

To: Interested Parties

From: GBAO

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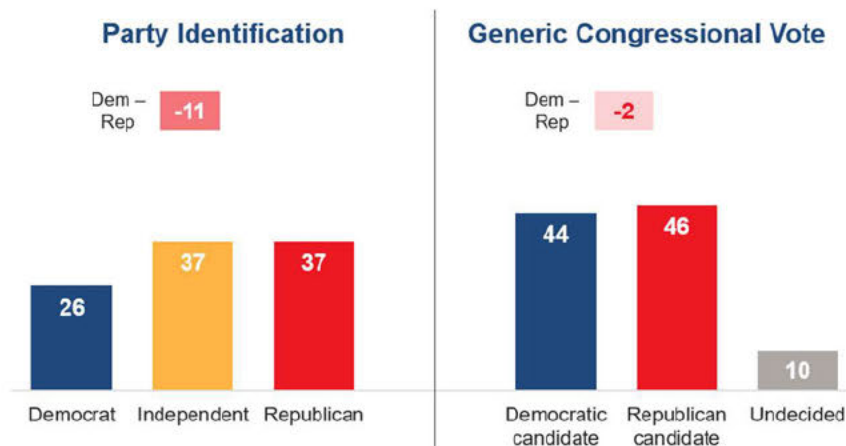
Big Democratic Opportunity In Iowa Senate Race

The changing political landscape in Iowa puts the U.S. Senate race in play. Democrats outperform party identification in the generic congressional ballot; Trump and Iowa Republicans are unpopular; and Democrat Rob Sand holds a strong lead in the race for governor.

In this environment, Democratic candidates Josh Turek and Zach Wahls both begin within striking distance of Republican Ashley Hinson. But Turek emerges as the stronger general election candidate: after balanced messaging, he moves ahead of Hinson, while Wahls continues to trail.

The following are key findings from a new poll of likely 2026 general election voters in Iowa¹.

- Iowa is competitive terrain in 2026.** Despite an 11-point party ID deficit (26% Democrat – 37% Republican), Democrats trail by only 2 points on the generic ballot for U.S. Congress (44% Democratic candidate – 46% Republican candidate). Democrats also hold a 13-point lead among independents.



- Trump and Iowa Republicans are underwater.** President Donald Trump has a net favorability of -5 (45% favorable – 50% unfavorable), and statewide Republican figures fare even worse: Senator Chuck Grassley is at -9, Governor Kim Reynolds at -11, and Senator Joni Ernst at -13.

¹ GBAO conducted an Iowa statewide survey of 1,200 likely 2026 general election voters from March 10-16, 2026 via telephone using live interviewers and text message. The survey is subject to a 2.8 percentage point margin of error at the 95% confidence level.

- Rob Sand is popular and leads the Governor’s race.** Sand is viewed favorably by 42% of the electorate and unfavorably by just 15%. Independents view him favorably by a 3-to-1 margin (39% favorable – 13% unfavorable). By contrast, leading Republican opponent Randy Feenstra is viewed negatively (19% favorable – 32% unfavorable), and Sand leads Feenstra 50% – 42%. Among independents, his lead grows to 57% – 29%.
- Ashley Hinson is unpopular and begins the Senate race in a weak position.** The presumptive Republican nominee has a net favorability of -8 (23% favorable – 31% unfavorable), and independents view her negatively by more than a 2-to-1 margin (16% favorable – 34% unfavorable).
- Despite being less well known, both Josh Turek and Zach Wahls begin within striking distance of Hinson.** Turek and Wahls have substantially lower name ID (34% and 49%, respectively) than Hinson (67%), yet Turek trails by just 4 points (43% – 47%) and Wahls by only 3 points (44% – 47%).
- Turek’s personal profile is more compelling than either Hinson’s or Wahls’s, and he gains more ground than Wahls after voters hear more about the candidates.** Over 6-in-10 voters (62%) say Turek’s profile is a convincing reason to vote for him for U.S. Senate, compared with 51% for Wahls and 48% for Hinson. And after positive profiles, Hinson’s lead over Turek narrows to just 1 point (46% – 47%), while Wahls still trails by 3 points (46% – 49%).
- After voters hear vulnerabilities on each candidate, Turek moves ahead while Wahls still falls short.** Turek leads Hinson by 2 points with rounding in the final vote test (46% – 45%), while Wahls remains 4 points behind (44% – 47%). Notably, Turek makes substantial gains among independents over the course of the survey, shifting the net vote margin 7 points in his favor and opening up a 17-point lead with them. The survey included equal numbers of negatives on the candidates.

Vote Progression

