



INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is entering the 2026 General Election with an unusually large number of candidates on state legislative ballots across the country. The scale of that presence matters not only because DSA-aligned candidates could influence the direction of their state legislatures if elected, but because state legislative offices can provide a platform, governing experience, donor networks and organizational infrastructure for future campaigns for higher office.

THE DSA HAS AT LEAST

82

STATE LEGISLATIVE
CANDIDATES —

65

ADVANCED TO
NOVEMBER

This year saw at least 82 candidates running state legislative races who are DSA members, DSA endorsees, or self-identified members. Of those, 65 have advanced to the November general election.

This represents a significant expansion of the DSA's electoral footprint at the state level and a potential pipeline for the movement's future political influence.

The DSA's state legislative presence in 2026 extends across 24 states, with candidates running for both state House and state Senate seats.

The largest concentrations are in:



NEW YORK

19 candidates,
with 17 advancing



OREGON

6 candidates,
with 5 advancing



VERMONT

6 candidates,
all advancing



MINNESOTA

5 candidates



PENNSYLVANIA

5 candidates,
with 4 advancing



FLORIDA

4 candidates,
with 3 advancing



MARYLAND

4 candidates



WASHINGTON

4 candidates



WISCONSIN

3 candidates,
with 2 advancing



GEORGIA

3 candidates,
with 2 advancing

Candidates also appear on the ballot in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico and Texas.

Most importantly, 65 of these 82 candidates identified have already advanced to the November General Election. That means the DSA's state legislative presence is no longer simply a primary-season phenomenon. Dozens of DSA-linked candidates will now compete directly for seats in state capitols this fall.

The breadth of this effort also demonstrates that DSA-aligned politics are not limited to congressional races or a handful of heavily Democratic urban districts. DSA state legislative candidates are appearing across multiple regions and in both chambers of state legislatures.

THE CONGRESSIONAL PIPELINE IS ALREADY TAKING SHAPE

The statehouse trend is also relevant because several prominent DSA-aligned Congressional candidates in 2026 have emerged from state and local political organizing.

In New York, [Claire Valdez](#) went from the state Assembly to winning the Democratic nomination for Congress. Michigan provides another example: State Rep. [Donavan McKinney](#), who was backed by DSA, successfully advanced through the Democratic congressional primary.

These victories demonstrate one potential progression: movement organizations can help develop candidates locally and at the state level, provide them with political experience and organizational networks, and eventually support campaigns for Congress.

The congressional results are particularly notable because these DSA-aligned candidates are not simply entering open-seat contests. In several cases, they have challenged and defeated established Democratic incumbents in primaries, demonstrating the movement's ability to organize voters and compete within the Democratic Party.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

The significance of 2026 extends beyond the individual races on this fall's ballot. The candidates competing this November could help determine who holds state legislative power in the near term and, over time, which political organizations and movements have the infrastructure, experience and elected officials to compete for higher office.

The DSA's growing presence in state legislatures is one part of that broader political realignment, but the numbers make clear that it is no longer something that can be viewed solely through the lens of a handful of congressional primaries. With at least 65 DSA-linked state legislative candidates advancing to November, the movement now has a substantial slate of candidates competing for seats in state capitols across the country.

The RSLC has consistently said that socialism starts in the states and that is where we need to stop it. The DSA's growing presence in statehouse races could have dangerous impacts for state policy in the short-term, and it reflects a clearly orchestrated long-term effort to build political power from the state-level up. With the continued support of our partners down the stretch, Republicans have an opportunity to defeat these candidates before they can build the momentum, networks and political infrastructure needed to compete for higher office, and we can do so now at a far more efficient cost than waiting to take them on in races for federal or higher office. Stopping them in the states today is not just about protecting state legislatures; it is about preventing the next generation of DSA candidates from gaining a foothold that could make them significantly harder and more expensive to defeat tomorrow.