

# Know Before You Go: IA-02 District Primer

*June 2018 • Researched, summarized, and edited by Swing Left's all-volunteer research team!*

**In the last election, Democrat Dave Loebsack won this district by only 27,638 votes (7.5%).**

That's too close! With your help, we're going to keep this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

## About the Incumbent

**Introduction:** Democrat Dave Loebsack has served six terms in Congress representing IA-02 since 2006. Born in Sioux City, Loebsack attended local schools. He has degrees in political science from Iowa State as well as UC Davis. Before running for office, Loebsack was a professor of political science; his wife is a retired public school teacher.

**Issues:** Loebsack has prioritized his issues as jobs and the economy; education, Social Security, Medicare/ Medicaid; holding government accountable; and supporting military troops and veterans. He votes with Democrats 90% of the time, consistently voting to protect a woman's right to abortion and to pass environmental protection measures. A member of the House Energy and Commerce committee, he has sought ways to use new technologies such as renewable energy to spur economic growth in the district. A forceful advocate for education, Loebsack believes that preparing workers to excel in these new economic sectors is key to expanding Iowa's middle class. Loebsack believes in Wall Street regulation and is generally for financial reform and against bailouts. He has stated that his "role in government is to help stick up for the little guy."

**Strengths:** Loebsack is home every weekend and visits every county throughout the year, not just during election cycles. He has a reputation for solving problems and finding solutions to the everyday issues faced by his constituents. He is well-spoken, knowledgeable, and approaches government with a combination of common sense, a long-term outlook, and of speaking truth to power.

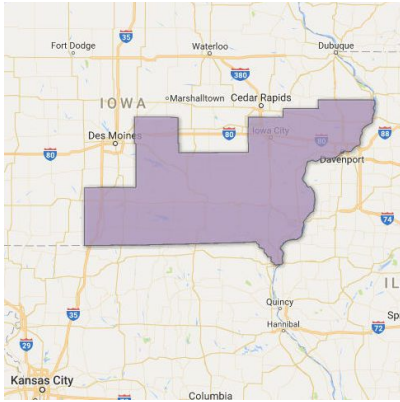
## About the Challenger

**Introduction:** Republican Chris Peters, a surgeon, served for nine years in the U.S. Army Medical corps before opening a private medical practice in Coralville, IA. Peters ran unsuccessfully against Loebsack in 2016. This year, he ran unopposed in the GOP primary.

**Issues:** Peters is running on a platform of de-regulating healthcare and slashing federal spending on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Peters suggests allowing insurers to compete across state lines, promoting high-deductible insurance plans and HSAs, and reforming the pharmaceutical patent system.

**Strengths:** Peters is a physician and a veteran. He articulates his positions in terms of values, like common sense and pragmatism. He has signaled a willingness to seek bipartisan solutions, and his campaign messaging is intended appeal to independent voters seeking an anti-establishment choice. He favors term limits and, if elected, has promised to limit his service to five terms, which may make him attractive to voters who, after six terms with Loebsack, may be ready for a fresh face.

**Potential Weaknesses:** Peters struggles to appeal to voters. He has already lost once, by a substantial margin, to Loebsack. In 2010, Peters ran as a Libertarian candidate for District 15 of the Iowa Senate but did not win that seat either. His Libertarianism may repel voters who suspect him of being an ideologue. It's hard to know what he stands for, as he has no position on many important issues. Although he's been characterized as pro-choice and supportive of same-sex marriage, he has yet to take an explicit position on either issue, and he supports defunding organizations like Planned Parenthood. An admirer of Sen. Rand Paul, who has endorsed him, Peters is likely to resist any form of gun control as yet more government interference with free markets, a tone-deaf position to take in the midst of an epidemic of gun violence.



## IA-02: Better Know the District

### IA-02: Facts & Stats

#### Population Centers

- Iowa City area, 155,868
- Davenport area, 144,340
- Clinton area, 48,896
- Burlington area, 47,487
- Ottumwa area, 44,224
- Muscatine area, 42,800

#### 2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 171K (45%)
- Trump: 186K (49%)

#### 2016 House Results

- Loeb sack (D): 199K (54%)
- Peters (R): 171K (46%)
- Other: 1K (0%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 187K
- Eligible, not registered: 106K

#### 2014 House Results

- Loeb sack (D): 143K (53%)
- Miller-Meeks (R): 129K (47%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 285K

#### Elections

The election of 2006, when Loeb sack won over 15-term Republican Jim Leach, was one of the biggest upsets of the cycle. Loeb sack was easily reelected in 2008, and faced the same opposition in 2010: Mariannette Miller-Meeks, a doctor from Ottumwa, president of the state medical society. The election of 2012 came after redistricting that moved Loeb sack's home from the 2nd District to the 1st. He moved to Iowa City to remain in the 2nd District. In 2012, Loeb sack defeated John Archer 55.6% to 42.5%. The 2nd District is considered "safely Democratic" because of the university population in Iowa City, the predominance of young families in the area, and the general progressive trending of the "Corridor," which runs from Cedar Rapids (Linn Co, 1st District) in the north to Iowa City. This is a very rapidly growing population, with special census counts taking place in some of the suburbs. Any political hot buttons or legislation that affects healthcare, education, or military manufacturing could prove to be a factor in political decisions.

#### Partner Organizations

The 2016 election has brought a large number of people and organizations into existence. **Indivisible Iowa** has segmented into many groups, each concentrating on a Iowa House and Senate District. They can quickly harness support from a large number of politically active Iowans. **Brand New Congress** is a new group that could present a challenge. Their aim is to replace the entire Congress. **Iowa Starting Line** works to build support for tough Democratic races statewide, and as an outgrowth of Iowa Starting Line, the Dubuque County Recorder is trying to build a **County Democratic Elected Officials Group**, with a goal of unity within the party to create momentum from the courthouse to the White House. **State Central Committee-Iowa Democratic Party** is 100 strong: the state committee and 99 county chairs.

#### Voter Registration Opportunities

In District 2, there are 541,550 registered voters. 171,784 are registered Dem and active, 148,616 are registered GOP and active, but the largest opportunity could lie in the 182,594 registered as Independent and active. Only 35,545 are listed as inactive (all parties and no party). Registering to vote in Iowa is available online. You can also register by mail. You can submit your voter registration to the Dept of Transportation (DOT) while you're applying for a driver's license at the DMV. You can complete a mail-in registration at offices for SNAP food programs and other assistance. You can register in person on Election Day, but only for Presidential Elections.