

## Bee Nguyen: Secretary of State, Georgia

Recommendation Level: High Priority



Georgia State Representative Bee Nguyen has been called a “rising star” in the Democratic Party so often that it’s become a bit of a cliché—she even won the Gabrielle Giffords Rising Star Award from EMILY’s List this year. Born to Vietnamese refugee parents, in speeches Nguyen has compared the threat of losing civil liberties here in the U.S. to what her mother and father went through when they lost their country of South Vietnam and had to flee. In her campaign for Georgia secretary of state, she’s at the center of the effort to protect civil liberties and (if

this isn’t too dramatic) save democracy itself. If she wins, she’ll occupy a post that will be vital in the 2024 election, when the threat of Republicans suppressing the vote or manipulating the outcome somehow will be high. She currently occupies the same legislative seat formerly held by Stacey Abrams, and she’ll be hoping to ride Abrams’s gubernatorial coattails this fall.

Below, we explore three key questions about Bee Nguyen’s candidacy that small and medium donors should answer before supporting campaigns. ([See how we evaluate candidates.](#))

### Is this race important?

The refusal of Donald Trump and many of his supporters to accept the 2020 election results have put a spotlight on the mechanics of U.S. elections. Secretaries of state can choose to help register voters and make it easier to vote, or they can erect barriers, and Republicans largely choose to do the latter. After the election was decided, Trump called Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger and [infamously asked](#) him to “find” the votes that would give him a victory in the state.

Raffensperger declined (and defeated his rabidly pro-Trump challenger in the GOP primary), but he still supports [Republican voter suppression efforts](#). Defeating him would help safeguard future elections against conservative interference of all kinds.

### Can Nguyen win?

Raffensperger winning his primary is good news for democracy in Georgia (Jody Hice, his Trump-backed challenger, was a truly dangerous conspiracy-monger) but as the incumbent, he’ll be a tough matchup for Nguyen. He won the 2018 SOS race by around 4 points, and maybe the Georgia

electorate has become more blue since then (as evidenced by the 2020 results), but Republican voters are also likely going to be very energized. The Cook Political Report rates the Georgia governor race as a toss-up, and if the SOS race mirrors the gubernatorial contest, it will likely be very close as well.

### **Does she need money?**

In 2018, the two major candidates for Georgia secretary of state spent a little over \$5 million combined, but the new focus on SOS elections means that this race should comfortably eclipse that total. As of the end of January, Nguyen had already raised over \$1 million, while as of last June (the latest filing available on Georgia's secretary of state website), Raffensperger had around \$750,000. Nguyen shouldn't have much trouble raising money, but incumbents like Raffensperger often have fundraising edges.

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Given the likelihood of a close race and the potential for the Georgia secretary of state to influence the 2024 election, this is likely one of the most important races in the country, even if secretary of state contests don't get the media coverage of congressional campaigns. Blue Tent rates Nguyen a **high priority**.

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