

# [***Who Is Colin Allred? Titans Linebacker-Turned-Congressman Challenging Texas Sen. Ted Cruz***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BGX-BFR1-DXVP-50MP-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** Mary Whitfill Roeloffs, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Rep. Colin Allred beat several other potential candidates on Super Tuesday and will run as a Democrat against Texas Sen. Ted Cruz.

**Body**

**Topline**

A Dallas-area congressman and former NFL linebacker has passed the primary election hurdle and will challenge Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, for the seat he's long held in Congress, the second time Democrat Colin Allred has tried to unseat an incumbent Republican.

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U.S. Rep. Colin Allred (D-Texas) speaks to reporters following a special service on Jan. 17, 2022 in Southlake, Texas.

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

A former Tennessee Titans linebacker and civil rights lawyer, Allred defeated State Sen. Roland Gutierrez (who represents Uvalde), Mark Gonzalez and a half-dozen other candidates during Tuesday s primary race to become the Democratic nominee for the seat Cruz the junior senator from Texas has held since 2013.

Allred has largely campaigned by promising a bipartisan approach and used his primary run to tout his congressional accomplishments (Democrats had the House majority from 2018 to 2022), including voting for climate change and gun safety legislation.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which has historically supported Republican candidates, gave Allred one ofonly fourof its Democratic endorsements in the 2022 House election, citing his support for "free enterprise and the American business community, and the AFL-CIO union groupsayshe has voted on the side of unions 100% of the time since he took office.

On undocumented immigrants, a major sticking point for Texas voters, Allredhas calledformer President Donald Trump's border wall "racist," advocated for providing a legal pathway to citizenship for immigrants currently living in the U.S. illegally and led a push against a Texas bill that effectively banned sanctuary cities.

Allred hascalledTexas' abortion ban "cruel" andco-sponsoredthe Women s Health Protection Act, which would codify Roe v. Wade and make the right to abortion a federal law.

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Linebacker Colin Allred, No. 56 of the Tennessee Titans, sets for a play against the Atlanta Falcons at the Georgia Dome on Aug. 22, 2008.

Getty Images

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**Contra**

Allred faces a steep uphill battle in Texas, where Republicans are expected to have a significant edge even as Democrats hope to make the state more competitive and suburban areas shift away from the GOP. Beto O Rourke came within 2.5 percentage points of unseating Cruz in 2018, but ultimately lost to the sitting senator, and most of the state s other recent Senate races have been won by Republicans by large margins.

**What To Watch For**

Nationally, Democrats are seeking to maintain their narrow Senate majority this year. Several seats held by Democrats are invulnerable swing statesthat Republicans hope to pick up, while very few vulnerable GOP seats are up for reelection.

**Big Number**

28. That's how many yearsit has beensince a Democrat won a statewide election in Texas.

**Key Background**

Allred was born in Texas and raised by a single mother who worked as a public school teacher. He was class president at Hillcrest High School in Dallas and played football at Baylor University. From there, he played for several years as an NFL linebacker before an injury ended his professional sports run and he returned to law school, starting a career in civil rights law. He worked at the Department of Housing and Urban Development during Barack Obama's presidency and ran for Congress in Texas 32nd District in 2018. He defeated 22-year Republican incumbent Pete Sessions, and ran for reelection twice before declaring his intention to challenge Cruz.

**Surprising Fact**

Allred was the first member of Congress known to take paid paternity leave, according to theTexas Tribune. He took two weeks off in 2019 when his first son was born and then almost a month off in 2021 for the birth of his second child. Allred is a supporter of national paid family leave.

**Tangent**

Allred has been supported by Democrats nationwide since declaring his Senate intentions and had raised more than $18.4 million by the middle of February, TheNew York Timesreported, exponentially higher than the $1.3 million Gutierrez, the second most-popular Democratic primary candidate, raised. At the end of 2023, Allredout-raised Cruzby a margin of $4.8 million to $3.4 million between October and December. Cruz currently has about $6.5 million in his campaign account,according toOpenSecrets. When it comes to popularity, Allred was viewed as favorable by 50% of Democrats in aFebruary pollby the Texas ***Politics*** Project, but only 11% of Texas Republicans, a majority of whom (44%) said they didn't know him or had no opinion. Cruz was viewed as very or somewhat favorable by 73% of his party in thesame report, with 70% of Democrats calling him somewhat or very unfavorable.

**Further Reading**

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2024

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