

ABC's *Good Morning America*

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7:01:30 a.m. [TEASE]

13 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Exit Strategy; Scramble to Replace Platner]

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Exit strategy. Graham Platner said to be looking to leave the crucial Senate race as his campaign collapses after he was accused of sexual assault. Now, the scramble to replace him.

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7:10:16 a.m.

3 minutes and 1 second

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: New Developments; Senate Candidate Accused of Sexual Assault]

STRAHAN: We're going to go now to the growing pressure on Democrat Graham Platner to drop out of the Maine Senate race after a woman accused him of sexual assault. Platner is being urged to step aside in a critical race for Democrats, hoping to take control of the Senate. Jay O'Brien is tracking the latest from Washington. Good morning, Jay

JAY O'BRIEN: Michael, good morning to you. Graham Platner is still in the race as of right now, but his campaign now confirming it's discussed a possible exit strategy with Democratic leaders in that state and that already leading to a clash. In a race that could decide control of Congress, this morning, Maine Democrat Graham Platner campaign collapsing around him, setting off a scramble to try to replace him on the ballot after an allegation of sexual assault by an ex-girlfriend, which he denies.

JENNY RACICOT [on CNN's *The Lead*, 07/06/26]: I looked at him and I remember this very specific look in his eyes, and I could smell alcohol, and I was, like, this is different.

O'BRIEN: And this morning, several state Democrats now jockeying to take Platner's place and challenge Maine's longtime GOP senator, Susan Collins. Under Maine law, Platner has just five days to drop out to be removed from the ballot. State Democrats would then have two weeks to select a new candidate, but there's no exact roadmap for how that process would go overnight. The executive director of the Democratic Party of Maine saying Platner team has reached out, accusing them of trying to dictate the next steps.

MAINE DEMOCRATIC PARTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEVIN MURPHY-ANDERSON: Unfortunately, Graham Platner team has repeatedly reached out to us in an attempt to put their thumb on the scale of what this process looks like. [SCREEN WIPE] We have repeatedly reiterated to Graham Platner's team that they have no role in determining our next Democratic nominee.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: New Developments; What's Next in Maine Senate Race?]

O'BRIEN: Platner campaign confirms they have reached out to the party, but denied trying to influence what comes next, saying in a statement, "while Graham [Platner] wouldn't want to be part of the process, he would want to make sure the voters and volunteers make this decision, not the political establishment." It comes as Democrats are abandoning the embattled candidate, more than 20 senators calling on him to drop out. Platner his biggest supporter, senator Bernie Sanders, now saying he spoke with the candidate yesterday, and "in light of these very serious allegations, I recommended that he step aside." Other key progressive voices like New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani also calling for Platner to drop out.

NYC MAYOR ZOHRAN MAMDANI: I think the focus of today should be to respond to the gravity of what so many of us have read, and I think the only appropriate response is for the campaign to come to an end.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: New Developments; Top Democrats Pressure Platner]

O'BRIEN: Platner strongly denying the sexual assault allegation, but saying he's reassessing his campaign.

GRAHAM PLATNER [on 07/06/26]: Regardless of the inaccuracy of the reporting, but mindful of the political reality it will inflict, we are taking the time to reflect on the best path forward.

O'BRIEN: And again, a sense of the stakes here. Any possible path for Democrats taking back the Senate almost certainly runs through Maine. Susan Collins is the only Republican senator this year defending a seat in a state that Donald Trump lost in 2024, Robin.

ROBIN ROBERTS: A lot of eyes on Maine. All right, Jay. Our thanks to you.