



# Matt Cohen & Associates

Special Education, Disability Rights & Human Services Law

## **Why it is important to the rights of children and adults with disabilities to have a DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT**

September 12, 2022

There are many reasons to be concerned about the political life of our country. The rights of many different groups in our society are threatened by the profound tilt to the right and intensifying effort to undermine basic democratic values and explicit constitutional and legislative protections. Ultimately, these threats are threats to all of us. This should be grounds to mobilize and do all we can to preserve our democratic values and the democracy itself.

I generally try to keep my personal political views separate from my law firm activities. But the state of the country calls for action that is beyond business as usual. For families of children and adults with disabilities, like other groups being attacked and marginalized by right-wing Republican power structure, and by Trump and his supporters, there is special reason for our concern.

Here are SEVEN IMPORTANT REASONS TO PREVENT Republican control of the Senate and House:

- 1) More conservative judges will be confirmed by the U.S. Senate, leading to more court decisions hostile to kids with disabilities and their families and narrowing the rights available under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, and the ADA;
- 2) Reduced funding for public education, vocational training, and community-based supports for individuals with disabilities;
- 3) Reduced support and funding for enforcement of the disability rights laws, by limiting or reducing the budgets of the U.S. Department of Education, the Office for Civil Rights, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice, particularly the Civil Rights Division;
- 4) Reduced support for voter access laws and increased barriers to accessing curbside and vote by mail provisions, which adversely impact people with disabilities, poor people, and people of color;
- 5) Limits on the scope and funding for the Affordable Care Act (Obama Care), Medicare and Medicaid, all health coverage programs that are disproportionately important for children and adults with disabilities;
- 6) Reduced regulation of air and water pollution, which is an existential threat to all of us due to climate change, but poses heightened risks for people with disabilities that may already have vulnerabilities due to asthma, allergies, and other medical conditions that are caused or aggravated by pollution;
- 7) Increased support for charter school and voucher programs that tend to channel public funds towards those schools and away from neighborhood public schools that must serve all students, leaving public schools to serve the students that often have the greatest needs, but with less money to do so.

I strongly urge my family, friends, colleagues, and clients to get involved in fighting back now! One way to get involved is to volunteer to support candidates in close races. One option that many candidates are utilizing is remote phone support, which means you can support a candidate even if you don't live in that jurisdiction. Perhaps the most important way to do that is to support DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES FOR THE HOUSE AND SENATE in order to ensure that the Democrats maintain and hopefully expand their control of House and Senate in 2022 and 2024.

You can help by getting involved in the campaigns and/or providing financial support. I especially encourage you to provide support for those DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES THAT ARE EITHER AT RISK OF LOSING A SEAT THAT IS CURRENTLY HELD BY DEMOCRATS AND THOSE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES THAT HAVE A CHANCE TO FLIP a seat currently held by a Republican.

***Here are some things you can do to support Democratic candidates:***

- **Vote** on election day!
- If you aren't registered, get registered and vote!
- **Encourage all your friends** to register and vote!
- **Volunteer** to work for Democratic Candidates to get people registered and to vote!
- Here are two sites where you can get information on volunteering in your area and/or in key swing contests:
  - Swing Left: <https://swingleft.org>
  - Democratic National Committee: <https://democrats.org/take-action/>
- **Donate to Democratic candidates.** Considering visiting <https://secure.actblue.com/> and searching for candidate names to find campaigns.

Put your time and efforts into the campaigns where it will make the most difference. To help with that, I have compiled a list drawn from a number of different sources of polling and qualitative data about the "tight" or "hot" races to help you to find candidates you can support in your area or around the country.

I also include links below to the [ActBlue website](#), which allows you to access candidate websites and/or make direct donations to all of the candidates listed below. It also allows you to set up a personal account to make donations to multiple candidates, shifting between campaigns, without having to reenter all your personal information each time. And note that the personal information that they are asking for is required by federal finance laws).

Please join me to support these candidates and help preserve our democracy and a government that is for ALL the people, not just the rich, white, and powerful.

Matt

## **Key Senate and House Races**

Visit <https://secure.actblue.com/> and search for candidates to locate current fundraising campaigns.

### **Key Senate Races**

*Numbers in parentheses are current poll numbers for the Democratic candidate  
Inc = incumbent*

Georgia: **Sen. Raphael Warnock (Dem, Inc)** v. Herschel Walker (+4)

Pennsylvania: **Lt Gov. John Fetterman (Dem)** v. Mehmet Oz (+11)

Arizona: **Sen. Mark Kelly (Dem, Inc)** v. Blake Kelly (+8)

Wisconsin: **Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes (Dem)** v. Sen. Ron Johnson (+4)

North Carolina: **Judge Cheri Beasley (Dem)** v. Ted Budd (Tied)

Michigan: **Rep. Tim Ryan (Dem)** v. J.J. Vance (-3%)

Nevada: **Sen. Catherine Cortez-Masto (Dem, Inc)** v. Adam Laxalt (+2)

New Hampshire: **Sen. Maggie Hassan (Dem, Inc)** v. Bolduc (+4)

Colorado: **Sen. Michael Bennet (Dem, Inc)** v. Joe O'Dea (favored)

Florida: **Val Demings (Dem)** v. Sen. Marco Rubio (-7%)

Washington: **Sen. Patti Murray (Dem, Inc)** v. Smiley (+6)

### **Key House Races**

Visit <https://secure.actblue.com/> and search for candidates to locate current fundraising campaigns.

Inc = incumbent

Alaska **Mary Peltola (Dem)** v. Sarah Palin (R)

California #22 **Rudy Salas (Dem)** v. Rep. David Valadao (Inc)

California #27 **Christy Smith (Dem)** v. Rep. Mike Garcia (R, Inc)

California # 36 **Will Rollins (Dem)** v. Rep. Ken Calvert (R, Inc)

Colorado # 8 **Yadira Caraveo (Dem)** v. Barbara Kirkmeyer (R)

Illinois #14 **Rep. Lauren Underwood (Dem, Inc)** v. Scott Gryder (R)

Illinois #17 **Eric Sorenson (Dem)** v. Ester King (R)

Indiana #1 **Rep. Frank Mrvan (Dem, Inc)** v. Jennifer-Ruth Green (R)

Iowa #3 **Rep. Cindy Axne (Dem, Inc)** Zac Nunn (R)

Kansas #3 **Rep. Sharice Davids (Dem, Inc)** vs. Amanda Atkins (rep)

Michigan #3 **Hillary Scholten (Dem)** v. John Gibbs (Rep)

Michigan # 5 Rep. **Dan Kildee (Dem, Inc)** v. Paul Junge (R)

Michigan #8 **Rep. Elissa Slotkin (Dem, Inc)** v. Tom Barrett (R)

Nebraska #2 **Tony Vargas (Dem)** v. Rep. Don Bacon (R, Inc)

New Hampshire #1 **Rep. Chris Pappas (Dem, Inc)** v. Republican TBD

New Jersey #7 **Rep. Tom Malinowski (Dem, Inc)** v. Tom Kean (R)

New Mexico #2 **Gabe Vasquez (Dem)** v. Rep Yvette Howell (R, Inc)

Nevada #1 **Rep. Dina Titus (Dem, Inc)** v. Mark Robertson (R)

Ohio # 1 **Greg Landsman (Dem)** v. Rep. Steve Chabot (R. Inc)

Pennsylvania # 7 **Rep. Susan Wild (Dem, Inc)** v. Lisa Scheller (R)

Texas #15 **Rep. Vicente Gonzalez (Dem, Inc)** vs. Monica De La Cruz (R)

Virginia # 2 **Rep. Elaine Luria (Dem, Inc)** v Jennifer Kiggans (R)

Virginia #7 **Rep. Abigail Spanberger (Dem, Inc)** vs. Yesli Vega (R)

Washington # 3 **Marie Perez (Dem)** vs. Joe Kent (R)

## **Additional Resources**

- [Rules for voting access in all 50 states](#)
- [Visit the Council of Parents Attorneys and Advocates \(COPAA\) website](#) for additional information on voting and voter registration
- An alternative: SwingLeft allows for a single donation that will be distributed evenly among the Democratic candidates in the top seven swing races.
  - [Visit SwingLeft to make a donation.](#)