

2018 McSally for US Senate Post Election Review

In the aftermath of what was a contentious race for the open Arizona U.S. Senate seat, the facts have always been this was a campaign that was running from behind from the beginning. With Martha McSally's unique personal biography and record of accomplishments, as well as the strong performance against two well-known GOP rivals that took place in the face of an unprecedented Democrat opponent who spent millions of dollars of misleading ads funded by liberal billionaires, McSally was continuously running at a disadvantage going into the general election.

Timeline Matters:

Sinema faced no legitimate primary opposition and began her general election advertising the first week of April, 30.5 weeks before the general election. While in comparison, McSally launched her general election advertising campaign 5 days prior to the August primary, 10.5 weeks prior to the general election. Giving Sinema a 20-week advertising advantage where she was able to successfully cement a moderate, independent image in a state that has favored center right Senate candidates for the last twenty years.

In addition, with over 65% of the state voting PEVL (early), mail in ballots were printed and dropped in the mail 6 weeks after the August 28 primary date. Voting began 42 days after the primary concluded.

Spending Matters:

While being a prolific fundraiser, McSally was up against an opponent who was able to raise unprecedented sums for a Democratic senate nominee. While McSally's strong fundraising was eventually able to bring us to near paid media balance in the final 2-3 weeks of the campaign, Sinema was given the opportunity to run a general election campaign from the day she entered the race as she had no real primary opponent.

Starting in April of 2018, Sinema spent a total of \$4.7M before the primary. Sinema was a fundraising magnet for national Democrat donors, drawing millions from major out of state donors. She had four months of positive reinventing ads running before McSally was up on TV at all starting July 31. McSally spent a total of \$2.4 million in the primary with conservative messaging focused on winning a primary battle against two well-known Arizona Republicans.

In total, the Sinema campaign was able to create a commanding lead in fundraising against her would be opponent Martha McSally. National Democratic money enabled pro-Sinema forces to be able to begin attacking McSally during the Republican primary in August, with Soros and Schumer funded entities spending over a million dollars attacking McSally while she was still enmeshed in a tough GOP primary.

Campaign spending comparison (General Election TV/Radio)

Sinema \$15 million

McSally \$5.85 million

Outside spending was essentially at parity (General Election TV/Radio)

Team Sinema \$21.3 million

Team McSally \$22.6 million

Grand total combined media spending (General Election TV/Radio)

Sinema \$36.3 million

McSally \$28.5 million

McSally Deficit: -\$7 million

This equates to approximately 14,000 gross rating points, or 14 messages statewide

*Note the spending disparity was at the candidate level/rate, not the Independent Expenditure rate, so \$7 million at \$500k/1000 grp is accurate

Geography Matters:

Maricopa factor:

Sinema has represented a Congressional District wholly contained within Maricopa County, which is over 60% of the general election electorate.

The real benefit to Sinema's home court geographical advantage is that Maricopa county is entirely within the Phoenix DMA/media market. The Phoenix DMA accounts for over 80% of the statewide vote. This is a key factor as it allowed for Sinema to be able to run advertisements for 3 prior congressional races within that entire media market. This provided Sinema with a 6-year advantage in advertising to over 80% of the state.

Sinema had spent over \$8m in aggregate running campaigns in the Phoenix DMA over those 6 years. Conversely, McSally represents the Tucson DMA, approximately/under 20% of the statewide electorate.

Outside Factors:

Trump Factor

In states that Trump won, McSally performed closer to Trump on the ballot (in '16) than everywhere else in the country with the exception of Nevada and Florida (where a two-term statewide incumbent governor with statewide name ID spent \$40 million of personal money to pull off a 10,000 vote victory).

Trump States Won vs Senate Race / Diff

WV	Trump +42	KS	Trump +20	ND	Trump +35
(-45)	Morrisey -3	(-25)	Koback -5	(-24)	Kramer +11
MT	Trump +20	TN	Trump +26	IN	Trump +19
(-23)	Rosendale -3	(-16)	Blackburn +10	(-13)	Braun +6
MO	Trump +19	AZ	Trump +3.6	TX	Trump +9
(-13)	Hawley +6	(-6)	McSally -2.4	(-6)	Cruz +3
NV	Trump -2.5	FL	Trump +1		
(-2.5)	Heller -5	(-1)	Scott +0		

Ducey Factor

While true that Ducey outperformed McSally, Governor Ducey was an incumbent with two successful statewide races under his belt. Ducey's opponent ran as a progressive and the opponent was essentially abandoned by national Democrats, as evidenced by the spending gap with Garcia, his opponent. Governor Ducey ran a great campaign and was aided by an 12x spending advantage against an unknown and un-tested candidate.

Ducey spent \$22m

Garcia spent \$1.8m

Media coverage

Local media consistently focused on the tensions between the McCain/Flake and Trump wings of the party in AZ, making it more difficult to unify Republicans of all ideological identifications. The who do you side with, Trump or McCain, media narrative continued throughout the general election. Sinema hugged McCain tightly, and never once had the word "Democrat" in a TV advertisement.

Sinema was well known to the largest media market in state and did not have to be introduced. The race was lost in the Phoenix media market, which accounted for the majority of the votes in the state. McSally was from Tucson and was hardly known at all in Maricopa county at the start of the campaign. Sinema had run 3 successful prior campaign's in the dominant media market in Arizona. Sinema's early nearly \$5 million positive advertising campaign during primary exacerbated her Phoenix advantage.

Democrat Meddling in a Republican Primary

While McSally eventually cruised to a solid victory, it did not come without a cost. The McSally campaign having spent over \$2 million dollars from their own war chest to defend public perception and set the record straight during a hard-fought battle that took place in the face of an unprecedented assault of over a million dollars of negative ads funded by liberal billionaires George Soros and Chuck Schumer. We know now that these highly publicized Democrat activists funneled over \$1.6 million to a Super PAC specifically designed to try and defeat Martha McSally in the Primary election. This spending was only a portion of the millions spent attacking McSally by her primary opponents and eventual Democrat opponents.

Unrest within the Arizona GOP electorate

A significant segment of the AZ GOP was hostile to the President. In internal polling during the primary, President Trump never broke 80% favorability among Republican voters. A certain segment of AZ Republicans was outright hostile to President Trump, and was against the Kavanaugh appointment. This segment of moderate Republicans, especially woman, proved very difficult to bring home to a Republican candidate that supported President Trump and the confirmation of Justice Kavanaugh. These factors, coupled with an opposing candidate who portrayed herself as willing to work with President Trump and who often tweeted her respect and admiration for Senator McCain's legacy, were significant challenges to McSally's candidacy

McSally General Election Advertisements:

- [Spot 1](#)
- [Spot 2](#)
- [Spot 3](#)
- [Spot 4](#)
- [Spot 5](#)
- [Spot 6](#)
- [Spot 7](#)
- [Spot 8](#)

Sinema General Election Advertisements:

- [Spot 1](#)
- [Spot 2](#)
- [Spot 3](#)
- [Spot 4](#)
- [Spot 5](#)
- [Spot 6](#)
- [Spot 7](#)
- [Spot 8](#)
- [Spot 9](#)
- [Spot 10](#)
- [Spot 11](#)
- [Spot 12](#)
- [Spot 13](#)
- [Spot 14](#)
- [Spot 15](#)

Conclusion

History has shown us time and time again that during the tenure where one party controls both chambers and the White house, the minority party increases midterm turnout causing the ripple effects of a new type of electorate in Arizona. This has been the case for Republicans and Democrat for years with few exceptions. The shift in the electorate during this midterm election showed increasing effects against candidates who showed real opposition efforts and experienced opponents. Amongst the top of ticket statewide races, Arizona saw three statewide republicans fall due to this change in the political environment causing voters to vote "Dem/Rep/Dem/Rep/Dem" down the top of ticket. In a year like this past one where McSally was coming out of a hard fought and ideological divisive primary, the McSally campaign was running from behind for the entire general election. Having had to drain her campaign war chest to defend against attack ads lobbed from a known Democrat Super PAC supporting Sinema, McSally went into the General elections with millions less than anticipated. While the McSally campaign was able to raise over \$19 million for the entirety of the US Senate race (majority being raised during the general election), outside groups let Sinema go unanswered with over \$4 million of TV ads for over four months. Against an experienced and skilled opponent with a significant fundraising advantage and running untouched in the Democratic primary, defeating Sinema was always an uphill battle. Running the campaign as a non-incumbent while healing the ideological fissures in the state GOP caused by a contentious primary election was an extremely tough challenge. The vast difference in the amount of candidate driven media spending during the general election was an almost insurmountable challenge, and we came up two percentage points short.