

NBC's *Today*
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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: All Eyes on Key Primaries Across U.S.]

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: Also, this morning, voters are heading to the polls in another round of competitive primaries ahead of November's midterm elections. In Wisconsin and Minnesota, Democrats once again decided between moderate and progressive candidates. And, in South Carolina, Republicans will pick a replacement for nominee for the late Senator Lindsey Graham. NBC's Ryan Nobles is in Lexington, South Carolina, this morning with more. Ryan good morning.

RYAN NOBLES: Hey, Savannah, good morning, and it is a very crowded field in this special primary to pick a new Republican nominee, and even though Darline Graham holds her late brother Lindsey Graham seat in the U.S. Senate, and has President Trump's endorsement, many folks here on the ground believe this race is headed to a runoff. In battleground South Carolina, where the late Senator Lindsey Graham's legacy looms large, his sister, Darline, with President Trump's endorsement, is hoping to pick up where her brother left off.

SENATOR DARLINE GRAHAM (R-SC): I think President Trump is going to get us through this, and the price of gas will eventually come down.

NOBLES: Trump touting her campaign in a tele-rally Monday night.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: She's the perfect person to carry on Lindsey's legacy.

NOBLES: But voters here nervous about her lack of experience. If a candidate does not clear the 50 percent threshold tonight, the top two candidates will head to a runoff later this month. In Wisconsin, progressive candidate Francesca Hong, who polls show in the lead and the race for governor, is trying to hold on despite a push from the more moderate wing of the party worried about her socialist views, and backlash over past social media posts calling to cancel Thanksgiving and abolish ICE, comments she's attempted to walk back.

FRANCESCA HONG: It is the people, the voters, that give me confidence not only to win tomorrow, but to win on November 3.

NOBLES: But without the endorsement of prominent progressive leaders like Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, she's vulnerable in a primary defined by surprise dropouts and re-entries. One of those re-entries, David Crowley, who has the endorsement of the state's popular governor, Tony Evers.

MILWAUKEE COUNTY, WI EXECUTIVE DAVID CROWLEY (D): It feels like we've captured lightning in the bottle, and so, our job is just to make sure we're — that we're

consolidating all those undecided voters.

NOBLES: Meanwhile, in the Minnesota Senate primary, Democrats will pick from progressive Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan and moderate Congresswoman Angie Craig.

MINNESOTA LT. GOV. PEGGY FLANAGAN (DFL): I'm fighting for the policies that I think Minnesotans really care about.

CONGRESSWOMAN ANGIE CRAIG (D-MN): I'm the experienced person in Washington, who has a track record already of taking on Donald Trump.

NOBLES: The winner will face whoever emerges from the GOP primary that includes former NFL sideline reporter Michelle Tafoya, a critical seat Democrats must hold if they have hoped to retake the Senate this fall. And here in South Carolina, the polls just opened. It could be a light turnout given that this is such a unique primary. They close tonight at 7. If no candidate reaches that 50 percent threshold, there will be a runoff here two weeks from today on August 25, Savannah.

GUTHRIE: All right, Ryan, thank you very much.