ABC's *Good Morning America*
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7:00:17 a.m. [TEASE]
55 seconds

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Millions of Americans heading to the polls, millions more already voted, control of Congress on the line. Election Day in America. Control of the House and Senate, and the future of President Trump's agenda at stake. Now, the President's closing message to voters —

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: We gave this a very strong shot.

STEPHANOPOULOS: — as the U.S. launches new strikes on Iran overnight.

ROBIN ROBERTS: This morning, the state of play as Democrats try to turn Texas blue for the first time in decades.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE JAMES TALARICO (D-TX): It's David versus Goliath.

ROBERTS: Michigan, a fight to the finish, after that last-minute endorsement surprise. Neck-and-neck races in Alaska, Maine, and more.

MICHAEL STRAHAN: Plus, the key issues driving voters to the polls, as gas prices hit a record for an Election Day, what voters are telling us.

STEPHANOPOULOS: Our team spread out across the country, covering all the key battleground states. Plus, what you need to know about your rights as a voter.

(....)

7:02:57 a.m.
18 seconds

STRAHAN: And here's the breakdown of power. Now, with Democrats hoping to gain in red states, while Republicans are hoping to hold the line.

STEPHANOPOULOS: A lot of engagement this year, but Republicans are facing political headwinds. President Trump's approval ratings are low, prices are high. The party out of power nearly always makes gains during the midterms.

(....)

7:03:31 a.m.
1 minute and 54 seconds

MARY BRUCE: Who will control Congress? What message will the country send the President? Those answers now in the hands of voters. This morning, millions of Americans heading to the polls, control of Congress on the line, the midterm elections, a critical test of the political power of President Trump. The President choosing to deliver his final pitch to voters at one of his personal projects, the Reflecting Pool.

TRUMP: Did somebody have those pictures for me?

BRUCE: Trump detailing the improvements which cost taxpayers $16 million dollars.

TRUMP: We're replacing all of the grass in all of the parks because, like the human being, grass has a life also.

BRUCE: The President, speaking for more than 23 minutes before turning to the critical election for weeks, he's blitzed the campaign trail, hoping to drive turnout in competitive races —

TRUMP: I love you, Kansas.

BRUCE: — holding 28 rallies, mostly in states he won, but where Republicans are now playing defense. Top of mind for voters? The rising cost of living fueled by the war in Iran, Trump had promised no new strikes until after the midterms.

TRUMP: You know, I don't know if you even call it a war, because we haven't been doing any fighting for months.

BRUCE: But officials now confirmed to ABC News that yesterday the U.S. carried out strikes against Iran in the Strait of Hormuz, part of a series of limited defensive strikes in recent weeks, the U.S. military estimates the war has cost $47 billion. As news of these defensive strikes broke, the President insisting that price tag is nothing compared to what the U.S. has earned through other foreign interventions.

TRUMP: This is peanuts compared to the kind of money that we've made.

BRUCE: Over and over again. Trump has urged voters to act like he himself is on the ballot, but now he appears to be bracing himself for losses.

TRUMP: For some reason, the sitting President doesn't win the midterms. But we gave this a very strong shot.

(....)

7:05:35 a.m.
9 minutes and 42 seconds

STEPHANOPOULOS: And, Mary, the President's attempts to have the Justice Department

interfere in the elections has been roundly rejected by the courts, including the Supreme Court last night.

BRUCE: Yeah, George, this is another blow to the Trump administration. The Supreme Court late yesterday rejecting the Trump administration's push for California to set aside 20,000 ballots that the administration claims could have been cast by people who are not citizens. The move, of course, came just one day after a federal judge in Alaska rejected the Trump administration's effort to intervene in the Alaska Senate race, George.

STEPHANOPOULOS: Mary Bruce, thanks. Robin.

ROBERTS: Okay, let's get the latest on the state of the races. As voters go to the polls across the country. Senior political correspondent Rachel Scott is here in the studio with us. Good morning. Rachel.

RACHEL SCOTT: Robin, George, Michael, good morning to all of you. Happy Election Day to everyone out there. We want to start with the state of play this morning. Republicans do control both chambers of Congress. For Democrats to flip the House, they're going to need to net three seats by the end of the night. In order to flip the Senate, they need to net four seats by the end of the night. Let's take a look at the Senate map. These are all the Senate races that are up for grabs tonight. 35 across the country. The path for Democrats to take control of the Senate. A lot more challenging here, and here's why. They're going to have to defend all of these states they currently have. These are all states where there's a Democratic senator currently. And then they're going to have to go on offense, flipping at least two states that President Trump won by double digits. We're talking about Alaska. We're talking about Texas. We're talking about Kansas. Many of these races in the final stretch, they have been very tight, a lot closer. But when we go back in history, it has been years, in some case, decades since many of these states have sent a Democrat to the Senate. In Ohio? Since 2018. In Iowa? 2008. Texas? 1988. Kansas? It's been nearly a century. Now, for Republicans to keep control of the Senate, what they're going to have to do to defend their home turf tonight, they're going to want to keep all of these red states. They're also going to try to go on offense in that critical state. They're in Michigan. But, of course, President Trump is entering this election with record low approval ratings, guys.

ROBERTS: They really have. All right. Our thanks to you, Rachel. We've seen soaring numbers, voting numbers. What's driving them? What's — what's really driving them to the polls right now?

SCOTT: It's all about the economy, Robin. And so this latest — latest Reuters/Ipsos poll shows that 50 percent of Americans say that the cost of living is the most important factor in how they're going to vote this election. And we know so many Americans out there have already voted more than 58 million Americans have cast their ballots so far. That number outpacing where we were four years ago, and so many more Americans heading out to the polls this morning.

STRAHAN: Yeah, we can understand cost of living being a big issue, right? The biggest issue.

Thank you so much for that, Rachel. And we are fanned out in key states across the nation. First, let's go to Juju Chang in Michigan. And the last-minute twist in the Senate race there. Good morning, Juju.

JUJU CHANG: Good morning Michael. We're here at a polling center here in Detroit and a predominantly black neighborhood. We've watched voters trickle in, line up early, pass out pamphlets. The excitement of election is underway, but everyone's wondering what's going to happen because of that high-profile, last minute defection that rocked this campaign. Haley Stevens, who lost to el-Sayed in the primary, switched her endorsement. Now, we went to a Rogers event last night. We spoke to supporters who said that they saw the defection as an act of courage that gives Democrats permission to cross the aisle and vote for a Republican. You see voters coming in and coming out as we speak, but the el-Sayed camp says, no, no, that is not what happened. This defection only backfired. It only served to fire up the base and enrage Democrats, getting them to the polls. The next day, they announced a record $2.4 million in fundraising. I also spoke to UAW workers who also are working hard to get out the vote. 500,000, a half-million phone calls made, 100,000 doors knocked. And as black church leaders like to say, it's all about getting souls to the polls.

UNIDENTIFIED BLACK FEMALE VOTER: That's right!

CHANGE: Right! guys?

STEPHANOPOULOS: Okay, Juju. Thanks. Democrats trying to turn Texas blue, elect the state's first Democratic senator in nearly four decades. Whit Johnson is in Austin. Good morning. Whit.

WHIT JOHNSON: Hey, George. Good morning to you. You can see the campaign signs are everywhere, as Texas has really emerged as this unexpected battleground state. No Democrat has won a statewide race here in Texas in more than 30 years. But right now, State Representative James Talarico has a slight edge in the polls over his opponent. Trump-endorsed Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton. Overnight, both candidates delivering their closing messages. Talarico framing this race as David versus Goliath. Paxton branding his opponent as a radical Democratic socialist. This has also become the most expensive non-presidential race in the U.S. ever, with more than $500 million pouring into the state. Elon Musk himself has funneled more than $160 million dollars into the Paxton campaign. And I've been speaking with voters, including some people who say they used to vote Republican, but they're switching to Democrats this election because of economic concerns. But I also spoke with one farmer who says despite the challenges, he is sticking with Republicans and believes many of his peers in the industry will do the same. Of course, this race all about affordability and the cost of living, Latino and rural voters expected to play a major role in who wins here in Texas, guys.

ROBERTS: All right. Our thanks to you. And, as we've been saying, more than 58 million have already cast their ballots. Millions are going to the polls, as we see today all across the country. Our correspondents are, as you see — national senior correspondent Steve Osunsami is in Georgia, which has set an early voting record. Good morning, Steve.

STEVE OSUNSAMI: Good morning to you, Robin, from a polling place here in Atlanta. You're right. We have seen an early midterm voting record here in Georgia. More than 2.8 million Georgians have voted early in the three weeks of early voting that happened here. Most of those votes from the blue counties surrounding Atlanta, home to incumbent Senator Jon Ossoff who, at the end of the night is hoping to hold on to his seat against Republican Mike Collins. But this is Election Day. This is when rural Georgia shows out, and Republicans are hoping for a high voter turnout. Today, Georgia's Republican secretary of state, who runs things here, tells me that we're going to see about four million votes total cast by the end of the night. And he plans to report that massive early vote an hour after the polls closed. So we'll see those numbers by 8:00, and he says that he'll have all of the votes counted by midnight, guys.

ROBERTS: All right. Our thanks to you, Steve. We're going to bring in our chief Washington correspondent, Jon Karl, and chief business correspondent Rebecca Jarvis. We're going to get to the issue of affordability in just a moment. That's what we're hearing over and over and over again. But, Jon, we're seeing in this red territory really in play here states that Trump has won convincingly all the times that he has ran, so what are we seeing here?

JONATHAN KARL: I mean, we're seeing Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Alaska, even Mississippi, potentially a South Carolina — what is happening here is Democrats are hopeful that they can win in states that they have not won in a long time, and Republicans are bracing for a big blue wave. We'll see if it actually happens. Now, the only way, Robin, of course, as you heard from Rachel, that Democrats can win the Senate is if they can win in at least two states that Trump carried by double digits. And so, what does Trump done? He has asked voters to vote as if he is the person on the ballot. In other words, he has turned this midterm into a referendum on his presidency. That is a very risky proposition for a President that has historic lows in his approval rating, with a clear majority in poll after poll after poll of Americans saying they don't approve of his performance as President.

STEPHANOPOULOS: So, Rebecca, Trump is on the ballot. The cost of living is on the ballot.

REBECCA JARVIS: Right. And I'm struck by the fact that we're having a nearly identical conversation today as the one we were having two years ago. The economy is the number one issue, as Rachel just shared, it was the number one issue there two years ago, and prices continue to climb. People struggling to pay for basic essentials like gas, groceries, housing, and health care. Back then, I traveled the country, people over and over said, we're maxed out. Again, that is happening with affordability getting worse, families are now paying $1,300 more a month on the same goods and services since five years ago, nearly $400 of that has occurred since January 2025, when Trump took office where we've seen the biggest increases is in prices. Our gas and diesel since the start of the Iran war, both at record highs this Election Day morning. Think about the fact that the average driver, guys, is visiting a gas station once or twice a week. That is a regular reminder that prices are still climbing. Gas this morning, $4.13 a gallon. That is up 2.99 is where it was this time last year. So, that's a big differential in people's mind as they go to the polls. Meantime, diesel, which is the fuel that really powers our economy — today, it's 6.29. A year ago, 3.67 again, another big differential. Now, unemployment jobs, they're there for the most part. Unemployment remains low 4.2 percent. The stock market is up 10 percent over the

last year. But workers wages are not keeping up with rising costs, and we have to remember, when we look at the stock market, only about half of Americans have any access —

STRAHAN: Mmm, yeah. Mmhmm.

JARVIS: — have any money invested in the stock market. So people are stretched, they are dipping into their savings, they're taking on more debt. And when you look at those debt numbers, one of the concerning factors here is that people, those who are really behind that number is getting worse. Those who are really behind on their credit card bills.

STRAHAN: Yeah. Costs have really gone up.

JARVIS: They feel it, everyone.

STRAHAN: Yeah.

(....)

8:02:18 a.m.
4 minutes and 56 seconds

SCOTT: Democrats, in order to flip the House need to net three seats by the end of the night. In order to flip the Senate, they need to net four seats by the end of the night. Democrats feel pretty good about their chances of flipping the House, and here's why. Their confidence coming from polls like this. Reuters/Ipsos asking voters across the country if they prefer a Democrat over Republican to represent them in the House. And you could see the majority, 52 percent said that they would prefer a Democrat. Over in the Senate, this is a little bit more challenging for Democrats. They're going to have to hang on to everything that they have. Still flip at least four seats by the end of the night, including at least two states that President Trump won by double digits: Alaska, Texas, Kansas. Many of these races, Democrats now getting the edge in the final stretch. And that is what is putting Republicans on defense. It is part of the reason why we have seen Vice President JD Vance, President Trump campaign in so many red states across the country. The President doing a campaign blitz holding 28 rallies, most of those in states that he won by double digits. And of course, he is entering this Election Day with record low approval ratings, guys.

STEPHANOPOULOS: And, Rachel, a lot of evidence that the economy is driving people to the polls.

SCOTT: It is. It is the number one issue for voters all across the country. We hear it out in the country. We're seeing that reflected in the polls as well. This is the latest Reuters/Ipsos poll, and it asks Americans what the most important issue is for them, when they're going to vote. And 50 percent said that it was the cost of living. And of course, this number being driven, of course, of just by how much Americans are paying for gas and for diesel right now, the average price for a gallon of gas, $4.13, the average price for diesel, $6.28. These two numbers for gas and diesel,

the highest ever for an Election Day, guys.

STRAHAN: All right. Thank you so much for that, Rachel. And we're going to go to one of the key battleground states, Alaska, where accusations that have — that Democrats tried to mislead voters have become an issue in a critical Senate race. Trevor Ault is in Anchorage for us. Good morning. Trevor.

TREVOR AULT: Good morning, Michael. We've been seeing some gigantic lines here in Anchorage leading up to Election Day. We've seen some people waiting up to two hours to vote early over the weekend. And the turnout actually could rival what we saw in the 2024 presidential election, which is almost unheard of for a midterm now. In that election, President Trump won Alaska by 13 points. Today, though, it's going to be a neck-and-neck race. You have the Democrat Mary Peltola against the incumbent, Republican Dan Sullivan. And by now, most people know there's actually two Dan Sullivan's on the ballot. What Republicans are calling a Decoy Dan Sullivan, that *The New York Times* reports the Peltola campaign allegedly recruited to join the race to try to siphon some votes. Over the weekend, though, a federal judge dismissed a lawsuit from the Trump administration trying to block the certification of this election if the incumbent, Dan Sullivan, were to lose, though federal officials and state officials say they've opened criminal investigations into all of this. Mary Peltola, for her part, says she has no idea whether her campaign recruited these other candidates. But she says if it did happen, she was not aware of it. What's not clear, though, is whether or not this issue is going to be very important to Alaskan voters, especially when you compare it to those other issues, like what Rachel was just talking about, gas prices and the economy. What is clear, though, from all of these voters turning out is how important this state could potentially be. It very well could decide control of the Senate late tonight, Robin.

ROBERTS: It could. All right there, Trevor. Now to the race in Maine where Democrats are trying to unseat longtime Senator Susan Collins. Will Reeve is there in Bangor, Maine. Good morning. Will.

WILL REEVE: Hi, Robin. Good morning. The polling site here in Bangor has been bustling all morning, people streaming in in this arena below. And the question that only these voters in Maine can answer is: Will Senator Susan Collins win reelection for a sixth term as the Republican senator from Maine, or will she be unseated by Democratic challenger Troy Jackson, who only had three months to campaign? Now, Senator Collins is an institution here in Maine. She was elected in 1996 and she's amassed considerable power in that time. And, on the campaign trail, she touted her record for funneling billions of federal dollars to her state and for delivering on Mainers needs. But many voters that we've spoken to here in Bangor are skeptical that past performance will indicate future results. Many of them feeling anti-Collins or even more forcefully anti-Trump, and they agreed with the Jackson campaign's portrayal of Collins as being too aligned with President Trump and his agenda, despite Collins's reputation as a moderate. But Collins spent much of the campaign running away from Trump, reminding folks what she has done for her state for nearly three decades. Now — but will that be enough for her? Remember, she is the only Republican senator running for reelection in a state that Donald Trump lost in 2024. So, the question they will be answering today is: Does this spell the end of an era for Susan

Collins, or will she hang on in this tightly contested race?