

SOCIALIST WATCH 2024

An Analysis of Socialist Candidates
in the 2024 General Election



By Chris Talgo, Jack McPherrin, Donald Kendal, and Justin Haskins

- Socialist organizations endorsed a total of

51

candidates during
the 2024 election.

- Of those 51 candidates,

94%

won their races.

- Socialists won by an average margin of **49 percentage points**.
- Socialist candidates were on the ballot in a total of **22 states** and the District of Columbia. California alone had 10 socialist candidates.

This *Policy Brief* contains a list of candidates who ran for a variety of political offices in the 2024 election while championing far-left, progressive ideology and socialist policies. This paper analyzes the outcomes of those races, compares the results to previous analyses conducted by The Heartland Institute, and provides a brief glimpse into what the future may hold for the socialist movement.

Defining ‘Socialist’ Candidates

Formally determining whether a candidate is “far-left,” “progressive,” or “socialist” can be a subjective exercise, if a specific methodological approach is not utilized. In the interest of objectivity, a requirement for inclusion in this list was that the candidates must have been endorsed by at least one of three organizations: Our Revolution, the Democratic Socialists of America, and/or the Progressive Democrats of America. Over the past several election cycles, these three organizations have emerged as the leading voices of the socialist movement in the United States. Moreover, all three of these groups clearly support socialist principles and public policies and only endorse candidates who align with socialist beliefs.

Our Revolution is a political action group that was created in 2016 in the wake of Sen. Bernie Sanders’ (I-VT) failed presidential campaign. It was formed so that Sanders’ socialist agenda would become part of the Democratic Party’s platform and to support socialist candidates across the United States. Over the past eight years, Our Revolution has become a potent political force as it has advocated for several socialist policies such as the Green New Deal, Medicare for All, and wealth taxes.¹

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is the foremost national socialist organization in the United States. Founded in 1971, the DSA promotes “single-payer Medicare for All, defunding the police/refunding communities, the Green New Deal, and more.”² It also should be noted that the DSA launched the Young Democratic Socialists of America in 2018, which aims to “divest our schools from fossil fuels and Israeli apartheid,” “bring key sectors of the economy under social control,” and fight “for transformative reforms such as College for All, Medicare for All, a Green New Deal, and other demands.”³

The Progressive Democrats of America (PDA) is a nonprofit organization “founded in 2004 to transform the Democratic Party and our country.”⁴ Like Our Revolution, the PDA supports the socialist platform espoused by Sanders. In fact, PDA states it was “the first national organization to ask Bernie Sanders to run for President as a Democrat, launching the Run Bernie Run campaign in early 2014.”⁵ Similar to Our Revolution and the DSA, the PDA supports socialist policies such as Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, canceling student loan debt, wealth taxes, and a vast expansion of the welfare state.

Key Takeaways from the 2024 Election

In the 2024 election, Our Revolution, the DSA, and/or the PDA endorsed 51 candidates in total. Of the 51 socialist candidates endorsed, 48 won their races (94 percent), with a 49 percentage point average margin of victory. However, nine of these candidates ran in uncontested races. Taking out those nine candidates, the 39 remaining socialist

candidates won their races by an average margin of approximately 37 percentage points. Only three socialist candidates lost their races, with a 13 percentage point average margin of defeat.

Among the candidates endorsed by these three socialist groups, 27 ran for the U.S. House of Representatives, two ran for the U.S. Senate, 12 ran for statewide offices, and 10 ran for local offices.

These races occurred in 22 states and the District of Columbia. California was the leading state for socialist candidates in the 2024 election, with 10 in total.

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A Brief History of Socialist Candidates’ Performance in Recent Elections

This is the fourth edition of the *Socialist Watch* series. Previous reports were produced after the 2018, 2020, and 2022 elections. The 2024 election results were particularly noteworthy, as the total number of socialist candidates endorsed by Our Revolution, the DSA, and/or the PDA dropped precipitously. For context, 86 candidates were

endorsed by one of these three groups in 2018;⁶ 266 candidates were endorsed in 2020;⁷ and 132 candidates were endorsed in 2022.⁸

Although these three organizations endorsed far fewer candidates in the 2024 election, the overall winning percentage and margins of victory are very similar to those of the 2020 and 2022 elections. In 2018, only 40 percent of the 86 endorsed candidates were victorious, with slim margins of victory in several races. On the other hand, in both 2020 and 2022, the candidates endorsed by these three organizations won more than 90 percent of their elections with average margins of victory exceeding 25 percentage points.

Looking Ahead

While some may interpret the fact that these three organizations endorsed a lower total number of socialist candidates in 2024 as a sign that the socialist movement in the United States is waning, that may not be the case. For example, this year, the DSA decided to endorse only a handful of candidates via their national website, for reasons unknown. Instead, many local DSA chapters were left to endorse their own candidates.⁹ It is possible that the DSA did not want to put a national spotlight on their candidates, fearing that certain candidates being associated with socialism might undermine their chances of victory. But this is purely speculative.

Despite the relatively small slate of socialist candidates in 2024, it is important to recognize

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that Our Revolution, the DSA, and the PDA are not shy about their vision for a socialist revolution in the United States. These organizations are very influential within the Democratic Party and continue

to make inroads as they seek to replace so-called establishment Democrats with far-left socialists.

Moreover, in the wake of the 2024 election and the Democratic Party losing control of the White House and the Senate, a civil war has begun brewing between the more “populist,” socialistic wing of the Democratic Party and the moderate establishmentarians. Time will tell which side emerges as the dominant force in the Democratic Party, though it is not unreasonable to hypothesize that embracing left-wing populism—

in the form of socialism—may be seen as the best strategy to combat the increasingly populist Republican Party.

| Candidate Name (First) | Candidate Name (Last) | State | Office | Won or Lost in 2024 | Socialist Percent Support | Opponent Percent Support | Difference |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Raul | Grijalva | AZ | US House | Won | 64 | 36 | 28 |
| Judy | Chu | CA | US House | Won | 65 | 35 | 30 |
| Sade | Elhawary | CA | California Assembly | Won | 61 | 39 | 22 |
| Ro | Khanna | CA | US House | Won | 68 | 32 | 36 |
| Derek | Marshall | CA | US House | Lost | 40 | 60 | -20 |
| Tina | McKinnor | CA | California Assembly | Won | 78 | 22 | 56 |
| Dave | Min | CA | US House | Won | 51 | 48 | 3 |
| Nithya | Raman | CA | Los Angeles City Council | Won | 100 | 0 | 100 |
| Marisol | Rubio | CA | California Senate | Won | 54 | 46 | 8 |
| Lateefah | Simon | CA | US House | Won | 65 | 35 | 30 |
| Mai | Vang | CA | Sacramento City Council | Won | 100 | 0 | 100 |
| Joe | Neguse | CO | US House | Won | 69 | 29 | 40 |
| Wyatt | Schwendeman | CO | Larimer County Clerk and Recorder | Lost | 42 | 58 | -16 |
| Janeese | Lewis George | DC | Washington, D.C. City Council | Won | 97 | 3 | 94 |
| Madinah | Wilson-Anton | DE | Delaware House | Won | 100 | 0 | 100 |
| Maxwell | Frost | FL | US House | Won | 62 | 38 | 24 |
| Jacqueline | Porter | FL | Tallahassee City Commission | Won | 100 | 0 | 100 |
| Gabriel | Sanchez | GA | Georgia House | Won | 63 | 37 | 26 |
| Chuy | Garcia | IL | US House | Won | 68 | 27 | 41 |
| Jonathan | Jackson | IL | US House | Won | 66 | 34 | 32 |
| Delia | Ramirez | IL | US House | Won | 67 | 32 | 35 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|----------------|----|----------------------------|------|-----|----|-----|
| Jan | Schankowsky | IL | US House | Won | 68 | 32 | 36 |
| JP | Lyninger | KY | Louisville City Council | Won | 100 | 0 | 100 |
| Jim | McGovern | MA | US House | Won | 69 | 31 | 38 |
| Ayanna | Pressley | MA | US House | Won | 100 | 0 | 100 |
| Elizabeth | Warren | MA | US Senate | Won | 60 | 40 | 20 |
| Jamie | Raskin | MD | US House | Won | 77 | 21 | 56 |
| Wes | Pelletier | ME | Portland City Council | Won | 100 | 0 | 100 |
| Debbie | Dingell | MI | US House | Won | 62 | 35 | 27 |
| Alyshia | Dyer | MI | Washtenaw County Sheriff | Won | 98 | 2 | 96 |
| Rashida | Tlaib | MI | US House | Won | 70 | 26 | 44 |
| Ilhan | Omar | MN | US House | Won | 75 | 25 | 50 |
| Alma | Adams | NC | US House | Won | 74 | 26 | 48 |
| Bonnie | Watson-Coleman | NJ | US House | Won | 61 | 37 | 24 |
| Alexandria | Ocasio-Cortez | NY | US House | Won | 69 | 31 | 38 |
| Claire | Valdez | NY | New York Assembly | Won | 100 | 0 | 100 |
| Tristan | Rader | OH | Ohio House | Won | 77 | 23 | 54 |
| Summer | Lee | PA | US House | Won | 56 | 44 | 12 |
| Greg | Casar | TX | US House | Won | 67 | 33 | 34 |
| Lloyd | Doggett | TX | US House | Won | 74 | 24 | 50 |
| Annette | Ramirez | TX | Harris County Tax Assessor | Won | 51 | 49 | 2 |
| Becca | Balint | VT | US House | Won | 62 | 30 | 32 |
| Marek | Broderick | VT | Burlington City Council | Won | 57 | 42 | 15 |
| Emilie | Krasnow | VT | Vermont House | Won | 97 | 3 | 94 |
| Bernie | Sanders | VT | US Senate | Won | 63 | 32 | 31 |
| Tanya | Vyhovsky | VT | Vermont Senate | Won | 100 | 0 | 100 |
| David | Zuckerman | VT | Vermont Lt. Governor | Lost | 47 | 49 | -2 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|------------|----|------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|
| Pramila | Jayapal | WA | US House | Won | 84 | 16 | 68 |
| Shaun | Scott | WA | Washington House | Won | 68 | 31 | 37 |
| Dave | Upthegrove | WA | Commissioner of Public Lands | Won | 53 | 47 | 6 |
| Mark | Pocan | WI | US House | Won | 70 | 30 | 40 |

ENDNOTES

- 1 Our Revolution, “Our Platform,” [ourevolution.com](https://ourevolution.com/policy-fights/), accessed November 21, 2024, <https://ourevolution.com/policy-fights/>
- 2 Democratic Socialists of America, “What is Democratic Socialism?” [dsausa.org](https://www.dsausa.org/about-us/what-is-democratic-socialism/), accessed November 21, 2024, <https://www.dsausa.org/about-us/what-is-democratic-socialism/>
- 3 Young Democratic Socialists of America, “Young Democratic Socialists of America Platform,” [y.dsa.org](https://y.dsausa.org/young-democratic-socialists-of-america-platform/), accessed November 21, 2024, <https://y.dsausa.org/young-democratic-socialists-of-america-platform/>
- 4 Progressive Democrats of America, “Our Mission,” [pdamerica.org](https://pdamerica.org/about-pda/), accessed November 21, 2024, <https://pdamerica.org/about-pda/>
- 5 Progressive Democrats of America, “Our Mission.”
- 6 Justin Haskins, “How Did Socialists Perform in 2018 Midterm Elections? Better Than You Might Think,” *Stopping Socialism*, December 1, 2018, <https://stoppingsocialism.com/2018/12/how-did-socialists-perform-in-2018-midterm-elections-better-than-you-might-think>
- 7 Justin Haskins and Chris Talgo, “Socialist Watch 2020: An Analysis of Candidates Endorsed by Far-Left Organizations,” The Heartland Institute, Policy Brief, November 2020, <https://www.heartland.org/publicationsresources/publications/policy-brief-socialist-watch-2020-an-analysis-of-candidates--endorsed-by-far-leftorganizations>
- 8 Justin Haskins, Jack McPherrin, and Chris Talgo, “Socialist Watch 2022: An Analysis of Socialist Candidates in the 2022 Midterm Election,” The Heartland Institute, Policy Brief, November 2022, https://heartland.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/112322_SocialistWatch2022_3.pdf
- 9 It was impossible to include the candidates endorsed by local DSA chapters without biasing the results, as many local chapters either do not have a website, do not have an endorsement section on the websites that do exist, and/or did not endorse any candidates. As a result, this analysis mirrors the methodology used in previous *Socialist Watch* reports, and only contains candidates endorsed at the national level by Our Revolution, the DSA, and the PDA.