The Single-Column Edition

# FROM § EACH

THURSDAY, 05 NOVEMBER 2026 — THE MORNING EDITION    FREE, FOREVER

## *Justice Department's clause for a narrow Republican loss meets a narrow Republican loss, exactly as drafted.*

**BY MORT**
*The Records Bureau*

The clause was built for a specific defeat, and on Wednesday the defeat it was built for stopped being hypothetical and started being math. The lawsuit filed to shadow those probes was written to block Alaska's certification under one condition only: Sen. Dan Sullivan, the Republican, losing by a narrow margin. On 27 October, before a single vote was counted, the Senate was already bracing for a floor fight over whether to seat Peltola if she won. The order to file the suit had come from the president four days earlier, on 23 October, for a margin the count had not yet produced; this week it did.

Then came the drawing. By 30 October the papers were treating the controversy and the Senate's majority as the same story, because by then they were. On 1 November Senator Tim Scott, asked point-blank whether he would accept the result if Peltola won, dodged the question entirely — not a denial, not a yes, just the empty space where an answer to a hypothetical should go until the hypothetical stops being one.

It stopped being one this week. CBS News reports the race is still undecided, Peltola and Sullivan separated by a slim margin, the count running

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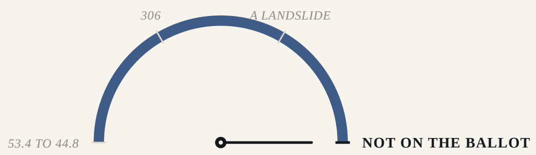
## THE WORD

*§82 — 04 NOVEMBER 2026*

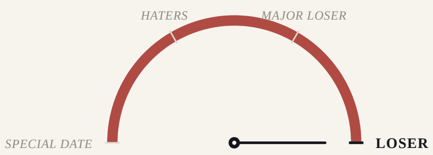
### *On Loser*

### DEMOCRAT



*NOT ON THE BALLOT*

### REPUBLICAN



*LOSER*

*"I looked up the word. I've got a tweet from September 11th, a Fed chair, and a statement from a retired general about graves in France. Forty-three tweets by 2016 alone, and I'm sure I missed some, I'm slow. Sorry, one thing before you go. A year ago today he said Republicans lost because he wasn't on the ballot. So when he's off the ballot, they lose, and that's his explanation. I keep reading that one. He wasn't on this one either."* — Lou

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INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

## *WHO PICKS THE JUDGE*

*The 2022 map put all 382 of Kansas City's Jackson County precincts in one U.S. House district; the 2025 map spreads them across three and cuts 20 of them apart block by block.*

... Continued on the Investigative Reporting page

## *Musk's $450 million bet on Republicans pays out a $400 million loss and dozens of lost races.*

**BY THE LODGERS**
*The Euro Desk*

Today we are making the costliest loss in American politics, which is not a dish you reorder in the same week, so I shall go slowly. You will need the twenty biggest political donors in the country, one of them putting in nearly four hundred and fifty million dollars alone, a slate of Republican candidates he backed, and a Tuesday to lose it on.

Begin on the thirty-first of October, when the Guardian priced him at four hundred and forty-six million dollars — half a dozen SpaceX rocket launches, or, at the Tesla Diner in Los Angeles, thirty-one point nine million cheeseburgers.

**Gary** *Cheeseburgers. I have been measured against a sandwich before, by this house, and I did not come out ahead either.*

By the second of November the figure had company. The top twenty donors in the country had put in two billion dollars between them, and Musk, at nearly four hundred and fifty million of it, was the single largest funder of the midterms, by a wide margin over anyone else.

**Rob** *Largest funder by a wide margin. We've had a landlord like that. Wide*

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## *Hong Kong upgrades activist's prison sentence for the third time since 2017, now ten years.*

**BY MORT**
*The Records Bureau*

Hong Kong's democracy movement received its third sentence since 2017 on Wednesday, the longest yet: ten years for Joshua Wong, its most recognizable face, convicted of conspiracy to collude with foreign forces to endanger national security. He pleaded guilty this year to a charge filed last year. NPR calls it his second conviction under the Beijing-imposed national security law, which means Wednesday was not even the beginning of the arithmetic.

It was born in August 2017, before that law existed. A Hong Kong court gave Wong, Alex Chow, and Nathan Law between six and eight months apiece for their role in the Umbrella Movement, and barred all three from holding office until 2022. Some ordinary law already on the books did that work; the national security statute Beijing would write was still three years off.

It was preceded in death by a promise. In 2020, Hong Kong's executive said in public that the new national security law would not touch judicial independence; activists, Wong among them, called it a law meant to silence Hongkongers. Within the year the promise was tested: that December, Wong was sentenced to thirteen and a half months for inciting an illegal assembly

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## *Billionaire held in contempt over Epstein ties sues incoming oversight chair for $7.25 million over repeating it*

**BY LOU**

*One More Question*

I've got The Hill's wire story from September sixteenth right here — or I had it, just give me a second, I think it slid under the passenger seat with the oil change reminder cards I keep forgetting to toss — and there's a word in it that shows up twice. "Unanimous." The House passed the contempt referral to the Department of Justice by unanimous consent. Same story, next sentence: the House Oversight Committee had already agreed to hold Mr. Black in contempt — unanimously. Two separate unanimous findings, one afternoon, one man. I don't know why that's the part I keep circling, sir, I really don't, but there it is, twice, like somebody wanted it on the record both ways. How many unanimous votes does it take to settle one contempt?

I'm sorry, I have to go back to this, from a different angle. Thirteen days before that vote — September third — Mr. Black was scheduled to sit for a deposition in front of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. That same day, instead, he filed a lawsuit of his own, trying to stop the subpoena before the deposition could happen. The committee asked a question. What came back, the same day, was a filing. I wrote "same day" down and un-

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## *GOP's mid-decade maps backfire into a dummymander, leaving Democrats holding the pen.*

**BY MORT**

*The Records Bureau*

Here lies a strategy that Texas and Missouri Republicans built in 2025 to survive 2026, and that the ballots and the bench spent the fall taking apart one piece at a time. Missouri's second map went down for the third time at the courts on September 25, when the Supreme Court's own conservative majority let a lower ruling against it stand. Lawmakers then asked voters directly with Proposition A; voters said no Tuesday, the fourth rejection and the first by ballot instead of bench. Texas took the quieter route, and its map died the same day, buried by the very district it had been drawn to protect.

Two days later Brian Kemp looked at all of it and declined the invitation to try the same play in Georgia. He had already spent September fielding diesel-tax pressure from Keisha Lance Bottoms, the Democratic Senate contender trailing Jon Ossoff — not from Mike Collins, the Republican he endorsed for the seat himself. A governor with that much on his plate did not need a fifth rejection with his name on it.

Thursday put the question on the wire that the architects of the whole project have no tally for yet: how many of the maps they drew to hold the

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## *Trump admits the Iran war cost Republicans the election, vows he'd fight it again.*

**BY RUTH**

*The Money Desk*

He did not start there. On Sunday, October 25, Vance tried the other door first: a personal letter, carried through Qatari mediators, to the secretary of Iran's supreme national security council, offering to restart diplomacy before the vote could make the war's price worse. Two days later, on Tuesday, October 27, in Lubbock, Texas, Trump answered with the opposite offer, telling a rally crowd they'd "see Iran in a couple of weeks" once the midterms were behind him. The same Tuesday, in Israel, voters settled their half of the war's sponsorship: Netanyahu's bloc took 53 seats to the opposition's 48, with Arab-led parties taking a historic 19 — a governing majority lost, confirmed final on Friday, October 30.

By Wednesday the American voters had settled theirs. Vance posted that the Iran war was behind what Le Monde, covering the vice president's own 2028 ambitions, called the Democratic landslide; the BBC called the break one of the sharpest from a sitting president in recent memory. Trump, touring the new White House ballroom hours later — "it's for the country, and it's free," he said — agreed, calling the war the "primary reason" his party lost,

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## *Stevens campaigns for Republican who loses to Democrat anyway, still won't take it back*

**BY LOU**

*One More Question*

Here is the list I keep coming back to, in the order it happened, because the order is the whole problem and I don't think I'm allowed to fix that for anybody. October 31st: Haley Stevens is advised to stay away from Abdul El-Sayed's campaign events, to limit what her own party is calling distractions. November 1st: she appears at a Republican campaign event with Mike Rogers. Same day: she attends a service at the Perfecting Church in Detroit, and afterward posts a video to X endorsing Rogers over her own party's nominee. Same day: the Republican National Committee says Michigan should take notice. Same day: her chief of staff, Justin German, resigns, and says — his word, I'm using his word — that many members of the staff resigned with him. November 3rd: Michigan votes. November 4th: Rogers loses, 45.48 percent to El-Sayed's 52.52. Same day: Stevens triples down. I built that off six different pages and I didn't move anything on any of them.

She had already said, somewhere in the middle of all that, that calling it about her fiancé was sexist. I'm not touching that one today. I'm stuck on a different word.

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## *CVS keeps the insurer and the benefit manager, spins off 9,000 pharmacies; you keep the 13 percent*

**BY STERLING**

*The Ownership Desk*

You will have been told this is a retreat. It is not. CVS Health spent a decade gathering the insurer, the benefit manager and nine thousand pharmacies, and on Wednesday it announced the pharmacies go out as CVS Pharmacy. Note what stays. Aetna stays. Caremark stays. The hundred and seventeen billion keeps the half that writes your premium and the half that prices your drug; the shops with the queue in them go. A divestiture is not a defeat — divestiture, mind you — it is the holder deciding the pieces are worth more apart. And the hour? KFF, on 31 October: the average premium on Healthcare.gov up thirteen percent for 2027, after twenty-six the year before. An analyst's count on 9 October: up to twelve million Americans without coverage since the start of the second term ... and nobody divests a lapsed policy. The split is the decade finishing. You keep the thirteen percent.

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> "Nothing up there is a conspiracy. That's the part that should worry you — it's all on the record, filed, stamped, and in a couple of cases notarized."
>
> *— Sal*

> "Nothing here is a scandal. A scandal requires surprise, and I can assure you nobody involved was surprised."
>
> *— Chip*

At first light the dog got up.
The fox heard the chain fall.

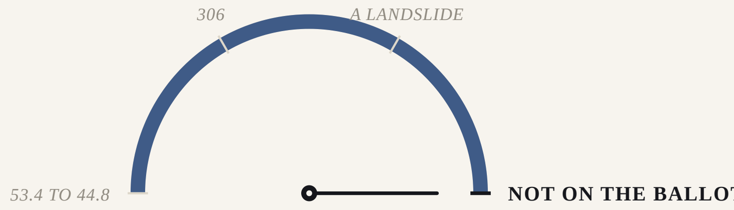
ENOCH · THE OWNERSHIP DESK

*§82 — 04 NOVEMBER 2026*

# On Loser

**BY LOU**
*The Word*

## DEMOCRAT



## *NOT ON THE BALLOT*

Now the other column. In 2018, his first midterm, the House vote went 53.4 to 44.8 against his party, and the House went with it [1]. In 2020 he finished on 232 electoral votes to Joe Biden's 306, a total he had called a landslide when he won by the same amount in 2016 [2].

And a year ago today, on the night of November 4, 2025, with the returns going against his party, he posted the explanation himself: "TRUMP WASN'T ON THE BALLOT, AND SHUTDOWN, WERE THE TWO REASONS THAT REPUBLICANS LOST ELECTIONS TONIGHT" [3]. He attributed it to pollsters. He was not on Tuesday's ballot either. The explanation is a year old and still in the drawer, and this morning's count is on the front page, held against what he did in every race in 2024. He picked the word. He picked it on September 11.

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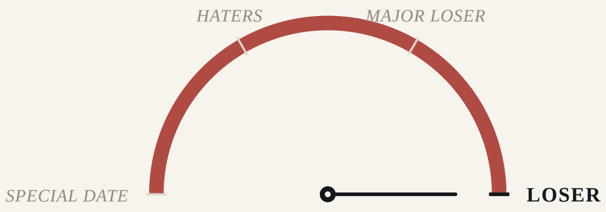
### *SOURCES*

1. 2018 House vote: Democrats 53.4 percent, Republicans 44.8 percent, and Democrats took the majority — Wikipedia, citing the Clerk of the House ↑
2. Biden set to finish with 306 electoral votes, "a total Trump called a landslide when he won by the same amount in 2016" — Associated Press via Fox 13 ↑
3. Truth Social post of 4 November 2025, attributed by Trump to "Pollsters" — Gray News/AP ↑

## REPUBLICAN



## *LOSER*

Give the word its due: it is a whole theory of politics in two syllables. The country divides into people who win and people who do not, and he says which. On the morning of September 11, 2013, he wrote: "I would like to extend my best wishes to all, even the haters and losers, on this special date, September 11th." It stayed up two years, until he led the Republican field, then vanished [1]. By September 2016 one count had 43 of these greetings [2]. In April 2025 the chair of the Federal Reserve became a "major loser," and the Dow fell 971.82 points [3].

In October 2023 his former chief of staff, the retired general John Kelly, said in a statement that Trump "rants that our most precious heroes who gave their lives in America's defense are 'losers' and wouldn't visit their graves in France"; his campaign called the stories debunked and made up [4]. That is the arrangement. The word works for as long as the man holding it stays off the list.

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### *SOURCES*

1. "I would like to extend my best wishes to all, even the haters and losers, on this special date, September 11th"; the original tweet of 11 September 2013 vanished in 2015 with Trump leading the Republican field — CBS News ↑
2. 43 tweets addressed to "haters and losers" counted by 9 September 2016 — Bustle ↑

3. Dow down 971.82 points, 2.48 percent, after Trump called Powell a "major loser" — CNBC, 21 April 2025 ↑
4. John Kelly's statement of October 2023, confirming comments The Atlantic reported in 2020, and the Trump campaign's reply — NBC News ↑

> *“I looked up the word. I've got a tweet from September 11th, a Fed chair, and a statement from a retired general about graves in France. Forty-three tweets by 2016 alone, and I'm sure I missed some, I'm slow. Sorry, one thing before you go. A year ago today he said Republicans lost because he wasn't on the ballot. So when he's off the ballot, they lose, and that's his explanation. I keep reading that one. He wasn't on this one either.”* — Lou

> “Loser. That's the whole vocabulary. Two columns, winners and losers, and one guy holding the pencil. And you know what I noticed? The pencil doesn't write his name. He gets 232 electoral votes, that's not a loss, that's a theft. His party takes a beating a year ago today, that's because he wasn't on the ballot. He wasn't on the ballot Tuesday either. Funny how that works. Go look at the front page, then tell me who taught you that word.”
>
> — Sal

> “The president uses "loser" as a term of art, in the competitive sense, and I'd caution against reading it as a comment on anyone in particular, including anyone who may or may not appear in this morning's numbers, which are preliminary, and which he was not on.”
>
> — Chip

*The Word today* — 👍 👎