# New Jersey Congressional Races Yield New Faces: 2026 General Election Recap

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The 2026 general election resulted in Democrats now holding 11 of New Jersey's 12 congressional seats after flipping two districts previously represented by Republican incumbents. The gains mark the Democrats' strongest showing in the state since the 2018 midterm elections, when they also won 11 seats during President Donald Trump's first term.

The election leaves Rep. Chris Smith (R-4) as the sole Republican member of New Jersey's congressional delegation. Rep. Smith, first elected in 1980, returns to Congress as the dean of New Jersey's delegation and is tied with Rep. Hal Rogers (R-KY) as the longest-serving current member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

**Congressional District 2 (Atlantic/Cape May/Cumberland/Gloucester/Ocean/Salem Counties):** Incumbent Republican Rep. Jeff Van Drew was defeated by Democrat Zack Mullock, the mayor of Cape May City. Mullock's campaign focused on economic growth, middle-class affordability, healthcare access, and housing affordability.

**Congressional District 7 (Hunterdon/Morris/Somerset/Sussex/Union/Warren Counties):** Incumbent Republican Rep. Tom Kean Jr. lost to Democrat Rebecca Bennett, a Navy veteran and healthcare executive. Bennett's campaign emphasized lowering costs for families, expanding healthcare access, supporting veterans, strengthening national security, and protecting democratic institutions.

**Congressional District 12 (Mercer/Middlesex/Somerset/Union Counties):** Democrat Adam Hamawy succeeds retiring Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman. Hamawy is a surgeon, Army veteran, and small business owner who ran on a progressive platform that included expanding healthcare access, reducing the influence of money in politics, addressing economic inequality, and increasing federal investment in healthcare, housing, and education.


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Sen. Cory Booker won reelection to a third full Senate term, defeating Republican challenger Justin Murphy. Sen. Booker has represented New Jersey since 2013, when he won a special election following the death of Sen. Frank Lautenberg. New Jersey Republicans have not won a U.S. Senate election since Clifford Case's reelection in 1972.

Nationally, the 2026 midterm elections produced significant changes in congressional control. Democrats are projected to gain at least seven Senate seats, with races in Alaska and Mississippi still too close to call at the time of publication.

Democrats also regained control of the U.S. House of Representatives. While several races remain unresolved, Democrats are projected to secure at least 255 seats. As a result, House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries is expected to become the first Black speaker of the House of Representatives.

The expanded Democratic majority in New Jersey's delegation is expected to increase the state's influence within the House Democratic Caucus and provide additional opportunities for members to secure committee and leadership positions. Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-6) is expected to reassume the chairmanship of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, one of the most influential committees in Congress, with jurisdiction over healthcare, energy, telecommunications, consumer protection, environmental policy, and interstate commerce.

The newly elected Congress will be sworn in on Tuesday, January 3, 2027.

To discuss how these developments could affect your organization or to explore advocacy and government relations strategies, please contact the author or any attorney in FBT Gibbons' Lobbying & Public Policy practice group.

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