

# ITE RESEARCH REPORT

# INVEST *to* ELECT

ILLINOIS

**SUBJECT:** Congresswoman Lauren Underwood

**REPORT CURRENT AS OF:** 2/7/2022

**AUTHOR:** Kelly Mazeski

- INCUMBENT
- CHALLENGER
- OPEN SEAT

**PRIMARY DATE:** June 28

**STATE OR DISTRICT:** IL-14

## **CANDIDATE(S) BACKGROUND:**

Underwood is the first woman, first person of color, and first millennial to represent her district in Congress. She is also the youngest African American woman to serve in the US House of Representatives. After growing up in Naperville, Illinois, Underwood received a degree in nursing from the University of Michigan and two master's degrees from Johns Hopkins University. She started her career as a policy professional in the Obama administration in 2014 and later worked as a senior advisor at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

In 2018, Underwood was elected to Congress after defeating Republican incumbent Randy Hultgren who served in Congress from 2011-2019. She was reelected in 2020 by a margin of 1.34%, the ninth-closest House race of the election cycle.

## **CANDIDATE CAMPAIGN FINANCES:**

2021 Q4 Contributions \$752,064 COH \$2,096,240

## **OPPONENT(S) BACKGROUND:**

Underwood currently has one significant Republican opponent, Mike Koolidge. Four other Republicans have not made any headway in the race. Koolidge, a 1997 Boston University graduate, six year Army veteran who served in Kuwait and Iraq, worked in radio for Chicagoan Spike O'Dell. For the last 14 years he hosted his own regionally syndicated conservative talk radio show called The Michael Koolidge Show. He ended the show to run for Congress.

## **OPPONENT CAMPAIGN FINANCES:**

Koolidge raised \$107,428. His COH is \$96,172.

## **STATE POLITICAL CLIMATE:**

Illinois is a Democratic stronghold and one of the "big three" Democratic states alongside California and New York. It is considered one of the most Democratic states in the nation and following the 2018 elections, all six statewide elected offices are held by a Democrat.

Historically, Illinois was a critical swing state leaning marginally towards the Republican Party. Following Bill Clinton's election in 1992, and his victory in Illinois, the state has been realigned in favor of Democratic candidates for president, with eight consecutive wins by that party, regardless of the national outcome. Traditionally, Chicago, East Saint Louis, and the Quad Cities region have tended to vote heavily Democratic, along with the Central Illinois population centers of Peoria, Champaign-Urbana and Decatur. In recent years, Chicago's suburban collar counties continue to trend Democratic as well.

**BIDEN +/- 2020**

57.5% Biden, 40.5% Trump

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

Cook - Lean D

FiveThirtyEight - D +7

Sabato's Crystal Ball - Leans D

**SUPPORT:**

- YES
- NO
- TBD

**NEWSLINKS:**

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20220202/most-prepared-weve-ever-been-rep-lauren-underwood-has-big-fundraising-lead-in-14th-district>

<https://www.koolidge.com/about-michael-koolidge>

**Website:** [www.underwoodforcongress.com](http://www.underwoodforcongress.com)