

## “PHOTO FINISH” RACES

### Maryland

- Retiring Incumbent – Senator Paul Sarbanes (D)
- Challengers – [Rep. Ben Cardin \(D\)](#) and [Lieutenant Governor Michael Steele \(R\)](#)

If this was any other year than 2006, this race would not even be close. Voters are faced with the choice of a gruff, sixty-three year old Congressman who has been in elective politics for more than forty years or a dynamic, inspiring candidate in the form of the Lieutenant Governor Michael Steele, an African American who is running [adverts](#) telling voters this work ethic is derived from a mother who worked for forty-five years in a laundrette making the minimum wage.

Ben Cardin has run a safe but boring campaign, acknowledging his dull nature (“Ben’s not flashy, but he never stops”) in his television adverts. The major strength of his campaign is the endorsements he has received with the Washington Post describing him as a “superb lawmaker” and the Baltimore Sun praising his “outstanding leadership”.

With a narrow lead amongst white voters, the success of Steele’s campaign is entirely dependent on whether or not the large black population in Baltimore chooses to coalesce around his candidacy or stay loyal to the Democrats. At this moment in time, he can’t be completely ruled out but one just cannot ignore the fact that Bush lost Maryland to John Kerry 56% to 43% in a much better year for the Republicans than 2006. Maryland leans very slightly towards the death-defying grey Ben Cardin.

### Missouri

- Incumbent – [Senator Jim Talent \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [State Auditor Claire McCaskill \(D\)](#)

A former member of the House of Representatives, Talent was first elected to the Senate in 2002 defeating Jean Caranhan, the wife of the man who was posthumously elected in 2000 following his death in plane crash. Talent’s opponent, Claire McCaskill currently serves as Missouri’s State Auditor. Possessing a deeply-unpleasant, cutting voice, McCaskill proved her strong appeal amongst party activists by defeating the state’s sitting Governor Bob Holden in the Democratic primary in 2002. She went on to be narrowly defeated by Republican Matt Blunt at the General Election.

This race has been defined by one issue: stem cell research. Talent has consistently been outspoken in his opposition to the research, serving as an original sponsor of Senator Sam Brownback’s efforts to ban all forms of human cloning. In the past few days, McCaskill has aired an outstandingly-effective [commercial](#) fronted by Parkinson’s sufferer Michael J. Fox calling for electors to vote Talent out of office for attempting to “criminalise the science that gives [him] hope”.

McCaskill is most certainly serious about winning this race, mortgaging her home for \$500,000 several days ago in order to boost her campaign’s finances. In the past three polls, Talent has clung to a narrow lead of 2%, just inside the margin of error. Whilst he still has a slight edge over McCaskill, who failed to her race for Governor despite leading in pre-election polls, this election is simply too close to call.

### Montana

- Incumbent – [Senator Conrad Burns \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [State Senate President Jon Tester \(D\)](#)

There is something strangely endearing about both of the candidates in the Montana Senate race. The two candidates – incumbent Republican Senator Conrad Burns and his challenger, State Senate President Jon Tester – could only belong to this Boots 'n' Stetson state.

A Senator since 1988, Conrad Burns has a penchant for saying the wrong thing at the wrong time, a recent example being telling a team of highly-trained fire-fighters battling forest fires that they had done a “piss-poor job”. Couple this with the fact Burns received more than \$150,000 from indicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff and it's easy to see why his re-election campaign is in peril.

Jon Tester, a salt-of-the-earth type whose family have farmed the same land in Big Sandy (population: 800) for three generations has successfully managed to cover up his left-leaning record in the State Senate through a folksy style and campaign commercials filmed in and around his [barn](#).

As sparsely populated state, it appears that the role of Montana's representatives in the House of Representatives and Senate is simply to bring home as many federal subsidies as possible. Conrad Burns' re-election campaign appeared, for many months, to be based on his achievements for the state on the powerful Appropriations Committee. How he asked, could they afford to throw away a seat on this Committee by electing a Democrat? In a political masterstroke, the Democrat's leader in the Senate has neutered Burns' attack by promising Tester a seat on the Committee “as soon as possible”. Whatever happens in this Senate race, Montana will continue to get more than its fair share of “pork”.

Burns has survived tough races before, but it seems unlikely he will be able to survive the Democratic onslaught this year. Unless something seismic happens, Jon Tester will be elected on 7<sup>th</sup> November.

## **New Jersey**

- Incumbent – [Senator Bob Menendez \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [State Senator Tom Kean Jr \(R\)](#)

The Senate race in New Jersey is probably the best opportunity the Republicans have of gaining a seat in 2006, a year that is building up to be their *annus horribilis*. The Democrats only have themselves to blame for this.

When former Senator Jon Corzine resigned from the Senate following his election to the Governor's mansion late last year, he had a chance to pick a successor to serve to remainder of his Senate term. The three leading candidates for the appointment, Congressman Frank Pallone, Rob Andrews and Bob Menendez were all noble choices with impressive backgrounds. Some, however, raised serious questions about Bob Menendez's ability to weather a political campaign of such intensity as a race for the Senate. The rest, as they say, is history.

Menendez, the son of Cuban immigrants and the former Chairman of the Democratic caucus in the House of Representatives, has courted controversy as a Senator since the day of his appointment with conflicts of interests, accusations of providing political favours and allegations of corruption swirling around his re-election campaign. .

The Republican nominee, State Senator Tom Kean Jr, is about a close to a dream candidate as possible - the dream candidate being his father, former Governor Tom Kean Sr. Senior's tenure as Governor, in which he enjoyed approval ratings of up to 80% and a whiter-than-white reputation appears to be benefiting his son. Junior's record as a member of the New Jersey State Senate is unspectacular but his bold efforts to tackle New Jersey's reputation as the most politically-corrupt state in the USA have made for an interesting contrast with the scandal-tainted Bob Menendez.

With polls showing Menendez holding only a 1% lead over Kean, the Republicans can smell blood. Whilst they have effectively surrendered Ohio (see below) to the Democrats, the Republican Senatorial Committee has pledged an additional \$5 million to Kean's campaign between now and Election Day. Whilst the general political climate and Democratic nature of the state must still make the incumbent a narrow favourite, he will not be able to relax for one minute between now and the moment the polls close on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

## Ohio

- Incumbent – [Senator Mike DeWine \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [Rep. Sherrod Brown \(D\)](#)

Despite the protestations of the National Republican Senatorial Committee to the contrary, the Party has effectively thrown in the towel and surrendered this seat to the Democrats.

As polls published on Thursday showed the two-term Senator Mike DeWine falling behind his challenger by 20% in the polls, the Committee confirmed that they had no plans to plough any further funds or resources into the race. In fairness to DeWine, his impending defeat has little to do with his performance as a Senator and a lot more to do with the corruption scandals surrounding the state's outgoing Governor, Bob Taft and indicted Congressman Bob Ney.

DeWine's almost-certain vanquisher is north-eastern Ohio steel-belt Congressman Sherrod Brown who has penned a book entitled "The Myths of Free Trade" in which he rallies against the "follies" of globalisation. Brown initially issued a statement in late 2005 declaring that he would take a pass on the Senate race, only to recant a month later in light of positive polling.

## Pennsylvania

- Incumbent – [Senator Rick Santorum \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [State Treasurer Bob Casey Jr \(D\)](#)

Those who follow political polling, whether in the United Kingdom or the United States, will pay careful attention to the "margin of error" in each poll. If your candidate or party sits many points above or below this margin for months on end, you know it's time to either crack out the champagne or drink hemlock. In the case of Senator Rick Santorum, it's time to drink hemlock.

In the past year, not one credible poll has shown Santorum within even five points of his opponent, State Treasurer Bob Casey Jr. Despite his lead in the opinion polls, Casey is a terrible candidate – a poor public speaker with few notable accomplishments in his present job. As the son of the wildly popular former Governor called – unsurprisingly – Bob Casey, he benefits from the family "brand" in the same way as Tom Kean Jr in New Jersey. The present Governor of Pennsylvania, Ed Rendell, has even suggested that "the only reason Bob Casey is running is because his name is Bob Casey".

Rick Santorum's problems are twofold. Firstly, Pennsylvania is a Democratic-leaning state (it was won by John Kerry 51/49 in 2004). Santorum's unimpressive victories in 1994 (49/48% over Senator Harris Wofford) and 2000 (47/53% over former Rep. Ron Klink) have occurred in years that can broadly be described as positive for the Republicans. 2006 is a different kettle of fish. Secondly, whilst Rick Santorum's ultra-conservative views on social and family issues - brought to widespread attention in his recent book 'It Takes a Family' - would appeal to a state like Utah, they do not sit well with a moderate state such as Pennsylvania. Bob Casey will defeat Rick Santorum by several points on Election Day.

## Rhode Island

- Incumbent – [Senator Lincoln Chafee \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [Former Attorney General Sheldon Whitehouse \(D\)](#)

Over the past six months, Lincoln Chafee has had to orchestrate a curious balancing act in the form of deflecting a serious primary challenge from the socially-conservative Mayor of Cranston Steve Laffey (which he survived by a 54/46% margin) whilst at the same time maintaining his moderate image in a state that voted 60% for John Kerry.

Given the fact registered Democrats outweigh Republicans by more than three to one in Rhode Island, the state's ludicrously-named former Attorney General Sheldon Whitehouse, has to be seen as the man to beat. Over the past month, Whitehouse has campaigned with both Bill Clinton and 2008 Presidential contender Senator Barack Obama whilst Chafee has actively shunned his party label.

As Election Day draws closer, Lincoln Chafee – who refused to endorse George W. Bush at the last election - must increasingly be regretting his decision to reject the invitation earlier this year from Democratic Senate leader Harry Reid to switch parties. Say hello to Senator Sheldon Whitehouse.

### Tennessee

- Retiring Incumbent – Senator Bill Frist (R)
- Challengers – [Mayor Bob Corker \(R\)](#) and [Rep. Harold Ford Jr \(D\)](#)

The Senate race in Tennessee is turning into one of the most expensive and contentious battles of this election cycle. In the Republican corner is businessman Bob Corker who is running on his revered term as Mayor of Chattanooga and experience of building a multi-million dollar business from scratch. The Democratic candidate is the eloquent and well-presented Memphis Congressman Harold Ford Jr who was first elected to his father's former seat in the House of Representatives at the age of 26. If elected, he would be the first black Senator from a southern state since Reconstruction.

If the Senate race was decided on life achievements and experience, Corker would score a landslide victory. The superficial political battleground of the media is, however, territory Ford dominates in the same way the Labour Party dominates Liverpool. An outstanding television performer and fluent public speaker, Ford's debate performances and campaign commercials have humiliated Corker.

Throughout the campaign, Ford has cleverly managed to neutralise any suggestions that he may be a "liberal" by airing commercials filmed inside the sanctuary of his boyhood [church](#) (a large cross carefully positioned in the background above his left shoulder throughout). Corker, on the other hand, has been relentlessly running adverts featuring bogus "residents" of Ford's [hometown](#) of Memphis ("where they know him best") drawing attention to the fact he grew up in Washington DC ("Harold's from DC, not Tennessee") and went directly from University to Congress ("Has Junior ever had a job outside of politics?").

Both have advantages. Corker will benefit from Tennessee's intrinsically conservative nature with the sad possibility of Ford's race proving an issue in some quarters whilst Ford could benefit from the tailwind building behind popular Democrat Governor Phil Bredesen's re-election campaign. With the latest polls showing Corker and Ford tied at 48% a piece, it would be foolhardy to call the race for either candidate.

### Virginia

- Incumbent – [Senator George Allen \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [Former Navy Secretary Jim Webb \(D\)](#)

A year ago, the suggestion that George Allen would have to fight a tough campaign for re-election, yet alone be faced with polls showing him up to 5% behind a Democratic opponent would have been utterly unthinkable. The 2006 elections were supposed to be an opportunity for Allen to tour the country speaking on behalf of candidates in swing states in preparation for a bid for the Presidency in 2008. How things change.

Allen's problems are threefold. Firstly, Virginia has been moving away from the Republicans for some years. Tim Kaine, the current Governor, enjoys sky-high approval ratings and his even more popular predecessor, Mark Warner has been actively campaigning for his opponent. Secondly, the Democrats are fielding an impressive candidate in former Reagan Navy Secretary turned novelist Jim Webb who has been able to trade off his moderate image in order to attract voters. With issues surrounding national security still dominating the American political psyche, Allen (who not served in the armed forces) has found it hard to paint a man with a Navy Cross, a Silver Star, two Bronze Hearts and two Purple Hearts as weak on defence. Thirdly – and most importantly -George Allen has run a campaign that that has left him open to accusations of [racism](#) after he used a racial slur to describe one of his opponent's volunteers and impropriety in his financial disclosures.

The mud-slinging has reached epic proportions with Allen questioning Webb's "values" and "character" given his inclusion of sexually-explicit scenes in some of his novels. Webb has hit back with claims that Allen helped secure the release from prison of a Chinese Spy who later passed their Government military secrets.

An average of four recent polls shows Allen clinging to a statistically-insignificant 49/48% lead. Whilst it would still be a surprise to see Allen lose his seat, it is a possibility that is increasing by the day.

## POSSIBLE UPSETS

### Arizona

- Incumbent – [Senator Jon Kyl \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [Jim Pederson \(D\)](#)

Jon Kyl, the Chairman of the Republican Policy Committee, was first elected in 1994 and has spent the majority of his career in the shadow of his partner in the Senate, 2008 Presidential candidate John McCain. Unsurprisingly, given that the state is on the border with Mexico, Kyl is campaigning strongly on the issue of opposing illegal immigration.

Jim Pederson, Kyl's opponent, is a good candidate. He talks a good talk, takes generally moderate positions, is well funded and has the benefit of being on the same ballot paper as a popular Democratic Governor cruising to re-election. Whilst it is highly improbable that Kyl will be defeated, the prospect cannot be entirely ruled out.

### Connecticut

- Incumbent – [Joe Lieberman \(I\)](#)
- Challenger – [Ned Lamont \(D\)](#) and [Alan Schlesinger \(R\)](#)

No other Senate race in the 2006 cycle has attracted as much interest or column inches than Joe Lieberman's tumultuous bid for re-election in Connecticut. Following his defeat in the Democratic primary by anti-war business executive Ned Lamont, the incumbent has found himself in the relying on the votes of Republicans in order to secure his re-election.

It is clear from watching Ned Lamont's [bizarre](#) television commercials that, whilst his campaign appealed strongly to a narrow sect of left-wing Democratic activists from groups such as [MoveOn.org](#) and [Daily Kos](#), his mainstream appeal is minimal. Whilst Lamont dramatically narrowed the gap with Lieberman to within several points in the days after his primary victory, his campaign has entirely run out of steam with several recent polls showing the incumbent with a lead of in excess of 15%.

Despite the shabby way in which he has been treated by his former Party, he has pledged to caucus with the Democrats from January onwards.

## Michigan

- Incumbent – [Senator Debbie Stabenow \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [Sheriff Mike Bouchard \(D\)](#)

Debbie Stabenow was first elected to the Senate in 2000 defeating the incumbent Senator and future Bush Energy Secretary Spence Abraham by less than 1%. Possessing a mumsy nature and the ability to seemingly wear the same outfit each day, Stabenow's personal likeability rating has not been directly mirrored in her poll numbers which put her ahead of her challenger, Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard by an uncomfortable 51/44% margin.

Bouchard appears to be benefiting from the coat-tails of the Republican candidate for Governor, Dick de Vos who has spent millions of dollars lambasting the Democrats for their handling of the state's economy with Stabenow appearing - uniquely for a Democrat in 2006 - to be negatively affected by her party affiliation. Stabenow will survive but by nowhere near the kind of margin by which a Democrat ought to be winning Michigan in such a negative year for the Republicans.

## Minnesota

- Retiring Incumbent – Senator Mark Dayton (D)
- Challengers – [Rep. Mark Kennedy \(R\)](#) and [Amy Klobuchar \(D\)](#)

Six months ago, the race between Mark Kennedy, a Congressman from the suburbs of Minneapolis and St Paul and Amy Klobuchar, the Hennepin County Attorney was looking like an extremely close race. This is no longer the case. Kennedy has run a passionate campaign focussed on his experience as a fiscal conservative and a successful businessman yet has failed to counter President Bush's deep unpopularity in the state. Amy Klobuchar has been able to tap into her record as a federal prosecutor "that went after cheats, crooks and scam-artists" to capitalise on the public's perception of the Republican-controlled Congress as corrupt. Whilst Klobuchar will not win by the 20% margin some polls have her ahead by, she is almost certainly on her way to Washington DC.

## Nebraska

- Incumbent – [Senator Ben Nelson \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [Pete Ricketts \(R\)](#)

Following Zell Miller's retirement, Ben Nelson - or "the Benator" as he has been nicknamed by President Bush - is probably the most conservative Democrat in the US Senate. In a state where George W. Bush polled more than 60% of the vote in the 2004 Presidential election, he needs to be. A former Governor of the state, he is endorsed by groups such as Right to Life, the Veterans of Foreign Wars PAC and the Nebraska Farmers Union. Despite spending more than \$10 million of his own money and running television ads fronted by the state's respected senior Senator (and 2008 Presidential contender) Chuck Hagel praising businessman Pete Ricketts' "character and courage", Nelson will defeat him by more than 15%.

## **Nevada**

- Incumbent – [Senator John Ensign \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [Jack Carter \(D\)](#)

First elected to the Senate in 2000 after a spell as Congressman for the Las Vegas suburbs, former Vet John Ensign is facing Jack Carter (son of) in this year's Senate race. Over the past two months, Ensign has seen his lead slip from 17% to just 7%.

In light of close contests elsewhere, the Democratic Senatorial Committee has so far declined to plough substantial amounts of money into this race. Ensign, however, cannot yet afford to relax (President Bush won the state by only 3% in 2004). Any further tightening of the opinion polls will cause Carter's campaign to be deluged by outside cash.

## **Washington**

- Incumbent – [Senator Maria Cantwell \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [Mike McGavick \(R\)](#)

With amongst the lowest approval ratings in the United States Senate, Maria Cantwell has been viewed as vulnerable to a Republican challenger (she was elected by only two thousand votes in 2000) for much of the past eighteen months. Over the past weeks, however, Cantwell's campaign has been moved out of Intensive Care on the back of high-profile endorsements from Bill Clinton and a scandal surrounding her opponent Mike McGavick's drink-driving conviction.

Despite narrowing the gap with Cantwell to within 3% during the summer, the multi-millionaire McGavick will need to do something rather spectacular to win. Republicans are hoping that the extra \$500,000 McGavick has donated to his campaign in the past few days will make an impact on his eroding poll numbers. If things continue as they are, Cantwell will win by around a 10%.

## **SAFE AS HOUSES**

### **California**

- Incumbent – [Senator Dianne Feinstein \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [Dick Mountjoy \(R\)](#)

Dianne Feinstein, the former Mayor of San Francisco who was first elected to the US Senate in 1992, is cruising to re-election over conservative former State Senator Dick Mountjoy. She is generally considered to be a centrist and will become Chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security if the Democrats unexpectedly take control of the Senate.

### **Delaware**

- Incumbent – [Senator Tom Carper \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [Jan Ting \(R\)](#)

First elected to the Senate in 2000 defeating the legendary Senator Bill Roth, former Governor Tom Carper has built a solid reputation for himself as a political centrist. He voted against a Senate motion calling for US troops to be redeployed out of Iraq by the end of 2007. Like his fellow Senator for Delaware, Joe Biden, Carper commutes to and from Delaware by train each day. He will be easily re-elected over the token Republican candidate, Jan Ting.

### **Florida**

- Incumbent – [Senator Bill Nelson \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [Rep. Katherine Harris \(R\)](#)

Former astronaut Bill Nelson's re-election effort was never supposed to be easy. His legislative accomplishments are few and far between, his latest approval rating is only 44% and his public-speaking style is akin to watching paint dry. He does, however, have one thing going for him: his opponent, Rep. Katherine Harris. Harris, you may remember, is an object of hatred for Democrats across the United States as a result of her role as Florida Secretary of State during the 2000 Presidential recount. When one couples Harris' [bizarre](#) and [erratic](#) campaign with President Bush's approval rating in Florida (a meagre 41%), Harris can only generously be described as "damaged goods".

### **Hawaii**

- Incumbent – [Senator Daniel K. Akaka \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [Cynthia Thielen \(R\)](#)

Three months ago, Dan Akaka was in grave danger of losing his seat, not through defeat at the general election but as a result of an aggressive primary challenger in the form of Rep. Ed Case who raised questions over the 82 year old Senator's effectiveness. Akaka survived the primary challenge by a 54/46% margin, thus guaranteeing his re-election to the Senate over State Representative Cynthia Thielen.

### **Indiana**

- Incumbent – [Senator Dick Lugar \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [Steve Osborn \(Libertarian\)](#)

The Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate, Dick Lugar is virtually unopposed for re-election given that the Democrats have failed field even a "paper candidate" against him. Rated by the Time Magazine as one of America's '10 Best Senators', the former Mayor of Indianapolis was proselytising about the spread of democracy to dictatorial regimes in Africa and Asia long before it was politically *au fait*.

### **Massachusetts**

- Incumbent – [Senator Edward Kennedy \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [Ken Chase \(R\)](#)

Ted Kennedy, who was first elected to the Senate in 1962, has only once faced a "competitive" challenge, being re-elected with 58% of the vote in 1994 over 2008 Presidential challenger Mitt Romney. Kennedy, who is reviled by conservatives across the world for his support for each and every misguided cause ever invented (his veiled support for the IRA being one such example) will defeat his anonymous challenger with more than 70% of the vote.

### **Mississippi**

- Incumbent – [Senator Trent Lott \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [Erik Fleming \(D\)](#)

The Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee breathed a huge sigh of relief earlier this year when former Majority Leader Trent Lott announced his intention to seek re-election. Polls had shown that all other Republican challengers were certain to lose to the state's former Democrat Attorney General, Mike Moore. Lott, whose home was completely destroyed by Hurricane Katrina has been highly effective in - to use an US political term – "bringing home the pork" in the

shape of financial aid for reconstruction and economic development projects in Mississippi, the US' poorest state.

### **New Mexico**

- Incumbent – [Senator Jeff Bingaman \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [Allen McCulloch \(R\)](#)

First elected in 1982, Jeff Bingaman is one of the most low-profile members of the United States Senate. As a Senator for a border state, he is the Senate's leading proponent of enacting a programme of guest work visas. He is certain to be re-elected over his Republican opponent, Allen McCulloch.

### **New York**

- Incumbent – [Senator Hillary Clinton \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [Mayor John Spencer \(R\)](#)

The question, in the New York Senate race, is not whether Hillary Clinton will be re-elected but by how large a margin she will be victorious. As of September 30th, Clinton's re-election effort had raised a total of \$48,760,084 as compared to her nearest challenger, Yonkers Mayor John Spencer's \$4,705,648. In order to shore up a Democratic base that is being increasingly disillusioned with her votes in favour of the Iraq war, Clinton has diverted more than \$2 million from her US Senate campaign account to assist the election effort in key battleground states. Given the primary season for the 2008 Presidential election effectively begins on 8<sup>th</sup> November, the day after Clinton's certain re-election, she will definitely have the funds required to launch a credible campaign for the top job.

### **North Dakota**

- Incumbent – [Senator Kent Conrad \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [Dwight Grotberg \(R\)](#)

Senator Kent Conrad dodged a bullet when the state's hugely popular Governor John Hoeven (his approval rating has stood at around 70% for the past three years) refused to bow to pressure from Karl Rove to enter the race, despite polls showing him ahead of the incumbent, 35% to 27%. A Democrat in a heavily Republican state, Kent Conrad was first elected to the Senate in 1986. As befits the heavily-rural nature of his state, he is a firm opponent of virtually every free trade agreement under the sun and is a firm supporter of farming subsidies. As the longest-serving Democrat on the Banking Committee, he will assume its Chairmanship from January in the unlikely event the Democrats gain the Senate. With a recent Survey USA poll putting his approval rating at 74%, he is certain to be re-elected over Town Councillor Dwight Grotberg.

### **Texas**

- Incumbent – [Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [Barbara Ann Radnofsky \(D\)](#)

For much of 2005, speculation swirled that Kay Bailey Hutchinson, the most powerful woman in the US Senate, would retire from the body in order to run for Governor of Texas. Hutchinson, however, avoided a bloody primary battle with incumbent Governor Rick Perry and opted to seek re-election. A possible Republican candidate for Vice-President in 2008, she has successively led her challenger, Barbara Ann Radnofsky by margins of in excess of 30%. Hutchinson is occasionally viewed with suspicion by members of the religious right for her refusal to support the overturning of Roe vs Wade.

## Utah

- Incumbent – [Senator Orrin Hatch \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [Pete Ashdown \(D\)](#)

First elected in 1976, Orrin Hatch is seeking his sixth six year term in the US Senate. Rarely for a Mormon Senator sitting or a state as conservative in outlook as Utah, Hatch is a firm supporter of stem cell research. His support for stem cell research has been a considerable bone of contention in Utah, with several ultra-conservative State Representatives openly threatening to launch a primary challenge against him in the months leading up to his renomination. Pete Ashdown has run a spirited campaign but will struggle to run within forty points of Hatch.

## Vermont

- Retiring Incumbent – Senator Jim Jeffords (Independent)
- Challengers – [Rep. Bernie Sanders \(Independent\)](#) and [Rich Tarrant \(R\)](#)

Bernie Sanders, the first self-proclaimed “socialist” to be elected to the House of Representatives is almost certain to be elected to the seat being vacated by Republican-turned-Independent Jim Jeffords. In a state that elected Howard Dean Governor on several occasions, Sanders’ anti-free trade, pro-universal healthcare and anti-war views have a highly sympathetic audience.

## West Virginia

- Incumbent – [Senator Robert Byrd \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [John Raese \(R\)](#)

First elected to the US Senate in 1958, the 88 year old Senator Robert Byrd is seeking his ninth six-year term in the body. On June 12<sup>th</sup>, he became the longest-serving Senator in history and is on record as saying that he would like to continue in the Senate “even if [he] was two hundred years old”. Luckily for the octogenarian, his constituents seem to appreciate the work he does in bringing billions of dollars in federal subsidies to the state through his seat on the powerful Appropriations Committee on which he first served under Lyndon Johnson. Byrd has a noble opponent in the form of media tycoon John Raese but will win re-election with around 70% of the vote.

## Wisconsin

- Incumbent – [Senator Herb Kohl \(D\)](#)
- Challenger – [Robert Lorge \(R\)](#)

Had revered former Governor Tommy Thompson entered the race, Herb Kohl would have faced a serious fight for re-election. Thompson, however, decided he enjoyed the world of money-making far too much, thus virtually guaranteeing Kohl’s re-election. First elected in 1986, estimates put Kohl’s personal wealth at up to \$270 million with his slogan, “Nobody’s Senator but yours”, touting his immunity to bribery and special interest money.

## Wyoming

- Incumbent – [Senator Craig Thomas \(R\)](#)
- Challenger – [Dale Groustage \(D\)](#)

First elected to the Senate in 1994, Craig Thomas is cruising to re-election over engineer Dale Groustage in a state which voted 69% for George W. Bush. Thomas was originally elected to the House of Representatives in 1989 to complete the unexpired term of future Vice-President Dick Cheney who resigned in order to become Defence Secretary. Unsurprisingly, given the

extremely conservative nature of his state he is an outspoken opponent of abortion and gun controls. He has drawn some criticism from agricultural groups for his numerous votes in favour of free trade agreements.