

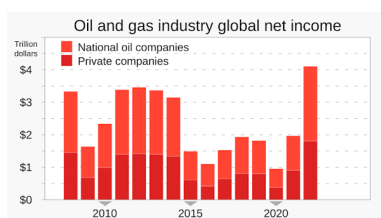
<https://internationalviewpoint.org/The-Looming-Election>



USA

The Looming Election

- IV Online magazine - 2026 - IVP619 - August 2026 -



Publication date: Tuesday 25 August 2026

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved

MIDTERM U.S. ELECTIONS are traditionally predictably unpredictable, the main question being how much loss the party of the sitting President will suffer. Conventionally that should go double or triple for the Republicans this November.

But amid a deeply unpopular ruinous war, and frightening insecurity for tens of millions of Americans fearing for their future, this year's November 2026 elections are unpredictably unpredictable. The question goes well beyond whether the Democrats — and which Democrats — might overturn the narrow Republican Congressional majorities.

National and even international attention — and \$61 million of dark money — were drawn to the August 4 U.S. Senate Democratic primary in Michigan, and the victory of progressive insurgent candidate Dr. Abdul el-Sayed. More will be said below on its meaning and implications.

Much will probably change between the writing of this editorial and the election. Multiple swirling uncertainties include:

1) What might be the state of the U.S. war with Iran? Another truce, more negotiations and stabilized oil prices, or massive escalation and a war spreading through the region, with oil at or over \$150 a barrel, or — perhaps most likely — something messily in between?

2) What might the U.S. economy look like with down-and-up fuel prices, Trump's off-and-on tariffs, and sectors of health care, construction and agriculture potentially crippled by mass immigrant detention and deportation?

None of these can be known, particularly when Trump's own policies shift with every day's half-deranged Truth Social posts.

3) To what lengths could Trump and the Republican cult go to preserve their power? Last-ditch moves to ram through Trump's massive voter-suppression Enslave America Act, if not at the federal level then adopted by some states, or to block voting by mail? Among the openly discussed scarier scenarios, ICE or Border Patrol agents stationed at polling places? Attempts to seize ballots, or to prosecute state election officials who refuse to obey unconstitutional government orders?

Presidential proclamation of a phony "state of emergency"? Rightwing mobs unleashed to block counting of votes? Sabotage of postal delivery of mail ballots?

Right now, the likelihood of such extreme and high-risk events may seem relatively low. The consequences, however, could bring a fundamental crisis of government legitimacy and what remains of Constitutional process.

Insurgencies Right and Left

Assuming for the moment a generally "normal" election process, we do know that the Trump 2 administration is more unpopular by the month, and Republican incumbents in critical Congressional district and Senate races look to be in

serious trouble. Yet the Democratic Party is even more unpopular, if possible, than the Trump-cult GOP.

Undoubtedly the immediate primary factors driving popular anger are economic: food and fuel price inflation, health insurance costs making medical care inaccessible for millions, fears among technical workers that rampant Artificial Intelligence might wipe out their current jobs and future employment chances.

There are insurgencies within both capitalist parties, most obviously in the Democratic Party and left-moving parts of its voter base, but also among MAGA voters disillusioned over Trump's broken promises to "fix the economy" and "end forever wars."

On the MAGA-GOP side, Trump deflects with raves about "radical left Democrats" and the fantasy specter of a Cuban-driven "Communist threat," while advertising the brilliant successes of his tariffs which people increasingly can see as disastrous in their own lives. The gangster administration doubles down on sadistic immigration detentions and deportations.

Trump's antics aren't working terribly well as some former loyalists peel off toward (even more) irrationalist and antisemitic extremism. The administration itself is divided between, for example, the traditional militarism of the late Senator Lindsey Graham and Marco Rubio — now Trump's viceroy to run Venezuela — and J.D. Vance, whose neo-isolationist streak combines with open admiration for Europe's far right and affinity with Vladimir Putin's Russia.

Nonetheless the Republican machinery with its bottomless resources of corporate and dark money, the still-powerful Trump cult following, and the power of partisan and blatantly racial district gerrymandering enabled by the far-right Supreme Court majority, remains formidable. Its defeat is by no means certain. By most counts there are only 20 or so House of Representatives districts, out of the total 435, that are genuinely competitive outside of a massive "wave" election.

The Republicans' open intention to reject election results if they don't win brings a higher level of volatility, fear and more unpredictable unpredictability into the political climate.

Among the Democrats

We need to be clear on two points. (1) The capitalist Democratic Party will not be "transformed" by some progressive or democratic surge; but (2) in the absence of viable independent politics nationally, what's happened in the primaries reflect popular anger and political volatility and can't be ignored.

The open revolt against a sclerotic entrenched party leadership reflects a confluence of issues where the Democratic leadership has failed, retreated or collapsed. Running scared, the establishment's backlash is already on display.

Rahm Emanuel, a potential 2028 presidential candidate, mentor and chief of staff of Barack Obama, and former mayor of Chicago where he fought a bitter and losing war to break the Chicago Teachers Union, writes in The Wall Street Journal that the progressive or democratic socialist left would "spoil" the Democrats' prospects.

When party progressive activists demand actual solutions to the crises that are crushing people's lives and hopes, establishment corporate centrists respond with calls for "realism," gradualism and the stagnant consultant-driven campaign tactics that lose elections over and over again. The centrist Third Way promises a \$15 million drive to

attack democratic socialism.

The critical issues include the corruption of politics by corporate PAC and billionaires' money; the crying need for national "Medicaid For All" health coverage; the obscene concentration of wealth at the top; the Trump gang's deregulation spree and "drill baby drill" lunacy while North America and Europe literally burn; and the anti-immigrant terror that has sparked anti-ICE mass resistance.

Not least is rising fury over Israel's state genocide in Gaza, murderous ethnic cleansing in the occupied West Bank, and annexationist invasion of south Lebanon. It's remarkable and unprecedented that a majority of Americans — among all sectors except older Republicans — view Palestine more sympathetically than Israel. Even Rahm Emanuel warned an Israeli audience, despite his undying Zionist loyalty, that Israel's behavior is hemorrhaging support in the United States.

The Wire, the newsletter of Jewish Voice for Peace, reports that since the election of Zohran Mamdani "11 JVP Action-endorsed candidates, including six congressional candidates have won their primaries — not in spite of but because of their unwavering support for Palestinian freedom." (Special JVP Action PAC issue, July 31)

The Biden-Harris administration is quite rightly despised for enabling the Gaza genocide, even though it knew the magnitude of the slaughter from the beginning. Israeli prime minister Netanyahu is widely despised for luring Trump with flattery and the prospect of quick, world-changing "victory" over Iran.

Battle Grounds

These combined factors have brought about an insurgency that's seen the mayoral election of Zohran Mamdani in New York City and some notable Democratic primary challengers, although of course there are losses too like Cori Bush's defeat in Missouri. Francesca Hong lost the Wisconsin gubernatorial primary by less than half a point.

In media reporting as well as Trump vitriol, the Democratic Socialists of America are seen as the driving force behind the anti-establishment upsurge. Undoubtedly DSA plays a significant role in some of these races (as in Mamdani's victory, and for example in promoting a notion idea of Alexandria Ocasio Cortez running for president in 2028). But DSA is not the only factor.

In the nationally spotlighted open Senate race in Michigan, public health expert Dr. Abdul el-Sayed took on an established AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) centrist Democrat Haley Stevens in the August 4 primary. Identifying not as a socialist but as an outspoken advocate of Medicare for All and ending aid to Israel, El-Sayed was targeted by "pro-Israel" and corporate PACS with some spent on toxic attack TV ads and mailers.

El-Sayed's campaign energized Arab community, progressive and pro-Palestinian activism including the formation of "Jews for Abdul" and "Women for Abdul" to counter the attacks.

Meanwhile AIPAC (which generally devotes its resources to primary rather than general elections) openly says it will continue its effort to defeat El-Sayed. Undoubtedly its ads will especially target Jewish, Black and women voters with the same toxic lies they spread during the primary.

A significant test of Democrats' "unity" will be whether Michigan and national figures — from outgoing governor

The Looming Election

Gretchen Whitmer to former president Obama — will energetically support El-Sayed as he runs against rightwing Trump Republican Mike Rogers, in what will be an exceptionally expensive and dirty contest that may decide which party controls the U.S. Senate.

Some progressive fantasies to the contrary notwithstanding, under the most optimistic scenarios — should the Democrats take control of the Senate and maybe even replace the discredited Chuck Schumer with someone like Senator Chris Van Hollen — the Democrats might become a genuine liberal opposition party in action rather than mostly empty talk.

That could be a big improvement — and no doubt revive many dormant illusions about the Democratic Party — but far from the transformation of social-democratic dreams. Frankly, on the national level this outcome is pretty much the ceiling of possibilities that might be achieved electorally.

In the House of Representatives, a swing to a Democratic majority would put the Speakership in the hands of Hakeem Jeffries — a committed centrist and the party's number-one beneficiary of AIPAC support.

In addition to the Democratic establishment counter-offensive, not to mention Trump's raving about the Communist menace (although his White House rant was pretty much a dud), there are deeper obstacles to the success of progressive Democrats or for that matter, activist movements.

The movements' outreach to the most critical sectors of society remains limited. This was not only visible in the No Kings Day mobilizations of the past couple years — large, creative and energetic but mostly white in their large majority. The Black community is politically engaged, but with its own urgent concerns.

African American voters, who constitute the backbone of the Democratic vote in many states including especially the South, have been a bulwark of the party establishment at strategic moments. This was notably shown in the 2020 presidential primary in South Carolina, where the leading Black Congressional representative James Clyburn rallied the vote for Joe Biden, scuttling the rising Bernie Sanders candidacy.

The Detroit vote was also a big part of why Abdul el-Sayed's razor-thin victory in Michigan was so much closer than polls predicted. Indeed, in the final stage of the primary Clyburn came in to support Stevens, whose campaign heavily promoted her advertised connections to the African American community, to Black women in particular, and the endorsements she received from Black elected officials (as well as prominent white Michigan establishment of course).

There are powerful Black-led and multi-racial protests around numerous cases of police brutality and murder of African American community members. The difficulty arises because much of the community sees the supposedly "more electable" Democratic mainstream as its only solid defense against the Trump-Republican rampage that ravages Black people's lives and rights.

For the left, the continuing tragedy is the absence of a meaningful political option independent of the Democratic Party. Local independent political campaigns are a viable possibility and important to be pursued, but only a first step in a very long march to any kind of national political alternative.

For independent politics to become a viable factor in the United States, Black as well as Latinx movements must be central forces from the outset. That's an enormous challenge, especially in the face of the very real intense menace from the right.

The Looming Election

At this moment, the only really predictable thing in crisis-ridden America is how much hangs in the balance, and not only in the looming midterm elections. Elections don't determine the future, but they help create the terrain of battles to come.

September-October 2026, [ATC 244](#).

PS:

If you like this article or have found it useful, please consider donating towards the work of International Viewpoint. Simply follow this link: [Donate](#) then enter an amount of your choice. One-off donations are very welcome. But regular donations by standing order are also vital to our continuing functioning. See the last paragraph of [this article](#) for our bank account details and take out a standing order. Thanks.