

Mark Kelly: U.S. Senate, Arizona

Recommendation Level: Low Priority



One reason that donors and activists and everyone else are angry at Arizona Sen. Kyrsten Sinema for refusing to vote for some of President Joe Biden’s top policy priorities is that Arizona’s other senator, who is theoretically subject to the same pressures from the same constituencies, hasn’t exhibited the same sort of squishiness. Sen. Mark Kelly has been a rock for the Democrats, and like a rock, doesn’t make much noise. His status as a low-key senator belies his impressive biography—he’s an astronaut and the husband of former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, who was shot in

the head by a would-be assassin. Kelly, along with Raphael Warnock, is one of the two most prominent Senate Democrats up for reelection, and he’ll face a tough reelection campaign no matter who the GOP nominates to oppose him. But like Warnock, Kelly is flush with cash, making him less than an ideal target for donations.

Is this election important?

Yes. Democrats need to win every Senate seat they can to retain control of the chamber. Additionally, the top fundraising among Republican primary candidates is Jim Lamon, who [helped fund](#) the conspiracy-addled “audit” of the 2020 election in Arizona.

Can Kelly win?

In what is shaping up to be a down year for Democrats, Kelly is far from safe, even as the incumbent. FiveThirtyEight’s composite rankings have Arizona as having a seven-point Republican lean, and Cook’s Political Report and Sabato’s Crystal Ball both rate the race as a toss-up. But Kelly will have a big fundraising advantage over his opponents, at least initially. In the 2020 special election, he beat Martha McSally by just under three points, a narrow victory, but a more substantial one than Sinema’s 2018 victory over McSally.

Does Kelly need money?

No. At least not right now. He had \$18 million in cash on hand at the end of 2021, a substantial war chest. So while Kelly could certainly lose, it won’t be for lack of money. That’s why Blue Tent

believes donating to Kelly should be a **low priority** for small and medium donors at this time.
([Read about how we recommend candidates.](#))

