

Former Rep. Mike Rogers jumps into Michigan's US Senate race

TODD SPANGLER Detroit Free Press

Former U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, a Michigan native and former FBI agent who rose to become chairman of the House Intelligence Committee before leaving Congress more than eight years ago, announced Wednesday he is running for the Republican nomination for the state's open U.S. Senate seat next year.

Rogers' reentry into politics, which was expected, gives the GOP its first big-name candidate in the campaign to replace [U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich.](#), who announced early this year she would not run for a fifth six-year term. Others could be preparing to follow suit, however. Former [U.S. Rep. Peter Meijer](#), R-Grand Rapids Township, last week announced the formation of an exploratory committee and former Detroit Police Chief James Craig is still eyeing a possible run.

On the Democratic side, [U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin, of Lansing](#), is the presumptive front-runner among a list of candidates that includes [actor Hill Harper, of Detroit](#), state Board of Education President Pamela Pugh, of Saginaw, and former state Rep. Leslie Love, of Detroit.

In a [video announcement](#), Rogers said, "I thought I put politics behind me but like you, I know something's broken. America under (President Joe) Biden and his cronies is going in the wrong direction." He then goes on to criticize the administration for a "broken border," inflation and a double standard in law enforcement. "Politics has gotten so small and so petty we're failing to address big problems," he continues. "We can do better."

"No candidate is better prepared to have an impact on day one," he said. "I'm ready to serve again."

effort, has moved back to the state in the vicinity of his old Michigan district, which stretched from Lansing to the outer suburbs of Detroit, his campaign said, though it didn't say exactly where.

No Republican has won a U.S. Senate seat in Michigan since Spencer Abraham did so in the 1994 Republican wave and he was defeated after a single term in 2000 by Stabenow. But Rogers, if he were to win the GOP nomination, could potentially be a strong general election candidate, given his experience and credentials.

Michigan Democratic Party Chairman Lavora Barnes, in a statement released Wednesday morning, criticized Rogers as a "retread" who nonetheless "won't be able to hide from his record" of supporting corporations over families, backing plans to reform Medicare and other social programs that could have resulted in cuts and moving to restrict abortion even in cases of rape or incest.

Rogers, an Army veteran who was born in Livingston County, replaced Stabenow in the U.S. House in 2001, having previously been a state senator and winning a 111-vote victory over another Michigan legislator, former state Sen. Dianne Byrum, of Onondaga, following a recount. He then went on to serve seven two-year terms without any serious challenge before stepping down in 2015 [to become a radio talk show host](#); during his time in Congress, he established himself as a free-market Republican and a sought-after voice on intelligence policy and cybersecurity matters.

During his tenure, Rogers was also a reliably conservative vote, [receiving an 86.3 out of 100 lifetime rating](#) from the American Conservative Union, voting for spending reductions, tax cuts and abortion restrictions and against the Affordable Care Act.

But he also staked out a more nuanced political role as Congress became ever more divided along partisan lines. The Washington Post's David Ignatius [lauded Rogers for helping to strike a bipartisan balance](#) on the Intelligence

Rogers openly criticized some Republicans for allowing the government to be shut down for 16 days in 2013 over a health care fight they couldn't win and his committee also produced a report finding there were no major intelligence failures ahead of the 2012 Benghazi attacks as well. Meanwhile, he also increased his name recognition by appearing on multiple Sunday TV news shows, doing so [more than any other member of Congress in 2013](#).

After deciding not to run in 2014, Rogers was replaced by former Michigan House Speaker Mike Bishop, R-Rochester, who was defeated four years later by Slotkin, a former intelligence officer and former acting assistant Defense Department secretary who served under two presidents. As such, she and Rogers can be expected to know each other well.

After leaving office, Rogers remained a commentator on cable news channels, especially CNN, where he also hosted a series, "Declassified," on America's covert operations, and worked with cybersecurity businesses. He also serves on several boards; is a trustee and chairman at the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress in Washington and a member of the advisory board for George Mason University's National Security and Law Policy Institute.

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Rogers initially worked as a member of former President Donald Trump's transition team as a national security adviser and was interviewed as a possible FBI director. But he criticized efforts to overturn fair elections, including [those by Trump and his allies in 2020](#). He has said that he believes Biden was lawfully elected.


That stance — as well as his traditional Republican ties, reputation for bipartisanship and experience as a law enforcement agent — could potentially hurt Rogers with that bloc of pro-Trump voters who have taken over much of the party in recent elections, just as they could help him in a general election. But Rogers has also decried what he sees as the "politicization" of the justice system represented by indictments brought against Trump, saying they are ["ripping the fabric of the United States apart."](#)

businessman Michael Hoover; Wayne County lawyer Alexandria Taylor, who was among those ordered to pay thousands in legal fees for filing what a judge called a frivolous lawsuit challenging ballots cast in Detroit in last year's midterm elections; Oscoda Area School Board Trustee Sharon Savage; St. Joseph physician Sherry O'Donnell, and J.D. Wilson, of Houghton Lake, whose website doesn't include any biographical information.

Other Democrats in the race include Dearborn businessman Nasser Beydoun and Ann Arbor lawyer Zack Burns.

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