

NBC's *Today*

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Platner Faces Key Test in Maine Primary]

CRAIG MELVIN: Well, more primaries are being held across the country today, and all eyes are on a key U.S. Senate race in Maine, a race that could help determine who controls the chamber — the upper chamber will come November. NBC's Ryan Nobles is in Scarborough, Maine. That's where the polls are already open, I understand. Ryan, good morning.

RYAN NOBLES: That's right, Craig. The polls just opened here in Scarborough behind me and a state that may be the most important for Democrats and their hopes to win back the majority in the fall midterms, but to do it, they're going to have to get by the incumbent moderate Susan Collins, who's running for her sixth term. Enter Graham Platner, a political newcomer, a Marine veteran, and an oyster farmer, someone who set the progressive world by storm, so much so that he pushed the incumbent Democratic Governor, Janet Mills, to suspend her campaign because she wasn't gaining any traction. But Platner has weathered a series of scandals, including the most recent recently where three different women accused him of being toxic and unsettling during their relationships. Now, NBC News has not been able to verify *The New York Times* reporting on this story, but Platner has said that the accusations are politically motivated and in some cases, not true. Now, Platner also acknowledging that he was forced to cover up a tattoo that some say resembles a Nazi symbol. He said he got that tattoo while he was in the Marines and didn't know the significance at the time. Now, one interesting wrinkle in the voting here today. Even though Janet Mills has suspended her campaign, her name is still on the ballot, so it does give Democrats another opportunity to vote for someone other than Platner. But Platner is expected to cruise to victory here, and this general election will begin tomorrow as voters in Maine will have to decide whether or not his scandals outweigh his progressive agenda, and the answer could determine who wins the majority in the fall, Craig.

MELVIN: Ryan Nobles for us there in Maine. Ryan, thank you.