

THE BOWLINE GROUP

# THE BOWLINE BRIEF

PEOPLE | POLITICS | POLICY

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**Politics, government affairs and public safety  
for the law enforcement community.**

WEEKLY EDITION

October 16, 2026

**WHAT HAPPENED. WHAT I THINK IT MEANS.  
WHY IT MATTERS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT. WHAT COMES NEXT.**

# The election map moved. The funding calendar did too.

1. Inside Elections raised its House outlook on October 15 to a Democratic gain of 10–20 seats. Cook moved 18 House race ratings toward Democrats on October 9.
2. In Texas, a University of Texas poll found Talarico 50% to Paxton 47%; Marist found Talarico 47% to Paxton 45% among likely voters. Both margins are within sampling error.
3. Marist now measures Iowa Senate Democrat Josh Turek at 48% and Republican Ashley Hinson at 45% among likely voters, reversing the narrow lead in last week's Emerson poll.
4. Cook moved the Alaska governor contest to Lean Democratic on October 13 and shifted Nebraska, Oklahoma and Vermont one category toward Democrats.
5. Outside groups have spent heavily across congressional battlegrounds; Texas Senate Democrat James Talarico's campaign reported raising \$64 million in the third quarter.
6. DOJ extended Local Byrne JAG application deadlines October 15: Grants.gov is now November 3 and JustGrants November 6. The old October 9/16 dates are superseded.
7. An October 14 GAO release found gaps in CBP and ICE body-camera planning and field guidance. DHS disputed a recommendation for automatic ICE camera activation.
8. Fairfield, Connecticut, replaced Flock with Axon license-plate readers; Suffolk County, New York, pressed Flock representatives on retention and oversight.
9. Investigators are examining suspicious mailings to lawmakers and election offices. USPS outlined special ballot-mail handling measures ahead of November 3.
10. H.R. 309 and the federal NO FLOCK Act have no confirmed new legislative movement; state implementation, court decisions and grant applications remain the actionable calendar.

## MY READ

The week's biggest operational change is not a poll: DOJ reopened the Local Byrne JAG clock. Politically, the House forecast moved while Senate spending and polling remained unsettled.

# The Senate: money, turnout and late movement

The map remains broad; new surveys should be read alongside spending decisions and external ratings.

## Texas: two new polls and an extraordinary fundraising claim

UT/Texas Politics Project (Sept. 25–Oct. 5) found Talarico 50% and Paxton 47% among likely voters; Marist (Oct. 8–11) found 47%–45%. Both leads are within sampling error. Talarico's campaign reported \$64 million raised in Q3. The two campaigns and outside groups are fighting over an unusually expensive race.

## Iowa: the survey leader changed

Marist's October 15 release measured Turek 48% and Hinson 45% among likely voters (margin of error  $\pm 6.6$  points), after Emerson showed Hinson ahead last Friday. The race remains Toss Up at Cook; the disagreement is more important than any single topline.

## Kansas and Alaska: resources follow the pressure

Cook's October 6 move of Kansas to Toss Up remains the rating baseline. Republican advertising has increased sharply there. President Trump campaigned in Alaska October 13 for Sen. Dan Sullivan; Sullivan and Mary Peltola subsequently debated Iran, energy costs and integrity.

## Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire and Ohio

Suffolk polling put Jackson at 49% and Collins at 47% in Maine. Michigan remains a high-spending Rogers–El-Sayed contest. Former GOP Senate nominee Don Bolduc endorsed Democrat Chris Pappas in New Hampshire. Ohio's Brown–Husted race continues to attract major outside spending.

## Georgia, North Carolina and Nebraska: do not drop them

Cook's prior Georgia Likely D and North Carolina Lean D calls remain the attributed baseline. Ossoff and Cooper reported strong fundraising. Nebraska's Ricketts–Osborn race stays on the watch list; no new Cook rating is assigned here.

### THE BOWLINE TAKE

With less than three weeks to vote, the Senate story is a resource fight: Kansas has become a spending demand, Texas a national money magnet, and Iowa a reminder that polling snapshots can reverse quickly.

# The standing political dashboard

External nonpartisan ratings are attributed to Cook or Inside Elections. These are not TBG predictions.

| RACE      | EXTERNAL SIGNAL  | THIS WEEK                                                           |
|-----------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AK SEN    | Inside: Toss Up  | Trump visit; Sullivan–Peltola debate; no new verified rating shift. |
| GA SEN    | Cook: Likely D   | Ossoff–Collins; fundraising and spending watch.                     |
| IA SEN    | Cook: Toss Up    | Marist LV: Turek 48%, Hinson 45% (Oct. 15).                         |
| KS SEN    | Cook: Toss Up    | Oct. 6 move retained; rising GOP ad attention.                      |
| ME SEN    | Cook: Toss Up    | Suffolk: Jackson 49%, Collins 47%.                                  |
| MI SEN    | Cook: Toss Up    | Rogers–El-Sayed; high outside spending.                             |
| NH SEN    | Cook: Toss Up    | Bolduc endorsement of Pappas; Sununu contest.                       |
| NC SEN    | Cook: Lean D     | Cooper–Whatley; previous rating retained.                           |
| OH SEN    | Cook: Toss Up    | Brown–Husted; substantial outside advertising.                      |
| TX SEN    | Cook: Toss Up    | UT 50–47 Talarico; Marist 47–45 Talarico.                           |
| NE SEN    | Continuity watch | Ricketts–Osborn; no unverified rating assigned.                     |
| HOUSE     | Inside: D +10–20 | Oct. 15 outlook; Cook shifted 18 races Oct. 9.                      |
| GOVERNORS | Cook: AK Lean D  | Oct. 13 AK shift; NE/OK/VT also moved toward D.                     |

**WHAT CHANGED** Inside Elections raised its House gain projection to 10–20 seats; Cook moved Alaska governor to Lean Democratic. Senate Toss Ups remain competitive rather than settled.

# The rating shift is now the headline

Both leading nonpartisan forecasters widened the prospect of Democratic House gains.

## **Cook: 18 more races move toward Democrats**

On October 9, Cook Political Report shifted 18 House ratings toward Democrats, including four Republican-held Toss Ups to Lean Democratic and four Lean Republican seats to Toss Up. Cook's most likely outcome is now a Democratic gain of 9–19 seats.

## **Inside Elections: a new majority range**

Inside Elections updated its October 15 outlook to Democrats +10–20 seats, up from +2–10 in the previous Brief. Republicans hold a 220–215 majority; Democrats need a net gain of three seats.

## **The district continuity list stays intact**

Continue IA-01, IA-03, CA-22, MI-04, MT-01, NY-21, KY-06, FL-13, AZ-01, NC-11, CO-05 and WI-01. The DCCC's newly added Red to Blue districts—AR-02, CO-03, FL-27, NV-02, NY-21 and TN-09—remain active targets.

## **New York: public-safety labor is candidate-specific**

The prior NY-03 endorsements for Tom Suozzi and NY-17 support highlighted by Mike Lawler remain relevant. No new uniform endorsement trend is asserted. Watch local unions and candidate responses on public safety.

## **Missouri: the ballot is the next test**

The 2022 congressional map governs this November's election. Missouri voters will consider Proposition A on November 3 concerning the newer map; it does not redraw the 2026 ballot.

**WHY IT MATTERS** The House is no longer just a handful of suburban Toss Ups. Both outside forecasters now see a wider battlefield; district-level labor support, turnout and late spending remain consequential.

# Alaska moves; Texas polls diverge

State executives control public-safety budgets, labor policy, appointments and agency operating rules.

## Alaska: a genuine outside-rating change

Cook moved Alaska governor from Toss Up to Lean Democratic October 13. The state now has two separate high-priority contests: governor and the Sullivan–Peltola Senate race.

## Texas: the poll population matters

The UT/Texas Politics Project likely-voter poll found Democrat Gina Hinojosa at 49% and Gov. Greg Abbott at 48%. Marist's separate likely-voter survey found Abbott 49% and Hinojosa 45%. Both were fielded before their release; the divergence is a reason to watch turnout, not declare a leader.

## Iowa: Sand ahead in a split-ticket state

Marist found Democrat Rob Sand at 52% and Republican Zach Lahn at 45% among Iowa likely voters. The same survey found the Senate race nearly tied and a Republican advantage on the generic House ballot.

## Nebraska, Oklahoma and Vermont shift toward competition

Cook moved Nebraska and Oklahoma from Solid Republican to Likely Republican, and Vermont from Solid Republican to Likely Republican, on October 13. Those are ratings changes, not declarations that the GOP is behind.

## Ohio, New York and the rest of the board

Ohio's Acton–Ramaswamy contest remains a core watch. Marist's October 7 New York poll showed Gov. Kathy Hochul ahead of Bruce Blakeman by 11 points. Florida, Wisconsin, Michigan, Oregon, Georgia and Nevada remain tracked; no unsupported new rating is claimed.

### LAW ENFORCEMENT LENS

Governors can change ALPR standards, collective-bargaining conditions, police staffing and statewide grant priorities. The state executive map belongs beside the Senate and House, not below them.

# Washington is campaigning. The rules still move.

Election administration, courts and agency policy are setting near-term operating conditions.

## **Election offices and lawmakers face suspicious mail**

Federal authorities are investigating suspicious mailings to congressional and state election offices. USPS has outlined special election-mail handling measures. Local agencies should treat election-worker protection and mailroom protocols as live operational issues.

## **Third Circuit: new firearms-disability decisions**

An October 13 federal appellate ruling distinguished violent and nonviolent prior offenses in challenges to the federal felon-in-possession prohibition. For agencies in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, litigation over charging and enforcement standards warrants attention.

## **H.R. 309: Senate action still pending**

The National Law Enforcement Officers Remembrance, Support, and Community Outreach Act passed the House September 14 and was received in the Senate September 15. No later substantive action was verified for this edition.

## **NO FLOCK Act: introduced, not enacted**

H.R. 10366, introduced September 14, would link some federal highway funding to state restrictions on automated license-plate readers. The separate Sanders–Merkley–Ocasio-Cortez proposal remains a competing approach; no new enacted federal standard is claimed.

## **Appropriations and the lame duck**

With Election Day November 3, public-safety organizations should maintain both an immediate agency/grant calendar and a short list of legislative asks for Congress's return.

**FOR OUR CLIENTS** The immediate questions are operational: election security, firearms-case guidance, technology compliance and application deadlines. Waiting for a post-election Congress will not resolve this month's decisions.

# Local Byrne JAG gets more time

BJA extended Local Byrne JAG deadlines October 15. The prior October 9/16 dates are no longer controlling.

| PROGRAM               | GRANTS.GOV     | JUSTGRANTS | STATUS / USE                                         |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Local Byrne JAG       | Nov. 3         | Nov. 6     | EXTENDED Oct. 15; eligible local formula applicants. |
| CTAS                  | Passed Oct. 15 | Oct. 22    | Tribal public safety; complete JustGrants.           |
| Daniel Anderl         | Passed Oct. 15 | Oct. 22    | Judicial security and privacy.                       |
| ANGEL                 | Oct. 20        | Oct. 27    | \$25M; targeted HSTF/violent-crime operations.       |
| Tribal Justice TTA    | Oct. 21        | Oct. 28    | Training and technical assistance.                   |
| Special Attorneys     | Oct. 28        | Oct. 30    | New Round 10 posting Oct. 14.                        |
| Coverdell Competitive | Oct. 29        | Nov. 5     | Forensic-science improvements.                       |
| DNA CEBR Formula      | Oct. 29        | Nov. 5     | DNA backlog/capacity.                                |
| Cold Cases Using DNA  | Oct. 29        | Nov. 5     | Investigative/prosecutorial capacity.                |
| Coverdell Formula     | Oct. 30        | Nov. 6     | State forensic-science funding.                      |
| STOP School Violence  | Oct. 30        | Nov. 6     | School-violence prevention.                          |
| Rural Violent Crime   | Oct. 30        | Nov. 6     | Rural violent-crime reduction.                       |

## Deadlines that closed this week

Crisis Response Training, Byrne State Crisis Intervention and Kevin and Avonte closed October 13; NIBIN Modernization closed October 15. Applicants already in the pipeline should verify submission status.

### DO THIS NOW

For Local Byrne JAG, update the application calendar to November 3/6. For CTAS and Daniel Anderl, the Grants.gov stage is over; only timely first-stage filers can complete JustGrants.

# ALPR oversight now includes vendor choice

The Flock debate is no longer simply whether cameras help solve crimes. Procurement and search controls are now in play.

## Fairfield: the agency kept ALPRs but changed vendors

Fairfield, Connecticut, removed its Flock cameras by October 5 and moved to 54 Axon license-plate readers. Police leaders emphasized agency control over data, auditability and updated policies. This is a vendor and governance decision, not an abandonment of ALPR technology.

## Suffolk County: lawmakers question retention and access

At an October 13 hearing, Suffolk County legislators pressed Flock representatives about reconstructing travel patterns, retention and access controls. Legislators discussed additional safeguards despite the county's substantial system investment.

## Oklahoma: the suppression ruling remains active

The federal district-court decision concerning a warrantless historical ALPR search remains the key litigation watch. No appellate reversal is claimed. The factual scope and any appeal matter before agencies extrapolate a nationwide rule.

## Missouri and Connecticut: implementation, not headlines

Missouri's executive-order safeguards and DPS guidance remain in force as an agency-policy reference. Connecticut's October 1 restrictions require attention to retention, data sharing, search justification and vendor settings.

## Oregon and the federal bills

Oregon's possible 2027 ban remains a legislative watch, while federal proposals range from funding conditions to more restrictive use limits. No verified new enactment is asserted.

### THE BOWLINE TAKE

Agencies can defend the investigative value of ALPRs and still insist on clear authorization, limited retention, meaningful audits, vendor accountability and training. Those are now procurement questions as well as policy questions.

# Immigration policy is also camera policy

ICE operations, local partnerships and federal funding are now overlapping management questions.

## GAO: CBP and ICE body-camera programs need updates

A GAO review publicly released October 14 found that CBP and ICE had not updated program plans since 2022 and 2024, respectively, and lacked tailored guidance across many offices. GAO counted roughly 11,500 deployed CBP cameras and 4,800 ICE cameras in 2026.

## The disputed recommendation

DHS agreed with six of GAO's seven recommendations but rejected automatic ICE camera activation controls. GAO maintained that additional activation safeguards would help agencies document compliance with policy.

## 287(g): the standing operations watch

The network of state and local ICE agreements remains a significant staffing, transport, training, liability and bargaining issue. New York litigation and the practical cost of participation remain active; no unverified new agreement total is asserted.

## Marble Hill and New York City

The October 8 ICE shooting remains a follow-up investigation, alongside ICE vehicle-stop and pursuit guidance. Political reaction to the incident has raised questions about how local police respond to protests around federal operations.

## Federal grants and local approval

Houston's withdrawn Model Cities application remains the comparison point. Laredo's council approved pursuing an estimated \$11.1 million Model Cities application, with debate over federal conditions; an application is not an award.

### WHAT IT MEANS

For people doing the job, federal immigration enforcement now intersects with body-camera training, local governance, staffing and grant eligibility. Separate what a grant permits from what a local agency has agreed to do.

## The political conversation underneath the headlines

1. The House map moved more than most individual polls. Cook and Inside Elections both widened the likely Democratic gain range.
2. Texas money and turnout are the real closing variables. The two latest nonpartisan surveys show close races, not settled winners.
3. Iowa is the best example of why a weekly brief cannot pick a favorite poll and stop there: Emerson and Marist point in different directions.
4. Law enforcement technology debates are moving from public rhetoric into actual procurement and audit requirements.
5. The new Byrne JAG extension changes agency work plans immediately; this is the grant item that should be forwarded internally.
6. Federal body-camera policy is back on the management agenda because GAO identified concrete planning and activation gaps.

### THE BOWLINE TAKE

## The final stretch is about execution

Campaigns have to convert spending and polling into turnout. Agencies have to convert rules and grant notices into documented action. In both cases, a good plan that misses the deadline is not a good plan.

#### THE BOWLINE BOTTOM LINE

House forecasters moved toward Democratic gains. Texas and Iowa remain close. Alaska governor shifted. DOJ extended Local Byrne JAG. ALPR procurement and ICE body cameras are now immediate management issues.

# The next seven days

Every continuing item remains on the list until resolved, superseded or explicitly retired.

| TRACKED ITEM        | REQUIRED NEXT CHECK                                                |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SENATE MONEY        | Kansas ad allocations; Texas outside spending and Q3 filings.      |
| IOWA / TEXAS        | New LV polling, turnout and early-vote data; Marist/UT divergence. |
| MAINE / OHIO        | Collins–Jackson and Brown–Husted polling and late advertising.     |
| SENATE BOARD        | AK, GA, KS, MI, NH, NC, NE; check external rating changes.         |
| HOUSE RATINGS       | Cook 18 shifts; Inside +10–20; district-level updates.             |
| HOUSE LABOR         | NY-03, NY-17 and other police/fire union endorsements.             |
| GOVERNORS           | AK, IA, TX, OH, NY, FL, WI, MI, OR, GA, NV; NE/OK/VT.              |
| MISSOURI MAP        | Nov. 3 Proposition A; 2022 districts remain for 2026.              |
| FLOCK / COURTS      | Oklahoma suppression case; appeal or other court rulings.          |
| FLOCK / CONTRACTS   | Fairfield transition; Suffolk oversight; South Windsor/Scottsdale. |
| STATE ALPR          | Missouri, Connecticut and Oregon legislative developments.         |
| FEDERAL ALPR        | H.R. 10366 and competing federal proposals.                        |
| ICE / CAMERAS       | GAO recommendations; DHS implementation; activation controls.      |
| 287(g) / NYC        | New York litigation, Marble Hill inquiry, vehicle-stop guidance.   |
| LOCAL BYRNE JAG     | Revised Nov. 3 Grants.gov / Nov. 6 JustGrants deadlines.           |
| GRANTS THIS WEEK    | ANGEL Oct. 20/27; CTAS and Daniel Anderl Oct. 22.                  |
| OTHER DOJ GRANTS    | Special Attorneys Oct. 28/30; Coverdell and DNA late Oct.          |
| CONGRESS / SECURITY | H.R. 309, appropriations, election-office mail threats.            |