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The 13 Down Ballot Races at the Heart of Abortion Access in 2024

Forward Majority Invests Seven-Figures in New “Protecting Abortion in the Battlegrounds” Initiative

In the two years since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, nearly two dozen states have either restricted or banned abortion access, driving one of the most severe wars on women and those needing reproductive care that our country has seen in decades.

This election cycle, abortion access isn't just on the ballot – it will be one of the key issues deciding 2024. And while the fight for reproductive justice has become a central talking point in the presidential race, Democrats cannot ignore the new reality: state legislatures are the backstop of our right to safe abortions. In order to protect abortion access nationwide, Democrats must prioritize electing progressives at the state level and combat the growing attacks from anti-abortion Republicans.

Don't Be Fooled – Abortion Is Already Being Left to the States

In April of this year, former President Trump made his stance on abortion clear when he stated that, if elected President, [he would leave abortion up to the states](#). During his [infamous TIME interview](#) Trump doubled down on this commitment and confirmed he would allow red states to monitor people's pregnancies and prosecute those who violate abortion bans. While we should wholeheartedly believe Trump's promise on abortion, we can't ignore the fact that abortion is already being left up to the states. In fact, since *Roe* was overturned in 2022, [14 states](#) have ruled to ban abortion. At the same time, [21 states](#) have ruled to expand protections around abortion.

This is a state-level fight that isn't going away anytime soon. Even if President Biden wins reelection, the Supreme Court remains conservative, and there are limitations to the Executive Orders President Biden can pass reinstating federal abortion access. Swinging state legislatures blue will be critical to protecting, and reinstating, our reproductive freedoms, and Democrats need to act now.

Abortion Access in the Hands of Suburban Voters

With the Trump realignment we've seen since 2016 and the overturning of *Roe* in 2022, the battleground turf needed to win has narrowed: rather than a few battleground states, voters who live in just a handful of suburban legislative districts will decide control of Congress, the White House, and all the rights that fall to state legislatures – including reproductive rights. Despite the fact that the most egregious GOP candidates on abortion aren't solely in the suburbs, the battleground states will be won or lost in the suburbs. That's because the voters in these districts reside in the most powerful geography in America, where they will cast decisive votes at every level of the ballot.



Our suburban battleground overlaps with what will be critical for Democrats in the path to holding the White House and winning back the US House. These super voters are the most important voters in the country – who will be voting in the most competitive and critical races up and down the ballot. In 2020, Biden won these states by razor thin margins (his electoral victory was clinched by just ~45,000 votes in 3 states). These tiny margins are even more extreme down-ballot: in 2022, the US House flipped by just ~6,000 votes in 5 races; this same year, the Pennsylvania State House flipped by just 63 votes in one race, and the Michigan State Senate came down to ~300 votes.

Forward Majority’s State-by-State Fight for Reproductive Justice

- Forward Majority's 7-figure investment will go towards electoral programs to persuade and turn out voters across these key legislative districts.
- In addition, Forward Majority is working to register thousands of pro-choice voters across the suburban battleground ahead of this November’s election.

The 13 Races Democrats Must Prioritize to Protect Abortion

To continue to build a Blue wall and protect our abortion access from the ground up, Forward Majority has identified the most extreme Republicans on abortion, across 13 state legislative races, that Democrats need to prioritize.

Chamber	State	District	Incumbent	County	Region	Suburban ?	2024 Haley	2020 Biden Performance	Support of Anti-Abortion Bills
House	AZ	16	Teresa Martinez	Pima, Pinal	Phoenix - Tucson	Partial	21%	48.0%	Introduced HB 2483; Voted for HB 2502, SB 1164
House	AZ	17	Rachel Jones	Pima, Pinal	Tucson	Partial	21%	47.8%	Voted against 1864 ban repeal
House	AZ	17	Cory McGarr	Pima, Pinal	Tucson	Partial	21%	47.8%	Sponsored “Abolish Abortion in Arizona Act”; Voted for HB 2502
Senate	AZ	2	Shawwna Bolick	Maricopa	Phoenix	No	20%	48.9%	Co-sponsored HB 2650; Voted for SB 1164



Senate	AZ	17	Justine Wadsack	Pima, Pinal	Tucson	Partial	21% / 14%	47.8%	Co-sponsored SB 1600; Voted for HB 2502
Senate	AZ	17	Venden "Vince" Leach	Pima, Pinal	Tucson	Partial	21% / 14%	47.8%	Voted for SB 1164
House	PA	137	Joe Emrick	Northampton	LeHigh Valley	Partial	14%	50.3%	Voted for SB 106
House	MI	46	Kathy Schmaltz	Jackson, Washtenaw	Ann Arbor	Partial	23% / 44%	49.9%	Voted against HB 4006, HB 4031 and HB 4032
House	WI	30	Shannon Zimmerman	St. Croix, Pierce	Northwest	No	12%	49.0%	Voted for AB 975
House	WI	85	Patrick "Pat" Snyder	Marathon	North Central	No	10%	50.0%	Voted for AB 975
House	WI	92	Clint Moses	Marathon	North Central	Partial	10%	48%	Voted for AB 975
House	WI	94	Ryan Huebsch	La Crosse, Trempealeau	Eau Claire-La Crosse	Partial	17% / 11%	50.0%	Pro-Life Candidate
Senate	WI	14	Joan Ballweg	Dane	Madison	Yes	24%	50.0%	Sponsored SB 16

ARIZONA

Arizona continues to be at the heart of our fight for reproductive justice in the United States and a key example of the power of state legislatures when it comes to protecting access to abortion. While Arizona’s elected leaders voted to overturn the 1864 abortion ban – after significant public pressure and backlash – the fight isn’t over.

Democrats need to make clear to Arizona voters that their abortion rights are still on the line and escalate the fight to regain control of the legislatures and vote out the far-right extremists threatening



abortion access. That's why Forward Majority is investing in six races in 2024 to elect progressive leaders and secure Democratic majorities.

All six Republicans that Forward Majority has identified in Arizona voted against repealing the 1864 abortion ban, and the majority have a long record of backing anti-abortion bills, including SB 1164, which successfully passed in March 2022, banning abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy with no exceptions for rape or incest. These electeds also supported other abortion bans, including HB 2483, which would create a Texas-style "heartbeat" abortion ban, HB 2502, a backdoor attempt at establishing fetal personhood to strip Arizonans of their reproductive rights and HB 2650, which would have required women who have abortions to be charged with homicide.

While overturning the 1864 ban was a critical win for progressives in the state, it was just the beginning of our fight to ensure abortion access for Arizonans. Electing in pro-choice Democrats in 2024, and keeping out right-wing extremists, will be critical to protecting our rights from the ground-up.

PENNSYLVANIA

Abortion is on the ballot this year in Pennsylvania. In 2022, Republican lawmakers passed an amendment, SB 106, declaring there is no right to abortion in the state's constitution. If the amendment were to pass the legislature a second time, it would go to a statewide referendum. However, with Democrats maintaining control of the state House, it's unlikely that the amendment will pass, and abortion should remain legal through the 23rd week of pregnancy or in the case that the health of a pregnant person is in danger, as is current law.

Democrats' recent gains in PA, including picking up two Senate seats last year, have been critical to protecting reproductive rights in the state. In the House, Democrats have a one-seat majority. The party needs to maintain this control and ideally expand their majority in order to protect Pennsylvanians' abortion access. Defeating Republican incumbent Joe Emrick, who voted in favor of SB 106, will be critical to this fight.

MICHIGAN

When it comes to abortion rights, Michigan is a far rosier picture than Arizona and Pennsylvania. In 2022, following the Dobbs decision, Michigan voters overwhelmingly passed a ballot initiative that codified abortion rights in the state's constitution. In fact, the ballot initiative drove record voter turnout among Democrats. With full legislative control, Michigan Democrats have also successfully repealed the 1931 abortion ban and lifted regulations on abortion clinics.

However, anti-abortion advocates are continuing to escalate attempts to overturn these rights. One extremist group, Right to Life of Michigan, has challenged Proposal 3 in federal court, arguing that the state's abortion access violates federal constitutional rights. Republican incumbent in District 46 Kathy



Schmaltz was endorsed by the Right to Life of Michigan and voted against the package of bills that stripped the 1931 abortion ban from Michigan law.

With Democrats controlling the House and Senate, our priority at Forward Majority is maintaining this control and preventing far-right Republicans like Schmaltz from winning key elections.

WISCONSIN

In Wisconsin, abortion is currently legal up to 20 weeks of pregnancy, but Republicans maintain control of both chambers and continue to challenge the right to abortion in the state. To protect abortion access in the state, it's critical Democrats take control from the current anti-abortion Republicans in power, starting with those who are actively passing anti-abortion bills.

In January 2024, the Wisconsin House passed AB 975, which would have set up a statewide referendum for a 14-week abortion ban. Meanwhile, the Wisconsin Supreme Court is set to hear a case over a state law from 1849 that classifies the "willful killing of an unborn quick child" as manslaughter. Currently, the law does not apply to abortions, and with a liberal majority on the Supreme Court, it's likely the lower court's ruling will be upheld.

At Forward Majority, we're fighting to take back the majority in Wisconsin and prioritizing investments in five key races this election year, including against four far-right Republican incumbents and one anti-choice candidate.