



Christy Davis



Roger Marshall



Erik Murray



Sandy Spidel Neumann



Anne Parelkar



Michael Soetaert

Who's running to represent Kansas in the U.S. Senate in 2026?

Here's a guide to the candidates

By Zane Irwin
Kansas News Service

A Democrat has not represented Kansas in the U.S. Senate since before the original Wizard of Oz film played in theaters.

Ever since Democratic Sen. George McGill left his seat in January of 1939, Kansas Republicans have enjoyed an 86-year run in the upper chamber of Congress.

Ahead of the 2026 elections, five Democratic candidates have filed to challenge first-term Republican Sen. Roger Marshall.

Odds makers favor Republicans to retain their majority in the Senate. But Democrats hope enough popular dissatisfaction with the current presidential

administration might damage Republicans' electoral chances in Congress.

Primary elections are on Aug. 4, 2026. Voters will decide the next governor of Kansas — as well as a U.S. senator, state attorney general, state insurance commissioner, secretary of state and state treasurer — on Nov. 3, 2026.

REPUBLICANS

Roger Marshall, Republican

Political experience: Marshall, in Great Bend, assumed office as Kansas' junior senator in 2021. Previously, he served one term as the U.S. Representative for the state's "Big First" rural district encompassing much of western and central Kansas.

What else? Marshall is a former OB-GYN. He also served in the U.S. Army Reserve for seven years.

Platform: The former physician has taken strong stances against expanded abortion access and mask mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic. He was one of six Republican senators who objected to the 2020 electoral count based on unsubstantiated claims of widespread voter fraud — after rioters descended on the capitol and disrupted proceedings. Most recently, the senator proposed a "Marshall" plan to address rising health care costs. Instead of extending enhanced premium tax credits for three years, as Democrats had demanded during the government shutdown, Marshall proposed extending the credits for one year and then replacing

them with health savings accounts. Congress did not end up extending the subsidies at all.

DEMOCRATS

Christy Davis, Democrat

Political experience: Davis, in Cottonwood Falls, served as the Kansas director for USDA rural development under former President Joe Biden. She was also on the board of the Chase County Chamber of Commerce and led the Symphony in the Flint Hills.

What else? Davis ran for Kansas' 1st Congressional District in 2020.

Platform: Davis says President Trump's tariffs are causing instability for farmers and rural communities. On immigration, Davis' website says she will "fight for immigration reform that provides a pathway to citizenship and ends inhumane policies that terrorize families and unconstitutionally deprive Kansans of due process."

Anne Parelkar, Democrat

Political experience: Parelkar, in Overland Park, has never run for public office.

What else? Parelkar has worked as an immigration attorney. She's admitted to practice law in Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas, where she grew up.

Platform: In an email, Parelkar said she wants to create "a single consolidated program" to provide health care to people under 18, rather than relying on a patchwork of options like Medicaid and the Children's Health



Voters in Kansas City, Kansas, showing up at the Wyandotte County Election office for the last minutes of early voting on Nov. 7, 2022. Carlos Moreno/KCUR 89.3

Insurance Program, or CHIP. She said that would simplify coverage and ensure children have health care access regardless of family circumstances. Parelkar also would like to pass stronger antitrust and consumer protection laws.

Erik Murray, Democrat

Political experience: Murray, in Kansas City, Kansas, is a commercial real estate developer. He has never run for public office.

What else? The Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas, recently chose Murray's firm to lead a billion-dollar project to redevelop the site of the former Indian Springs mall.

Platform: If elected, Murray's website says he would focus on lowering costs for starting and running small businesses. He told the Kansas City Star that he supports federal policies like the

Opportunity Zones program, which provides tax incentives for investments in economically distressed areas.

Michael Soetaert, Democrat

Political experience: Soetaert was, until recently, a city council member in Wellington. For years, the former Republican has run for various local, state and federal offices.

What else? Soetaert grew up in Spring Hill, Kansas.

Platform: Soetaert told the Hutchinson News in 2019 that he was a conservative, pro-life candidate. His website says he changed his mind on the issue of abortion after "Kansans voted for bodily autonomy." Soetaert supported the Respect for Marriage Act in 2022, which shored up some protections for gay marriage in case the U.S. Supreme Court overturns its 2015 decision

establishing the right.

Sandy Spidel Neumann, Democrat

Political experience: Spidel Neumann, in Mission, has not held public office. Records show she has made over 120 donations to Democratic candidates and organizations, including a recent \$5,000 donation to the Kansas Democratic Party.

What else? She recently retired after over 20 years as a financial services executive at Ameriprise.

Platform: On health care, Spidel Neumann says she "supports reinstating Medicaid funding, extending funding for ACA subsidies, keeping the government out of women's healthcare decisions, and fighting pharmaceutical companies to reduce arbitrary and escalating drug prices." She says she opposes cuts to funding for veterans' mental health and other services.

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