

## Democrats await Raskin's decision on Senate race

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If he decides to run for U.S. Senate, Rep. Jamie Raskin could shake up what has so far has been seen as a two-candidate Democratic primary for the Maryland seat.

Raskin, who is “seriously considering” entering the race to replace outgoing Sen. Ben Cardin, said on CNN this week that he plans to announce his decision by July 4. Primary election day is set for May 14, 2024.

“As some of my House colleagues have pointed out, these Senate seats only open up every 25 or 30 years,” Raskin said on CNN’s State of the Union.

Cardin was first elected to the Senate in 2006, while Maryland’s junior senator, Chris Van Hollen, was first elected in 2016.

Walter Olson, a senior fellow and writer for the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank in Washington, D.C., said Prince George’s County Executive Angela Alsobrooks is the early favorite in the race, ahead of U.S. Rep. David Trone, the wealthy co-founder of Total Wine & More.

Alsobrooks has a coalition of leading Democrats backing her, including two of Raskin’s House colleagues: U.S. Reps. Kweisi Mfume and Steny Hoyer, a former House majority leader.

Montgomery County Councilman Will Jawando and activist Jerome Segal have also announced their candidacies for the Democratic nomination.

“My feeling all along was that [Raskin] would not run,” Olson said, adding that the congressman currently has a desirable position as an influential member of the House and a national following for his prominence in the investigation of former President Donald Trump’s role in the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol.

While Trone is a “formidable” candidate, especially considering his ability to fund his own campaign and his early strategy of paying seven figures to boost his name recognition with television advertisements, Raskin’s presence in the race could weaken Trone’s chances of winning, Olson said.

Raskin’s entire district is in Montgomery County, Maryland’s most populous county. Trone’s district, which is mostly in Western Maryland, includes northern Montgomery County.

Alsobrooks would benefit from Montgomery County voters being torn between the two congressmen.

Though Roger Hartley, dean of the College of Public Affairs at the University of Baltimore, said a race with Raskin in it would be close.

He agreed that Trone and Raskin could “cannibalize each other’s votes” in Montgomery County, but he said the two men may have more statewide name recognition than Alsobrooks.

Raskin’s war chest would help his chances, too, Hartley said. With more than \$3.3 million in cash on hand as of March 31, according to a report from the Federal Election Commission, Raskin would be in a better starting position to match Trone’s spending power than Alsobrooks, who cannot transfer her county campaign money directly to her federal committee.

Trone has reportedly said he is willing to spend upwards of \$50 million on his campaign.

S. Anthony (Tony) McCann, a former Maryland health secretary who has held roles in U.S. Senate and House committees, agreed that Raskin would be a top contender for the open Senate seat.

“He’s certainly going to get a lot of people in his district and a lot of people considering the role he’s played in the House,” said McCann, now a lecturer at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy.

McCann said that Raskin’s national profile may also help him make inroads with voters in Baltimore city and Baltimore County — two jurisdictions from which a candidate has not yet emerged.

Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski Jr., a fellow Democrat who was at one point seen as a potential candidate, also has endorsed Alsobrooks.