

INVEST *to* ELECT

ILLINOIS

ITE RESEARCH REPORT

SUBJECT: Senator Raphael Warnock

REPORT CURRENT AS OF: 1/11/21

AUTHOR: Kelly Mazeski

- INCUMBENT
- CHALLENGER
- OPEN SEAT

PRIMARY DATE: May 24, 2022

STATE OR DISTRICT: Georgia

CANDIDATE(S) BACKGROUND:

Senator Raphael Warnock, born in Savannah, GA in 1969, was one of twelve brothers and sisters growing up in public housing on the Georgia coast. He graduated from Morehouse College in 1991 before completing his PhD at Union Theological Seminary in New York. In 2005, Warnock became Senior Pastor at

Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, the former pulpit of Dr Martin Luther King. He was the youngest pastor selected to serve in this leadership role.

Warnock won a special US Senate election in Georgia by two points on January 5, 2021,. Warnock is Georgia's first Black senator and the first Black Democrat to represent a southern state in the Senate. He is also the first Democrat to win a US Senate seat in Georgia in 20 years.

Warnock is a formidable candidate due to his outstanding name recognition, incumbent advantage, a strong political network and deep donor list.

CANDIDATE CAMPAIGN FINANCES:

In 2021 Q3, Warnock raised \$9.5 million in contributions with \$17.2 million COH.

OPPONENT(S) BACKGROUND:

Warnock's likely opponent is Black conservative and former University of Georgia football star and Heisman Trophy winner Hershel Walker. Walker has strong national name recognition and is endorsed by Trump and Mitch McConnell.

Walker's lead has some Republicans worried. He supports Trump's claim that he lost the Presidency due to voter fraud. He also has a history of violent actions and mental health struggles detailed in his 2008 book *Breaking Free: My Life with Dissociative Identity Disorder*, describing

himself as dealing with at least a dozen personalities.

OPPONENT CAMPAIGN FINANCES:

Walker raised \$3.7 million during the first five weeks of his campaign reported in Q3. He has \$2.5 million COH.

STATE POLITICAL CLIMATE:

In the late 2010s and early 2020s, Georgia became a competitive swing state, with Democrats narrowly winning all statewide federal elections in the 2020 elections. However, the Republican party controls the state offices of governor, attorney general and secretary of state, as well as both chambers of the state legislature.

The Georgia legislature recently made controversial changes to state voting laws that may suppress voter turnout, particularly Black voters. The General Assembly can now select the chair of the state election board rather than the board being chaired by the Georgia secretary of state (remember Brad Raffensperger?).

BIDEN +/- 2020

+0.30% Biden was the first Democrat to carry the state since Bill Clinton in 1992.

POLITICAL REPORTS AND POLLS (e.g., Cook Political Report, FiveThirtyEight, Sabato's Crystal Ball)

Cook Political Report - Toss Up

Sabato's Crystal Ball - Toss Up

SUPPORT:

- YES
- NO
- TBD

NEWSLINKS:

- <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/these-10-races-could-determine-control-senate-2022-n1286404>
- <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/republicans-could-flip-two-senate-seats-georgia-nevada-new-gop-n1286469>
- <https://apnews.com/article/lifestyle-sports-nfl-college-football-coronavirus-pandemic-5e2875eec11e93f9a3bf1fc859137ff8>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/jan/03/herschel-walker-video-build-back-better-georgia-republican-senate-run-trump>