

## Minnesota Primary: Key Incumbents Sent Packing

Alert

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By Paul Cassidy

In the face of a pandemic, while many Minnesotans went to their assigned polling places yesterday in order to cast ballots for a number of contested inter-party challenges on both the DFL and Republican side of the aisle, hovering over the election is the specter of counting thousands of mail-in absentee ballots in a timely fashion. Due to the pandemic, many polling places have been consolidated and polling officials worry also that they don't have enough election judges and ballot officials. As of Tuesday morning, almost 500,000 voters had cast their ballot votes by mail. Additionally, due to a court order, absentee ballots will be accepted after Election Day, up to the day before the county's canvassing date.

Headlining this year's Minnesota primary was a pitched battle between first-term incumbent U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar and her challenger Antone Melton-Meaux, who were fighting for the DFL nomination and the right to go on to the general election. The race captured national attention due to Omar's high-profile progressive views and her membership in the "The Squad." Political analysts believe when all is said and done, this race will far outspend any previous primary totals in the history of Minnesota elections. In the end, Omar coasted to a relatively easy victory, with numbers not far off from her 2018 primary victory.

A number of sitting Minnesota legislators faced challenges within their own party and fought to keep their seats in the Minnesota House and Senate. After the votes were totaled, it was a tough night for a number of DFL incumbents, who lost to challengers from the more progressive wing of the party. The following is a brief rundown of races we are following including races at the federal, state and local levels:

(Note: all vote totals are as of Wednesday, August 12 at 8 a.m.)

Congress:

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**CD 5 DFL:** DFL-endorsed incumbent Ilhan Omar faced-off against mediator Antone Melton-Meaux, resulting in an Omar victory with a margin of 57-39%.

**CD 7 GOP:** After gaining the CD 7 Republican nomination and President Trump's backing, former state senator Michelle Fischbach cinched the primary from retired Air Force Maj. and former nominee Dave Hughes and physician Noel Collis. She won with 59% of the vote. She will take on 14-year incumbent Collin Peterson. This is a seat Republicans have a strong chance to flip in the general election. In 2016, Trump carried the district by 31 points.

### MN House:

**MN District 31A:** Incumbent Minority Leader Kurt Daudt had a primary challenge from Beau Hullermann. Daudt won convincingly with 86% of the vote.

**MN District 51B:** Eagan Mayor Mike Maguire and DFL-endorsed Liz Reyer's DFL primary bout to fill the seat vacated by Rep. Laurie Halverson's retirement resulted in Reyer coasting to an easy victory with 63% of the vote.

**MN District 55A:** Former Shakopee Minnesota House District 55A representative Bob Loonan and Erik Mortensen repeated their 2018 primary battle, this time to challenge incumbent DFL Rep. Brad Tabke. Mortensen again pulled off a victory with a 55-45% margin.

**MN District 59B:** Rep. Raymond Dehn, a four-term incumbent, lost the DFL endorsement to Esther Agbaje, an associate with Ciresi Conlin LLP and former State Department employee. He additionally lost the primary by a 47-42% margin.

**MN District 63A:** Rep. Jim Davnie, a 10-term incumbent, faced a DFL primary from former Minneapolis City Council Candidate April Kane. Davnie pulled off an easy victory with 79% of the vote.

**MN District 66B:** Rep. John Lesch, in his ninth term, faced a DFL primary from Athena Hollins. In the end, Lesch was the rare incumbent endorsed by the DFL to lose the primary, as Hollins won with relative ease with a 60-40% margin in the race.

Other House incumbents who fended off primary challengers include GOP Representatives Shane Mekeland, Paul Torkelson, Jeremy Munson, Anne Neu, and DFL Representative Sandy Masin.

### MN Senate:

**Senate District 7:** Incumbent Sen. Eric Simonson lost the primary election after losing the DFL nomination to challenger Jen McEwen. McEwen, an attorney, dominated with a 74-26% win.

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**Senate District 9:** Senate Majority Leader Gazelka coasted to an easy win over his challenger, Richard Dahl with 85% of the vote.

**Senate District 47:** Following the retirement of Sen. Scott Jensen, Julia Coleman defeated Thomas Funk in the Republican primary with 63% of the vote, while Addie Miller won easily over Bala Chintaginjala on the DFL side with 87% of the vote. This is a seat likely to remain in GOP hands.

**Senate District 53:** Senate Minority Leader and DFL-endorsed Susan Kent faced challenger Marquita Stephens with a 66-34% margin. Kent will face GOP candidate Mary Giuliani Stephens in what will be an expensive race in the Senate.

**Senate District 56:** DFL-endorsed Lindsey Port fended off two challengers to win with 68% of the vote. Lindsey will challenge incumbent Sen. Dan Hall in the general election. This will be one of the most hotly contested races for the Senate GOP majority in the November election.

**Senate District 62:** DFL-endorsed Omar Fateh challenged incumbent 3rd term Sen. Jeff Hayden. Fateh won handily with a 56-44% margin.

Other Senate incumbents who defeated primary challengers include: DFL Senators David Tomassoni, Sandy Pappas, Chuck Wiger and Bobby Jo Champion and GOP Senator Carrie Ruud.

### County Commissioners:

**Hennepin County District 6:** In a six person field, Hopkins School Board member Chris LaTondresse and former Rep. Dario Anselmo moved on to the general election.

**Hennepin County District 7:** Kevin Anderson, Danny Nadeau and Kim Zellers faced off in the primary for Hennepin County Board Commissioners. Anderson and Nadeau will move on to the general election in November.

**Dakota County District 3:** Former State Rep. Laurie Halverson, Seema Maddali, Scott D. Johnson, Gary Huusko, Janine Hudson and Diane Anderson were on the ballot to replace long-time board member Thomas Egan. Halverson dominated the six-way race with 48% of the vote. She and Anderson, who carried 19% of the vote, will move on to the general election.

For up to date election results, please go to the Minnesota Secretary of State's [election website](#).

You can also follow election results through a number of Minnesota news sources, including:

[Star Tribune](#)

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