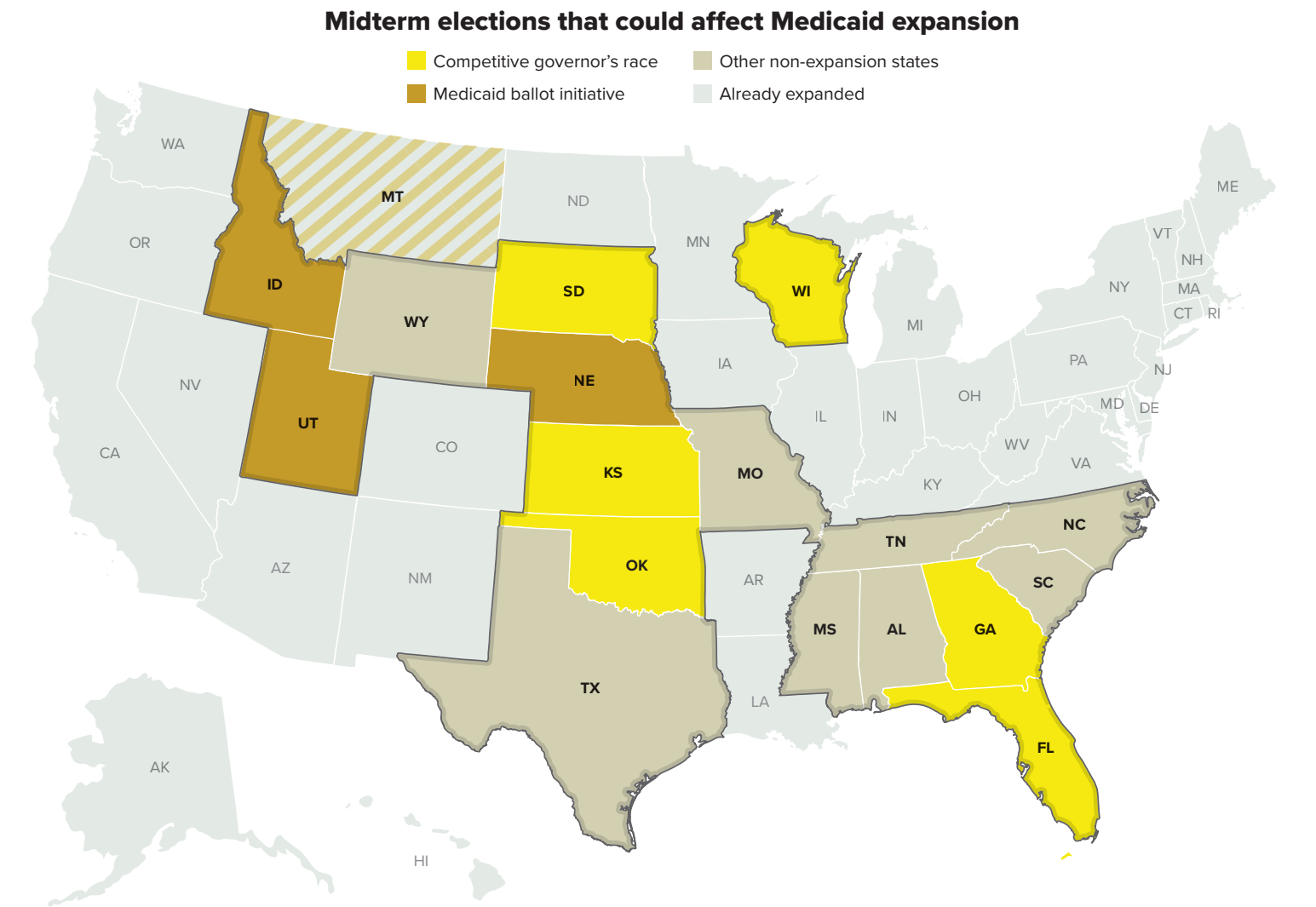


Oct. 12, 2018

Midterms Could Boost Prospects for Medicaid Expansion

The Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that more than 3.8 million uninsured adults could gain Medicaid coverage if the Affordable Care Act’s eligibility expansion were adopted in the 17 states that have refused to do so. Shifts in state-level politics could soon spur more states to adopt expansion: every Democratic candidate for governor running in this year’s midterm election supports expansion, and four states will have ballot referendums calling for Medicaid expansion.

Every state that has not expanded currently has a Republican governor and a GOP-controlled state legislature except North Carolina, which has a Democratic governor and a GOP-controlled state legislature. State-level election analysts see few opportunities for Democrats to flip state legislatures, which suggests that any Democratic governor who takes office next year would need to work with Republican lawmakers to expand the program. Earlier this year, Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam (D) convinced the state’s narrowly-Republican state legislature to support expansion by attaching a work requirement to the legislation.



Key 2018 electoral factors affecting Medicaid expansion in states that have not expanded

STATE	BALLOT INITIATIVE	GOVERNOR'S RACE RATING	COMPETITIVE CHAMBERS	POTENTIAL ENROLLMENT	NOTES ABOUT GOVERNOR'S RACE AND PAST EFFORTS
<div><div></div>Alabama</div>	No	Solid R	None	153K	While her Republican predecessor created a task force that recommended Medicaid expansion, incumbent Gov. Kay Ivey opposes expansion. Her opponent, Walt Maddox (D), supports it but is not considered competitive.
<div><div></div>Florida</div>	No	Toss-up	Senate	662K	In 2015, the Republican-controlled Senate voted to expand Medicaid, but the bill was rejected by the Florida House. Democratic candidate Andrew Gillum has vowed to use his veto power to spur further negotiations.
<div><div></div>Georgia</div>	No	Toss-up	None	388K	Democratic candidate Stacey Abrams has made expansion a centerpiece of her campaign, and a recent poll found 73 percent of state residents in favor. Previous bills to expand the program have failed in the legislature.
<div><div></div>Idaho</div>	Yes	Likely R	None	43K	GOP candidate Brad Little has said he would only work with the legislature to expand Medicaid if the ballot initiative succeeds. Democratic candidate Paulette Jordan supports expansion, but is not considered competitive.
<div><div></div>Kansas</div>	No	Lean R	None	79K	In 2017, term-limited incumbent Gov. Sam Brownback (R) vetoed legislation that would have expanded Medicaid. GOP candidate Kris Kobach opposes expansion, while candidates Laura Kelly (D) and Greg Orman (I) support it.
<div><div></div>Mississippi</div>	No	No race	None	167K	Incumbent Gov. Phil Bryant (R) and both chambers of the state legislature rejected expansion when it was first proposed in 2013.
<div><div></div>Missouri</div>	No	No race	None	199K	Gov. Mike Parson (R) opposes expansion, and introduced a bill to limit any potential expansion in his previous role as state senator. His Democratic predecessor supported expansion, but it was rejected by the legislature.
<div><div></div>Montana</div>	Yes	No race	None	70K	Montana has already expanded Medicaid, but the expansion will sunset in 2019 unless lawmakers reauthorize further funding. If passed, a ballot initiative would tax tobacco products to pay for the program moving forward.
<div><div></div>Nebraska</div>	Yes	Solid R	None	34K	Incumbent Gov. Pete Ricketts (R) opposes expansion, while his opponent Bob Krist (D) supports it but is not considered competitive. In August, the ballot initiative to expand Medicaid was certified to appear on the midterm ballot.
<div><div></div>N. Carolina</div>	No	No race	None	293K	Incumbent Gov. Roy Cooper (D) supports expansion and has filed a waiver with CMS asking for permission to institute a work requirement if the legislature is willing to pass expansion. But state lawmakers have thus far opposed it.
<div><div></div>Oklahoma</div>	No	Lean R	None	142K	Republican candidate Kevin Stitt opposes expansion and has called the ACA a “disastrous law.” His opponent, Drew Edmondson (D) supports expansion and has promised to push for expansion on his first day in office.
<div><div></div>S. Carolina</div>	No	Likely R	None	170K	Incumbent Gov. Henry McMaster (R) opposes expansion, and his predecessor Gov. Nikki Haley (R) rejected a proposal to expand in 2013. Democratic candidate James Smith supports expansion, but is not considered competitive.
<div><div></div>S. Dakota</div>	No	Likely R*	None	29K	GOP candidate Kristi Noem opposes expansion. Her opponent, Billie Sutton (D) — a former rodeo rider who was paralyzed by a riding accident 10 years ago — supports expansion and was on a state task force to explore the idea.
<div><div></div>Tennessee</div>	No	Likely R	None	271K	Term-limited incumbent Gov. Bill Haslam (R) proposed expanding Medicaid via a “private option” in 2013, but his plan was blocked by the state Senate. GOP candidate Bill Lee opposes expansion, while opponent Karl Dean (D) supports it.
<div><div></div>Texas</div>	No	Solid R	None	1.1M	Incumbent Gov. Greg Abbott (R) and his predecessor Gov. Rick Perry (R) both rejected Medicaid expansion. Abbott’s opponent this fall, former Sheriff Lupe Valdez (D), supports expansion but the race is not considered competitive.
<div><div></div>Utah</div>	Yes	No race	None	91K	Incumbent Gov. Gary Herbert (R) supports a partial expansion of Medicaid, and has requested a federal waiver to do so. Separately, advocates secured enough signatures for a ballot initiative that would enact a full expansion.
<div><div></div>Wisconsin</div>	No	Toss-up	Senate	32K	Incumbent Gov. Scott Walker (R) used state funds to enact a partial Medicaid expansion, rejecting federal ACA funds. His challenger, educator Tony Evers, supports expansion and focused on the issue in his first TV advertisement.
<div><div></div>Wyoming</div>	No	Solid R	None	15K	The legislature rejected a 2014 proposal for an alternate Medicaid expansion with premiums and copays. GOP candidate Mark Gordon opposes expansion, while Mary Throne (D) supports it, but the race is not considered competitive.

*Note: The South Dakota's governor's race is currently rated “likely Republican” by POLITICO, but recent polls show a tighter-than-expected race. POLITICO's election team considers the race competitive and is evaluating a potential rating change. Another forecaster, The Cook Political Report, recently changed its race rating to “toss-up.”

Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation; Kirby Wilson and Elizabeth Koh, “Medicare for All? Even Medicaid expansion is unlikely, Florida legislature says,” Tampa Bay Times; Ariel Hart, “Medicaid expansion question fuels Georgia governor’s race,” The Atlanta Journal-Constitution; Sam Baker, “Idaho primary gives Medicaid expansion a boost,” Axios; Matthew Barba, “Parson says bill would limit Medicaid expansion,” Bolivar Herald-Free Press; Colby Itkowitz, “Montana’s voting on whether the tobacco industry should pay for Medicaid expansion,” The Washington Post; JoAnne Young, “Medicaid expansion to be on the November ballot in Nebraska,” Lincoln Journal Star; Chris Casteel, “Oklahoma gubernatorial candidates split by party on expanding Medicaid,” The Oklahoman; David Perry, “Billy Sutton will not be out-cowboyed,” The Pacific Standard; The Associated Press, “Evers’ first TV ad criticizes Walker of Medicaid expansion”; Seth Klamann, “As rest of West mulls Medicaid expansion, Gordon and Throne remain polar opposites,” Casper Star-Tribune; Ballotpedia