

# theIntersection

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Welcome to The Intersection, Echelon Insights' newsletter about news at the crossroads of polling, data, and technology.

Comments? Questions? Tips? Don't hold back: [patrick@echeloninsights.com](mailto:patrick@echeloninsights.com).

**David Byler: The (early) verdict: The polls were okay!** (The Washington Post)

"Over the past six years, many pundits predicted — even confidently proclaimed — the death of the polling industry. Based on the results of the midterm elections so far, it seems that those rumors were greatly exaggerated.

Before the election, the FiveThirtyEight aggregate showed a 1.2 percentage point Republican lead in national House polls, and the RealClearPolitics average put the GOP ahead by 2.5 points. In the current House map — which is essentially fair to both parties — that nets out to a small Republican lead.

The polls also showed a close race in several Senate contests, with both parties standing a good chance of winning the upper chamber. So far, the initial results — though still incomplete — roughly match that picture."

**Nate Silver: Candidate Quality Mattered** (FiveThirtyEight)

"On Monday, I wrote about my three key questions heading into Election Day. I'll address the first two — about polling error and turnout — at length once results are a bit more final. But the third question, about whether candidate quality would matter, is the easiest to answer: It's a resounding yes.

For one thing, just look at the large difference between Senate and gubernatorial results in states with both types of races on the ballot. In the nine states with battleground<sup>1</sup> Senate races in states that also had a gubernatorial race on the ballot, there were significant discrepancies between the performance of the candidates:"

## Ticket-splitting abounded in key Senate and gubernatorial races

Margin between Democratic and Republican candidates as of 3 p.m. Eastern on Nov. 9 in battleground Senate races that also had a gubernatorial race on the ballot

STATE	MARGIN		
	SENATE	GOVERNOR	DIFFERENCE
New Hampshire	D+9.6	R+15.7	25.3
Ohio	R+6.6	R+25.6	19.0
Pennsylvania	D+3.4	D+13.4	10.0
Georgia	D+0.9	R+7.6	8.5
Colorado	D+12.2	D+17.1	4.9
Wisconsin	R+1.0	D+3.4	4.4
Arizona	D+5.0	D+0.7	4.3
Florida	R+16.4	R+19.4	3.0
Nevada	R+2.7	R+4.8	2.1

SOURCE: ABC NEWS

### [Amy Walter: Calcified Politics Gives Us Another Close Election](#) (The Cook Political Report)

"Just as Democrats did in 2020, Republicans came into the 2022 midterms expecting a landslide. Sky-high inflation, an unpopular President, and pessimism about the direction of the country all pointed to a 'typical' midterm romp for the party out of power.

But, as we have written extensively over the last two years, other fundamentals matter in our politics; fundamental structural realities make 'landslide' elections harder and harder to come by. \

First, as I wrote earlier this fall (citing the amazing work of political scientists John Sides, Chris Tausanovitch, and Lynn Vavreck), events and the responses to them from politicians no longer have the ability to deeply and fundamentally reshape our politics or political coalitions. With fewer people willing to 'defect', even when they are unhappy with the status quo, you get more close elections and fewer 'wave' elections. Also, when every election is an existential election, the drop-off among 'in-party' voters, which was once common in midterm elections, is no longer the case."

### [Chuck Todd, Mark Murray, Ben Kamisar, Bridget Bowman and Alexandra Marquez: Voters who 'somewhat' disapproved of Biden broke for Democrats](#) (NBC News)

"If it's Thursday ... Control of both House and Senate remains uncalled. ... GOP needs to win eight of 33 undecided House races for a majority, while Democrats need to win 26 of them. ... In Arizona Senate, Sen. Mark Kelly leads Blake Masters, 51%-46%, with 76% in. ... In Nevada Senate, Republican Adam Laxalt is ahead of Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto by 15,800 votes, but bulk of what's left are mail-in ballots from Clark and Washoe counties. ... Georgia Senate heads to Dec. 6 runoff. ... And President Biden, after celebrating his party's midterm performance, departs for overseas trip to Egypt and Cambodia.

But first: So how did Democrats defy historical trends and overperform in a midterm election when President Biden's approval rating stood at 44%, according to the national exit poll?

Answer: They narrowly won what turned out to be the true swing voters in this election — those who "somewhat" disapproved of Biden."

[\*\*David Byler: The 2022 election results tell us nothing about 2024\*\*](#) (The Washington Post)

"As soon as the 2022 election results are finalized (which could take weeks in some races), pundits will use the returns to make predictions about 2024. That's just how the political parlor game is played.

When you see these predictions (and that's a "when" not an "if"), be skeptical. Historically, midterm results have told us nothing about who will win the next presidential election."

## Midterm results don't predict the next presidential election

MIDTERM YEAR	MIDTERM RESULTS: SHIFT IN HOUSE SEATS	PRESIDENTIAL POPULAR VOTE, TWO YEARS LATER
1950	R+28	R+11
1954	D+19	R+15
1958	D+49	D+0.2
1962	R+4	D+23
1966	R+48	R+1
1970	D+12	R+23
1974	D+48	D+2
1978	R+15	R+10
1982	D+26	R+18
1986	D+5	R+8
1990	D+8	D+6
1994	R+54	D+9
1998	D+5	D+1
2002	R+8	R+3
2006	D+30	D+7
2010	R+63	D+4
2014	R+13	D+2
2018	D+41	D+5
2022	TBD	TBD

Source: [The Brookings Institution](#), David Leip

DAVID BYLER / THE WASHINGTON POST

### [Alex Samuels: Can Raphael Warnock Pull Off Another Senate Runoff?](#)(FiveThirtyEight)

“In short, the eventual outcome of Warnock and Republican Herschel Walker’s runoff on Dec. 6 may in part hinge on whether control of the Senate hangs in balance. As of now, the Senate will include 48 Democrats and 48 Republicans, with three other as-yet-unprojected Senate races in Alaska, Arizona and Nevada. Returns

give Republicans an edge as of now in both Alaska and Nevada. Arizona, meanwhile, tilts slightly toward Democrats currently. With a Democratic win in the Pennsylvania Senate race last night, that means Democrats need to hold on to two of their three competitive seats — Arizona, Nevada and/or Georgia — in order to reach 50 seats and maintain their majority in the chamber. If Georgia is the deciding seat, parties will likely throw everything they have at the Georgia runoff, even with Walker’s obvious warts as a candidate.”

### Before 2020, the GOP usually gained ground in Georgia runoffs

Shift in vote margin and percentage change in turnout from the general election to the runoff for statewide races in Georgia, 1992-2020

YEAR	OFFICE	GENERAL MARGIN	RUNOFF MARGIN	DIFF.
<b>2020</b>	<b>U.S. Senate</b>	<b>R+1.8</b>	<b>D+1.2</b>	<b>D+3.0</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>U.S. Senate*</b>	<b>R+1.0</b>	<b>D+2.1</b>	<b>D+3.1</b>
2020	Public Service Commission	R+2.9	R+0.8	D+2.2
2018	Secretary of State	R+0.4	R+3.8	R+3.4
2018	Public Service Commission	R+2.1	R+3.5	R+1.4
<b>2008</b>	<b>U.S. Senate</b>	<b>R+2.9</b>	<b>R+14.9</b>	<b>R+12.0</b>
2008	Public Service Commission	D+0.6	R+13.0	R+13.7
2006	Public Service Commission	D+2.6	R+4.4	R+7.0
1998	Public Service Commission*	D+15.8	D+31.4	D+15.6
<b>1992</b>	<b>U.S. Senate</b>	<b>D+1.6</b>	<b>R+1.3</b>	<b>R+2.9</b>
1992	Public Service Commission	R+0.7	R+13.6	R+12.9

[Emily Ekins: This may help explain why Republicans didn’t take the Senate](#)



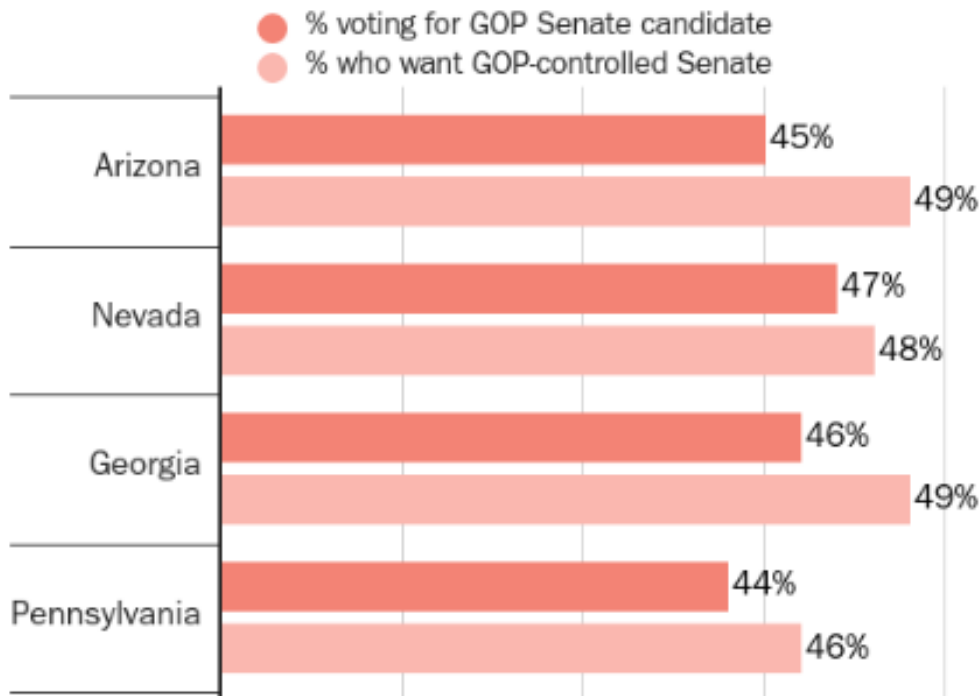
Emily Ekins  
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## This may help explain why Republicans didn't take the Senate

Emily Ekins @emilyekins · Nov 4

Interesting poll finding, more voters in key senate races want Republicans to control the Senate than are currently planning to vote for the Republican candidate in their state.

### KEY SENATE RACES: More want Republicans to control the Senate than plan on voting for the Republican Senate candidate in their state



Source: October 2022 New York Times/Siena Polls,  
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/10/31/upshot/senate-polls-az-ga-nv-pa-crosstabs.html>.  
Graphic compiled by Jordan Gygi and Emily Ekins, Cato Institute