

NBC's *Today*

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7:01:26 a.m. [TEASE]

23 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Name Game]

CRAIG MELVIN: Name game. Two candidates both named Dan Sullivan appearing on the ballot in Alaska's Republican Senate primary today, leading to fears of voter confusion and accusations of trickery. The battle leading to a major decision by the state Supreme Court as that closely watched race could impact the balance of power on Capitol Hill. We'll have the very latest.

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7:13:26 a.m.

3 minutes and 30 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Alaska Seat Key to Battle for Senate Control]

MELVIN: Meanwhile here at home, it is primary day across more states, voters heading to the polls in California, Florida, Wyoming, and Alaska, where candidates with the same name in the same race are sparking some confusion and some accusations as well. NBC's chief Capitol Hill correspondent, Ryan Nobles has more on that. Ryan, good morning.

RYAN NOBLES: Hey, Craig, good morning. It is a pretty wild story. In just a few hours, polls will open across Alaska, which is a reliable red state that President Trump has carried three times. All eyes are on that Senate race, where a Republican incumbent is seeking a third term, but he's got a strong challenger across the aisle, and another one whose name sounds a little too familiar. This morning, high-profile primary races with national implications as President Trump and his party look to keep their narrow majority. Alaska in the spotlight, where incumbent Republican Dan Sullivan is looking to secure a third term in the Senate.

SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN (R-AK) [on FNC's *One Nation with Brian Kilmeade*, 08/16/26]: I always have tough re-elections, but here's the thing, we're always ready, right?

NOBLES: But in a made-for-TV plot twist, another Dan Sullivan is also on the ballot, and a retired fifth-grade teacher who also wanted to run as a Republican. State election officials tried to remove the retired teacher over concerns about voter confusion. The Alaska Supreme Court ruling that both Sullivans could appear on the ballot, but ordered election officials to list their respective names like this, so voters know who is who. Sullivan the teacher responding on his website: "I am a qualified candidate who followed the rules and filed to run for office under my legal name." But the President accusing Democrats of trying to trick Alaskans on Truth Social, saying the effort was designed to "take Votes away from our great Senator of the same name." The entire Dan debacle, making its way to late night.

JIMMY FALLON [on NBC's *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, 06/01/26]: It was Dan Sullivan versus Dan Sullivan.

NOBLES: Fallon creating a fake campaign ad that imagined the two candidates trying to clear things up.

FAKE SENATE AD [on NBC's *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, 06/01/26]: So, on Election Day, don't vote for Dan Sullivan. Listen to Dan Sullivan, avoid Dan Sullivan, and vote for Dan Sullivan.

NOBLES: Still, in Alaska's primary, the top four candidates advanced to the midterms, regardless of party, and the biggest challenger to the incumbent Senator Sullivan may actually come from former Democratic representative Mary Peltola, who made history in 2022 as the first Alaskan native ever elected to Congress. Recent polling showing Peltola and Sullivan virtually neck and neck. Florida also taking center stage, where three Democratic socialists are running in the primary for House and Senate races against more moderate Democrats. A key test for progressives in the battle of the future of the party that's been unfolding throughout this primary.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: All Eyes on Florida Race]

MELVIN: I mean, the whole Dan Sullivan debacle, Ryan, sounds like something from a *Northern Exposure* episode many years ago. Let's get into these new poll numbers for a second, show some headwinds for Republicans heading into the fall midterms. What more can you tell us about those numbers?

NOBLES: Yeah, you know, Craig, the midterms are always a challenge for the party in power, but this new polling shows Republicans are facing serious headwinds. First, the President's approval rating has fallen to 33 percent. That's the lowest of his presidency, but also on the key issue of the economy, voters say they trust Democrats over Republicans for the first time in roughly a decade, Craig.

MELVIN: All right, Ryan Nobles. Ryan, thank you.