

Democrat Senator Announces She Will Not Seek Reelection

- Nancy Jackson
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Minnesota Democrat Senator Tina Smith announced on Thursday she will not run for re-election when her term ends, blowing the Senate race wide open.

In a video posted on X, the 66-year-old senator said her decision is “not political” but based on a desire to “spend more time with [her] family.”

Smith has served in the Senate since 2018 after she won a special election to replace former Sen. Al Franken, who resigned following sexual misconduct allegations against him.

“This decision is not political,” Smith said. “It is entirely personal, but it’s not lost on me that our country is in need of strong progressive leadership, right now maybe more than ever.”

“So, there are two things on my mind about this,” she continued. “The first is that I have nearly two full years left in my Senate term, and I plan to use every single day working to represent your interests in the United States Senate. ... And also, since I don’t have to worry about running a re-election campaign, I can focus entirely on this job right now.”

Smith added that Minnesota Democrats have a “deep bench of political talent.” Democrats have held both Minnesota Senate seats since 2009.

According to Cook Political Report's first 2026 Senate forecast, Democrats are "likely" going to keep her seat, however, the party's longtime hold on the state has shown signs of slipping in recent elections. In the 2024 presidential election, former Vice President Kamala Harris won Minnesota by just four percentage points after former President Joe Biden won the state by seven points in 2020. Smith won her 2020 re-election bid by five points.

Last month, Democrat Sen. Gary Peters of Michigan announced he also would not seek re-election in 2026. "I always thought there would be a time that I would step aside and pass the reins for the next generation. I also never saw service in Congress as something you do your whole life," Peters said.