

Know Before You Go: AZ-02 District Primer

March 2017 • Researched, summarized, and edited by Swing Left's all-volunteer research team!

In the last election, Republican Martha McSally won this district by only 43,933 votes (13.9%). That's close! With your help, we're going to win this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

About the Incumbent

Republican Martha McSally is a second-term congresswoman and a retired U.S. Air Force colonel who was the first American woman to fly in combat. She served in Iraq and Kuwait in the first Gulf war and later made history again as the first woman to command an Air Force fighter squadron based at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

Recent Elections: McSally came to Congress in a narrow 2014 victory, beating incumbent Ron Barber by 161 votes after a mandatory recount. In 2016, she defeated former Democratic state representative Matt Heinz and a Libertarian write-in candidate. McSally tallied 57% of the vote to Heinz's 43%.

Issues: McSally is modestly conservative. She's an active supporter of veterans and the military, and she advocates for border protection, but she doesn't support Trump's proposed border wall. She supports repealing and replacing the ACA. In the 114th Congress, McSally ranked third among House freshmen for producing legislation, and has cosponsored 249 bills. She has never missed a vote.

Committees: McSally is a member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, where she serves as chairperson of the Subcommittee on Border & Maritime Security. She is also on the House Committee on Armed Services, where she is a member of the Subcommittees on Military Personnel and Tactical Air and Land Forces.

Strengths: McSally speaks with authority on military issues, as a combat veteran who has played a historic role on breaking gender barriers. She enjoys wide support among active duty and retired veterans in the district.

Potential Weaknesses: McSally has faced protesters in 2017 calling on her to protect healthcare access and to reject other Trump policies. The district's unemployment rate is high, 10.7%, and that may become an issue in the next election if it doesn't improve.

How We'll Win in 2018

The 2016 election ushered in a challenging new political reality. The encouraging news is that **millions of us are already working together** to strengthen the democratic foundations of our society. By focusing on Swing Districts like this one, the Swing Left community can — and will — **take back the House for the Democrats next year.** Here are the broad strokes of how we'll do it, together:

Now Through Election Day

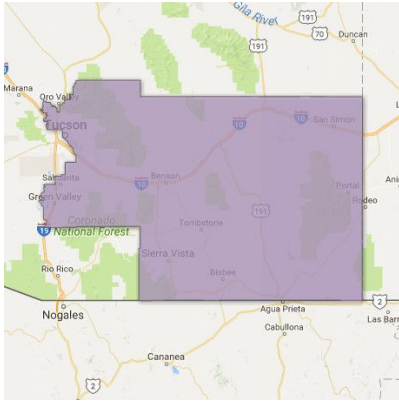
- **Build face-to-face voter relationships** via door-to-door canvassing and conversations.
- **Register as many new voters as possible** who are likely to vote Democratic.
- **Recruit people to Swing Left** to expand our army of progressive-minded citizens living both inside and outside of Swing Districts.
- **Continue researching and learning about this Swing District and the incumbent**, as well as connecting with local allies who also want to win back the House.
- **Raise awareness and build momentum on social media** by sharing stories about this Swing District, as well as the voting record and actions of the incumbent.
- **Harness the creativity of Swing Left volunteers** by capturing and sharing ideas and actions that work.

Lead-Up to Election Day

- **Raise money** for Democratic congressional campaigns.
- **Conduct ongoing phone banking** to build relationships with sympathetic voters and understand their concerns.
- **Host & attend events and rallies** to amplify our voices.

November 2018

- **Get out the vote** on Election Day.
- **Drive voters to the polls** to make casting their votes as easy as possible.
- **Monitor the polls** to ensure that no registered voter is intimidated away or prevented from voting.



AZ-02: Better Know the District

Geography & Climate

Arizona's 2nd Congressional District occupies the southeast corner of the state, covering parts of Pima and Cochise Counties. The district includes more than 20,000 square miles of mostly high desert grassland, featuring mountains and wide valleys. It includes two-thirds of Tucson. Elevations run from 3,500 to 6,000 feet with the highest peaks in the eastern Chiricahua Range. The district's semi-arid climate features mild winters and hot summers. In most months, rainfall rarely exceeds one inch, but July and August are considered the "monsoon season," which is highlighted by intense storms that often cause flash floods.

AZ-02: Facts & Stats

Population Centers

- Tucson, 523,278 (partial, state's 2nd largest city)
- Sierra Vista, 45,187
- Douglas, 17,288
- Bisbee, 5,507
- Benson, 5,056
- Willcox, 3,710

2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 157K (50%)
- Trump: 141K (45%)

2016 House Results

- Heinz (D): 136K (43%)
- McSally (R): 180K (57%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 99K
- Eligible, not registered: 107K

2014 House Results

- Barber (D): 109,543 (49.9%)
- McSally (R): 109,704 (50%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 163K

Citizenry

Nearly 90% of the district's 723,000 people live in urban areas, most particularly in the Tucson metropolitan area. Door-to-door canvassing is difficult in the district's rural areas, as population centers are widely dispersed. The population is 82% white, 14% Hispanic, 2% black, and 2% Asian. The district's median household income is nearly \$45,000. Ninety percent of the district's citizens have a high school diploma, and 30% have college degrees.

Industries

In line with the rest of the state, there's a large cohort of retirees (especially military retirees) in the district. The healthcare sector — both public and private — is the largest job contributor, followed by administrative professions. Military retirees tend to reside close to the district's two active military bases — in Tucson's eastside and in Sierra Vista. Tourism is another major industry. Especially noteworthy is the district's high unemployment rate. Outreach to unemployed and underemployed residents should be a priority for the Democratic challenger in 2018.

Education

Located within AZ-02 are two community college districts: Cochise College, with campuses in Douglas and Sierra Vista as well as centers in Benson, Ft. Huachuca and Willcox, and Pima Community College, which encompasses six campuses and four education centers throughout the greater Tucson area, including one located at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. Both colleges offer associate's degrees and vocational certificates. The University of Arizona's campus in Tucson (just outside of AZ-02) enrolls nearly 33,000 undergraduates and more than 9,000 graduate students. Faculty members total more than 3,100. The University of Arizona campus and the metropolitan campuses of Pima Community are rich targets for progressively minded students and faculty. Campus clubs should be explored and contacts leveraged for voter registration.