2026 Elections: What the Midterms Mean for CTE and the 120th Congress

November 12, 2026

Objectives

- Recognize the emerging balance of power in Congress
- Identify leadership and committee changes to watch
- Understand the potential implications for CTE
- Develop ideas for upcoming advocacy

Election Night: The Big Picture

- Democrats have flipped both chambers of Congress
  - Major Senate Flips: Iowa, Kansas, Maine, North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio, Mississippi and Texas
- Democratic Congress and Republican White House = Divided Government
  - More oversight
  - Opportunities for bipartisan legislation
  - Stalled nominations
- Significant changes in many states as well

Bicameral Results

- Senate:
  - Democrats: 55
  - Republicans: 44
  - Uncalled: 1
- House of Representatives:
  - Democrats: 255
  - Republicans: 168
  - Uncalled: 12

Congressional Leadership

House:

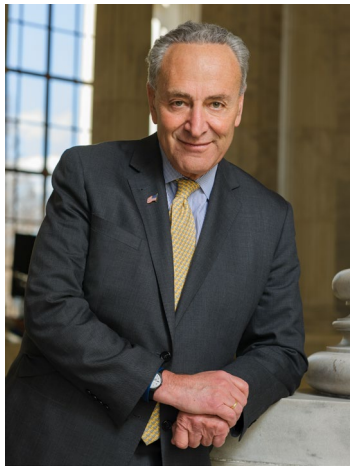
- Speaker Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY)?
  - Election next week
- New House Minority Leader
  - Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH)

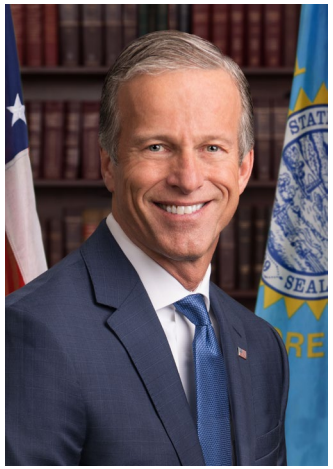
Senate:

- Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY)?
- Sen. John Thune (R-SD) re-elected as Republican leader









Committee Leadership

- Senate Appropriations
  - Chair Patty Murray (D-WA)
  - Who replaces Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)?
- House Appropriations
  - No changes expected (except Party flip)
- Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
  - Chair Bernie Sanders (I-VT)
  - Ranking Member Rand Paul (R-KY)
- House Education and Workforce (soon to be Education and Labor)
  - Challenges to Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) for the chairmanship

Lame Duck Session

- How does the election impact FY 2027 appropriations?
- Congressional Agenda
  - National Defense Authorization Act
  - Debt Ceiling
  - Farm Bill
  - Reconciliation
  - Nominations
- Other priorities for key Members
  - Foxx: WIOA
  - Cassidy: College Transparency Act

120th Congress

- Oversight:
  - Department of Education: Interagency Agreements, Reorganization of ED, Grant Administration
- Affordability
  - Cost of College
  - Student Loans
  - Pell Shortfall
- Democratic Messaging Bills:
  - Efforts to repeal parts of One Big Beautiful Bill (i.e. Federal Scholarship Tax Credit)
  - Setting the stage for 2028

How the Midterms Impact CTE

Major Question: Are there opportunities for bipartisan bills to pass?

- Perkins VI:
  - Is reauthorization more likely in the 120th Congress?
  - How does oversight of ED impact reauthorization?
- Other opportunities for bipartisanship?
  - Apprenticeships
  - AI
- Building on the momentum of CTE
  - Interest in CTE legislation in the 119th Congress
  - Growing the CTE caucuses

ACTE Advocacy Plan

- FY 2027 appropriations: Continue advocacy
- Freshman outreach
  - Intro emails
  - Materials dropoff and meetings in January and February
  - CTE Month activities
- CTE Caucus briefings & new member recruitment

Messaging: CTE is a bipartisan issue that can work under divided government

Grassroots Advocacy for the 120th Congress

- Introduce CTE Programs to newly elected lawmakers and staff
  - More than 100 new Representatives; 18+ new Senators
  - Education backgrounds
- Offer yourself as a resource
  - School visits
  - Continued outreach
- Utilize ACTE resources
- Attend CareerTech VISION Session, Thurs. 12/3, 3:00 pm
- Register for NPS!



Engage on key federal policies related to CTE advocacy, research & messaging

Save the date for 2027!

Resources

- **CTE Policy Watch Blog**
  https://www.acteonline.org/cte-policy-watch/
- **Action Center**
  https://www.acteonline.org/take-action-congressweb-embed/#/
- **Advocacy Resources**
  https://www.acteonline.org/advocacy/advocacy-resources/



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