

2026 Senate Race Spotlight: Michigan

The 2026 Michigan Senate race is a high priority for Republicans, coming close in 2024 but falling short. Mike Rogers narrowly lost to Elissa Slotkin by only 19,000 votes. President Trump won the state but by a margin of about 80,000 votes.

While Republican candidate quality in Senate races was better in 2024 than 2022, the Michigan race with a top tier Republican candidate was an example that showed candidate quality is critical but doesn't guarantee victory. Centrist Democrats have proven to be tougher challenges. If Haley Stevens wins the Democratic primary, this Senate race could be another tough matchup for Republicans. This week's Discussion Points breaks down the 2024 Senate race and what Republicans should consider for next time.

Voter Groups (Source: Edison Exit Polls)	Presidential Trump-Harris	Senate Rogers-Slotkin
Independents	-4	-7
Moderates	-17	-22
Women (55% of 2024 Michigan electorate)	-6	-9

Similar to challenges in other Senate races [like Georgia](#), Republicans encountered trouble in Michigan with certain voter groups. Here are a few takeaways from the 2024 race:

1.) Independents (35%) outranked Republicans (34%) and Democrats (31%) in percentages of party affiliation. Republicans had a +3 party ID advantage over Democrats, but came in behind independents. Independents represented 1,952,015 votes out of the 5,577,187 cast in the Senate race. Trump lost independents by 4 with Rogers losing them by 7. Trump got 44% of the Independent vote, while Rogers got 42%. Given the size of the independent vote, had Rogers matched Trump's percentage, he would have won the race by over 20,000 votes.

2) By ideology, moderates were the largest group (41%) ahead of conservatives (35%) and liberals (25%). Trump lost moderates by 17 with a larger gap for Rogers (-22).

3.) Women comprised 55% of the 2024 Michigan electorate with Slotkin winning women by 9, a larger margin than that of Kamala Harris (6).

4.) Slotkin won 1 in 4 economy voters — a higher proportion than other Democratic contenders in Senate races. Slotkin won 23% of voters whose top issue was the economy, as compared to the percentages won by other Democratic candidates: Gideon (ME) 8%, Cunningham (NC) 15%, Ossoff (GA) 12%, Kelly (AZ) 12%.

5.) Slotkin was able to create some separation from Biden's unpopularity. Among the 11% of the Michigan electorate that somewhat disapproved of Biden's performance, she won over half (56%) of those voters. This means tying her to Biden wasn't enough to disqualify her, even among voters who somewhat disapproved of him.

As Republicans look at what to do differently in Michigan next year, all of these factors should be considered.

Have a good weekend.

David & Myra