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2026

General Election Guide



Introduction

On November 3, 2026, Minnesota voters will go to the polls in one of the most consequential elections in the state's history. With Gov. Tim Walz stepping aside, Minnesota will have a new governor and dozens of new faces in both the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Minnesota Senate. With several "what if" scenarios that could be defined by developments at both the state and federal levels, this election will fundamentally shape Minnesota's political landscape for the next four years.

Larkin Hoffman and Larkin Hoffman Public Affairs' (LHPA) combined government relations team is deeply involved in Minnesota politics across all levels of government. We work with elected officials at the municipal, county, regional, state, and federal levels and have spent decades building relationships with key public policy leaders, both elected and appointed. This election guide offers a high-level overview of the numerous political contests on the 2026 ballot, highlighting some of the most competitive races and key districts likely to influence the political control of the Minnesota Legislature in January.





Federal Races to Watch

U.S. Senate

Michele Tafoya (R) vs. Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan (DFL)

Democratic Sen. Tina Smith announced last year that she would not seek another term, creating an open seat in the U.S. Senate for the first time since 2006. The seat has been held by a Democrat since 2008 when Democratic challenger Al Franken defeated Republican incumbent Norm Coleman by fewer than 500 votes. Since then, Republicans have come closer to winning this seat than its counterpart which has been held by Sen. Amy Klobuchar since 2006.

Lt. Gov. Peggy Flannagan began her career in the Minnesota House of Representatives and is the first Native American women to serve as Lieutenant Governor. Flanagan won decisively over Congresswomen Angie Craig (MN – 2) this past August to secure the Democratic nomination and has received high-profile endorsements from national progressives, including Sen. Bernie Sanders and Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

Republican nominee and former NFL sideline reporter Michele Tafoya is looking to flip this seat back under Republican control for the first time in 18 years. Tafoya also emerged from a crowded field of Republican hopefuls with a comfortable victory in the Republican Primary. Tafoya has positioned herself as a “pro-choice” Republican and has received the endorsement of President Donald Trump.

U.S. House of Representatives

Sen. Eric Pratt (R) vs. Former Sen. Matt Little (DFL) – Congressional District 2

Of Minnesota's eight Congressional Districts, the 2nd Congressional District is the only district without an incumbent seeking reelection. Consisting of portions of Dakota, Le Sueur, Rice, Scott, and Washington Counties, this district stretches from the south metro suburbs all the way down to the rural communities of southeastern Minnesota. In recent times the district has been one of the most competitive in the nation. Outgoing Congresswomen Angie Craig (MN-2) has represented the district since 2018, but in 2024 she put a more than 13% gap between herself and Republican Joe Teirab.

Republican nominee Sen. Eric Pratt (R – Prior Lake) was first elected to the Minnesota Senate in 2012 after having previously served on the Prior Lake School Board. While in the Senate, Pratt has served as the chair of the Senate Education Policy Committee and the chair of the Senate Jobs & Economic Growth Committee. Currently, he serves as the ranking Republican member of the Senate Finance Committee.

The Democratic nominee is former state Sen. Matt Little (DFL-Lakeville). Little emerged victoriously from a competitive three-way DFL primary in August, defeating state Sen. Matt Klein (DFL-Mendota Heights) and Rep. Kaela Berg (DFL-Burnsville). Little previously served in the Minnesota Senate from 2017-2020 and as mayor of Lakeville.

Rep. Brad Finstad (R) vs. Jake Johnson (DFL) – Congressional District 1

Congressional District 1 is arguably the most competitive congressional race of the 2026 election cycle. The district stretches across Minnesota's entire southern border and extends as far north as Red Wing. Since Republicans flipped the open seat in 2018, Democrats have remained competitive with the margins generally under 5%. However, Republicans widened the gap to more than 30,000 votes in 2022 and more than 60,000 in 2024. Despite this, recent polling has the two candidates in a dead heat. SurveyUSA has Democratic challenger Jake Johnson as a two-point favorite (46%-44%).

Congressman Brad Finstad first took office in a special election to replace the late Republican Congressman Jim Hagedorn, who passed away after a year's long battle with cancer. Congressman Finstad was previously appointed by President Trump to serve in the Department of Agriculture and was a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives, where he served from 2003-2008.

Democratic challenger Jake Johnson looks to flip the seat back under Democratic control for the first time in nearly a decade. Jonhson is a public-school teacher, government relations coordinator, and bargaining member of his local union.



Minnesota Statewide Races to Watch

Governor

Rep. Lisa Demuth (R) vs. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (DFL)

For the first time in Minnesota's 168-year history, the two candidates most likely to win this cycle's gubernatorial race are both women. With the announcement last January that two-term incumbent Gov. Tim Walz would no longer seek a third term, the race quickly became a targeted opportunity for Republicans.

After a competitive endorsing convention and high-profile three-way primary, Republican Speaker of the House Lisa Demuth (R-Cold Spring) emerged as the nominee. Demuth was first elected to the Minnesota Legislature in 2018. She became the first women to lead the House Republicans in 2023, eventually becoming the first black Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives in 2025. Speaker Demuth won the Republican Primary on August 11, defeating the Republican-endorsed candidate Kendal Qualls and President Trump's endorsed candidate, MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell.

Following Walz's announcement, Democratic U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar quickly announced her intention to seek the office and subsequently won the DFL endorsement and primaries without significant opposition. Serving as the third highest ranking Senate Democrat in Washington D.C., Klobuchar was immediately considered a strong statewide candidate and is a potential favorite for the general election.

Attorney General

Keith Ellison (DFL) vs. Ron Schutz (R)

A Democrat has served as Minnesota's Attorney General for 60 consecutive years, but in recent years Republicans have found themselves within striking distance. In 2018, no candidate managed to secure 50% of the vote, and in 2022, Republicans came within 1% of flipping the seat. KSTP/SurveyUSA had A.G. Ellison leading Republican challenger Ron Schutz by only one point (45% - 44%). Republicans see this seat as a key component to combating fraud in state government.

Attorney General Keith Ellison is running for his third term as Minnesota's Attorney General and has centered his campaign on consumer protection, affordable healthcare and access, economic affordability, and checking federal policies.

This year, Ellison is challenged by Republican Ron Schutz, an attorney from Medina, Minnesota. After graduating from the University of Minnesota Law School, Schutz served on the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corp. Recent polling shows this race to be statistically tied heading into the final weeks.

Secretary of State

Steve Simon (DFL) vs. Tad Jude (R)

Secretary of State Steven Simon was first elected in 2014 and is seeking his fourth term in office, which would make him the longest serving constitutional office holder of this election cycle. Simon is running on a platform centered on protecting Minnesota's historically high voter turnout, defending election workers from harassment, modernizing the state's online business services, and resisting efforts to restrict ballot access.

Republican challenger Tad Jude is an attorney and former judge who previously served 14 years in the Minnesota Legislature. His campaign focuses heavily on instituting photo voter ID requirements in Minnesota, conducting more regular audits of the voter registration system, and enforcing stricter verification rules for mail-in and absentee ballots.

State Auditor

Zach Filipovich (DFL) vs. former Sen. Scott Jensen (R)

The most obscure and often overlooked of the four constitutional offices is the office of the State Auditor. Among other things, the State Auditor is responsible for auditing local units of government and maintaining financial integrity. This race is seen as competitive following the retirement of two-term State Auditor Julia Blaha.

Democratic nominee Zach Filipovich is an accountant and the former city council president of Duluth, Minnesota. Filipovich is running on a platform of traditional, non-partisan fiscal oversight. He emphasizes his background in local governance, municipal budgeting, and corporate finance, pledging to keep the auditor's office focused strictly on data-driven financial accountability.

Republican nominee and former State Sen. Scott Jensen (R – Chaska) is looking to capitalize off his name recognition following his time as the Republican gubernatorial nominee in 2022. His platform focuses heavily on rooting out state-level fraud, increasing accountability following recent pandemic-era spending scandals, and expanding the investigative powers of the auditor's office.



The Minnesota State Legislature

In recent years, the Minnesota Legislature found itself in the headlines for one reason or another. The 94th Minnesota Legislature (2025-26) navigated an unprecedented level of disruption, partisan skirmishes, and tragedy. Electoral disputes, criminal misconduct, and death, including the assassination of Speaker Emerita Melissa Hortman, led to eight special elections during the biennium. Additionally, with death of former Majority Leader Kari Dzeidzic (DFL – Minneapolis), and the 67-67 split in the House, Minnesota became the first state in American history to begin a legislative session without a clear majority in either legislative body.

The Minnesota Senate has been a back-and-forth battle between the DFL and Republicans since 2010, the first time in state history that Republicans took the Senate majority. The 2022 election cycle saw the DFL as the most recent victor of this electoral tug-of-war securing a 34-33 majority. High inflation, the war in Iran, and Operation Metro Surge has the DFL hopeful that they can retain control of the Senate, while Republicans have focused their campaign efforts on program integrity and fraud prevention as key messages for swing voters.

Currently split 67-67, the Minnesota House of Representatives is tied for the second time in state history. The House DFL Caucus hasn't lost their gavels since President Trump's first mid-term in 2018, and they have historically had more robust fundraising efforts that Republicans. Despite this, Republicans have consistently made inroads on their path to the majority, avoiding a single net loss since losing the majority in 2018. Regardless of who takes the majority in either legislative body, the winners will likely inherit a structural budget deficit for the next biennium.

Races to Watch – Minnesota Senate

Sen. Grant Hauschild (DFL) vs. Andrea Zupancich (R): Senate District 3

Senate District 3 is the largest district by land area in the state, stretching all the way down to Duluth and going up to the Canadian border with parts of St. Louis, Lake, Koochiching, Itasca, and Cook Counties. Additionally, the district has a piece of Minnesota's Iron Range, an area known for its strong support for labor unions and historical alignment with DFL candidates.

Sen. Grant Hauschild (DFL – Hermantown) is seeking his second consecutive term and currently serves as the Vice-Chair of both the Senate Labor and Taxes Committees. He faces former Babbit Mayor and Republican challenger Andrea Zupancich. This race is a rematch of 2022, which was only decided by 703 votes.

Sen. Rob Kupec (DFL) vs. Austin Peterson (R): Senate District 4

Sitting in the northwest part of the state on the North Dakota border, just four counties south of the Canadian border is Senate District 4. Featuring the counties of Clay and the majority of Becker, the most notable cities in this district are Moorehead and Detroit Lakes. This seat has been a prime target of Republicans for a while now.

Sen. Rob Kupec (DFL – Moorehead) looks to win a second term. A meteorologist in his civilian life, Sen. Kupec serves as the Vice-Chair on the Senate Agriculture Committee. He was also the author of the Digital Fair Repair Act in 2023.

The Republican challenger is Austin Peterson. From Hawley Minnesota, Peterson is a school board member and serves on the board of the area's food shelf.

Sen. Rob Farnsworth (R) vs. Kim (Kotonias) McLaughlin (DFL): Senate District 7

This district features a large portion of Minnesota's historic Iron Range. Traditionally relying on mining and forestry as the economic drivers in the region, the Iron Range has struggled in recent decades due to the decline of these industries. Moreover, as the DFL increasingly favored environmental conservation, they have struggled to find messaging that resonates with voters in the area. Formerly held by beloved DFL State Senator David Tomassoni, Republicans were able to flip this seat in 2022 by over 2,700 votes.

Looking to hold this seat for Republicans and nab his second term in office is Sen. Rob Farnsworth (R – Hibbing). Winning against former St. Louis County Commissioner Ben DeNucci, Sen. Farnsworth first tried his luck in politics against former House Rep. Julie Sandstede, losing by just 30 votes in 2020. Sen. Farnsworth sits on the Senate Education Finance, Higher Education, and Transportation Committees.

Looking to bring the district back to its DFL roots is Kim (Kotonias) McLaughlin. Also vying for the Senate District 7 seat in 2022, McLaughlin lost a close primary race to eventual DFL challenger Ben

DeNucci by 41 votes. McLaughlin serves on the Hibbing School Board, the Range Association of Municipalities and School Boards, and the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission.

Sen. Aric Putnam (DFL) vs Rep. Bernie Perryman (R): Senate District 14

What used to be considered the Republican Capital of Minnesota is now largely represented by the DFL. Featuring one of Minnesota's most prominent population centers, St. Cloud, the district also has the counties of Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne. In 2022, the district was decided by a little over 1,300 votes. During the 2024 election President Donald Trump won the district's most populous county (Stearns) by over 26%.

Sen. Aric Putnam (DFL – St. Cloud) has represented the area since 2020, beating Republican incumbent Jerry Relph by a little over 300 votes. In 2022, he beat Republican Rep. Tama Theis by more than quadruple his 2020 margin. Sen. Putnam chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee and sits on the Senate Higher Education, Housing, and Taxes Committees.

Despite the widening margin of victory. Rep. Bernie Perryman (R – St. Agusta) looks to flip the seat. Rep. Perryman spent the last four years as the House Representative for District 14A where she beat her most recent opponent by more than 2,500 votes. Rep. Perryman serves as the Co-Vice Chair of the House Commerce Committee and sits on the House Health Finance & Policy Committee.

Former Rep. Nels Pierson (R) vs. Simon Glaser (DFL): Senate District 24

This race is for an open seat currently held by outgoing Sen. Carla Nelson (R – Rochester), who represented the area since 2010. Senate District 24 features almost all of deeply conservative Dodge County, giving it a Republican lean. Sen. Nelson won this seat in 2022 after redistricting by over 5,000 votes; however, the rural and metropolitan portions of the district are very different ideologically.

Former Republican state Rep. Nels Pierson (R-Rochester) is looking to take advantage of his name recognition and the district's conservative leanings in order to hold this seat for Senate Republicans. Pierson was first elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 2014 and retired during the 2022 redistricting cycle. DFL-nominee Simon Glaser is a teacher and union organizer who worked for Education Minnesota and served as a delegate to the state AFL-CIO.

Sen. Jim Abeler (R) vs. Angela Nelson (DFL): Senate District 35

It's hard to find a Senate race this year that will be as closely contested as Senate District 35. Decided by only 186 votes, Senate District 35 was the closest Senate race of the 2022 election cycle. Resting entirely in Anoka County, both House Districts in this area are currently represented by DFL legislators.

With a one-year interlude, Sen. Jim Abeler (R – Anoka) has been a member of the legislature since 1998. However, it wasn't until a special election in 2016 that he began his career in the Senate. Sen. Abeler is seen as one of the leading voices in the space of human services and is the former chair of Senate Human Services Committee.

DFL challenger Angela Nelson looks to flip this district entirely blue. Nelson is a former nurse who turned educator and works as a principal in White Bear Lake.

Sen. Heather Gustafson (DFL) vs. Heidi Heino (R): Senate District 36

Featuring the cities of White Bear Lake, Lino Lakes, and Vadnais Heights, Senate District 36 sits almost entirely within Ramsey County, with a small piece in Washington County. The DFL was able to flip the seat in 2022 by over 2,500 votes after 12 years of Republican control. Ramsey County favored Vice President Kamala Harris by the largest margin in the state; however, the outskirts of the county are a lot more competitive.

Looking to hold this seat for the DFL and capture her second consecutive term is Sen. Heather Gustafson (DFL – Vadnais Heights). Sen. Gustafson began her career by unseating then incumbent and Senate Education Chair, Roger Chamberlain. More recently, Sen. Gustafson was the Senate author of bi-partisan legislation that created the Office of the Inspector General to help fight fraud. She also Vice-Chaired the Senate Education Finance, and State & Local Government Committees. Looking to flip this seat back to Republican control is Heidi Heino, centering her campaign message on stopping fraud and regaining government accountability.

Brady Hoag (R) vs Kristy Janigo (DFL): Senate District 37

This open seat is potentially one of the most ideologically diverse districts in the metro area, featuring suburbs like Maple Grove and Osseo, and rural communities such as Loretto and Independence. Outgoing Republican Sen. Warren Limmer (R – Maple Grove) held this seat for more than 30 years. In 2020 Sen. Limmer won a tight race against now Senator for Senate District 42, Sen. Bonnie Westlin (DFL – Plymouth). However, after redistricting, Sen. Limmer widened his margin of victory to more than 4,300 votes.

Emerging as the decisive victor from the August 11 primary with more than 84% of the vote is DFL challenger Kristy Janigo. Serving as an at-large city council person in Maple Grove since 2022, Janigo is also a military veteran.

Republican hopeful Brady Hoag is looking to hold this seat for Republicans. Staying true to the larger Republican messaging of this cycle, and his background in finance, Hoag has centered a lot of his messaging on fighting fraud.

Sen. Judy Seeberger (DFL) vs. Rep. Tom Dippel (R): Senate District 41

About two thirds of this district sits in Washington County and the other third in Dakota County. This race is a rematch of the 2022 match up that was decided by a mere 321 votes, in favor of Democrat Sen. Judy Seeberger (DFL – Afton). House Republicans have had consistent success in this district, winning both the corresponding state House Districts in 2022 and 2024. However, the DFL is looking to center cost of living as a key piece of their strategy to hold this district.

Working as a paramedic, Sen. Judy Seeberger is seeking her second term in office. During her first term in the legislature, she served as the Vice-Chair of the Senate Commerce Committee.

After losing a tight race in 2022, Rep. Tom Dippel (R – Cottage Grove) ran again, this time for the House of Representatives, pulling off a victory in 2024 and widening the margin of victory for Republicans.

Rep. Dippel has focused his campaign on critiquing the polices passed by the DFL run legislature in 2023-24 and highlighting the recent fraud in human services related fields.

Sen. Julia Coleman (R) vs. Dan Kessler (DFL): Senate District 48

In what will be another rematch from 2022, this race is for the southwest metro seat that takes up over 80% of Carver County. Historically, this district has favored Republicans, however, in 2022 the DFL was able to flip and hold one of the two House seats in the district. Additionally, from 2020 to 2022, the DFL was able to narrow Republicans' margin of victory by nearly 5,000 votes. Republicans in the area will likely focus on human services fraud and the DFL will look to highlight the effect that national policies, including Operation Metro Surge, have had on Minnesotans.

Vying for her third term in office is Sen. Julia Coleman (R – Chanhassen). Starting her career as a City Councilwomen for the City of Chanhassen, Sen. Coleman is now the ranking minority member on the Senate Education Policy Committee. She also serves on the Senate Transportation and Rules Committees.

Looking to capitalize on the continued shift in demographics and economic discontent is DFL challenger Dan Kessler, who is a psychologist and small business owner.

Races to Watch – Minnesota House of Representatives

Rep. Bidal Duran (R) vs. Reed Olson (DFL): House District 2A

Containing Lake of the Woods County, and parts of Clearwater, and Beltrami Counties, House District 2A sits in the north central part of Minnesota, with Bemidji, Minnesota as the largest city. This area has seen tight margins in its elections; however, results have favored Republicans.

Incumbent Rep. Bidal Duran (R – Bemidji) is seeking his second term in House District 2A. Currently serving as the Co-Vice Chair of the House Public Safety Committee, Rep. Duran spent time working as a Peace Office for the City of Bemidji and a Sheriff's Deputy for Hubbard County. Rep. Duran also serves as leadership assistant for the House Republican Caucus.

Challenging the incumbent is Beltrami County Commissioner Reed Olson. Olson is a former City Councilmember for the City of Bemidji and currently directs a non-profit organization called The Nameless Coalition, which provides emergency housing for community members.

Rep. Roger Skraba (R) vs. Aaron Kania (DFL): House District 3A

House District 3A is the largest geographic House District in Minnesota, with parts of Minnesota's historic Iron Range, the boundary waters, the largest portion of Lake Superior's north shore, and the largest portion of Minnesota's U.S. – Canadian border. More recently the area has made international headlines because of an ongoing battle with devastating wildfires that have threatened the local ecosystem and economy.

Rep. Roger Skraba (R – Ely) is vying for his third term in the Minnesota House of Representatives. Formerly the mayor of Ely, Minnesota, Rep. Skraba serves as the Co-vice Chair of the House Legacy Committee and is also a vocal member of the House Capital Investment Committee.

Skraba's challenger is DFL-endorsed candidate Aaron Kania, a former law enforcement officer and firefighter who currently serves as a forest caretaker.

Rep. Natalie Zeleznikar (R) vs. Aaron Schweiger (DFL): House District 3B

House District 3B is arguably the more competitive side of Senate District 3 due to its proximity to the region's largest city, Duluth. The area has historically favored DFL candidates until Rep. Zeleznikar began her time at the House of Representatives in 2023, after unseating the late DFL House Rep. Mary Murphy, who had served in the House for more than 40 years. Since her election, Zeleznikar has been a leader for the House Republican Caucus on the Children & Families Finance and Policy Committee and the Health Finance & Policy Committee.

Aaron Schweiger, the DFL endorsed candidate for House District 3B, is seeking to unseat the two-term Republican incumbent. He is a former staffer for Sen. Amy Klobuchar and former Congressmen James Oberstar.

Rep. Cal Warwas (R) vs. Dan Horoshack (DFL): House District 7B

Featuring the cities of Hibbing, Chisolm, and Virginia, Minnesota, House District 7B is considered to be the heart of Minnesota's Iron Range. Historically, this area has favored DFL representation because of its strong support for organized labor. However, as the industries that support these jobs have slowed over time, the district has become more competitive.

Rep. Cal Warwas (R – Clinton Township) is a third-generation miner seeking his second term after flipping the open seat, previously held by DFL Iron Ranger Dave Lislegard. Sitting on the House Environment Finance & Policy, Public Safety Finance & Policy, and Taxes Committees, Warwas focused his legislative efforts primarily on capital investment and public infrastructure.

DFL candidate Dan Horoshak, a fifth-generation iron ranger and union member, is hoping to return the seat to its Democratic roots.

Abdi Daisane (DFL) vs. Micheal Conway (R): House District 14A

House District 14A holds the southwest parts of St. Cloud and the southern parts of Stearns County. This part of the Senate District 14 leans more Republican; however, the seat has been left open by current Rep. Bernie Perryman, who is seeking to represent the area in the Senate.

Abdi Daisane emerged victorious from the DFL primary on August 11 after handily defeating his opponent with sixty-two percent of the vote. This is Daisane's second time vying for the seat after losing to Rep. Bernie Perryman in 2024. Daisane is a business consultant and has served on the area's Housing Redevelopment Authority.

The Republican vying for the open seat is Micheal Conway, an 8-year member of the St. Cloud City Council. Conway also won a decisive victory against his opponent in the August 11 primary, winning over sixty-two percent of the vote.

Sue Ek (R) vs. former Rep. Zachary Dorholt (DFL): House District 14B

This side of Senate District 14 is much more competitive, with only 191 votes separating the two candidates in the last election. Containing the counties of Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne, this seat is open after ten-year incumbent Rep. Dan Wolgamott (DFL – St. Cloud) announced his retirement. House District 14B is likely one of the most competitive legislative races and could be the deciding factor for next year's majority.

Republican candidate Sue Ek came within 200 votes of defeating then eight-year incumbent Rep. Dan Wolgamott. Ek previously served on St. Cloud's Transportation Infrastructure Advisory Board and has centered her campaign on fighting fraud, supporting law enforcement, and economic development.

Former state Rep. Zachary Dorholt (DFL-St. Cloud) threw his hat in the ring looking to keep the seat blue. Dorholt is a mental health professional with degrees in community development and counseling psychology and served in the Minnesota House of Representative from 2013-14.

Rep. Erica Schwartz (R) vs. Leah Hanson (DFL): House District 18A

Featuring the counties of Blue Earth, Le Sueur, and Nicollet, House District 18A has seen the highest amount of electoral turnover since 2018 and the district hasn't been decided by more than nine-hundred votes since 2020.

Republican Rep. Erica Schwartz won her seat against former state Rep. Jeff Brand by just over eight-hundred votes, the most decisive victory for the area since 2020. Rep. Schwartz serves as the Co-Vice Chair of the House Higher Education Committee and sits on the Public Safety Finance & Policy and Taxes Committees.

DFL challenger Leah Hanson is a resident of North Mankato who works as a social worker and is a graduate of MSU Mankato. She prioritizes housing, health care accessibility, education, and program integrity.

Rep. Aaron Rupinski (R) vs Dan Wilson (DFL): House District 26A

Located on the southeast Minnesota-Wisconsin border, House District 26A encompasses all of the city of Winona. Previously held by Rep Gene Palowski for nearly four-decades, the seat recently flipped to Republican control in 2024 by current Rep. Aaron Repinski (R – Winona). This is also one of the most coveted seats for both political parties.

Vying for his second term in the Minnesota House of Representatives and hoping to keep the seat under Republican control is Rep. Aaron Repinski (R – Winona). Serving on the House Health Finance & Policy, Public Safety, and Veterans Affairs Committees, Rep. Repinski formerly served as an at large City Councilman for the City of Winona and was fire fighter and small business owner.

Hoping to flip the seat back to DFL control is challenger Dan Wilson, an environmentalist who fought against sand mining in the Winona area. Wilson began his political journey at Bethany House, an emergency housing center in Winona. He currently farms part time and volunteers with Wilson Fire and Rescue.

Rep. Matt Norris (DFL) vs. Leslie Larson (R): House District 32B

Nestled in the north metro, House District 32B sits in Anoka County and has the cities of Lexington, and part of Blaine. The district has been decided by a little over four hundred votes in the last two election cycles. Currently held by the Minnesota DFL, this seat will be a high priority for House Republicans.

Rep. Matt Norris (DFL – Blaine) is seeking his third term in office. Rep. Norris began his legislative career in 2022 after defeating incumbent Rep. Don Raleigh by 413 votes. Since then, he served as Co-Vice Chair of the House Taxes Committee and was the House author of the bi-partisan bill that created the Office of the Inspector General.

Republican challenger Lelsie Larson is a City Council woman for the City of Blaine's second ward. She also sits on the Blaine Economic Development Authority Board and works as a substitute teacher.

Rep. Zach Stephenson vs. Josh Jungling: House District 35A

The north metro suburbs are likely the most politically complex part of the seven-metro county area, House District 35A is no different. Featuring Anoka County, the only two cities in this district are Coon Rapids and Anoka City. This matchup is rematch of the 2024 election cycle, which was decided by only 872 votes.

Stepping in to lead the House DFL Caucus after the assassination of Speaker Emerita Melissa Hortman, Rep. Zach Stepheson is seeking his fifth term in the Minnesota House of Representatives. Stephenson has served as House Commerce Chair, Ways & Means Chair, and most recently, leader of the House DFL Caucus. He also chief authored H.F. 100, legalizing adult-use recreational cannabis.

Throwing his hat back in to the ring after a close defeat in 2024 is Republican hopeful Josh Jungling. Working as a small business owner, Jungling is currently the Charitable Gambling Manager at Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association. He also served as a coach and sat on his community's youth and high school wrestling boards.

Rep. Kari Rehrauer (DFL) vs. Steve Pape (R): House District 35B

House District 35B, featuring Andover and well over half of Coon Rapids, was slightly more competitive over the last election cycle than House District 35A.

Vying for her second term is DFL Rep. Kari Rehrauer (DFL – Coon Rapids). Rep Rehrauer took her first shot at the Minnesota Legislature in 2022 against current Sen. Jim Abeler (R – Anoka), however, she was defeated by less than two hundred votes. In 2024 she pulled off a narrow victory for the Minnesota House of Representatives, winning by 370 votes. Rep. Rehrauer's background includes time on the Coon Rapids City Council and time with Education Minnesota as a union organizer.

Republican challenger Steve Pape returns for a rematch against Rep. Rehrauer. Pape is a navy veteran and engineer who served on the Presidential Blue-Ribbon Commission.

Sebastian Stoss (R) vs. Jim DeMay (DFL): House District 36A

Containing part of White Bear Township and the cities of Centerville, North Oaks, Circle Pines, and Lino Lakes, this northeast metro seat has been left open by outgoing Rep. Elliot Engan (R – Lino Lakes). After the 2022 election this district was decided by only 642 votes in favor of Republicans and over 2,200 votes in 2024.

Despite the widening margin of victory, the DFL still feels like they have a shot at this district. Hoping to flip the seat back to DFL control is Jim DeMay a Mounds View School Board member and graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Looking to keep the district under Republican control is Sebastian Stoss, a former legislative aid.

Rep. Wayne Johnson (R) vs. Cole Birkeland (DFL): House District 41A

This district is in the southeast metro and sits along the Wisconsin border. Entirely in Washington County, some of the more notable cities are Lake Elmo, and little under half of Cottage Grove. Republicans have managed to maintain control of this area; however, the margins are extremely close. The seat was won by Republicans by only 128 votes in 2022 and 327 votes in 2024.

Current Republican Rep. Wayne Johnson (R – Cottage Grove) is seeking his second term in the Minnesota House of Representatives. Before the legislature, he served as Washington County Commissioner and as a City Councilmember for the City of Cottage Grove. Rep. Johnson sits on Taxes, Workforce, and Housing Committees.

DFL challenger Cole Birkeland is attorney living in Lake Elmo and is a board member of his local community service organization.

Willam Beck (R) vs. Jen Fox (DFL): House District 41B

This district has parts of Washington County and Dakota County and features the cities of Hastings, and the larger half of Cottage Grove. Though this district has favored Republicans, it has also experienced high legislative turnover. This seat was decided by 418 votes in 2022, and 510 votes in 2024.

William Beck is the Republican candidate from Hastings, Minnesota. Beck worked as a teacher and is now a charter school board member, substitute teacher, and disability rights advocate.

Jen Fox is the DFL-nominee for this seat. Formerly serving on the Hastings City Council, she also worked as the Director of Consumer Outreach and Community Relations for the Minnesota Department of Commerce. Fox was also the DFL-nominee in 2024 but fell short on election day.

Rep. Lucy Rehm (DFL) vs. Caleb Steffenhagen (R): House District 48B

Featuring the southwest metro suburb of Chaska and Chanhassen, House District 48B's matchup is rematch of 2024's race that was decided by only 225 votes. Current Rep. Lucy Rehm (DFL – Chanhassen) is vying for her third term. She first took office after the redistricting cycle in 2022, beating 4-year incumbent Greg Boe by 417 votes. Rep. Rehm is former city council member and currently serves as the Co-Vice Chair of the House Transportation Committee.

Republican challenger Caleb Steffenhagen returns this election cycle, hoping to flip the seat red. Steffenhagen works as a middle school teacher and is a National Guard intelligence officer.

Rep. Brad Tabke vs Aaron Paul: House District 54A

Arguably the most competitive House race for the 2026 election cycle, House District 54A was won in 2024 by a mere 14 votes. This district sits entirely in the southwest metro county of Scott and features only Shakopee and Jackson Township. Additionally, this seat has seen some of the highest electoral turnover in the last decade and is a rematch from 2024.

DFL Rep. Brad Tabke (DFL – Shakopee) is the former mayor of Shakopee and currently serves as the House Co-Chair of the Transportation Committee. Rep.Tabke first won the seat in 2018 but lost it in 2020, then gained it back for the DFL in 2022. Tabke has held the seat consecutively longer the anyone in the last 10 years with a mere two terms.

Republican challenger Aaron Paul, an active-duty police officer of more than 30 years, returns for a rematch against Rep. Tabke after coming up just short in 2024.

Rep. Jeff Witte (R) vs. Brian Cohn (DFL): House District 57B

This Dakota-County House District sits in the south-central part of the metro area and only features a large portion of Lakeville City. In 2022, the race was decided by only 676 votes, but in 2024 that gap widened to 1,261 votes.

Rep. Jeff Witte (R – Lakeville) is seeking his third consecutive term in office. Starting his career in public service, Rep. Witte was a 27-year police officer and formerly sat on the Lakeville Planning Commission. He now serves as Vice Co-Chair of the House Public Safety Committee and as a member of the Taxes Committee.

DFL challenger Brian Cohn returns to face off against Rep. Witte, and is touting affordability as his main campaign message.

Note to Readers

This document provides Larkin Hoffman and Larkin Hoffman Public Affairs analysis of the 2026 General Election in Minnesota. It highlights a number of contested races on both sides of the aisle and discusses their potential impact on the Minnesota Legislature. The goal is not to prognosticate or predict the outcome of individual races but rather provide a general feel for the tenor of the 2026 campaign and highlight a handful of competitive races that are worth noting.

As always, please feel free to contact us if you have questions about any particular race or how various results might impact your ongoing engagement with the State of Minnesota or the Minnesota Legislature.

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