

News From The States

COUNTDOWN '24

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By **Robin Opsahl**, [Iowa Capital Dispatch](#)

Good morning! There's less than a month left before the Iowa GOP caucuses, kicking off the 2024 Republican presidential nominating cycle.

- Though it's still possible for another candidate to get a last-minute surge, former President Donald Trump has strengthened his lead in early state polls, according to [aggregated data by FiveThirtyEight](#).
- Poll analysis [from ABC News](#) found that historically, presidential candidates with at least 40% in December national polls go on to become their party nominee.
- But others like Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis say they will be able to overtake Trump in states like Iowa and New Hampshire. [The New York Times reported](#) that DeSantis said Trump will claim the Iowa caucuses were "stolen" if he loses the first-in-the-nation contest.

A little housekeeping note: This will be the last Countdown '24 you'll receive this year! We will not be sending you a newsletter for the next two weeks as we take a break for the holidays. We'll be back Jan. 8, 2024, a week before the caucuses.

TOP IMPACT *What to read this week*

[How a new way to vote is gaining traction in states — and could transform US politics](#)



(Photo by Bill Pugliano/Getty Images)

With U.S. democracy plagued by extremism, polarization, and a growing disconnect between voters and lawmakers, a set of reforms that could dramatically upend how Americans vote is gaining momentum at surprising speed in Western states.

Ranked choice voting, which asks voters to rank multiple candidates in order of preference, has seen its profile steadily expand since 2016, when Maine became the first state to adopt it. But increasingly, RCV is being paired with a new system for primaries that advances multiple candidates, regardless of party, to the general election. Proponents argue these twin reforms deliver fairer outcomes that better reflect the will of voters, while disempowering the extremes and encouraging candidates and elected officials to prioritize conciliation and compromise. | [News from the States](#)

Sec. of State Bellows hears arguments for and against challenges to Trump's ballot eligibility.



(Photo by Emma Davis/ Maine Morning Star)

Mainers who filed challenges to former President Donald Trump’s primary election eligibility say putting him on the ballot would violate two amendments of the U.S. Constitution, the 14th and 22nd. Counsel for Trump says only one section of the Constitution matters — the three qualifications for the presidency.

The challengers presented their arguments on Friday to Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows, who is expected to issue her ruling later this month. The hearing also sought to answer the question of whether Bellows, who served as presiding officer over the hearing, has the authority to rule on the challenges, a power objected to by Trump’s counsel. | [Maine Morning Star](#)

BIG PICTURE *Election coverage across the country*



(Photo by Robin Opsahl/Iowa Capital Dispatch)

- **Donald Trump celebrates Iowa Poll lead as he rallies for caucus support** | [Iowa Capital Dispatch](#)
- **Sununu ‘all in’ for Nikki Haley as he makes endorsement official** | [New Hampshire Bulletin](#)
- **Jeff Roe, main strategist for DeSantis super PAC, resigns** | [CBS News](#)
- **Haley and DeSantis pressure Trump to join them on the CNN debate stage in Iowa** | [CNN](#)

Courts

- **Court of Appeals rules Trump can stay on Michigan’s primary ballot, appeal planned** | [Michigan Advance](#)

- **Fulton 19 update: Life goes on, jackpot justice for Giuliani, sorry not sorry** | [Georgia Recorder](#)
- **Clock ticking on North Dakota tribal redistricting dilemma** | [North Dakota Monitor](#)
- **Reforms coming to WA elections after three counties settle with UCLA's Voting Rights Project** | [Washington State Standard](#)
- **5th Circuit denies Louisiana's appeal in congressional redistricting case** | [Louisiana Illuminator](#)
- **New judge takes control of another Georgia political map; Cobb schools now found in violation of voting law** | [Georgia Recorder](#)

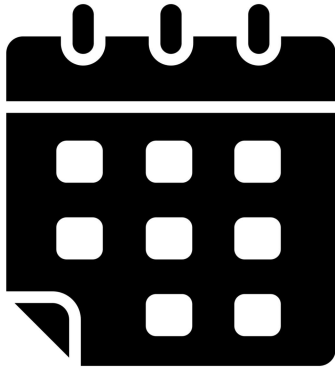
Nominating contests

- **Christie files appeal after not qualifying for Maine's primary election ballot** | [Maine Morning Star](#)
- **Iowa Democrats announce in-person precinct caucus locations for 2024** | [Iowa Capital Dispatch](#)
- **Idaho open primary ballot initiative reaches 50,000 signature milestone** | [Idaho Capital Sun](#)
- **Trump has massive edge in Super Tuesday states, cutting off rivals** | [Business Insider](#)
- **Idaho GOP presidential caucus voters face Dec. 31 deadline to register and affiliate** | [Idaho Capital Sun](#)

Campaigns

- **Few Republican women make it to Caucus Day. As Nikki Haley closes in, gendered attacks rise** | [Des Moines Register](#)
- **Ron DeSantis wanted to change the way campaigns were funded. Then the fights started** | [Washington Post](#)
- **Biden won the Teamsters endorsement in 2020. It's not a sure bet in 2024** | [Politico](#)
- **Nikki Haley's Nevada primary gamble set to cause 'major confusion' as state holds two votes** | [New York Post](#)
- **What did UA students think of Vivek Ramaswamy calling 'the climate change agenda' a hoax?** | [Alabama Reflector](#)
- **Biden plans swing through South Carolina, in early glimpse at 2024 campaign** | [ABC News](#)
- **Christie doesn't rule out working with Haley to defeat Trump in GOP primary** | [The Hill](#)

COMING UP Calendar of events



- **Jan. 10, 2024, DES MOINES** | CNN will [host a Republican presidential debate](#) at Drake University.
- **Jan. 15, 2024, IOWA** | The Iowa Republican caucuses.
- **Jan. 23, 2024, NEW HAMPSHIRE** | The New Hampshire presidential primaries.

Follow state-level coverage of Election 2024 anytime at [News From The States](#). Send tips and thoughts to ropsahl@iowacapitaldispatch.com, and follow them on Twitter [@robinlopsahl](#)

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