

*CBS Mornings*

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Voters Cast Ballots in Graham Platner Primary]

GAYLE KING: It is primary day in four states and the main attraction appears to be Graham Platner and the U.S. Senate race, it's in Maine. Voters are choosing a Democrat to challenge Republican Senator Susan Collins there. They've heard a lot of negative stories about Platner's relationship with women. Caitlin Huey Burns is at a polling place in Portland where [sic] the latest — Caitlin, people on both sides of the aisle are watching this one. Good morning to you.

CAITLIN HUEY-BURNS: And good morning to you, Gayle. And voters are voting today right behind me, and a Platner win today would make way for a marquee match-up that could help determine the balance of power in the Senate, but also could test just how much voters are willing to tolerate to ensure success for their party. Despite a slew of high-profile controversies, Democratic Senate candidate Graham Plattner remains defiant.

GRAHAM PLATNER: We're gonna win on Tuesday, and after Tuesday — [CHEERS]

HUEY-BURNS: The Maine oyster farmer and Marine veteran spent the days ahead of his party's primary pushing back against allegations from some former girlfriends of unsettling and toxic behavior, one alleged he physically bruised her. Platner denies the allegations of physical abuse, calling them politically motivated. Many Democrats we met here still back him. [TO NOLETTE] Do you have any concerns about some of the things that have come out about him?

MAINE VOTER MARY NOLETTE: No. [SCREEN WIPE] I feel like people who have experienced hardship and made mistakes in their lives. We've all — we've all made 'em.

HUEY-BURNS: And others are at least willing to hear him out.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE MAINE VOTER: I think a lot of people have a lot of skeletons in their closet that we don't know about.

HUEY-BURNS: But winning the primary would be just the start. Platner is trying to do something no other Democrat has done in 30 years: defeat Republican Senator Susan Collins, who, last week, set a Senate record for casting 10,000 consecutive votes.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE MAINE VOTER: I think she's done a lot for the state of Maine.

MAINE VOTER GILL VEILLEUX: I truly believe that Susan Collins is the one to represent us.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE MAINE VOTER: Definitely Susan Collins will have my vote.

HUEY-BURNS: Now, many Democratic lawmakers are standing by Platner, but his former political director, who quit the campaign in October, wrote an op-ed in *The Washington Post* yesterday, saying that Platner should not be a U.S. Senator, and that his flaws as the candidate became impossible to ignore, Nate.

NATE BURLESON: Caitlin, thank you.