

DEEP ROOT ANALYTICS - MEMORANDUM

From: Deep Root Analytics
To: Interested Parties
Subject: Texas General Election Candidate Ballot Impacts

Introduction

Deep Root Analytics conducted an analysis of the potential impact on competitive congressional districts in Texas depending on who emerges as the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate in 2026.

Our findings suggest that if Attorney General Ken Paxton is the Republican standard-bearer, his presence at the top of the ticket could significantly weaken Republican performance in down-ballot and congressional races. This dynamic could limit opportunities for GOP pickups while also endangering seats previously considered safe.

In our analysis, we drew on modeled ballot performance, turnout projections, candidate consideration scores, demographic data, and internal polling that tested three Senate ballot scenarios (generic, Cornyn vs. generic Democrat, and Paxton vs. generic Democrat). Using internal models alongside public and private polling, we simulated shifts in voter behavior—including reduced support among independents, decreased Democratic crossover, declining support among women statewide, and softening suburban Republican margins. Comparing Cornyn and Paxton's relative performance across demographic groups allowed us to estimate the extent of Paxton's drag on Republican congressional candidates.

Attorney General Ken Paxton as the nominee would not only result in a competitive and costly Senate race in Texas but could also create a 4 to 7-point drag on a generic Republican congressional candidate's performance across the state. This in turn will imperil Republican control of 7 congressional districts, compromising President Trump and party leaders' monumental efforts to retain the U.S. House of Representatives.

GOP Pickup Opportunities at Risk

Following redistricting, Republicans have five realistic opportunities to flip Democratic-held congressional seats. Under a scenario with Senator John Cornyn at the top of the ticket, Republicans are positioned to compete effectively in all five.

With Attorney General Ken Paxton as nominee, projections show Republicans would likely only flip 2 of the 5 targeted districts, due to consistent drag across key races.

POTENTIAL DEM to GOP FLIP DISTRICTS				
DISTRICT	OFFICE HOLDER	GENERIC CONGRESSIONAL BALLOT MARGIN	PROJECTED PAXTON MARGIN	PROJECTED PAXTON DRAG
9	Al Green (D)*	+2%	-4%	-6%
28	Henry Cuellar (D)	+2%	-3%	-5%
32	Julie Johnson (D)*	+9%	+3%	-6%
34	Vicente Gonzalez (D)	+4%	-3%	-7%
35	Greg Casar (D)*	+14%	+8%	-6%

*Open seat post-redistricting

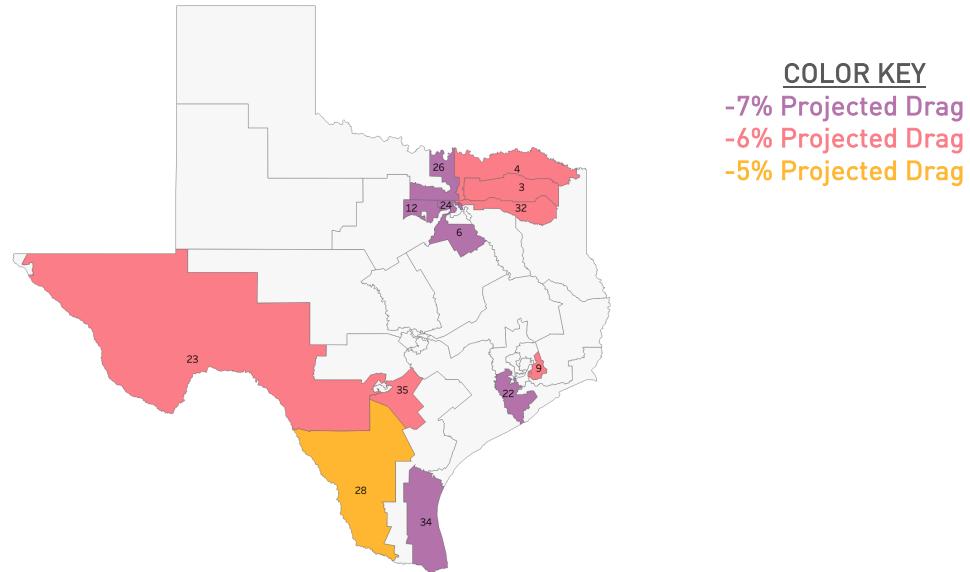
Safe GOP Seats Become Vulnerable

Redistricting has also reshaped eight Republican-held districts that should, under normal conditions, remain secure. A generic Republican is well-positioned to hold these seats.

However, with Paxton as the nominee, at least half of these districts become serious pickup opportunities for Democrats, as projected margins shrink dramatically or even flip.

GOP HOLD DISTRICTS				
DISTRICT	OFFICE HOLDER	GENERIC CONGRESSIONAL BALLOT MARGIN	PROJECTED PAXTON MARGIN	PROJECTED PAXTON DRAG
3	Keith Self (R)	+9%	+3%	-6%
4	Pat Fallon (R)	+8%	+1%	-6%
6	Jake Ellzey (R)	+10%	+3%	-7%
12	Craig Goldman (R)	+10%	+3%	-7%
22	Troy Nehls (R)	+4%	-3%	-7%
23	Tony Gonzales (R)	+10%	+3%	-6%
24	Beth Van Duyne (R)	+4%	-3%	-7%
26	Brandon Gill (R)	+7%	0%	-7%

2026 Paxton Drag in Texas Competitive Congressional Districts



Map shows projected vote margins for a generic Republican vs. Ken Paxton as the 2026 Senate nominee across Texas congressional districts. Darker shades indicate greater negative drag.

Conclusion

The data suggests that nominating Ken Paxton for U.S. Senate in 2026 would impose a measurable down-ballot penalty for Republicans in Texas. His candidacy not only reduces the likelihood of flipping competitive Democratic-held seats but also exposes multiple GOP-held districts to potential Democratic gains.

In short, Paxton's presence on the ballot could shift the balance in Texas from a cycle of expected Republican expansion to one of significant defensive vulnerability.