doesn't pass the resolution, it would advance to the party's Aug. 23 general meeting for a vote. Babcock said it would still be unlikely to pass.
- **CASSIDY'S CROWD.** Cassidy faces state Treasurer John Fleming (R), state Sen. Blake Miguez (R), Public Service Commissioner Eric Skrmetta (R), and health care administrator Sammy Wyatt (R) in the GOP primary. Rep. Julia Letlow (R-05) and state Rep. Julie Emerson (R) are also potential candidates. (*Shreveport Times*)

MICHIGAN: Abdul El-Sayed Pursues Bridge Building with Progressive Bid

2018 GOV candidate Abdul El-Sayed (D) is looking to bridge political divides as he runs with a progressive campaign to succeed retiring Sen. Gary Peters (D). At a Lansing town hall on Monday, El-Sayed "asked attendees to reach out to people from whom they've become estranged in the wake of several elections."

- **EL-SAYED SAYS:** "Politics, at the end of the day, is about the emotional struggle around who we are and who we want to be."
- **PROGRESSIVE POSTURE.** El-Sayed is campaigning on affordability, housing, and tackling corporate influence in politics as he faces Rep. Haley Stevens (D-11) and state Sen. Mallory McMorrow (D) in the Democratic primary. (*Michigan Advance*)
- **NERDING OUT.** Stevens is tapping into her auto policy background, focusing on the state's "unstoppable" manufacturing industry and speaking out against the influence of China in the state's auto industry and supply chain. (*Automotive News*)

NORTH CAROLINA: State Dems Connect Michael Whatley to Mark Robinson

North Carolina Democrats are tying RNC Chairman Michael Whatley to controversial 2024 GOV nominee Mark Robinson (R). The party is looking to elect former Gov. Roy Cooper (D) to replace retiring Sen. Thom Tillis (R).

- **REMEMBER?** At a Tuesday press conference in the state Democratic Party's headquarters, state Rep. Phil Rubin (D) referenced Whatley's past comments in support of Robinson, including calling him "the greatest lieutenant governor in the United States." Following the release of a CNN investigation into Robinson's explicit online posts, Whatley expressed disappointment, but didn't outright disavow his candidacy.
- **RUBIN SAYS:** "His support for Robinson was steadfast even as Robinson said vile things about women, attacked victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and said, 'We are called to be led by men, not women.'" (*NC Newsline*)

OHIO: Awaiting Sherrod Brown's Announcement

Former Sen. Sherrod Brown (D) is expected to officially announce his campaign against Sen. Jon Husted (R) in the next two weeks. (*Axios*)

- **BROWN IN THE PRIMARY.** Brown's comeback bid could guarantee him a glidepath to the Democratic nomination. Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb (D) and Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval (D) can focus on their 2025 reelection bids, and state Sen. Casey Weinstein (D) could be dissuaded from launching a Senate bid. 2022 nominee Tim Ryan (D) could instead see a pathway in the open governor's race. See the *States* section for more.
- **GOP GET UP!** Standing Tall Action, a GOP-aligned group, is planning to launch a five-figure digital ad campaign in support of Husted, boosting his support of the president's policies. (NBC News)

- **SLF CHAIRMAN CORY GARDNER SAID IN A STATEMENT:** “Ohioans firmly rejected Sherrod after he oversaw [former President] Biden’s disastrous inflation crisis as Banking Chairman, and they’ll gladly do it again.” (release)

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

Marie Gluesenkamp Perez draws first GOP challenger

By James A. Downs and Amelia Monroe

REDISTRICTING ROUNDUP: Fleeing Texans May Return Home

Texas Democrats will reportedly return to the Lone Star State at a not-yet-announced date. “Democrats believe they’ve accomplished their mission by killing the first special session and by raising national awareness about the mid-decade redistricting effort.” Texas House Democrats then released a statement saying they have not yet decided their plans. (KTRK)

- **ABBOTT PLAYS HARD BALL.** Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) said he plans to call another special session on Friday, after the Legislature adjourns sine die. Abbott said the second special session “will start immediately.” (release)
- **ANOTHER ONE NOT SO SURE.** Not every governor is as committed to the cause as Abbott. Indiana Gov. Mike Braun (R) remained uncommitted about changing the congressional map “but said he and GOP legislative leaders are ‘considering it seriously.’” Braun said what happens in Texas likely affects the calculus in Indiana. The governor added legislative leaders need to assess the interest among the rank and file. Republicans have a supermajority in both chambers. (*Indiana Capital Chronicle*)
- **INDY DEMS GO TO THE WINDY CITY.** Indiana House Democrats will appear alongside Texas House Democrats in Chicago for a press conference as Braun considers his next steps. (*Axios Indianapolis*)
- **ON THE TOPIC OF ILLINOIS.** Gov. JB Pritzker (D) did not rule out counter-redistricting efforts, but it’s not clear how much change Democrats could effect. The current map already heavily favors Democrats with a 14-3 congressional advantage. Seats held by Reps. Mike Bost (R-12) and Mary Miller (R-15) went to President Trump by 40 points and are not near any “Democratic-rich urban areas” to potentially retool. Rep. Darin LaHood’s (R-16) district went to Trump by 23 points but would remain difficult to change. The Democratic Illinois House speaker said no conversations have taken place. (*Chicago Sun-Times*)
- **BAYOU UPDATE.** The Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the Louisiana redistricting case on Oct. 15, according to a new court filing. The Court originally heard the case during its term this past spring but decided to punt it after failing to reach a decision. After deciding to rehear the case, the Court asked parties to answer whether the state violated the 14th and 15th amendments in the creation of a second majority-Black seat. The case has potential major implications for Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which prevents voting procedures that discriminate against minority groups.
- **HOUSEKEEPING.** The Republican-led state defended its map in court, arguing it crafted the map based on political reasons while complying with a court order to add the second seat. Louisiana Solicitor General Ben Aguiñaga (R) did, however, say before the justices the state believes the Section 2 to be unconstitutional. (*Louisiana Illuminator*)
- **ONE CAUSE.** Anti-gerrymandering group Common Cause signaled Tuesday “some openness” to counter-redistricting strategies by blue states. The group said it does not “endorse partisan gerrymandering even when its motive is to offset more extreme gerrymandering by a different party” but also will we “call for unilateral political disarmament in the face of authoritarian tactics.”
- **IT’S A SYSTEM.** Common Cause said it “established a fairness criteria” for all counter measures. The group maintained its support of independent commissions. (*The Hill*)

ARIZONA 06: Immigration Lawyer Abandons Campaign

Attorney Mo Goldman (D) officially withdrew from the race against Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R). The longtime immigration attorney said his motivation for backing out was because of President Trump's and Ciscomani's immigration crackdown that has put communities "under siege." Goldman says he plans to "focus on the resistance" against ICE and "make sure [his] clients and [the] communities are protected."

- **BAD NUMBERS.** Goldman's fundraising numbers paled in comparison to his primary and potential general election opponents. He reported raising more than \$250,000, while Marine Corps veteran JoAnna Mendoza (D), his primary competitor, raised nearly \$1.2 million by June 30—which doesn't come close to Ciscomani's \$2.3 million raised.
- **EXIT ENDORSEMENT.** Goldman told his supporters to shift their focus toward supporting Mendoza's campaign.
- **THE FIELD.** The Southeastern Arizona-district has one of the more crowded primaries in the country. Goldman's exit still leaves more than a dozen Democrats who have filed statements of interest to enter the race, including Mendoza who has already confirmed her bid. (*Tuscon Sentinel*)

NEW YORK 17: Race for Lawler's Seat Gets More Crowded

Air Force veteran John Cappello (D) is the latest Democratic candidate to join the race against Rep. Mike Lawler (R). Capello served as a B-1 bomber pilot at the U.S. embassies in Israel and Serbia and "was also a military liaison officer in Ukraine."

- **HEATING UP.** Cappello joins a crowded primary, with at least seven other Democrats already declared, including Rockland County legislator Beth Davidson, former FBI analyst John Sullivan, and Army veteran Cait Conley. (*The Highlands Current*)

PENNSYLVANIA 10: History Repeats Itself as Candidate Residency Becomes a Concern

2024 candidate Janelle Stelson (D) moved into the district ahead of her rematch with Rep. Scott Perry (R) after her residency became a talking point during the last campaign. Stelson lost to Perry during her original run by a narrow 5,133 votes, one of the closest races for the incumbent during his tenure.

- **PERRY SPOX SAYS:** "Carpetbagger Janelle Stelson thinks Voters are stupid. She can rent all the apartments she wants; Voters know she isn't invested in the 10th congressional district and never will be."
- **HITTING POINT.** Stelson's residency was a primary talking point for Perry's campaign in 2024. While law does not require candidates or members to live in the districts they represent, Stelson living outside the Cumberland County district could have played a large part in her original defeat. The two-time candidate pledged to move to the district permanently if she secures a victory. (*York Daily Record*)

TENNESSEE 07 SPECIAL: Club for Growth Plays in Special Primary

The Club for Growth-aligned School Freedom Fund "spent almost \$20,000 in early August to oppose state Rep. Jody Barrett (R)" in the race to replace former Rep. Mark Green (R).

- **PUNCHES THROWN.** Club for Growth President David McIntosh recently called Barrett "anti-Trump" on social media and noted he voted against the state's school-choice bill, which passed in early 2025. McIntosh also posted about Barrett's support of Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) during his run for president. Barrett responded with past McIntosh comments criticizing President Trump as part of an attack ad in 2016.
- **SIGN OF THINGS TO COME?** State Rep. Lee Reeves (R), also running in the primary, received nearly \$800,000 in support from School Freedom Fund last year during his run for the Legislature. School Freedom Fund spent \$3.1 million in Tennessee legislative races last year boosting candidates who backed Gov. Bill Lee's (R) bill. (*Tennessee Lookout*)

TEXAS: Greg Casar and Lloyd Doggett Appear Headed for Primary

Rep. Greg Casar (D-TX 35) indicated he intends to run in the potential new Austin-based seat, “setting him on a collision course” with Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-TX 37), who also said he plans to run there. The new map would gut Casar’s seat that runs from Austin to San Antonio. Doggett earlier this week urged Casar to run in the new San Antonio area seat, which President Trump won by about 10 points. In an email, Casar’s chief of staff said “there’s no reason it would make sense to run in that district” since fewer than 10% of his current constituents are in it.

- **THE EMAIL SAYS:** “[W]hatever happens he will be running for reelection in Austin. We intend to send Greg back to Congress to continue shaking up the Democratic Party.” (*Punchbowl News*)

WASHINGTON 03: GOP Legislator Hops In

State Sen. John Braun (R) joined the all-party primary to take on Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D). Braun, the Senate’s minority leader, has served in the Legislature since 2013 and is president of family-owned Braun Northwest, an emergency vehicle manufacturing business. Before that Braun served in the Navy. (release)

- **HOTLINE ANALYSIS.** Gluesenkamp Perez, first elected in 2022 by flipping a Trump-won seat, won by about 4 points last year. Whether she faces Braun or someone else in the general election, Gluesenkamp Perez is likely in for a tougher campaign than against Joe Kent (R), the 2022 and 2024 nominee who was one of the GOP’s weakest recruits the last two cycles.

HOTLINE LATEST EDITION

Tim Ryan considers launching governor bid amid Sherrod Brown's Senate run

By Abby Turner

CALIFORNIA: Dem Candidates Back Newsom’s Push to Redraw Congressional Map

“The major Democratic candidates for governor have all quickly lined up behind their party in supporting efforts to redraw California’s congressional districts mid-decade to counter Texas Republicans’ attempts to do the same.”

- **WHAT DEMS SAY.** Former Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra (D) and former state Senate leader Toni Atkins (D) both told *Politico* California must redraw their maps in response.
- **THROWING TRUMP IN.** Former Rep. Katie Porter (D) and businessman Stephen Cloobek (D) framed their support for redrawing California’s congressional map as a way to stand up to President Trump.
- **BACKTRACKING.** Former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa (D), “who backed the creation of California’s independent redistricting commission,” has “called for the commission’s map to be tossed out early.”
- **HOW IT HELPS THEM.** “The near uniform response from others in the 2026 field has not afforded any of them a chance to stand out, much less a viral soundbite chewing out the president and Texas Republicans. But it has allowed them to stay in their party’s good graces and cast themselves as leaders of the resistance as they seek a fundraising surge.” (*California Playbook*)

CONNECTICUT: GOP Primary Takes Shape Against Lamont

New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart (R) “has gained an early advantage by raising more than \$300,000 in small contributions on her way toward qualifying for public financing against” Gov. Ned Lamont (D). “Stewart has been campaigning for months in the race against” state Sen. Ryan Fazio (R), “a fiscal conservative who recently formed an exploratory committee and whose supporters say will catch up in the fundraising battle.” (*Hartford Courant*)

FLORIDA: DeSantis Didn’t Back Jay Collins for Gov After Lt. Gov. Appointment

Neither Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) or Lt. Gov. Jay Collins (R) “stated their intentions surrounding 2026” yesterday when Collins got sworn in. DeSantis has yet to endorse in the race to succeed him, and everyone wants to know “whether DeSantis intends to back Collins as his successor in the governor’s mansion after his term ends.”

- **IF NEEDED.** DeSantis yesterday that Collins is “capable of serving and leading as governor if that need were to ever arise.” (*Florida Playbook*)
- **BEHIND THE SCENES.** Collins “has been telling Tampa Bay politicians that he will launch his gubernatorial campaign Oct. 1” and is reportedly working with DeSantis’ campaign advisors. He would challenge Rep. Byron Donalds (R-19) in the primary. (*Florida Politics*)

IOWA: Rob Sand Leans into Independent Label Over Moderate Characterization

State Auditor Rob Sand (D) “has been described by both friend and foe as a ‘moderate,’” but he has “firmly rejected the label, describing himself as ‘independent-minded.’” While he’s running in the Democratic party to succeed Gov. Kim Reynolds (R), “his campaign is already attracting the attention of Republicans and Independents.”

- **CRITICIZE BOTH SIDES.** Sand has “condemned the political practice of demonizing the other party in order to earn support” and criticized the system of picking the lesser of two evils in elections. (*Newton Daily News*)

NEW JERSEY: Candidates Each Receive \$1.1 Million in Matching Funds

The New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission distributed around \$1.1 million in matching funds to both 2021 nominee Jack Ciattarelli (R) and Rep. Mikie Sherrill (D-11). “Ciattarelli and Sherrill are about 32% of the way to the \$12.5 million matching funds cap. Each has so far received a little more than \$4 million in public funds.” (*New Jersey Globe*)

NEW YORK: Former Governor Endorses Eric Adams for Mayor

Former Gov. David Paterson (D) announced he would endorse New York City Mayor Eric Adams (I) “for re-election, despite Adams trailing in the latest poll.”

- **SWITCH UP.** He supported former Gov. Andrew Cuomo (I) in the primary as “the strongest candidate to challenge” Assemblyman Zohran Mamdani (D). “He said he didn’t endorse Mayor Adams before due to his indictment and other issues, but now feels this is the right time to step in and help.” (WABC)

OHIO: Tim Ryan Mulls Gov Bid After Sherrod Brown’s Decision to Run for Senate

Former Sen. Sherrod Brown’s (D) decision to run for Senate against Sen. Jon Husted (R) “ended speculation that he would run for governor against” 2024 presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy (R).

- **A COMEBACK.** Former Rep. Tim Ryan (D) “is mulling a bid” for governor now after Brown’s decision. A spokesperson for Ryan said: “Sherrod Brown’s decision to run for the U.S. Senate has renewed and heightened Tim Ryan’s interest in running for governor to further serve the people of Ohio.” (*Columbus Dispatch*)

- **HOTLINE ANALYSIS.** The race could shift quickly if Ryan jumps into the Democratic primary. While former state Department of Health Director Amy Acton (D) and Ramaswamy currently face no primary opposition, Acton has yet to consolidate support and secure the unified endorsements like her likely GOP opponent. Ryan, with name recognition as a longtime member of Congress and without the political baggage Acton carries from her COVID-19 response, could quickly draw major backing. Former Gov. Ted Strickland (D), who praised Acton this month but held off on endorsing her, says Ryan could run an effective campaign and have a better chance at winning. The Ohio Democratic Party has so far withheld an endorsement. But don't expect Ryan to entirely clear the field if he launches a campaign: Acton pledged to stay in the race even if other candidates enter.

PENNSYLVANIA: Dems, GOP Navigate Gubernatorial Race Amid Shapiro's Presidential Hopes

"While state Republicans have started to coalesce around" State Treasurer Stacy Garrity (R), "eager to avoid a messy primary before facing" Gov. Josh Shapiro (D), "Democrats are still focused on" 2022 nominee Doug Mastriano (R) "as they launch initial attacks against her."

- **HOW DEMS WILL HIT BACK.** Democrats "expect the anti-Garrity campaign to feature plenty of examples of where she and Mastriano align—particularly on supporting abortion restrictions and on the legitimacy of the 2020 election." But the messaging on abortion and elections might not break through this time around as it did in 2022.
- **SQUASHING 2028 AMBITIONS.** Republicans are looking to reenergize President Trump's coalition in the state he flipped in 2024 and where Republicans flipped two House seats and the attorney general's office. Republicans "hope they can defuse or derail" Shapiro's 2028 presidential ambitions with "a robust campaign against him for governor next year." (NBC News)

SOUTH CAROLINA: Lindsey Graham Cautions Trump to Hold Endorsing in Gov Race

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R) is advising President Trump "to hold off endorsing in the governor's race, at least for now." Trump endorsed term-limited Gov. Henry McMaster (R) before the 2018 primary and "campaigned with him ahead of the runoff."

- **EXPECT A RUNOFF.** With five candidates and "early polling showing none of the hopefuls near to the majority support needed to clinch the nomination, a runoff is expected."
- **THE KEY.** "Receiving Trump's endorsement may be the key to winning the nomination as the president remains popular in the state" and he "may be looking to see who can win the race and raise the necessary cash for a campaign before weighing in." (Columbia State)

VIRGINIA: Youngkin Campaigns with Lt. Gov. Nominee He Told to Drop Out

Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) campaigned with talk show host John Reid (R) last night.

- **NOW ABOUT ALL THAT.** "It was only the second time Reid and Youngkin have campaigned together publicly since the latter asked the former to withdraw from the race earlier this year" after a Tumblr account reportedly linked to Reid that featured posts of nude men surfaced. "The governor is now no longer asking Reid to withdraw; instead, he is telling Republicans why they should support him." (Virginia Scope)

WYOMING: Third Republican Enters Uncrowded Governor's Race

State Sen. Eric Barlow (R) announced his bid for governor in a race that "is still relatively uncrowded." 2022 candidate Brent Bien (R) and business owner Joseph Kibler (R) have announced bids. 2022 SEN candidate Reid Rasner (R) "has filed a campaign finance account for governor but has yet to announce his candidacy." (Wyoming Tribune Eagle)

OVERLOOKED**Out With the Old, In With the New**

By Amelia Monroe

President Trump's \$200 million, nearly 90,000-square-foot ballroom will supposedly have all the fixtures of his trademark white and gold aesthetic, evoking the architectural endeavors of French King Louis XIV. Not too long ago, colonial Americans rejected any connection to their European adversaries—which is why the White House's East Wing is the largest and one of the only flamboyant gathering areas on the property. A renovation of this scale is the first of its kind since President Truman, who is largely responsible for the current version of the White House. Before then, the nation's most recognizable landmark went through three other major reconstructions, including in 1792 when it broke ground: 1817 was the beginning of its rebuild after being burnt down by the British in 1814. In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt moved the Oval Office to the West Wing, dubbing it as the new executive office space.