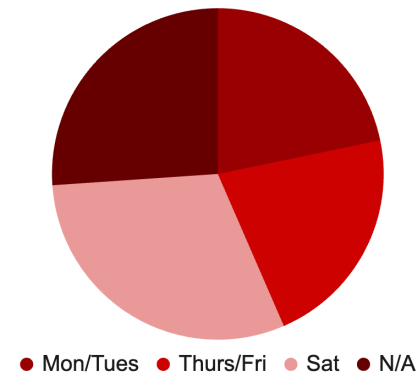


What's Your Opinion?

Which Homecoming event was your favorite?
Out of 23 responses:
Skating/Zoo - 5
Movie/Yell like Hell - 5
Homecoming game - 7
N/A - 6



Next Poll:

Election Day
How was your voting experience?

Answer the poll on The Herald's Instagram page, @astateherald. Polls are posted on Mondays. Previous poll results can be found on astatetheherald.com

Have an idea for a poll? Send your ideas to the opinion editor. See box below for emails.

What would blue mean for Arkansas?

SHAYAAN SAYEED
OPINION EDITOR



Shayaan Sayeed is a sophomore International Business major from Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Arkansas has been widely known as a “red state” for much of its recent history, with it being reliably red for the past 26 years. In honor of the upcoming election, allow me to explore what it would mean for Arkansas if Democrats won.

Arkansas has not always been Republican; it was strongly Democratic before the 2000s. Even those of us who weren't around then know at least one famous Democratic governor from Arkansas: Bill Clinton, who was later elected U.S. President in 1992 and 1996.

Here are a few things to remember before we talk about the red vs. blue debate in Arkansas: Arkansas has a 2x higher rate than the national average in agriculture and ranks 1st in the nation for rice production. This means it's known for its farming culture and farmers.

The two strongest competitors in this upcoming midterm election are Hallie Shoffner (Democratic Party) and Tom Cotton (Republican Party). One of these candidates' main agendas is to make farmers' lives better and more affordable; can you guess which one?

Shoffner's story is that the 150-year-old farm her family owned was forced to shut down because of increasing financial insecurity, and she doesn't want that to happen to thousands of other

farming families across Arkansas. Being a sixth-generation farmer is one of the main reasons she is fighting for the future of farms and lower costs for working families.

Cotton's re-election campaign centers on national security, defense economics and conservation policy leadership. He is focusing on stricter border enforcement, stronger military defense, pressure on international security and tax relief.

If you think he sounds like Trump's wing woman, it is because he is. He has pushed to build the wall, keep pressure on the war in Iran and prevent them from acquiring nuclear power. Cotton voted for the Laken Act signed by Trump in 2025, and introduced the Reforming American Immigration for Strong Employment Act.

Furthermore, some of his re-election campaign policies state lowering taxes for Arkansas families, funding the police, tougher penalties for violent criminals, protecting rural hospitals, improving veterans' healthcare, opposing what he refers to as “woke” ideologies when it comes to schools, like Critical Race Theory and gender ideologies, abortion restrictions, etc.

He has also not attended any debates in his 2026 re-election campaign, including the one hosted by ASU TV, that both Shoffner and Libertarian candidate Jeff Waldin participated in.

Waldin is not mentioned as much as Shoffner and Cotten, but he could make a difference in the result of the Senate race. His ideologies are pretty similar to Shoffner's, and every vote cast for him could mean a vote not cast for her, making a victory even more likely for Cotton.

According to his website, he is “not beholden to a party, a PAC, or a political tribe. He's running because someone has to bring sanity to nationalism politics.”

Wadlin said he believes everyone should be covered by healthcare, the government should not continue to borrow trillions of dollars, we need a simpler tax code, and that America is a nation of immigrants but we still need border controls, and to monitor who enters and enforce immigration laws.

If Democrats win on Nov. 3, which looks likely based on 2026 projections, it could be a step toward driving the Republican Party out of the White House. As long as Shoffner remains true to her promises, it could be a win for the working

class and the farmers of Arkansas. She promises to keep jobs in Arkansas, grow local businesses, manage taxpayers' dollars responsibly, and, again, keep farming secure. All these point to more localized solutions for Arkansas rather than the United States as a whole.

She could vote for federal legislation protecting abortion access, opposing restrictions and supporting doctors providing reproductive healthcare – a huge win. Existing gun laws would remain, but we'd have better background checks, safer storage, restrictions involving domestic violence offenders, and funding for violence-prevention programs.

Shoffner supports strengthening the Affordable Care Act, protecting Medicare and Medicaid, lowering prescription-drug prices and improving healthcare access. She also talks about increasing the state minimum wage which is considered relatively low according to the rest of the States, coming in at \$11 an hour.

Greater investment in education, protecting social security, and these promises coming from someone who is more in touch with the working class than Cotton. But all this is really just talk, until she follows through with it. If she won, federal policies could be pushed to prioritize her agenda of farm economies, rural communities and affordability. But this is what could happen if a Democrat wins this election.

It's not as though if Shoffner wins Arkansas will turn blue, but it will change how Arkansas is viewed in Washington. If Shoffner takes a seat in the Senate, it would mean a major loss to the Republican party, and a democratic victory in a red state. If Democrats win the Senate and the House, that could change the trajectory completely.

It would send a shock wave to the other states and put pressure on Arkansas governor, Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Since 2008, when Mark Pryor won the U.S. Senate seat in Arkansas, Democrats have not won the Senate. Meaning, they haven't won in many people's lifetimes-people who can vote now for a change.

This election isn't just about



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Democrats vs. Republicans; it is about who you believe will do best for your state. Whether you are voting in Arkansas or another state, it matters. Research your candidates, know their policies, what they stand for, and what they have done to back up those beliefs.

The outcome of this race will affect the partisan balance of the U.S. Senate in the 120th Congress. Thirty-three of the 100 U.S. Senate seats are up for election, and another two seats are up for special election. Democrats hold 13 of the seats up for election, and Republicans hold 22. Currently, Republicans have a 53-45 majority in the chamber.

Why is voting important? Firstly, it is vital to use your voice. Your single vote can change the outcome of the election; you may not feel it directly but it does change everything. Arkansas is currently ranked last for voter turn outs, and that is unacceptable as it becomes home to more and more students.

Go to the polls and vote; your voice matters more this year than ever. I am not telling you one candidate is better than the other; that decision is yours. Our generation's voice will determine where Arkansas goes from here. If you are an A-State student, you can find ballots in the Fine Arts building on campus. If you are registered to vote in another county or state, please take this weekend off and go vote.

If you aren't the voice of reason, if you don't stand up for what you believe is true, no one else will do it for you. No matter the election result, do your part so you can live with your conscience that you at least tried, rather than not voting at all. Not doing anything at all makes you part of the problem.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BOSTON GLOBE

VOTING LOCATIONS:
Fine Arts Building
Arkansas State University Campus: 2412 Quapaw Way
Craighead County residents can vote early at
Craighead County Election Annex, 315 W. Jefferson, Jonesboro.
Bring an appropriate ID!

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