

# [***Illinois primary features competitive congressional races in the Chicago area***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BK0-YSP1-DYMD-63GK-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

CHICAGO — Voters are set to cast their ballots Tuesday to decide competitive U.S. House races during the Illinois presidential primary.

Democratic incumbents in at least two Chicago-area congressional races are locked in energetic challenges in the strongly Democratic territory.

Here’s a look at both races:

**7TH DISTRICT**

U.S. Rep. Danny Davis faces one of the toughest reelections of his long political career.

The 14-term Chicago Democrat was able to fend off a [*2022 primary challenge*](https://apnews.com/article/2022-midterms-house-gop-boerbert-illinois-506721f6a080ffa54ec2cd00b366e0a0) from progressive, anti-violence activist Kina Collins, who received about 45% of the vote. She is giving it a third try, saying the 82-year-old Davis isn’t the right fit for the district covering downtown Chicago, large swaths of the south and west sides and inner ring suburbs.

“We almost won the last election,” Collins said. “We plan on finishing what we started.”

It’s a crowded five-candidate primary field, including Chicago City Treasurer Melissa Conyears-Ervin, a former Davis ally who now says it’s time for him to be voted out.

Conyears-Ervin, who has backing from the influential Chicago Teachers Union, leads in fundraising and is married to a city alderman, says her perspective as a working mother resonates with voters.

“I’m new. I’m fresh. I’m relevant,” she said. “I understand the challenges of working families.”

While campaigning, Conyears-Ervin has been dogged by questions from a city ethics probe for allegedly firing top aides who claim she misspent taxpayer money and pressured public employees to help political allies. She has declined to discuss the matter.

Davis also has faced ethical questions about misspending congressional funds for the campaign. He has denied wrongdoing.

Top campaign issues are crime and jobs, along with questions about Davis being fit for office. He has previously mulled retirement.

In December, a campaign staffer used artificial intelligence to alter a photo of Davis to make him look younger, which was temporarily used on the campaign website. Davis has acknowledged it was a misstep.

Davis says questions about his age are fair but that his experience is an asset, particularly for getting committee leadership positions. He sits on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee.

“I’m not running to be the quarterback for the (Chicago) Bears. I’m not running to carry the torch in the Olympics,” he said. “I’m running to use my knowledges, my expertise, my intellect.”

He has backing from top Illinois Democrats. Gov. J.B. Pritzker and others held an endorsement event for Davis this month, praising his long record on healthcare, criminal justice and social services.

Also running are Chicago educator Nikhil Bhatia and Kouri Marshall, a former deputy director for Pritzker.

**4TH DISTRICT**

U.S. Rep. Jesus “Chuy” Garcia is being challenged by Chicago Alderman Raymond Lopez, the congressman's first primary challenger since 2018, when he first won office.

Lopez, 45, is one of the most conservative members of the City Council, often backing police. A lifelong Chicagoan, he claims Garcia is out of touch with voters in the area.

The Chicago-area district is predominantly Hispanic and includes working class communities and neighborhoods on the city’s southwest side, as well as wealthy suburbs.

“He’s just not a fit for this district,” said Lopez, calling Garcia an “extreme” Democrat who hasn’t paid attention to suburbanites.

Garcia, 67, says voters have repeatedly put him in office, including in 2022 after a remap added new territory to the district. He also is a former state legislator and city alderman.

Garcia, who was born in Mexico and came to the U.S. as a child, is one of the most progressive members of the House. He has wide name recognition, in part from two [*unsuccessful bids*](https://apnews.com/article/chicago-mayor-election-2023-73b7ffa6da2ad2f301674c5c23e08560) for [*Chicago mayor*](https://apnews.com/article/37b3e952864f4cb1b3c13b88475685c3).

“No one in Chicago who is in elected office today has the type of history that I have for ethical ***politics*** and ethical governance as well,” he said.

His accomplishments include bringing an estimated $37 million in funding back to the district for dozens of projects, including school programs, a suburban flooding project, a library expansion and funding a clinic for low-income residents, he said.

Garcia dominates in fundraising, raising $376,000 in 2023 compared to Lopez’ $46,000 in the same time period, according to federal election records. He also has endorsements from labor groups, while Lopez has picked up support from the Chicago police union.

There is no Republican running in the heavily Democratic district, so the winner is expected to win outright in November.

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