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Wahls, Turek trade barbs as Senate primary tightens

Stephen Gruber-Miller and Brianne Pfannenstiel
Des Moines Register
USA TODAY NETWORK

Iowa's once-sprawling Democratic primary field for the U.S. Senate has narrowed to a two-man contest, focusing the choice facing Iowa voters in June as Zach Wahls and Josh Turek jockey for frontrunner status.

Wahls, a state senator from Coralville who rose to viral fame defending gay marriage and his two moms, is seen as the liberal candidate. He argues that a union-supported progressive with a working-class message can cut through



State Rep. Josh Turek poses for a portrait on Aug. 11, 2025, at his home in Council Bluffs, Iowa.
CODY SCANLAN/THE REGISTER

the noise and energize the Democratic base. Turek, a state representative from



Iowa Sen. Zach Wahls is pictured June 9, 2025, in Coralville.
JULIA HANSEN/IOWA CITY PRESS-CITIZEN

Council Bluffs, is one of the few Iowa Democrats to win in a district also carried by Republican President Donald

Trump. A former Paralympian, Turek casts a more moderate image that his supporters believe will appeal to independents and disaffected Republicans.

It's a dynamic playing out in primary contests across the country as Democrats grapple with how to best position themselves going into a competitive midterm year.

"I think this is sort of the fundamental question that Democrats are wrestling with," said for the Cook Political Report's Senate and Governors Editor Jessica Taylor, "Do you need to energize your base more to get them to turn out,

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An aerial view shows the ongoing construction of City Park Pool. The pool was slated to open during Memorial Day weekend, but has been pushed back to a midsummer opening. PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF IOWA CITY GOVERNMENT

Defunct Mercy Iowa City seeks \$55M from MercyOne

Ryan Hansen
Iowa City Press-Citizen
USA TODAY NETWORK

The lengthy legal battle between MercyOne and Mercy Iowa City's liquidation trust rages on in federal bankruptcy court after a judge allowed the trust's request for \$55 million to move forward.

It is the latest development in a bankruptcy court fight that has included nearly 2,500 court filings and spawned numerous "adversary proceedings," which are similar to lawsuits in other courts.

That is what Mercy Iowa City's liquidation trust did in late August 2025, filing 148 pages outlining why it believes MercyOne owes the former downtown hospital's creditors "more than \$55 million in damages."

Mercy Iowa City filed for bankruptcy in 2023.

The University of Iowa initially planned to acquire the hospital before a Texas-based capital investment emerged as the front-runner. In a twist, rights to the downtown hospital ended up in the hands of UI Health Care, which rebranded the facility as the UI Medical Center Downtown in 2024.

MercyOne says case should be dismissed because complaint is 'a novel'

MercyOne, in September 2025, argued that an "adversary proceeding" should be dismissed because, among other reasons, Mercy Iowa City's complaint against the Midwest health care system would need to "write a novel" in response.

"[t]he complaint includes unnecessary detail, and excessively recites purported evidence more appropriate for a trial brief or summary judgment motion, after discovery occurs, than a complaint," the organization said, according to court documents.

Mercy Iowa City's trust's claims echo past arguments made in federal court, including that MercyOne failed to abide by the terms of an agreement signed in the 2010s that "exacerbated"

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City Park Pool opening delayed to midsummer

Jessica Rish
Iowa City Press-Citizen
USA TODAY NETWORK

The new City Park Pool in Iowa City is nearly complete, though it will open a few months later than anticipated.

Supplier delays and site conditions are pushing back the opening of Iowa City's beloved aquatic hotspot, which has been closed since 2024.

Parks and Recreation officials announced the pool is expected to open "midsummer" rather than Memorial Day weekend as originally planned. The city said the delay is due to "weather, site conditions, and supplier delays," though construction is "progressing well."

A city pool with a 75-year history

City Park Pool first opened to the

public in 1949.

The infrastructure continued to deteriorate over the ensuing decades, posing a hazard to employees and residents. The pool lost more than 10 million gallons of water from 2021 through the fall of 2023. The city voted to tear out the original pool and build three separate swimming areas along with a new bathhouse for \$13.7 million.

Iowa City-based City Construction Newco, LLC, started tearing up the pool site at the conclusion of the 2024 season. The pool was closed for all of 2025 as crews rebuilt the structures.

The city sought public design input through a survey and several public meetings. The new City Park Pool will offer several new amenities, including a six-lane, 50-meter lap pool, a leisure pool with play features, and a diving well with multiple diving boards.

The new pools include space for

nearly 900 swimmers and use almost 40% less water than the old City Park Pool.

The new facility will also improve public accessibility, anchored by a state-of-the-art bathhouse that will add a year-round community room for local events and meetings, along with outdoor restrooms.

"The history of City Park Pool is important," Williams Architects senior project manager Andrew Caputo told the council in September 2023. "I know personally, as an architect, history is something that is cherished in the community. History has a role to play in the design process."

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