

# Members of Congress who won their first election thanks to a party nominating convention



**David de la Fuente**

Senior Political Analyst

[@dpdela Fuente](https://twitter.com/dpdela Fuente)

This is a list of Congressional Members as of March 2019 who owe their initial election to a party nominating convention. These are contests in which a small number of party insiders get to pick their party's nominee rather than a broader swath of voters getting to do so in a primary election open to everyday voters.

- **IL03 – Dan Lipinski (D):** won a 2004 nomination replacement convention after his father won his primary and then declined to seek reelection, triggering a replacement nomination. Many accused his father of running in the primary and dropping out to guarantee the nomination went to the son. Lipinski easily won the general.

- **IL13 – Rodney Davis (R):** won a 2012 nomination replacement convention after Rep. Tim Johnson (R) won re-nomination and then dropped out. Johnson supported his former staffer Jerry Clarke (R), but Davis won. This was a Republican-leaning but competitive district created in 2011 by the Democratic state government that Democrats felt they could not beat Johnson, but could win in an open seat and expected one later in the decade as Johnson was in his mid-60s. Davis ended up winning by 1,002 votes (0.34%) against a weak Democratic nominee who was meant to be the sacrificial lamb against Johnson.
- **IN07 – Andre Carson (D):** won a 2008 special nomination convention after his grandmother died. He would go on to win the special election.
- **KS04 – Ron Estes (R):** won a 2017 special nomination convention after Rep. Mike Pompeo (R) resigned to join the Trump Administration. He would go on to win the special election by a closer margin than expected.
- **MO08 – Jason Smith (R):** won a 2013 special nomination convention after Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R) resigned to join the private sector. He would go on to easily win the special election.
- **MT – Greg Gianforte (R):** won a 2017 won a 2017 special nomination convention after Rep. Ryan Zinke (R) resigned to join the Trump Administration. Gianforte would go on to win the special election by a close margin after committing misdemeanor assault against a journalist.
- **NC01 – G.K. Butterfield (D):** won a 2004 special nomination convention after Rep. Frank Ballance (D) resigned due to corruption. Butterfield would go on to easily win the special election.
- **NV02 – Mark Amodei (R):** won a 2011 special nomination convention after Rep. Dean Heller (R) resigned to assume one of the state's Senate seats by appointment. Amodei would go on to easily win the special election.

- **NY05 – Greg Meeks (D):** won a 1998 special nomination in NY06 by being selected by the chair of the Queens County Democratic Party after Rep. Floyd Flake (D) resigned to focus on his church. He would go on to win the special election by a large margin, and eventually his district would renumber to NY05.
- **NY10 – Jerold Nadler (D):** won dual 1992 special nominations in NY17 (special election) and NY08 (general election) after Rep. Theodore Weiss (D), who represented NY17, died after having won his NY08 primary, his new district due to redistricting. Nadler easily won both the special and general election, and would go on to have his district renumbered as NY10.
- **NY15 – Jose Serrano (D):** won a 1990 special nomination in NY18 by being selected by the chair of the Bronx County Democratic Party after Rep. Robert Garcia (D) resigned due to corruption charges. Serrano easily won the special election, and his district would eventually renumber as NY15.
- **OH11 – Marcia Fudge (D):** won a 2008 nomination replacement convention that was triggered when Rep. Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D) died. She would go on to win the general election easily. Interestingly, there was also a special election including a special primary that also occurred during this time period. The replacement convention occurred in September, the special primary in October, the general election in early November, and the special election in late November.

- **OH14 – David Joyce (R):** won a 2012 nomination replacement convention that was triggered after Rep. Steven LaTourette (R) resigned to join the private sector. Joyce was a friend of LaTourette. LaTourette declining the nomination after winning the primary ensured the Tea Party wasn't able to compete in a primary, and in fact the Tea Party candidate lost the convention to Joyce. This was a Republican leaning district in which the Democrats put up a sacrificial lamb against LaTourette, but would have certainly recruited a strong candidate had they known the district would be an open seat. They even requested their nominee drop out, so they could appoint a better candidate, but the original nominee refused. Joyce would go on to easily win his general election.
- **PA12 – Fred Keller (R):** won a 2018 special nomination replacement convention triggered by the resignation of Rep. Tom Marino (R) who left Congress to focus on his health and take a job in the private sector. Keller is expected to easily win the special election. Keller could lose the special to Marc Friedenberg (D) who was selected as the Democratic nominee by the Pennsylvania Democratic Party.
- **PA17 – Conor Lamb (D):** won a 2017 special nomination convention that was triggered in PA18 after Rep. Tim Murphy (R) resigned due to scandal. Lamb would go on to win the 2018 special election in an upset in this Republican leaning district. He would get redistricted into PA17 later that year.

- **UT02 – Chris Stewart (R):** won a 2012 nomination convention that used to be how Utah picked nominees. In the old system, if someone could update over 60% of convention delegates, the primary was cancelled, and the convention winner became the official nominee. At the 2012 Republican convention, Stewart was able to obtain 62% of the vote in the third round of voting meaning he moved to the general election without a primary. He easily won the general in what was essentially a new seat under reapportionment.
- **VA01 – Rob Wittman (R):** won a 2007 special nomination convention that was triggered when Rep. Jo Ann Davis (R) died. He would go on to easily win the special election.
- **VA05 – Denver Riggleman (R):** won a 2018 replacement nomination convention to replace Rep. Tom Garrett (R) after he won re-nomination but declined to appear on the general election ballot due to scandals that emerged after Garrett had won re-nomination. Riggleman would go on to win the general election by a close margin.
- **VA06 – Ben Cline (R):** won a 2018 nomination convention that the state party chose to hold rather than a primary when it had the choice to do either. The district was open because Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R) decided to retire with as his committee chairmanship was up. Cline easily won the general election.
- **VA09 – Morgan Griffith (R):** won a 2010 nomination convention that the state party chose to hold rather than a primary when it had the choice to do either. Griffith would go on to defeat Rep. Rick Boucher (D) in the general in this Republican-leaning district that Boucher had been able to hold before the Tea Party wave.

Note: Instances in which someone won both a primary and convention (Rob Bishop and Steve King are examples) are not included. Instances in which an individual wins a regular primary ahead of a combined regular and special general election on the same day, and the party picks the special

nominee but defers to the primary results are not below  
(Mary Gay Scanlon and Susan Wild are examples).