

# Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

## The Mid-Terms are Almost Here!

As we approach the November election, the campaign ads are increasing in frequency and tone. We're seeing a lot of negative advertising, almost nightly public opinion polls and an all-out battle for control of the U.S. Senate.

In an October 16, 2014 post, *2014: A Tale of Two Elections*, Larry Sabato and Kyle Kondik of the University of Virginia Center for Politics, provided an updated look at the races across the country and made their predictions concerning the outcome of those races.

They introduced their analysis by stating, "*As we approach the home stretch, 2014 has turned into a tale of two elections. On the one hand, this is a classic six-year itch election where the incumbent president's party is going to suffer losses in both houses of Congress. We're just arguing about exactly how many. Overall, it is indisputable that*

*Republicans will have more critical victories to celebrate than Democrats when all the ballots are counted, and they have a strong and increasing chance to control the next Senate.*

*On the other hand, there are unusual and even a few bizarre features on the landscape. Some Democratic incumbent senators have been hanging tough in heavily Republican territory; months ago, many observers thought they'd be quickly swept out to sea*

*in a red tide. The GOP is having a difficult time making inroads in competitive "purple" states and districts, and very little progress at all has been seen in Democratic blue areas.... "*

That said, there are some major changes looming in the Southern states and we'll attempt to give you a run down on what's happening in our region of the United States.

October 2014

Public Policy Notes

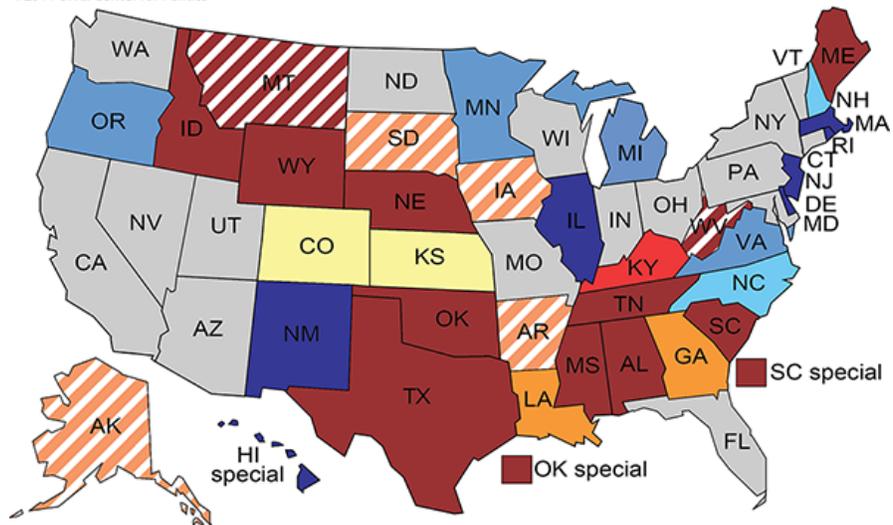
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Crystal Ball Senate Ratings  
October 16, 2014

[www.centerforpolitics.org](http://www.centerforpolitics.org)

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Safe D	Leans D	No election	Toss-up/Leans Runoff	Leans R	Safe R
Likely D	R to D	Toss-up		D to R	Likely R
Democrats: 47		Toss-ups: 4		Republicans: 49	

## Louisiana: Democrats in Trouble



In 1996, **Senator Mary Landrieu (D)** was the first woman from Louisiana elected to a full term in the U.S. Senate.

As a long time fixture in the Louisiana political landscape, she is facing a tough challenger this year and, at this point, polls are indicating that the two candidates are in a race that

is being called a “toss-up”.

**State Representative Bill Cassidy (R)** is challenging for the position and *Sabato’s Crystal Ball* is predicting a potential run-off.

Neither candidate is expected to get a majority of the vote during the November 4th election and, in that case, a run-off election is



scheduled for December 6th.

At this point, it appears that Cassidy is poised to take the seat; however, there is a month between the initial election and the potential run-off and a lot can change during that period.

If Representative Cassidy takes the seat, it will be one of the Republican gains in the U. S. Senate.

Source: *Crystal Ball*, [www.centerforpolitics.org](http://www.centerforpolitics.org).

## Arkansas: Another Democratic Senator Poised to Fall



**Senator Mark Pryor (D)** has represented Arkansas since 2003 and polls currently have him

behind his Republican opponent, Representative Tom Cotton.

Pryor is the son of a political heavy-

weight and long-term Senator from Arkansas, Senator David Pryor and has served in the Senate for 11 years.

**Tom Cotton (R)**, a lawyer and veteran who successfully captured a House of Representatives



seat in 2013, is a newcomer poised to take the seat from an establishment candidate.

According to an October 20, 2014 poll by *Talk Business & Politics* and Hendrix College, Cotton now has an 8.5 point lead over Pryor.

Source: <http://talkbusiness.net/2014/10/tbp-hendrix-poll-cotton-up-8-points-on-pryor-in-senate-race/>

## Kentucky: McConnell & Grimes in Dead Heat



**Senator Mitch McConnell (R)** of Kentucky appears to be maintaining an edge over challenger

**Alison Lundergan Grimes (D)**. He has served in the Senate since

1985 and as Minority Senate leader since 2007.

**Lundergan Grimes** is currently the Secretary of State in Kentucky.

According to *The Courier-Journal*, McConnell and



Grimes are in a “*virtual dead-heat just 15 days before voters will go to the polls, according to the latest Bluegrass Poll. The poll found that McConnell leads by the narrowest of margins, pulling ahead 44-43 among likely voters. That result is well within the poll’s margin of error.*”

Source: [www.courier-journal.com](http://www.courier-journal.com)

## Georgia: Possible Run-off in January?

With the retirement of long-term Georgia Senator Saxby Chambliss, the race to fill that position has heated up.



Georgia businessman **David Perdue** is the Republican nominee for the seat. **Michelle**

**Nunn** is the Democratic candidate and the daughter of former long-term Senator, Sam Nunn.



At this point, it appears that the candidates are within a few polling points of each other and analysts are debating whether Perdue (who has the

lead) can get 50% of the vote to avoid a run-off.

Georgia has scheduled a potential run-off on January 6, 2015, per their state law. This date coincides with day 3 of the technical start of the 114th Congress, meaning the Georgia Senator would be sworn in after the date that Congress convenes.

Source: [www.centerforpolitics.org](http://www.centerforpolitics.org)

## North Carolina: A Bright Spot for Democrats?



Incumbent **Senator Kay Hagan (D)** maintains a slight polling lead over her challenger

**Thom Tillis (R)**. She was elected to the U. S. Senate in 2009.

Tillis is the current Speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives and Republican candidate for the North Carolina Senate seat.

Senator Hagan's lead is small but has stayed persistent throughout



the campaign.

According to *Sabato's Crystal Ball*, the National Republican Senatorial Committee has just dropped \$6.5 million into the contest to purchase political ads in the hope of helping to increase Tillis's numbers.

Source:  
[www.centerforppolitics.org](http://www.centerforppolitics.org)  
October 16, 2014

## Virginia: An Incumbent Slips



Incumbent **Senator Mark Warner (D)** appeared to be coasting to a victory until a story surfaced that accused the

Senator of a possible promise of

a judicial post for a relative of a state senator to keep that official from resigning.

Republican challenger **Ed Gillespie (R)** is an American Republican strategist who served as the 61st Chairman of the Republican



National Committee and Counselor to the President in the George W. Bush administration.

*Sabato's Crystal Ball* anticipates that this contest may be decided by single digits because of the competitive nature of Virginia politics. They conclude with "a victory by Republican Ed Gillespie would be a massive upset."

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Southern Early Childhood Association



"A Voice for Southern  
Children"

## How to Use Public Policy Notes

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you... You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

*This monthly newsletter is produced by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director.*

*SECA strives to provide non-partisan and non-biased information*

*that is of interest to early childhood educators. Sign up at*

*[http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/policy\\_newsletter\\_sign.php](http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/policy_newsletter_sign.php)*

*to receive notice of its availability each month.*

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## Voter ID: Where We Stand

As the election nears, the issue of whether voters will be required to present an ID in order to vote has gained attention from the media. It grew to a crescendo with a case before the U.S. Supreme Court that challenged the validity of a Texas voter ID law.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, *"a total of 34 states have passed laws requiring voters to show some form of identification at the polls. As of October 13, 2014, thirty-one of these voter identification laws are in force."*

For Voter ID laws in effect in 2014, laws are classified as either strict or non-strict.

**Strict laws** require that voters without acceptable identification vote on a provisional ballot. They must also take additional steps after Election Day in order for the vote to be counted. *Strict laws* are in place in **Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas** and **Virginia**.

**Non-strict laws** allow at least some voters without acceptable identification to cast a ballot that will be counted without further action on the part of the voter. *Non-strict laws* are in place in **Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Arkansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma** and **South Carolina**.

The legal challenges have been centered around the type of ID that is considered acceptable.

**Photo ID's** are required in Georgia,

Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Alabama, Florida and Louisiana. **Non-photo ID's** will be accepted in Arkansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma and South Carolina.

Texas won the right to require photo IDs in the November 2014 election because of the proximity of the ruling to the date of the election. The Arkansas Supreme Court struck down the photo ID law this month.

If you'd like to learn more about the requirements for your state, the issues surrounding voter ID, and the current legal status, go to <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx>.