



Written by [Billy J. Stephen](#) on March 4, 2026

Freedom-loving State Legislators Did Well on Tuesday

Primary elections for the 2026 midterm cycle began Tuesday, March 3, in Arkansas, North Carolina, and Texas, featuring high-profile contests for the U.S. House and Senate, state legislatures, and state and local offices — including positions on the Texas Railroad Commission and state supreme courts.

In Texas, attention centered on a competitive Republican Senate primary, which saw incumbent [Senator John Cornyn](#) challenged by Attorney General Ken Paxton and U.S. Representative Wesley Hunt, along with a Democratic field that included [U.S. Representative Jasmine Crockett](#) and [state Representative James Talarico](#). Dozens of congressional and state legislative races were also contested. North Carolina saw intense intraparty battles in multiple congressional districts and a competitive Senate race, while Arkansas featured mostly secure Republican incumbents such as [Senator Tom Cotton](#) and Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Runoff elections will be held for races in which no candidate received a majority of the vote — scheduled for March 31 in [Arkansas](#), May 12 in [North Carolina](#), and May 26 in [Texas](#). These early contests provide the first glimpse into voter enthusiasm and party dynamics ahead of the November general election.

The New American and The John Birch Society do not endorse or promote candidates in elections. They provide nonpartisan information showing how elected officials adhere to [America's founding principles](#) and the [U.S. Constitution](#).

Texas

Although most attention focused on the U.S. Senate race, several congressional and state legislative contests also drew interest among constitutionalists. One of the most notable results came in Texas' [2nd Congressional District](#), where incumbent U.S. Representative Dan Crenshaw, a former Navy SEAL, was [defeated](#) in the Republican primary by state Representative Steve Toth 56 percent to 41 percent.

Crenshaw has a lifetime freedom score of [59 percent](#) on [The New American's Freedom Index](#), while Toth holds a lifetime score of [87 percent](#) — ranking him [second](#) among Texas legislators and reflecting a significantly stronger record of voting in accordance with the U.S. Constitution.

Meanwhile, Texas' highest-scoring state legislator, Representative Briscoe Cain, with an [88-percent](#)



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lifetime freedom score, and Trump-endorsed candidate Alex Mealer are headed to a [runoff election](#). Mealer got 36 percent of the vote to Cain's 31 percent. Since neither hit the 50-percent threshold, they will face off against each other on May 26.

In Texas' four-way [Republican primary race](#) for attorney general, the contest will head to a runoff election between state Senator Mayes Middleton, who received 39 percent of the vote, and U.S. Representative Chip Roy, who received 32 percent. Roy holds a lifetime Freedom Index score of [97 percent](#), making him one of the highest-scoring members of Congress. Middleton, meanwhile, has a respectable lifetime score of [79 percent](#). Roy will likely need to improve his support in the Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston areas. However, he performed well in South and West Texas, while Middleton did not reach 50 percent in his strongest areas. More voters participated in the Republican primary for attorney general than in the Democratic primary, potentially easing concerns about Democratic dominance in November.

[The Texas Tribune](#) reported that, unlike the incumbent shake-ups seen two years ago, nearly every sitting state legislator was poised to survive Tuesday's primaries, even amid expensive proxy battles over casino legalization, tort reform, and establishment-versus-hardline GOP fights. However, it noted a handful of notable exceptions — including state Representative Cecil Bell Jr., one of the [authors](#) of the [Texas Sovereignty Act](#), with a lifetime Freedom Index score of [63 percent](#). Bell lost his primary to Kristen Plaisance, who [argues](#) that Texas government has exceeded its constitutional limits through overspending, taxation, and favoritism, while calling for restoring constitutional governance by eliminating property taxes, ending government immunity protections for officials, and reducing centralized power in the Texas House.

North Carolina

The results in North Carolina offered a mixed picture for constitutionalist legislators.

State Representative Keith Kidwell, the highest-scoring member of the North Carolina General Assembly, with an [83-percent](#) lifetime Freedom Index score, narrowly lost his primary election. Other [high-scoring](#) legislators either successfully defended their seats or did not seek reelection.

North Carolina's pivotal 2026 U.S. Senate race is now set, with former Democratic Governor Roy Cooper and former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Whatley securing their respective parties' nominations Tuesday, setting up what is expected to be one of the nation's [most expensive](#) and closely watched battleground contests in November. The results will trickle down to all other races in the state.

One of North Carolina's most [closely watched](#) legislative primaries may be headed for a recount. With all precincts reporting unofficial results, Rockingham County Sheriff Sam Page leads longtime Senate leader Phil Berger, who has a lifetime Freedom Index score of [61 percent](#), by just two votes out of more than 26,000 cast. Because races decided by less than one percent qualify for a recount under state law, Berger could request one if the margin remains that narrow after provisional ballots are counted.

Arkansas

Arkansas delivered stronger results for high-scoring legislators.

State Senator Bryan King, a Republican with a [100-percent](#) lifetime Freedom Index score — despite having missed several votes — [defeated](#) his primary challenger 60 percent to 40 percent. Likewise,



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state Representative Wayne Long, the highest-scoring member of the Arkansas House, who [touted](#) his [88-percent](#) lifetime freedom score on campaign materials, also fended off a tough primary challenge.

On the surface, both contests appear to reflect efforts by establishment forces to unseat some of the Legislature's strongest constitutionalist voices.

Challengers faced a more difficult path against incumbents with lower constitutional scores. State Representative Matt Duffield, a Republican with a lifetime score of [44 percent](#), narrowly defeated pro-life pastor David Howell in a competitive primary race.

Similarly, state Representative Jim Wooten, who holds a lifetime freedom score of [43 percent](#), narrowly defeated challenger Tony Ferguson, a pro-life and pro-Second Amendment candidate.

The lowest-scoring Republican state representative in Arkansas, Dolly Henley — with a lifetime score of [33 percent](#) — defeated her primary challenger by a comfortable margin.

Democrat Alex Holladay [won](#) a special election for Arkansas House District 70, defeating Republican Bo Renshaw with only 51 percent of the vote in a race made possible after former Representative Carlton Wing, who has a [65-percent](#) lifetime Freedom Index score, resigned to lead Arkansas PBS, giving Democrats a pickup in the chamber though Republicans still maintain an 80-19 majority. In 2024, Wing [defeated](#) Holladay by just two percent. The seat will be up for election again this November, when Renshaw and Holladay are to face off in a rematch.

As *The Hill* [states](#), the Democratic pickup could prove significant on appropriations bills, which require a 75-percent supermajority vote in both chambers. The margin may be particularly relevant this year, as Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders faces backlash from some Republicans over her proposal to build a 3,000-bed prison in Franklin County.

As the 2026 election cycle continues, these results provide an early snapshot of the political landscape and underscore the importance of monitoring how legislators vote on constitutional issues. You can see how your state and federal elected officials adhere to constitutional principles [here](#).



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