

NBC's *Today*

03/04/26

7:01:02 a.m. [TEASE]

20 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Counting the Votes]

CRAIG MELVIN: Counting the votes. The midterm elections kick off with key races and upstart victories —

STATE REPRESENTATIVE JAMES TALARICO (D-TX): This is truly a campaign of, by, and for the people.

MELVIN: — setting up critical showdowns that could impact the balance of power in Washington. We're live with the overnight results.

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7:12:53 a.m.

3 minutes and 6 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Key Takeaways From Closely Watched Primaries]

HODA KOTB: Meantime, the war and the economic fallout all come at a key time with the midterm elections officially underway. The first primaries took place last night, setting up some critical showdowns. NBC's Ryan Nobles is in Washington with the overnight results. And some challenges faced by voters. Ryan, good morning.

RYAN NOBLES: Hey, Hoda, good morning. And you're right. This first primary of the midterm calendar does give us a real sense of where the battle is headed, with enthusiastic Democrats turning out the vote and President Trump once again looming large over the Republican contests. This morning, legal chaos in Texas' elections after fears that some voters went to the wrong polling places, some locations were ordered to stay open, but then overturned by the Texas Supreme Court, leaving votes cast after 7:00 p.m. local time in limbo. It's a sign of how hotly contested these races are, including the Democratic Senate primary. NBC News projecting that James Talarico has defeated Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett.

TALARICO: This is a truly a campaign of, by, and for the people.

NOBLES: The victory setting up a Texas-sized showdown this November in the Lone Star State, as Democrats try to flip a statewide seat here for the first time in three decades. The Republican Senate primaries heading towards a bruising runoff in May, with John Cornyn fighting for his political survival against Ken Paxton, after neither candidate won a majority of the vote. Cornyn taking aim at Paxton, who was impeached, but later acquitted by the state Senate of bribery and corruption charges in 2023.

SENATOR JOHN CORNYN (R-TX): I refuse to allow a flawed, self-centered, and shameless candidate like Ken Paxton risk everything.

NOBLES: Paxton firing back.

TEXAS ATTORNEY GENERAL KEN PAXTON (R): John Cornyn has failed us time and time again.

NOBLES: And a stunner on the House side, with Republican Dan Crenshaw, the only Texas GOP House incumbent who did not have President Trump's endorsement, losing his race. In North Carolina, another critical race taking shape. The state's former Democratic governor, Roy Cooper, clinching his party's nomination overnight, facing former Republican National Committee chair, Michael Watley, who was endorsed by President Trump, another race heavily influenced by the President.

KOTB: All right, so, Ryan, let's go up 35,000 feet, look at the big picture. What do these results talk about, what the political winds are doing in the future?

NOBLES: Yeah, Hoda. Look, we're still several months out from the general election. But the Democrats that I spoke to were very pleased with the incredible voter turnout in their primaries last night. For instance, in Texas, with competitive races on both sides of the ballot, more Democrats voted in the primary yesterday than did Republicans, which is rare for that red state. But Republicans still feel confident they can hold the Senate, because they currently control the majority of the seats up for re-election this cycle. Hoda?

KOTB: All right, Ryan Nobles for us there in D.C. Ryan, thank you.