

2026 COLORADO SPRINGS-AREA STATE LEGISLATIVE DEEP DIVE

State Senate District 11 & State House Districts 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22

General Election: November 3, 2026

This is a supplemental deep dive on the eight Colorado Springs-area state legislative races, with primary context, district environment, and the issues each race is turning on, plus candidate websites where they could be confirmed.

County-wide context: El Paso County's overall voter registration is roughly 29% Republican, 17% Democratic, and 54% unaffiliated — one of the most Republican-leaning large counties in Colorado. But these eight districts are drawn around central and southeast Colorado Springs specifically, which trends considerably more Democratic than the county as a whole; several of these seats have flipped or nearly flipped in the last two cycles.

STATE SENATE, DISTRICT 11

Central Colorado Springs & Manitou Springs

Sen. Tony Exum is finishing his first term in the Senate after four terms in the House (including the HD-17 seat now held by Regina English). He ran unopposed in his primary. Three Republicans filed for the GOP primary — Levon Stilson, Mark Tisdale, and Nickolas Razo — with Stilson emerging as the nominee.

Tony Exum (D, Incumbent) — www.facebook.com/SenTonyExum

Levon Stilson (R) — stilson4colorado.com

Exum represents one of the safer Democratic seats among these eight races — the district has been held by Democrats continuously since redistricting in 2022, and Exum's own 2022 win over then-incumbent Republican Dennis Hisey came by nearly five points. His committee assignments (chair of Local Government & Housing) give him a substantive record to run on around housing policy in a district that includes some of the city's most housing-cost-burdened neighborhoods.

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 14

Northwest El Paso County

Rep. Ava Flanell was appointed to this seat in 2025 and is running for a first full term. She defeated a primary challenge from Troy Vanderhule and picked up an endorsement from the Colorado Chamber of Commerce along the way. Democrat Sarah Emery, an attorney, is unopposed on her side. This is a GOP-leaning district, and Flanell enters as the clear favorite; it's included here mainly because it borders several of the more competitive seats and its turnout affects down-ballot county races.

Sarah Emery (D) — www.sarah4cos.com

Ava Flanell (R, Incumbent) — avaforcolorado.com

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 15

Eastern Colorado Springs & Cimarron Hills — Open Seat

This is the only open seat among these races caused by an incumbent stepping up rather than down: Rep. Scott Bottoms left to run for governor (finishing third in a competitive three-way GOP primary behind Marx and Kirkmeyer). Democrat Jeff Livingston, who lost to Bottoms by about 16 points in 2024, is running again. Republican Pricella Tiegen won a four-way primary that also included Douglas Wade Jones and Ronnie Buggs II.

Jeff Livingston (D) —

www.facebook.com/p/Jeff-Livingston-for-District-15-100094223705328

Military veteran who served four years as a satellite communications operator. Running on education funding, teacher pay, and renewable energy access.

Pricella Tiegen (R)

This remains one of the more reliably Republican districts in the group; Bottoms won it comfortably in both 2022 and 2024. Both campaigns have run fairly low-budget efforts so far compared to the money moving in HD-16 next door — typically a sign a seat isn't drawing outside attention because it's not seen as flippable, though Bottoms' departure does remove the incumbency advantage Livingston lost to in 2024.

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 16

Central Colorado Springs — The Marquee Race

This is the highest-profile of the eight races, and probably the highest-profile state house race in Colorado this cycle. Rep. Rebecca Keltie won the seat from then-incumbent Steph Vigil in 2024 by three votes out of more than 41,000 cast — the closest state legislative race in the country that year, decided by an automatic recount. Keltie chose not to seek re-election. Vigil is attempting a comeback against Republican Jill Haffley, a retired D-11 history teacher and current D-11 school board vice president who won her primary decisively (65%) over Jamie Koch.

Stephanie Vigil (D) — www.vigilforcolorado.com

Former state representative for HD-16 (2023-2025), first elected in 2022. A community organizer and former gig-economy delivery driver; El Paso County's first openly queer elected official. Running again on affordable housing, workers' rights, and transportation.

Jill Haffley (R) — votejilhaffley.com

Taught U.S. History and Government in Colorado Springs District 11 for 30 years and currently serves as D-11 school board vice president, where she was part of a slate that flipped the board conservative and ended a decades-old union contract. Campaigning on "common sense and accountability."

Given the three-vote 2024 margin, this district is genuinely a toss-up, and it's the one race among these eight most likely to draw outside spending from both state parties before November.

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 17

Central/Southeast Colorado Springs

Rep. Regina English, the first Black woman to represent El Paso County in the General Assembly, defeated a primary challenge from Chauncy Johnson, who had actually outraised her heading into the primary — a sign her win turned more on name recognition or organizing than money. She faces Republican Laura Martin, who

ran unopposed for the GOP nomination, in a district that leans Democratic.

Regina English (D, Incumbent) — www.facebook.com/ReginaEnglishCO

First elected in 2022; previously served on the Harrison School District 2 board. Holds a doctorate in organizational leadership. Has focused her legislative work on behavioral health, education equity, and criminal justice reform.

Laura Martin (R)

The district's Democratic lean and Martin's minimal primary spending make this one of the safer seats on this list for the incumbent, barring a late surprise.

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 18

Northeast Colorado Springs

Rep. Amy Paschal, a software engineer first elected in 2024, ran unopposed in her primary. Republican Adriana Cuva defeated James Boelens Jr. — the same opponent Paschal beat in the 2024 general election — in the GOP primary.

Amy Paschal (D, Incumbent) — www.amyfor18.com

Former Vice Chair of the El Paso County Democratic Party and election judge. Running on affordable housing, healthcare, and election security. This is a district Republicans have targeted in back-to-back cycles, so it isn't fully safe, but Paschal is defending a seat she's already flipped once.

Adriana Cuva (R)

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 21

Fountain & El Paso County — Open Seat

Sitting Republican Rep. Mary Bradfield did not make the primary ballot for re-election — a notable development, since her campaign account still showed meaningful cash on hand. I couldn't find explicit reporting on why she stepped back; worth a direct search if it matters to you. Brenda Delgado Miller won a decisive Republican primary (76%) over Alexander Africa and faces Democrat Michelle Tweed, a Navy veteran, for the open seat.

Michelle Tweed (D) — www.michelletweedforcolorado.com

Navy veteran and former VA employee bringing military and veterans' affairs experience to the race.

Brenda Delgado Miller (R) — x.com/BrendaMiller4CO

Fountain and the surrounding unincorporated area lean Republican; with an open seat and Miller's stronger fundraising position, this district leans toward the GOP nominee absent a late change.

STATE HOUSE, DISTRICT 22

Colorado Springs

Rep. Ken DeGraaf, a commercial airline pilot and 30-year Air Force veteran, was among the most vocal opponents of the statewide TABOR/K-12 funding referral debated this year. He faces a rematch with Mike Pierson, a fellow 20-year Air Force veteran who lost to DeGraaf in 2024.

Mike Pierson (D) — pierson4co.com

20 years as an Air Force officer followed by 12 years of federal civil service; describes himself as a "practical progressive." Running on Powers Boulevard improvements, school funding, and affordable housing for essential workers like teachers.

Ken DeGraaf (R, Incumbent) — kendegraaf4hd22.com

A strict constitutionalist who has campaigned on hand-counted paper ballots and voter ID, and has been an outspoken opponent of cashless bail and other criminal justice reforms passed by the Democratic legislature. This is a second consecutive matchup between the same two candidates, which typically means both sides already know exactly where the votes are — worth treating as one of the more genuinely competitive races on this list.

DISCLAIMER: This deep dive was compiled with the assistance of artificial intelligence (Claude by Anthropic), drawing on Ballotpedia, the Colorado Springs Gazette, Colorado Politics, Colorado Newsline, the Colorado Chamber of Commerce, and candidate campaign websites. Not every candidate has a confirmed campaign website; where one could not be verified, the candidate is listed without a link rather than guessed at. This document does not constitute an endorsement of any candidate. Information is current as of early August 2026 and district dynamics may change before the election.