

*CBS Mornings*

06/05/26

7:00:11 a.m. [TEASE]

4 seconds

NATE BURLESON: And we also have new allegations of misconduct by Senate candidate Graham Platner.

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7:00:24 a.m. [TEASE]

14 seconds

BURLESON: The leading Democrat in a race that could help decide control of Congress faces new accusations of mistreating some women.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: New Accusations]

GRAHAM PLATNER [on MSNOW's *All In with Chris Hayes*, 06/04/26]: There are some allegations in this piece that I just want to be kind of unequivocal about are simply not true.

(....)

7:03:49 a.m.

5 minutes and 42 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: New Allegations Against Sen. Candidate Platner]

BURLESON: A Democratic candidate in a crucial Senate race in Maine [is] facing explosive new allegations. *The New York Times* reports some women who used to date Graham Platner say they saw disturbing behavior. Platner was already facing scrutiny over explicit texts he sent to other women early in his marriage. Caitlin Huey Burns is on Capitol Hill, Caitlin, good morning.

CAITLIN HUEY-BURNS: And good morning to you, Nate. Well, for the second time this week, Graham Platner faces new controversy just days away from Maine's primary. And while Platner acknowledged that he made mistakes and was far from a perfect boyfriend, he denies allegations, these new allegations from former girlfriends, and insists he is staying in the race. Graham Platner pushed back late Thursday against new allegations he was physically rough with at least one woman he dated.

PLATNER [on MSNOW's *All In with Chris Hayes*, 06/04/26]: Those serious allegations are just not true.

HUEY-BURNS: Lindsey Fifield told *The New York Times* that, while he dated a decade ago, Platner "never hit me, he never punched me," but she said he regularly grabbed her by the

shoulders – sometimes hard enough to leave marks.” And she alleged. “[d]uring one argument, he twisted her arm behind her back, shoved her into a bedroom and held the door closed.”

PLATNER [on MSNOW’s *All In with Chris Hayes*, 06/04/26]: There are some allegations in this piece that I just want to be kind of unequivocal about are simply not true.

HUEY-BURNS: Platner, a political novice and oyster farmer, has also insisted he didn’t know that a chest tattoo he got as a Marine and has since covered up is widely recognized as a Nazi symbol, but Fifield told *The New York Times* he did know that, and even joked about it.

PLATNER [on MSNOW’s *All In with Chris Hayes*, 06/04/26]: Anything alleging physicality, anything alleging that I knew what my tattoo was, these are the statements of someone who’s politically motivated.

HUEY-BURNS: Fifield has worked for right-leaning causes and Republican campaigns, but denied any connection to Republican Maine Senator Susan Collins, who Platner would face this fall if he wins Tuesday’s primary. Platner’s campaign told CBS News, “Let’s be very clear. This is a lifelong GOP operative who’s dedicated her career to electing Republicans.” But a second woman, a Maine Democrat, who also said she dated Platner, told *The New York Times* she found some of his behavior “reckless” and “unsettling.”

MS NOW’S MYCHAEL SCHNELL [TO PLATNER, on 06/02/26]: Do you believe you deserve to represent Maine?

HUEY-BURNS: It’s all led to questions from some Democratic Senators.

SENATOR PETER WELCH (D-VT): He has the obligation, as a candidate, to address the legitimate questions that Mainers have – the personal and political.

HUEY-BURNS [TO FETTERMAN]: Are you concerned that there’s more to drop?

SENATOR JOHN FETTERMAN (D-PA): Well, he lied to everybody. He said that – that there wasn’t any after his Nazi tattoo situation. And now there’s more and more.

HUEY-BURNS: Now, some high-profile Democrats are sticking by Platner. Congressman Ro Khanna described the behavior that was described in *The New York Times* as “wrong and toxic,” but said that Platner has sought redemption. And Khanna is expected to campaign with Platner in Maine tonight, Vlad.

VLADIMIR DUTHIERS: All right, Caitlin, thank you very much. For more on this, we’re joined by Democratic Party strategist and CBS News contributor Joel Payne. Joel, good morning. Always good to see you.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Political Impact of Graham Platner Allegations]

JOEL PAYNE: Good morning.

DUTHIERS: So, this is the latest in a slew of controversies for Platner, who's still leading in the polls against Republican Susan Collins. But what do you make of his response? I mean, a lot of people are suggesting, is this really the best candidate to win in the general election, not in the primary election, but in the general against Susan Collins?

PAYNE: Well, Vlad, a few things. One, in order for Graham Platner to win, this needs to be a referendum on Susan Collins, and what has happened over the last few weeks, really since Janet Mills, his previous Democratic opponent who suspended her campaign in the primary, ever since she stepped out of the race, Platner – the response to this and other allegations, I think has allowed this to become a referendum on him. And so, Maine voters are not judging whether Susan Collins let them down, whether Susan Collins is the right person to represent them, but whether Graham Platner is fit for office. If the race stays in that zone, it is not good for Graham Platner. And what I would say is his specific response to some of these allegations has been very D.C. focused, he came to meet with Chuck Schumer, the Senate Democratic leader, Kirsten Gillibrand, the leader of the Senate Democratic campaign arm, and that response feels very D.C. coded for a candidate who is very working class-coded. And so, what I would recommend as a political strategy matter, if Graham Platner wants to get out of the morass that he's in right now, he's got to get back in front of voters, and I do think that the campaign plans to pivot to do that.

KELLY O'GRADY: Joel, I mean, there's a lot of time between the primary and the general election, right? It – you know, November feels like a year away, almost. And you said that if it stays in this realm, this could be really problematic for him. We're going to expect a lot of digging to happen between now and then. So, at what point does this become the wrong candidate for Democrats to win in the general?

PAYNE: Look, I have a theory on this. I think that voters have told us they will accept flawed, imperfect candidates who have complicated, and frankly, pretty sordid pasts if it goes to the brand of that candidate, if it goes to who they know them to be. Now, what Platner has never done, he has never sold himself to be a choir boy. He's never said, "I live the perfect life." What he has said is he's a fighter, he comes from those communities, and he understands what their experience is. If Platner can convince voters that what they're hearing about him now is actually not the real Graham Platner, and the real Graham Platner is who he's presented on the campaign trail over the last six months or so, he can get out of this. If voters believe they were being sold a bill of goods and they were being misled, that's a bad place for Platner to be.

O'GRADY: Well, there are a lot of ifs in there Joel, but we always appreciate your context. Thank you so much for joining us this morning.