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## CHAMBERS IS IN

### *U.S. Senate race comes alive*

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#### GENERAL OUTLOOK

If you ever require a quick read on which way a U.S. House or Senate seat is leaning, check out *The Cook Political Report*. With staff in Washington, D.C., and some roots in Louisiana, the Report categorizes seats as leaning either Democrat or Republican — or as a "toss up" if an election looks particularly tight.

The seat currently occupied by U.S. Sen. **John Kennedy** can be found on the far right of the Cook Report's color spectrum, underneath "Solid Republican." With \$9.7 million in his campaign war chest and a Beltway press corps that won't stop asking for quotes, Kennedy plans to protect that classification as he seeks re-election on the Nov. 8 ballot.

That classification, however, means very little to two Democrats who plan to qualify to oppose Kennedy. As expected, Baton Rouge activist **Gary Chambers** officially announced his candidacy this morning. He now joins former fighter pilot **Luke Mixon** on the blue side of the election's spectrum.

## CHAMBERS VS. MIXON

Politicos tracking this race have known for a few months that Chambers and Mixon would share space on this ballot. In fact, Chambers first expressed interest in the race via Twitter just 24 hours after Mixon announced in October.

Fast forward to today. Chambers' campaign issued a press release early this morning with its own announcement — just 24 hours after Mixon addressed members of the Baton Rouge Press Club, an important stop for statewide candidates.

Chambers and Mixon simply can't avoid each other, and both separately and together they may become the most interesting features of this developing race.

Chambers made some important friends last year during his unsuccessful bid in the 2nd Congressional District. His progressive politics and unapologetic far-left stances opened him up to a national fundraising base and he claims to have 15,000 individual donors ready to cut checks. Chambers is an unexpected Democratic force on the move and he may be positioned to come out of this election stronger than ever.

If Chambers can post another aggressive fundraising haul in this election and build upon his penchant for earned media, he will become an unmissable factor in Democratic politics moving forward. In the truest sense, Chambers is the wild card to watch.

Mixon, meanwhile, hit the ground running with support from Democratic Party Chairwoman **Katie Bernhardt** and a campaign staff with connections to Gov. **John Bel Edwards** and New Orleans Mayor **LaToya Cantrell**. Mixon has been the establishment candidate on the Democratic side of this contest since October, and spent much of the following weeks boldly attacking Kennedy's votes and stances.

## WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

While it's unlikely Chambers will knock votes off of Kennedy, some of Mixon's supporters believe their candidate can do just that by taking the debate directly to the incumbent. Mixon, unlike Chambers, is also new to electoral politics, which will appeal to voters who don't want to hear about things like fundraising.

“I don’t think people in Lake Charles with blue tarps on their roofs — I don’t think people in Lafourche and Terrebonne that have seen their houses devastated and the electricity not on — I don’t think they’re super concerned with Kennedy’s \$10 million dollars,” Mixon told reporters.

Chambers, for his part, didn’t say much to most of the press corps today when he officially made his announcement. Instead, the campaign said interviews would be available tomorrow. There was likely a good reason for handling media requests that way, but in practice it probably turned the announcement into a two-day story.

“Every single day, Louisianans across the state work hard to lift their families up to make ends meet and to build a better future for their children, and every day they are met with roadblock after roadblock, especially this past year,” Chambers said in his press release. “I’m running for Louisiana Senate because it’s time for real change in Louisiana from a candidate who understands first-hand the challenges facing Louisianans every day.”

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Learn more in this video: <https://youtu.be/c98hVMBme00>

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## POLITICAL CHATTER

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- **THE CALL IS OUT:** The special session on redistricting will begin Feb. 1 and end Feb. 20. The call was released today and contains six items related to election districts, including those for the state Supreme Court. ([Read the call.](#))
- **WMG UPDATE:** Congressman **Troy Carter** is among the latest officials who will not be attending Washington Mardi Gras. Also, the Beer League has canceled its annual get-together. Others made their decision to skip the festivities days or weeks ago — some due to health concerns, some due to the mask mandate and vaccine requirement. Subscribers say some restaurant reservations are being axed or modified as well due to table sizes. Many, however, are planning to make the trip and the main events are still a go.
- **REC (THE BRIGHT SIDE):** Earlier today the Revenue Estimating Conference recognized an increase of \$847 million for the current fiscal year and a boost of \$771 million for the next.
- **REC (LONG-TERM):** There are no promises of continued prosperity. In fact, a shortfall is on the horizon for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, when the temporary portion of the state sales tax rolls off.
- **REC (WHAT'S NEXT):** With the new revenue forecasts in hand, Gov. **John Bel Edwards** can finish his executive budget proposal, which will be presented to lawmakers on Jan. 25.
- **WATCH THE CLOCK:** Pre-filing for the 2022 regular session begins in one week, on Tuesday, Jan. 18.
- **CAPITOL CHATTER:** Via *The Advocate's* **Blake Paterson** (@BlakePater): "The prison inmates that clean Louisiana's Capitol are under quarantine for 14 days. Staff instructed to put out their trash near the elevators by 4 p.m."

- **HIRE**: The Public Affairs Research Council has hired **Caylee Deshotel** as its new communications manager.
- **END OF THE ROAD**: The Joint Governmental Affairs Committee gathers in Thibodaux this evening and then in Baton Rouge in the Capitol next Thursday for its final Roadshow meeting. That final meeting next week will be at 11 am in Committee Room 5.
- **FUNDRAISERS**: Rep. **Delisha Boyd** has a luncheon fundraiser one week from today, on Jan. 18, at 11:30 am at the Louisiana Realtors office in Baton Rouge. Sen. **J. Rogers Pope** has his own luncheon fundraiser on the same day, beginning at noon at Longview.
- **SUBSCRIBE TODAY**: Want more insider political info in the new year? Sign up today at [www.LaPoliticsWeekly.com](http://www.LaPoliticsWeekly.com).

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## HEADLINES & BYLINES

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- The Advertiser: Louisiana's tax revenue beats estimates by \$2 billion over 3 years; how should it be used?
- WGNO: Indoor mask mandate reinstated in New Orleans
- The Advocate: **Gary Chambers Jr.** says he will challenge **John Kennedy** in U.S. Senate election campaign
- WWL-TV: Louisiana to start accepting income tax returns Jan. 24
- The Advocate: U.S. Sen. **John Kennedy** 'spit in the face of democracy,' Democratic opponent **Luke Mixon** says
- Houma Courier: Trailers continue to trickle in for Houma-Thibodaux residents displaced by Ida
- The Advocate: Youth hunting license required this season for Louisiana's young hunters
- WRKF: Louisiana Considered: The history of King Cake and how it became a Mardi Gras staple

- The Advocate: Haitian groups to meet in Baton Rouge to seek deal after president's assassination (**Russel Honore** will mediate the sessions)

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## Our History (Circa 34 Years Ago)

### **Super Tuesday in 1988**

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On March 8, 1988, a Super Tuesday election produced an unusually low turnout in places like East Baton Rouge Parish

Across the river, however, in West Baton Rouge Parish, voting locations were filled with citizens eager to have a say on the subject of off-track betting.

Our friends at the State Archive found some footage from that gambling vote in its WBRZ-TV Collection.

The coverage reveals that supporters were excited about the prospect of new jobs that betting parlors and, potentially, a new horse-racing track would bring to the area.

Opponents were concerned about the moral impact gambling would have on the community.

#### **WATCH THE VIDEO**

***This history section was made possible by the office of Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin and the Louisiana State Archives.***

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## **SOCIALLY YOURS**

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## **ANNIVERSARIES**

- **Toni McAllister** and **Josh McAllister** are toasting to 18 years together this week... **Lana Morales Chiasson** and **Chett Chiasson** celebrated 22 years last week...

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY, TRACKERS!**

- Tuesday, January 11: Rep. **Rodney Schamerhorn** and **Shelley Hendrix McLaughlin**
- Wednesday, January 12: **Kim Bishop, Danny Smith, Cody Allen Wells, Michael Tipton** and **Chris Macaluso**
- Thursday, January 13: Sen. **Fred Mills, Telley Madina** and **Scott Martinez**
- Friday, January 14: **Michael Reed** and **Jordan Gleason**
- Saturday, January 15: **Miles Forrest, Bryan Jones, Ruth Ward** and **Jim Engster**
- Sunday, January 16: Rep. **Larry Selders, Linda Spradley, Logan Anderson** and **Peggy Cromer**
- Monday, January 17: Former Congressman **Don Cazayoux** , **Jordan Bridges** and **Bud Courson**

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**THE END.**