

NBC's *Today*  
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13 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Candidate Controversy]

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: Then, candidate controversy. A Maine Democrat at the center of a major scandal this morning, after his explicit texts to multiple women were revealed. What it means for the critical battle for control of the U.S. Senate.

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8:05:16 a.m.  
2 minutes and 12 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: News at 8; Controversy Swirls Around Senate Candidate]

CRAIG MELVIN: This morning, fresh controversy is swirling around Maine Democratic Senate candidate Graham Platner. Platner's trying to unseat long-time Republican incumbent Senator Susan Collins in what's expected to be a critical battle for control of the U.S. Senate. NBC's chief Capitol Hill correspondent Ryan Nobles joins us now with the very latest on this. Ryan, good morning.

RYAN NOBLES: Hey, Craig, good morning. And over the weekend, the oyster farmer and combat veterans campaign was battered by a new scandal, Platner's wife revealed to the campaign last year that he had exchanged sexually explicit texts with other women earlier in their marriage. On Saturday, Platner's wife, Amy Gertner, put out a video responding to the reports.

AMY GERTNER: It makes me really angry, disappointed, and I find it really shameful that there's a group of media outlets and people who are willing to spread gossip instead of talking about real issues that Graham is running on.

NOBLES: Now, she also said that the pair has a great marriage in a statement to NBC. Platner said that "Amy and I went through something hard because of me. We did the work, and I'm grateful for her every hour of every day." Now, in recent months, Platner has been dogged by other questions about his fitness for office, including old social media posts, where he shared inflammatory views about sexual assault. He has since apologized for those posts. He also recently covered up a tattoo that he got in 2007 while he was a Marine that some say resembles a Nazi symbol. Platner says he didn't know the reference at the time. Meantime, the primary isn't until next week in Maine, but Platner's popularity has already forced Maine Governor Janet Mills to bow out of the race, making him the presumptive Democratic candidate. Platner's been endorsed by the likes of progressives, including Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren. Now, Maine is historically tricky to pull, but according to polling before this recent controversy, Platner is leading the incumbent Senator Susan Collins in a general election face-off, Craig.

MELVIN: All right. Ryan Nobles for us there in Washington. Ryan, thank you.