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ANALYSIS

Democratic socialism: What it is, what it isn't



The national Democratic Socialists of America website says its vision rejects “authoritarian visions of socialism.” The organization believes capitalism must be replaced with “a system where ordinary people have a real voice in our workplaces, neighborhoods and society.” SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

Primary wins, GOP attacks draw attention to the left

Eduardo Cuevas USA TODAY

At the head of a challenging midterm election, Republicans have seized an opportunity to castigate their opponents as extremists after democratic socialists won Democratic congressional primaries in New York City, Colorado and Washington, DC. ● GOP leaders have invoked the specter of radical left authoritarianism by calling progressive Democrats “communists” – an echo of Cold War-era messaging from prominent Republicans such as Sen. Joseph McCarthy and former President Richard Nixon.

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Sen. Bernie Sanders, left, and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez are among the most high-profile democratic socialists in national politics. TASOS KATOPODIS/GETTY IMAGES

Bray bows out of Senate leader race

Marissa Meador
Indianapolis Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

Sen. Rodric Bray, R-Martinsville, will not seek re-election as leader of the state Senate, he announced July 31, after a brutal primary election that saw six incumbents ousted for opposing re-districting.

It's a departure from Bray's previous statements about his plans to stay in leadership. In a statement, a spokesperson for Bray attributed the decision to Bray's duty to protect his fellow senators from further political retribution.



Bray

“Given promises to recruit and fund primary challengers for any senator who supports Bray's bid to remain the leader of the Senate,” Bray spokesperson Molly Swigart said in a statement, “he has determined he will not put members in jeopardy from their own party simply because he is asking members to support his re-election as [Senate president pro tempore].”

Bray has previously lamented the intensity behind Trump's push to oust anti-redistricting senators, framing the multimillion-dollar campaign as D.C. insiders meddling in Hoosier politics. Trump has largely blamed Bray for Indiana's failure to redistrict, lambasting him as a “RINO” and urging a primary challenge.

“The Rod Brays of Politics are WEAK and PATHETIC,” Trump wrote in November 2025.

But while Trump didn't get what he wanted on Indiana's map, he decisively won his plot for revenge. In a single night, more Indiana senators lost to primary challengers than they had since 2002. Bray's exit as leader only confirms that Trump's push has fundamentally changed the political make-up of the chamber.

Earlier this year, Sen. Chris Garten, R-Charlestown, resigned from his position as Senate majority leader amid speculation that he may try to challenge Bray as leader. In his resignation, Garten, who supported redistricting, said he was no longer aligned with the “strategic direction of leadership.” Garten could not be immediately reached for

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Lynn town marshal killed, struck by van fleeing from police

Douglas Walker
Muncie Star Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

LYNN — Lynn Town Marshal Brad Fisher was killed on the morning of Wednesday, July 29, when he was struck by a vehicle driven by a Randolph County woman who was fleeing from police.

The events leading to the fatality began about 8:30 a.m., when a Randolph County sheriff's deputy pulled over a van, which had been reported stolen, at Randolph County roads 400 West and



Fisher

50 South.

The woman reportedly driving the van — Maci Atkinson, 34, of rural Winchester — then fled from the scene, resulting in a chase that eventually became an eastbound pursuit on U.S. 36. Investigators said Fisher was attempting to place tire deflation equipment at U.S. 36 and U.S. 27 when the woman's van struck him. Her vehicle continued eastbound before crashing into a dump truck.

Fisher was taken by ambulance to Ascension St. Vincent Randolph Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Atkinson was taken to the Winchester hospital for treatment. She was later transferred to the Randolph County Jail. ISP is conducting an investigation of the fatality. Fisher had served for more than a quarter-century with the Lynn Police Department.

A former Randolph County sheriff's deputy, Fisher had also been a firefighter and EMT for the Lynn Fire Department for more than three decades. A husband and father, he was also active

as a local baseball umpire.

Atkinson already faced a total of seven charges in four cases pending in Randolph County courts: battery, driving with a controlled substance in blood, possession of a controlled substance, possession of marijuana, possession of a narcotic drug, resisting law enforcement and unlawful possession of a syringe.

All four cases have been filed since April 23. A warrant had been issued for her arrest on Tuesday after Randolph

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