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Two-Person Primary in Iowa: Wahls' Momentum vs. Schumer-Backed Turek's Struggles

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With Nathan Sage's exit, the Democratic primary is now a clear two-person contest: **Zach Wahls — the candidate with clear momentum, the most money raised, and the strongest organization — versus Josh Turek, the Schumer-backed candidate who's struggling to keep up.**

Below is the state of play and the argument for why Zach Wahls is the strongest nominee to win statewide.

A two-person race: on-the-ground momentum vs. the DC pick

Sage's decision to drop out makes the choice sharper, and the contrast clearer.

Zach Wahls has built the strongest operation in this primary because his message is the strongest message in Iowa: end the corruption in our politics and focus on the things that actually hits families every day – the cost of living, health care, wages, and retirement security. That's how you win back Democrats and the independents and Republicans you need to win statewide. Zach continues to make headlines as he fights for affordability:

- [Des Moines Register: Zach Wahls rolls out Social Security plan that raises taxes on wealthy](#)

- [Iowa Starting Line: 2 new Iowa bills to lower grocery prices](#)
- [NBC: Iowa Senate candidate 'laser focused' on addressing affordability & political corruption](#)
- [Cedar Rapids Gazette: Wahls blasts 'broken economy,' vows to reject corporate PAC money in Iowa U.S. Senate run](#)

On Monday, Pete D'Alessandro, a longtime populist organizer who had been supporting Sage, endorsed Zach because he knows Zach is the fighter for working people that Iowans need in the Senate. Pete's endorsement underscores what we're seeing on the ground: when voters have a choice between the "the insiders' candidate" and "the fighter," they're lining up with Zach.

That's also true of registered Republicans like Gary Berkland, a school board member in rural Wright county, who has endorsed the campaign. Zach is the only candidate building the broad coalition needed to win in Iowa. **That's why Zach Wahls has earned more contributions from actual Iowans than both Turek and Sage combined.**

Turek's lane is Washington. He has the backing of Chuck Schumer and the inside game. But Iowa isn't a state that takes orders from D.C., and the voters who decide elections here don't want a senator who works for party bosses or insiders — they want someone who will take on corruption and the failed political status quo.

Labor has Zach's back — because he's always had theirs

Labor's message in this primary is loud and clear: **Zach Wahls is the strongest candidate for hardworking Iowans and their families because he's always shown up for workers — not just during election season, but throughout his time in public life.**

Zach has walked picket lines, shown up at rallies, and done the hard work of rebuilding bridges between the party and labor that had been long neglected. That's why 17 local unions have chosen Zach as the preferred candidate of Iowa workers. Just last week, that [momentum continued to grow in a big way](#), adding:

- Teamsters Local 238 (Cedar Rapids) — the largest local union in Iowa

- IUOE Local 150 (Quad Cities)
- IUOE Local 234 (Des Moines)

These are endorsements from the labor unions who know how to judge a candidate: by whether they show up, listen, and fight. Not only will they be instrumental for building a strong ground game across the state to win the Primary, they represent key voters we need to win in November.

Electability: The reality of winning statewide

Winning a race for the U.S. Senate takes a candidate with the right message, discipline, and ability to put together the resources needed to build a statewide organization. Despite his DC support, Turek has shown he doesn't have what it takes:

- Turek saw a precipitous drop in fundraising in Q4 and made reckless spending decisions – burning 40% more than he raised in the period – leaving his ability to reach voters in question and any type of organizing on the ground nearly impossible.
- Despite claims that he is uniquely positioned to win because of success in his current State House district, the reality is Turek's seat has been held by Democrats for over a decade. Turek is virtually unknown statewide and the 6,000 votes he received represent less than 1% of the voters the Democratic candidate will need to win.
- Turek's association with Chuck Schumer and the Washington establishment is toxic in both a Democratic primary and a general election. The persuadable voters we need to win statewide demand independence — and they can smell a D.C. project a mile away. Zach Wahls has shown he will stand up to politicians in both parties, which is exactly why he's consolidating support as the leading Democrat in this race.

Finally — and most important: Zach Wahls is the only Democrat in this race who has actually represented rural Iowa in the legislature, and he's the only one with a serious plan to win there. That plan is straightforward and built for Iowa:

- **Break up corporate monopolies and restore competition** so family farmers and small businesses can survive again

- **Pass a new farm bill** that incentivizes sustainable, resilient agriculture and strengthens rural communities
- **Repeal Trump's reckless tariffs** that are driving up costs for farmers and consumers alike

That's a governing agenda that can win in Iowa: independent, anti-corruption, and focused on making it easier for working families to get ahead.

Ready to help us keep building this momentum? You can join our team at zachwahls.com.

Thank you,

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