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The 2026 Midterm Verdict: How Democrats Retook Congress

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Democrats retook both chambers on November 3, flipping seven Senate seats and four governorships. The seat maths, vote totals and what divided government means next.

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS & STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

Executive Summary Democrats retook both chambers of Congress in the November 3 midterm elections, ending Republican control of Washington and reshaping the final two years of Donald Trump’s presidency. The Associated Press called the Senate for the Democrats late on Tuesday night, after Josh Turek’s win in Iowa delivered the decisive seat, while the party passed the 218 seats needed for a House majority as counting continued into Wednesday. The scale of the shift is what sets this result apart from a routine midterm swing. Democrats flipped seven Senate seats, took four Republican-held governorships, and built a national House popular-vote lead of more than 12 million ballots in the Associated Press count. The new Congress is due to be sworn in on January 3, 2027, with Hakeem Jeffries expected to become House speaker. This study measures that verdict against the pre-election picture. Our record early-voting study tracked more than 54 million early ballots cast before Election Day, and our pre-election polling study found a Democratic generic-ballot lead and a record-low presidential approval rating. The results below test those signals against the counted vote. Both studies set the baseline this results study now tests. Methodology Every figure in this study comes from the Associated Press live results system, network projections from NBC News, CBS News and CNN, Reuters tallies of called races, and the Guardian’s governor count built on Associated Press data. Where tallies differ because counting is still under way, this study reports the range and names the source, rather than presenting any single newsroom’s projection as a final result. All counts are a Wednesday-afternoon snapshot, not a certified final result. Results are unofficial until states certify them, a process that usually

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