

Idaho 2024 Primary Election Overview

Veritas Advisors, LLP

Idaho's 2024 Primary election results are not yet official, but it looks like we again saw mixed results around the state with some notable regional trends. There were an unprecedented number of contested races for the legislature this year further illustrating the battle within the GOP. While we had plenty of hotly contested primary races, statewide voter turnout looks to be lower than the last few election cycles.

All 105 seats in the Idaho Legislature and both US Representatives are up for Election this year. Of the 105 sitting legislators, 98 of them have filed to run for re-election. This was a higher percentage than recent election cycles. Of the 87 sitting Republicans running for re-election, 47 of them have Republican Primary opponents. Most of this report is focused on the Republican primary. However, the Democratic Party has fielded candidates in 81 of the Legislative districts, a significant increase from 45 in the 2022 election cycle. One Democrat incumbent had a primary challenger, Senator Ali Rabe (Dist 16), and she won that race. We will have more bipartisan reporting after the general election in November. As of the primary election, we have about 20 percent turnover in the Idaho Legislature. No statewide, Constitutional Offices were up for election.

On the federal level, neither Senate seat was up for election. Congressman Russ Fulcher (ID-1) did not have a primary challenger. Congressman Mike Simpson (ID-2) won his primary election.

On the state level, again, we saw more regional shifts within Republican primary races. Across the Southern part of the state (Elmore, Twin Falls counties, and Magic Valley), the more conservative candidates won. In Eastern Idaho and in and around the Idaho Falls area, the more traditional GOP candidates won in almost every instance. The Treasure Valley was a mixed result with notable losses on both sides of the GOP. North Idaho continues to be more right leaning, but with a few notable wins from the more traditional branch of the GOP. We saw a significant amount out-of-state funding in independent expenditures this primary, backing attacks against incumbents that were both aggressive and inaccurate. This appears to have had an impact in some races, but not in others.

In the Senate, it is notable that five incumbent GOP Senators lost their primary race yesterday, most notable among them, Pro Tempore Chuck Winder, who lost to a challenger from his right. In addition to Senator Winder, the others who lost were:

- Scott Herndon (Dist 1) - lost to the more traditional GOP candidate Jim Woodward (who Herndon had unseated in 2022).
- Geoff Schroeder (Dist 8) - lost to the more conservative candidate, Christy Zito (who had held that seat previously).
- Chris Trakel (Dist 11) - lost to the more traditional GOP candidate Camille Blaylock.
- Linda Wright-Hartgen (Dist 25)– lost by a surprising margin to a more far right candidate, Josh Kohl.

Assuming all of these survive their general election – and most should – the Senate GOP caucus will shift slightly more to the right by about two votes. We'll also see some shake up with two members of the Majority Leadership team gone with Winder's loss and the retirement of Senator Abby Lee.

In the House, ten incumbent GOP members lost their primary election:

- Matt Bundy (Dist 8, Seat A) - lost to more right challenger Rob Beiswenger.
- Megan Blanksma (Dist 8, Seat B) lost to more right challenger Faye Thompson.
- Jacyn Gallagher (Dist 9, Seat A) lost to more traditional conservative John Shirts.

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- Julie Yamamoto (Dist 11, Seat A) lost to more right challenger Kent Marmon.
- Kenny Wroten (Dist 13, Seat B) lost to more right challenger Steve Tanner.
- Melissa Durant (Dist 23, Seat A) lost to challenger Chris Bruce, a sitting Kuna City Councilman
- Tina Lambert (Dist 23, Seat B) lost to more traditional GOP challenger Shawn Dygert.
- Chenele Dixon (Dist 24, Seat A) lost to more right challenger Clint Hostetler.
- Greg Lanting (Dist 25, Seat B) lost to more right challenger David Leavitt.
- Juliann Young (Dist 30, Seat B) lost to more traditional GOP challenger Ben Fuhriman. The loss was by 10 votes so we expect a recount.

This should also shift the House GOP caucus slightly further right as well, by about four seats.

Leading up to the 2024 Primary we had 7 departures from the legislature this cycle between retirements and members running for a different office.

2024 Retiring Legislators:

House

- Representative Sage Dixon (Dist 1, Seat B) Republican, Assistant Majority Leader
- Representative Mike Kingsley (Dist 7, Seat A) Republican
- Representative Chris Allgood (Dist 11, Seat B) Republican – now a City of Caldwell Councilmember
- Representative Lauren Necochea (Dist 19, Seat A) Democrat, Assistant Minority Leader
- Representative Colin Nash (Dist 16, Seat B) Democrat – now a Boise City Councilmember
- Representative Sue Chew (Dist 17, Seat B) Democrat

Senate

- Senator Abby Lee (Dist 9), Republican, Assistant Majority Leader