

# 18 IN '18 RACES TO WATCH





As state-level Republicans have reached modern highs in legislative majorities and statewide offices held, the RSLC has brought attention to outstanding Future Majority Project (FMP) and Right Women, Right Now (RWRN) candidates running in critical races by highlighting them through the “Races to Watch” program since 2014. In years past, candidates featured in our campaigns proved to be essential majority makers and this cycle is no different. In Kentucky, 16 in ‘16 featured candidate Melinda Prunty helped Republicans flip the Kentucky House for the first time in 95 years. In Connecticut, 16 in ‘16 candidates Heather Somers and George Logan helped Republicans achieve split control in the state Senate, bringing Republicans to 69 chambers controlled. Meanwhile, candidates in Colorado, Maine, New York and Washington all played integral roles helping Republicans retain crucial Senate majorities in 2016 and expand our map.

In 2018, candidates featured as part of the 18 in ‘18 Races to Watch program are running in some of this year’s biggest legislative and statewide races with an opportunity to make history with their elections. From the most expensive ticketed gubernatorial race in U.S. history, to majority making districts in Alaska, Colorado, Maine, and North Carolina, the candidates featured in this list will prove critical to help protect and grow Republican ranks in the states.



# ALASKA

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## Marilyn Stewart

### Alaska House District 21

*Democrats control the Alaska House of Representatives through a coalition of Democrats, Independents, and rogue Republicans.*

[marilynalaska.com](http://marilynalaska.com)



A veteran of the U.S. Army, Marilyn Stewart first moved to Alaska in 1981 when she was stationed at Fort Richardson, AK. In the 36 years since, Stewart has made Alaska her home, worked on several campaigns, served in the administration of Anchorage Mayor Dan Sullivan and become a well-known community leader. In 2012, she was awarded the Freedom's Sister Award by Ford Motor Company for her commitment to strengthening the Alaska community and inspiring and empowering others. She joined notables such as Myrlie Evers-Williams, Barbara Jordan and Rosa Parks in receiving this award. As state representative, Stewart will work tirelessly to foster a strong economic future for families, a friendlier business climate for entrepreneurs and business owners, and a top-of-the-line education system for all Alaskan students.

*Stewart came within 500 votes of winning this seat two years ago, coming closer than any other Republican in the state to defeating an incumbent Democrat.*

# CALIFORNIA

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## Bill Essayli

### California Assembly District 60

*Republicans need to flip two seats in the California Assembly to end the Democrats' supermajority in the chamber which would significantly hinder their ability to pass legislation increasing taxes.*

[billessayli.com](http://billessayli.com)



As a resident of Riverside County for over 30 years, Bill Essayli has spent his career fighting on behalf of the people of California in the courtroom. Bill stepped down as an Assistant United States Attorney earlier this year to run for California's 60th Assembly District. Since joining the office in 2014, Bill has worked on several significant cases, including the federal investigation of the deadly December 2015 San Bernardino terrorist attack and several high-profile drug trafficking cases. Prior to joining the United States Attorney's Office, Bill was a Deputy District Attorney in Riverside County. Bill is the son of Lebanese-American immigrants and the first in his family to graduate college.

*In the June 2018 open primary, Essayli received over 50% of the vote beating the incumbent Democrat by almost 6%.*



# CALIFORNIA

## Janet Nguyen

### California Senate District 34

*Republicans ended the Democrats supermajority in the California state Senate in a recall election in June of 2018.*

[www.janet2018.com](http://www.janet2018.com)



Republican State Senator Janet Nguyen has a truly unique story. Winning reelection to the State Senate is not easy in a state like California, especially when your district has a Democratic registration advantage. However, challenges are nothing new to Senator Janet Nguyen as she has a long track record of winning despite long odds. As a young child, Janet fled communism and immigrated to the United States via a refugee camp. She grew up believing in conservative values with a strong work ethic. She has owned her own small business and was elected to the Garden Grove City Council. Shortly after, Janet became the first Vietnamese-American woman elected to the Orange County Board of Supervisors. Today Senator Janet Nguyen represents the 34th State Senate District and a pivotal vote to stop tax increases in the 5th largest economy in the world.

*Senator Nguyen was featured on the RSLC's "14 in '14: Races to Watch" list and handily won that year despite facing a Democratic registration advantage in her district.*

# COLORADO

## Beth Martinez Humenik

### Colorado Senate District 24

*Republicans flipped the Colorado state Senate in 2014 when Senator Martinez Humenik flipped SD 24 by less than 900 votes.*

[bethforco.com](http://bethforco.com)



The Senator is a fourth generation Coloradan who grew up primarily in Fort Collins, Colorado. She is a former proprietary college Adjunct Instructor and K-12 substitute educator with a long history of educators in her family as well as industry experience in a variety of other fields. Senator Martinez Humenik is a dedicated leader, who listens, is thoughtful and is a strong advocate for District 24 as well as for all citizens in Colorado. She has lived in the City of Thornton since 1997 where she served as a Municipal leader from 2007-2014. She works diligently on healthcare reform options as well as affordable access for all Coloradans, transportation issues currently facing our state, and education opportunities for our children's success since she is an educator. Senator Martinez Humenik is actively involved with municipal leaders, the business community, non-profits and residents in Thornton, Northglenn and Westminster, the three cities represented in Senate District 24.

*Martinez Humenik's victory in 2014 broke at least 20 years of Democratic control of the 24th Senate District.*



# GEORGIA

## Meagan Hanson

### Georgia House District 80

*Republicans currently hold a supermajority in the Georgia House of Representatives by a 116-64 margin. It is the third largest Republican legislative caucus in the country.*

[hansonforhouse.com](http://hansonforhouse.com)

Meagan Hanson, of Brookhaven, Georgia, has represented Georgia's 80th House District since 2016. An attorney by trade, Meagan received her law degree from the University of Alabama. Since her election, Meagan has been a strong voice for issues that affect her community the most, including transit, education and government efficiency. Meagan played major roles in monumental transit reform, increasing education funding for her towns, and creating a committee to explore the option of removing the plagued DeKalb County elected CEO position, which she now chairs.

*In her first campaign for the 80th House district, Hanson defeated a Democratic incumbent even though the district supported Hillary Clinton by a 14-point margin at the presidential level.*



# IDAHO

## Caroline Nilsson Troy

### Idaho House District 5B

*Republicans have controlled the Idaho House of Representatives since 1960 and have had a trifecta in the state since 1995.*

[troyforidaho.com](http://troyforidaho.com)

Upon graduating from college, Caroline Nilsson Troy became partner in an Idaho family farm, operating equipment, selling commodities, and serving on numerous agricultural boards - often as the only woman. In 1989, she became the first woman to chair an Idaho Cattle Association committee. Leaving the farm to become a professional fundraiser, she spent over 20 years soliciting donors nationally and internationally for widely-diverse programs housed in land-grant universities. Since her election to the Idaho House in 2015, Troy has focused on growing the rural economy by supporting education and improved infrastructure, supporting job creation by adding value to commodities, and reducing the regulatory and tax burden on families and small business. As an Idaho Suicide Prevention Council board member, she spearheaded a task force that included members of the NRA and a coalition of nonprofits and focused on reducing "lethal means" deaths.



*Idaho's 5th House district is one of the few competitive districts in the reliably Republican state as President Obama garnered nearly 46% of the vote in this district in 2012.*



# ILLINOIS

## Evelyn Sanguinetti

### Illinois Lieutenant Governor

*Republicans currently control every lieutenant governor's office in the Midwest.*

[facebook.com/LtGovEvelyn](https://www.facebook.com/LtGovEvelyn)



Evelyn Sanguinetti serves as the 47<sup>th</sup> Lieutenant Governor of Illinois. Born to teenage immigrant parents, Evelyn went from relying on welfare programs to the first-ever Latina Lieutenant Governor. As Lt. Governor, Evelyn chairs the Rural Affairs Council, three River Coordinating Councils, and the Military Economic Development Committee. She leads the state's task forces to combat the opioid epidemic, expand telemedicine, and consolidate units of local government. Evelyn entered politics with her successful run for Wheaton City Council, where she served until signing on as running mate to then-candidate for Governor Bruce Rauner in 2014.

*When she was sworn in, in 2015, she became the first Hispanic to be elected as Lieutenant Governor in Illinois and is the first female Hispanic Lieutenant Governor in the United States.*

# MAINE

## Amy Volk

### Maine Senate District 30

*Republicans hold a slim one vote majority in the Maine Senate.*

[amyforme.com](http://amyforme.com)



Senator Amy Volk is currently serving her second term in the Maine Senate where she serves as Assistant Majority Leader. Prior to being elected to the Senate, she served two terms in the Maine House as the Representative for House District 127, coastal Scarborough. Senator Volk is best known recently for having successfully championed legislation to help victims of human trafficking. In addition to her legislative service, Senator Volk is active in the local community. She serves as a member of the Worship and Kids City Welcome teams at The Rock Church. She also served as the Board Secretary of the Root Cellar for many years and is a current charter member of the board of directors for Maine Connections Academy, a statewide public charter school. Senator Volk resides in Scarborough with her husband, Derek, the President of Volk Packaging Corporation, a third-generation family business. They have four children.

*Volk's 2014 campaign for the 30th Senate District was described as one of the "most-watched state-level contests" in Maine which she won by a six-point margin despite facing an onslaught of outside spending against her.*



# MARYLAND

## Mary Beth Carozza

### Maryland Senate District 38

*Republicans are hoping to end the Democrat supermajority in the Senate by flipping five districts occupied by Democrats which Governor Larry Hogan carried in his first gubernatorial run.*

[marybethcarozza.com](http://marybethcarozza.com)

Mary Beth Carozza of Ocean City, Maryland currently is a member of the Maryland House of Delegates, elected in 2014 to represent District 38C, which includes Worcester and Wicomico counties on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Her public service includes serving in the Administration of President George W. Bush, the Office of Governor Bob Ehrlich, and the U.S. Senate Homeland Security Committee. As Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for House Affairs, she was responsible for coordinating the Department's legislative issues before the U.S. House of Representatives including the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks. Since her 2014 election, Mary Beth has earned a strong reputation for constituent service and accessibility, especially her work with local businesses and the Shore farm community, and her focus on career technology and trades education.

*President Trump and Mitt Romney both carried this Senate district by double digit margins but it is represented by a Democrat Senator who narrowly won re-election in 2014.*



# MISSOURI

## Sarah Mills

### Missouri House District 18

*Since the 2012 elections Republicans have maintained a supermajority in the lower chamber.*

[millsforstaterep.com](http://millsforstaterep.com)

A native of the Kansas City area, Sarah Mills was raised in a family that valued service to community and country. In 2012, she graduated magna cum laude from Vanderbilt University with a BA in Political Science. Post-graduation, Mills was recruited to work for the Central Intelligence Agency as an analyst, focusing on East Asian affairs. Shortly after returning home to Kansas City to be closer to her family, Mills made the decision to continue on her path of public service by running for office. In November 2016 she was elected Clay County Public Administrator, serving as a court-appointed guardian, conservator, and personal representative in probate cases. As Public Administrator, she has completely modernized the office, which has increased efficiency and reduced government waste.

*If elected, Mills would be the first Mexican-American woman and the first Hispanic Republican woman ever elected to the Missouri State House.*



# NEVADA

## Valerie Weber

### Nevada Senate District 8

*Republicans need to flip two Democrat-held state Senate districts to regain control of the upper chamber.*

[valeriefornevada.com](http://valeriefornevada.com)



Originally from California, Valerie moved to Las Vegas in 1990 after transferring with her former employer, United Blood Services (UBS). She currently serves as an adjunct faculty member in the Business Administration Department for the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) where she has taught since 2014. Serving the community is her passion, as she was a gubernatorial appointee to the Education Commission of the States (ECS), a 50-state compact emphasizing commitment to education, notably higher education. Weber previously served three terms in the Nevada state Assembly from 2002-2008 of which her most notable legislation included enhanced DNA laws, passage of the first organized retail crime bill in Nevada, and consumer friendly bills that enhanced citizen understanding of property tax law.

*The 8th Senate District in Nevada is arguably the chamber's most competitive district as the margins in the district for the past two presidential election were less than 1%.*

# NEW MEXICO

## Brenda Boatman

### New Mexico House District 23

*In 2014, Republicans flipped control of the New Mexico House of Representatives for the first time in decades and are in a prime position to regain their majority this cycle.*

[brendaboatman.com](http://brendaboatman.com)



Raised in New Mexico, Brenda Boatman is an Army veteran, air traffic controller, pilot, non-profit board member, entrepreneur, self-defense instructor, volunteer volleyball coach, wife, and mother. She first dreamt of working in New Mexico's state capitol when she was in Youth and Government in High School as a Representative. At the age of 19 she joined the Army and five years later returned to New Mexico a better person and a strong leader ready to help improve her communities one person at a time. She has indicated her desire to focus on education reform, veterans' issues, and lowering the unemployment rate if she is granted the opportunity to serve the 23rd House district.

*The 23rd House district was carried by both Hillary Clinton and President Obama but has a track record of electing Republicans down ballot as it had a Republican representative as recently as 2014.*





# NORTH CAROLINA

## Tamara Barringer

### North Carolina Senate District 17

*Republicans have a supermajority in both chambers of the North Carolina General Assembly ensuring they can override the Democrat Governor's vetoes.*

[tamarabarringer.winwithwp.com](http://tamarabarringer.winwithwp.com)

Senator Tamara Barringer is in her third term representing Wake County and District 17 in the North Carolina State Senate. She is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Business Law & Ethics at the Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. A recognized leader in the State Senate, Tamara serves as Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee and Chair of the Appropriations on General Government and Information Technology Committee. As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, Tamara plays a pivotal role in drafting and evaluating tax and financial legislation. Before serving in elected office, Tamara and her husband, Brent, served as therapeutic foster parents for the Methodist Home for Children for 10 years. She is equally passionate about her work in the Senate for improving early childhood and K-20 public education, reforming the human services systems to support foster and adopted children and their families, and improving the lives of persons suffering mental disabilities.

*Barringer's 17th Senate district is one of four Republican Senate districts where President Trump got under 50% of the vote in 2016.*



# OREGON

## Lori Chavez-DeRemer

### Oregon House District 51

*Republicans are just five seats away from split control in the Oregon House of Representatives.*

[lorichavezderemer.com](http://lorichavezderemer.com)

Lori Chavez-DeRemer grew up in a farm community, was the first in her family to graduate from college (California State University, Fresno), and worked to support her husband, Shawn, while he attended medical school. In 2005, Shawn and Lori became small business owners when they founded Anesthesia Associates Northwest. The company has now grown into one of Oregon's most respected healthcare firms. Lori became the first female and Latina elected Mayor of Happy Valley when she was elected in 2010 and was subsequently re-elected in 2014. During her tenure as Mayor, Lori has been a fiscally responsible leader for her constituents as the City of Happy Valley enjoys more than \$2.5 million in reserves and maintains one of the lowest property tax rates in the state of Oregon.



*If elected, Lori Chavez-DeRemer would become House District 51's first ever elected Latina and Oregon's first ever Republican Latina State Representative.*



# OREGON

## Jessica Gomez

### Oregon Senate District 3

*Republicans only need to pick up three seats to win control of the chamber after flipping SD3 in 2016.*

[jessicafororegon.com](http://jessicafororegon.com)

Jessica Gomez was born into a predominately Hispanic, working-class community on Long Island, New York. She permanently settled in the Rogue Valley in 2004 where she built her business from the ground up alongside her husband, Pat. They faced many obstacles, but through hard work and perseverance, they were able to build a high-tech manufacturing company that gives back to the communities of Southern Oregon. As the mother of two, Jessica believes education must be Oregon's number one priority. She understands the need for increasing parent engagement, providing more technical education options, introducing early career paths, and supporting student leadership and entrepreneurship. As a small business owner and a job creator, Jessica supports getting government out of the way of Oregon small businesses so that they can thrive.

*The 3rd Senate district is currently held by Republican Alan DeBoer who won a contentious special election in 2016 by less than 1% making this one of the most competitive districts in the Senate.*



# PENNSYLVANIA

## Amber Little-Turner

### Pennsylvania House District 74

*Republicans flipped control of the Pennsylvania House during the 2010 midterms and have held a steady majority in every election since then.*

[votelittleturner.com](http://votelittleturner.com)

Amber Little-Turner believes she can best serve the 74th District because she understands the struggles of many of the residents as she spent time in foster care as a child and became a teenage mother at 16. Little-Turner has an extensive background in public service having worked for a local Magisterial Judge as well as working for State Rep. Harry Lewis. She also owns her own business helping people gain access to affordable legal services. Additionally, she serves on the boards of the local YMCA and Chamber of Commerce. Little-Turner lives in Coatesville with her husband and four children.

*The 74th House district is currently represented by state Rep. Harry Lewis, who was featured in the Future Majority Project's "14 in '14 Races to Watch" list.*



# WASHINGTON

## Maia Espinoza

### Washington House District 28

*Republicans have steadily gained seats in the state House chamber in every election since 2008 and only need to flip two districts to regain the majority for the first time since 1998.*

[maiaespinoza.com](http://maiaespinoza.com)



Before being a small business owner, non-profit director, and teacher, Maia beat the odds and finished college as a new mother. She is a now wife and mother of two. She was a Legislative Liaison for the Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs and helped pass hard fought bills by bringing people and parties together. Maia moved to the Tacoma area as a kid when her parents were stationed at Joint Base Lewis McChord. She fights for responsible spending of tax dollars and helps provide a step up and out of homelessness through her involvement with Coffee Oasis, a holistic youth initiative. She is an advocate for small business owners and struggling students alike.

*In the last midterm elections, the Republican candidate came within less than 1% of defeating the Democrat candidate making this one of the most competitive districts in Washington.*

# WEST VIRGINIA

## Caleb Hanna

### West Virginia House of Delegates District 44

*Republicans took control of the West Virginia House of Delegates in 2014 for the first time since the 1930s.*

[hannaforhouse.com](http://hannaforhouse.com)



Caleb is a proud Christian conservative from Southern West Virginia and was raised with the belief that success is built on hard work, commitment, and dedication - these West Virginia values will always guide him. When he was 10 years old, his father told him the American Dream is getting harder to find, if not disappearing altogether. From that moment, he knew he wanted to help and serve the people of the great Mountain State. His goal is very simple: A New Era of Leadership for West Virginia. He has the vision for opportunity, and West Virginia needs that now more than ever.

*Only 18 years old, Hanna would become the youngest member of the West Virginia House of Delegates if he is elected in November.*





## ABOUT FMP

The Republican State Leadership Committee's (RSLC) Future Majority Project (FMP) seeks to identify, recruit and support candidates who better reflect the full diversity of our nation. Launched in 2011, FMP supports men and women from diverse communities as they run to grow the economy, support job creators and focus on ways to keep more money in the pockets of working families. The efforts are helping to build a strong bench of current and future Republican leaders. In the 2013-2014 cycle, FMP recruited 244 new candidates of all diverse backgrounds and successfully helped elect 43 to office in states nationwide, with an investment totaling more than \$6 million – in partnership with Right Women, Right Now. In 2015-2016, FMP invested \$7 million – in partnership with the RSLC's Right Women, Right Now (RWRN) – to identify and recruit 174 new, diverse candidates in 36 states. Through these efforts, FMP and RWRN saw 22 new candidates of diverse ethnicity elected, as well as 165 new women. FMP also saw 18 diverse elected officials enter leadership. Since its founding in 2011, the RSLC has with an over \$20 million investment helped elect over 500 women and over 100 diverse candidates.



## ABOUT RWRN

The Republican State Leadership Committee's (RSLC) Right Women, Right Now (RWRN) initiative serves to identify, recruit and support women candidates nationwide in order to help elect more Republican leaders who better embody the electorate of our country, where women are 53 percent of the voters. RWRN offers candidate trainings, mentorship matchings and digital organizing tools for our candidates' campaigns for state-level office. Since its founding in 2012, RWRN has recruited hundreds of women candidates, elected over 500 new women to office and continues working to grow the largest caucus of Republican elected women in the country. RWRN is co-chaired by Tennessee Speaker of the House Beth Harwell and Arizona Secretary of State Michele Reagan. In the 2015-2016 election cycle, RWRN shattered its recruitment goal of 500 candidates by identifying and recruiting 690 new, women candidates to run for state-level office. RWRN saw 165 of those candidates appointed or elected in 37 states. In partnership with the RSLC's Future Majority Project (FMP), which aims to elect candidates from all diverse communities, RWRN invested \$7 million between 2015-2016 to identify, recruit and support these candidates.

