

## Legislative Division Weekly

### GRASSROOTS ACTION UPDATES

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact their elected representatives to support the *Contract Our Veterans Act*! The American Legion supports this crucial legislation that will help veteran-owned businesses obtain government contracts. *Go to the [Action Center](#) to quickly email a letter of support to your member of Congress.*

Have you had a recent meeting or phone call with your member of Congress? Report your contact today! Click [here](#) to register your Congressional contact and demonstrate the power of The American Legion advocacy in action.

The American Legion's legislative agenda for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. To review our priorities, you can check out our [Advocacy Toolkit](#).

### SHAKEUP IN HOUSE?



*This article's original publication can be found [here](#).*

Less than six months out from Election Day, the 10 most vulnerable House members are a mix of Republicans and Democrats, including two progressives facing tough primary challenges.

The other eight members to make the list will be battling to keep their seats in November. Taking over the No. 1 spot — after its occupant in our November ranking was expelled from the House — is New York Republican Rep. Brandon Williams. His district saw some of the greatest changes after New York's Democratic-controlled state legislature approved new maps in February.

Fellow New Yorkers Anthony D'Esposito and Mike Lawler remain on the list, as does California Rep. John Duarte. Returning is fellow California Rep. Mike Garcia. And joining the list for the first time this cycle are Democrats Don Davis of North Carolina and Matt Cartwright of Pennsylvania.

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With 22 members representing districts that would have voted for the opposite party's presidential nominee in 2020, there are members who narrowly missed this list but could find themselves on it as the campaign progresses. Arizona GOP Rep. Juan Ciscomani is sure to have a competitive rematch against Democrat Kristen Engel. Ciscomani had significantly more outside support than Engel did in 2022, according to [OpenSecrets](#), but Democrats have signaled that could change this year. On the other side, Republicans hope that Alaska's ranked-choice voting system won't be a roadblock again to ousting Democratic Rep. Mary Peltola in a state that then-President Trump won by 10 points in 2020.

Reps. Jamaal Bowman and Cori Bush, both progressives, join the list at the fifth and sixth spot due to the competitive primaries each face. Bowman and Bush, who are both aligned with Justice Democrats, face Democratic candidates who have outraced them. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee also endorsed both George Latimer in New York and Wesley Bell in Missouri, as did the Democratic Majority for Israel, and progressives are bracing for outside spending by pro-Israel groups in both races.

But there are other members facing serious primary challenges. In Texas, Rep. Tony Gonzales is in a runoff election later this month. Virginia Rep. Bob Good, the chair of the House Freedom Caucus, appears to be in serious trouble. [Cardinal News](#) reported Wednesday that an internal poll taken by his primary challenger, state Sen. John McGuire, showed him with a 14-point lead over Good. In both Gonzales' and Good's cases, there are Republican House colleagues backing their opponent, a somewhat unusual twist in the campaign.

In New Jersey, freshman Rep. Rob Menendez faces a June Democratic primary challenge from Hoboken Mayor Ravi Bhalla. Menendez has maintained institutional support that his father, Sen. Bob Menendez — who tops our list of the [most vulnerable Senate incumbents](#) — lost after he was indicted last year. But after a federal judge barred the state's primary ballot design, which gave preferential placement to candidates who had the support of county chairs as the younger Menendez did, he could have a more difficult path to securing renomination.

Another member who could join the list in the coming months is Texas Rep. Henry Cuellar, who was [indicted last week](#) alongside his wife on charges that he took \$600,000 in bribes from the government of Azerbaijan and an unnamed foreign bank headquartered in Mexico City.

National Republicans could take another look at Cuellar's seat in the 28th District, which he won by 13 percentage points two years ago. Republicans Jay Furman and Lazaro Garza are the two candidates in a runoff election later this month after no candidates reached a 50 percent threshold during the March primary.

*The complete list can be found [here](#).*

## SPEAKER SEAT SECURE FOR NOW

*This article's original publication can be found [here](#).*

The House overwhelmingly voted to table Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene's attempt to oust Speaker Mike Johnson on Wednesday night, with nearly all Republicans and most Democrats coming to Johnson's rescue.

The final tally was 359-43, with 11 Republicans and 32 Democrats voting against the motion to table Greene's resolution. Seven Democrats voted "present."

Greene, R-Ga., made her long-telegraphed move against Johnson after reading a lengthy litany of complaints about his tenure in office, which began in late October, on the floor. She offered her resolution to declare the office of the speaker vacant during a break in other legislative business.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., tried to dispense with the clerk's formal reading of the resolution on the floor, which is typically done by unanimous consent. In this case, there was an objection and the entire resolution was read out.

Then Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La., a onetime speaker contender himself, offered his motion to table Greene's resolution.

Greene has said that Johnson is a "Democrat speaker" and is particularly upset that Johnson brought to the floor compromise fiscal 2024 appropriations legislation and a war supplemental package that included aid for Ukraine.

Greene initially introduced the measure after the passage of the second of the two appropriations packages, leading to weeks of speculation of if and when she would make her move.

But former President Donald Trump intervened and tried to persuade Greene to back down, according to reports, leading to speculation that the situation might be defused.

It had appeared that Greene and her ally Thomas Massie, R-Ky., had put their effort on pause Tuesday, after meetings with Johnson on Monday and Tuesday in which they delivered four "requests" to the speaker. They were joined by Arizona's Paul Gosar, the only other Republican to publicly back the effort.

The trio is asking that Johnson only bring legislation to the floor that has the support of a majority of the conference; oppose any additional Ukraine aid; defund the office of special counsel Jack Smith; and include a 1 percent across-the-board spending cut in a continuing resolution that will be needed past Sept. 30 if all fiscal 2025 appropriations bills are not passed in time.

Johnson, however, said he is not negotiating with Greene and her allies.

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In a statement posted on his social media account after the vote Wednesday, Trump offered praise for both Greene and Johnson, but said he opposed the motion to vacate, arguing it would “negatively affect everything!”

Though only a handful of Republicans have come out against Johnson, that would have been enough if Democrats took the same approach they did in October and voted to oust former Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

But when Congress returned from its recess last week, Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., and his two deputies put speculation to rest by declaring they would vote to table Greene’s motion to vacate. “At this moment, upon completion of our national security work, the time has come to turn the page on this chapter of Pro-Putin Republican obstruction,” Jeffries, Whip Katherine M. Clark, D-Mass., and Caucus Chair Pete Aguilar, D-Calif., said in their statement.

And Greene has not secured much support from her Republican colleagues; though 10 other Republicans joined her in voting against the motion to table on Wednesday, it’s not clear how many of those would actually vote to sack Johnson if Greene’s motion to vacate the office actually came to a vote.

A vast majority of the conference wants to avoid the chaos of last October, when McCarthy became the first speaker ever removed from office under a motion to vacate.

“I do think it’s a distraction to put a lot of energy in this, when other problems are out there,” Rep. Ryan Zinke, R-Mont., said. “I would prefer we focus on the border, focus on the Israeli problem with ammunition, focus on what we can do rather than these leadership distractions.”

Rep. Mike Garcia, R-Calif., who is in a tight reelection race, said a motion to vacate is divisive. “This type of drama right now is an unnecessary tactic,” he said. “I think she’s depreciated the value of it to zero.”

In October, eight Republicans, led by Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., joined with every Democrat to oust McCarthy. Gaetz moved against McCarthy after he put a “clean” stopgap spending measure on the floor.

That kicked off a three-week period in which the House was paralyzed as three different Republicans — Scalise, Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, and Majority Whip Tom Emmer, R-Minn., were all nominated by the conference but blocked by a group of dug-in opponents.

That paved the way for Johnson’s dark horse candidacy and out-of-nowhere ascension to the speakership. Since then, he has negotiated with Democrats to avoid a government shutdown and fund the government for fiscal 2024, and moved additional aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan.

Johnson’s decision to move funding for allies appears to have played a major role in Democrats’ move to protect him. The speaker had stated he needed changes to the country’s immigration and border enforcement laws to move Ukraine aid, but ended up bringing legislation to the floor without border provisions.

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Since Greene's intent became known, there have been rumblings among GOP critics that it was time for those seeking to remove Johnson — and potentially trigger more instability within their party and in Congress — to face consequences, such as removal from committees.

Greene has said that doesn't bother her, considering Democrats did that when they were in control and it didn't dent her political popularity. Nonetheless, talk of consequences continued up through the vote on Wednesday night.

"I think that remains to be seen," said Rep. Austin Scott, R-Ga., who himself was briefly a candidate for speaker last October.

Aside from Greene, Massie and Gosar, other Republicans who voted "no" on the motion to table Wednesday night included Andy Biggs and Eli Crane of Arizona; Eric Burlison of Missouri; Warren Davidson of Ohio; Chip Roy of Texas; Alex X. Mooney of West Virginia; Barry Moore of Alabama; and Victoria Spartz of Indiana, who was coming off a tough primary win in the Hoosier state on Tuesday night.

"I appreciate the show of confidence from my colleagues in this misguided effort," Johnson told reporters after the vote. "I intend to do the right thing, what I was elected to do, and I'll let the chips fall where they may."

"In my view, that is leadership. And that's what's called for in the times in which we live."

### LEGIONNAIRE OF THE WEEK

To recognize the weekly accomplishments of our Legionnaires, we will spotlight an individual every week. These individuals demonstrate exceptional grassroots activism by meeting with/contacting their Congressional Representative/Senator to advocate for veterans. Efforts like these truly make a difference and give veterans a voice in Congress.

#### Ralph Bozella, Colorado

Ralph, for your steadfast advocacy of Legion priorities, we are honored to name you Legionnaire of the Week!

Ralph met with Congressman Joe Neguse (CO) in Longmont, CO. In Ralph's report, he shared that Congressman Neguse attended a Vietnam War Era Commemoration ceremony at Post 32. More than 50 were in attendance, and the power and influence of The American Legion was observed by Congressman Neguse.

Thank you, Ralph, for your report and the time you have dedicated to the Legion's legislative priorities.

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If you have made a Grassroots effort and would like to be considered for next week's "Legionnaire of the Week," please fill out the Congressional Contact Report Form [here](#). You can also email us at [grassroots@legion.org](mailto:grassroots@legion.org) with the details.

### LEGISLATIVE DIVISION UPDATES

The American Legion National Executive Committee met in the Indianapolis HQ this week, and the Legislative Director was in attendance.

In the DC office, the rest of the Legislative Division staff met with allies to discuss the Richard Star Act and the Hell Girls Gold Medal, as well as issues like homelessness among the veteran population.

The team also met with staff from the offices of Rep Van Drew (NJ), Rep Levin (CA), Sen Hassan (NH), and Senator Scott (FL), as well as the House Veterans Affairs Committee staff.

Leg Div staff continued to review the FY25 NDAA and VA/MilCon Bills to develop supporting positions to communicate to the House Appropriations Committee as hearings continue. Grassroots outreach took center stage as the Program manager drafted up several new campaigns for important legislation.

### GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

Interested in what the Legion is advocating for in Congress on *The Veteran's Role in Supporting the Military*? Check out our [information paper](#) in the [Legislative Toolkit](#). This is a great starting point for a conversation with your elected officials!

As part of our ongoing Grassroots efforts, LegDiv staff is available to provide **Grassroots Training** tailored to the hosting Department's needs. If you are interested in hosting a Grassroots training event, please contact [grassroots@legion.org](mailto:grassroots@legion.org) or [ejohnson@legion.org](mailto:ejohnson@legion.org).

Register for Action Alerts today at <https://www.voterve.net/AmericanLegion/Register>

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### UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As of Friday, May 10th, at 9:00am, the following hearings are scheduled:

May 13<sup>th</sup>, 11:00am – House Veterans Affairs Committee (Health Sub), Field Hearing “Iowa: A Leader in Veteran healthcare Innovation”

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 4:30pm – House Veterans Affairs Committee (Technology Modernization Sub), VA Office of Information and technology Budget Request

May 15<sup>th</sup>, 3:30pm – Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, Frontier Health Care

May 15<sup>th</sup>, 4:00pm – Senate Armed Services Committee (Airland Sub), Army Modernization

May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2:00pm – House Veterans Affairs Committee (Oversight and Investigations Sub), Ensuring VA’s Security

May 16<sup>th</sup>, 9:30am – Senate Armed Services Committee, testimony on the Department of the Navy

May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 4:45pm – Senate Armed Services Committee (Strategic Forces Sub), testimony on the DoD nuclear weapons program

HVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Calendar Home | House Committee on Veterans Affairs](#)

SVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings - U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#)

HASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – House Armed Services Committee](#)

SASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services](#)

[View The American Legion Legislative Handbook Here](#)

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