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Forecasts point to major victory for Takaichi and LDP

Key takeaways

- The first round of forecasts from pollsters have converged around a prediction that the LDP could win enough seats to retake an independent majority in the House of Representatives.
- While there are many close races that could determine how large a victory the government wins, the opposition Centrist Reform Alliance (CRA) appears to be struggling to coalesce, while Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae's popularity appears to be fending off conservative challengers to the LDP.
- The size of the LDP's victory will have implications for the LDP's partnership with Ishin no Kai, as the prime minister considers how to convert her victory into control of the upper house and deliver some quick policy wins.

The first wave of forecasts from major pollsters has been published and they uniformly suggest that the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is poised to win an absolute majority of its own – a pickup of at least thirty-five seats – which, together with Ishin no Kai, could give the Takaichi government an absolutely stable majority in the House of Representatives. If this outlook holds, it would be an unqualified victory for Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae, precisely the kind of victory that would quiet doubters in the LDP and encourage one or more parties in the upper house – or a handful of individual legislators – to give their backing to the government to facilitate its control of the Diet. In light of these findings, the landscape of potential outcomes – discussed [here](#) – has shifted, with the most likely outcome now being the **LDP gaining at least enough seats to win an independent majority (55%)**, followed by **LDP gains between 15 and 30 seats (35%)**, and the LDP and Ishin no Kai either **barely clearing the majority line (5%)** or **falling just short (5%)**.

While the LDP enjoys solid leads in many single-member districts (SMDs), the bedrock of these forecasts is that the LDP could win up to 70 seats in the 176-seat proportional representation (PR) portion, up from 59 in 2024. The forecasts have been uniform in anticipating this result, noting that under Takaichi's leadership the LDP may be positioned to pull in conservative voters who opted for the Democratic Party for the People, Sanseitō, or Ishin in recent elections. With 70 PR seats in hand, the LDP could afford to lose as many as 126 of 289 SMDs and still win an independent majority, a useful cushion for the LDP since forecasts have suggested that as many as half of the SMD races may actually be too close to call in light of the uncertainty surrounding how Kōmeitō supporters will vote.

What is notable is that Takaichi could win a significant victory in the absence of signs that turnout will be elevated. There are few signs that voters, particularly independents, are especially motivated to vote. Instead, the indications are that she has simply succeeded on both "fronts" of the campaign. In the battle with the Centrist Reform Alliance (CRA) for older voters, LDP strongholds appear to be robust across provincial Japan, while a slow start from the CRA means that the new party could be struggling to retain some of the Constitutional Democratic Party's (CDP) traditional strongholds in northeastern Japan, let alone expand its footprint in urban Japan. At the same time, as suggested above, she appears to be winning the battle for younger voters against the DPFP and Sanseitō. The former is projected to gain no additional seats beyond the 27 it won in 2024; the latter could increase its total beyond the two seats it held heading into the election but appears likely to fall well short of the 30 or more it hoped to win. In short, making the election a referendum on Takaichi's premiership – LDP candidates and campaign materials are featuring her name prominently and downplaying the party's name – may be solidifying the LDP's support at the expense of virtually every opposition party.

That said, the race is not yet sealed for Takaichi and the LDP because of the uncertainty in SMDs. Over the next ten days, it especially bears watching whether supporters of the CRA's constituent parties become more enthusiastic about the new party, shifting more of the CDP's strongholds into the CRA column. Meanwhile, it also bears watching whether these polls are under-reporting support for the DPFP and Sanseitō given the challenges of polling younger voters through random dialing. If there is a polling "miss," it would likely be in favor of these parties backed mainly by young voters, which could have implications both in PR voting and in closely contested SMDs with multiple opposition candidates. Finally, as a report this week about Takaichi's possibly concealing links to the Unification Church suggests, there may yet be news that alters the competition, even if this story in particular may not resonate with voters who seem to have little interest in the LDP scandals predating Takaichi's premiership.

Absent a dramatic shift over the next ten days, however, the main thing to watch on election day could be how close the LDP itself gets to the 244 seats needed for a stable majority – giving it sole control of the lower house's committee chairs and half of committee seats – or even the 261 seats needed for all of the committee chairs and a majority of committee seats.

In this event, Takaichi will have to decide whether to continue to partner with Ishin no Kai -- which is projected to possibly lose seats, has policy demands that LDP lawmakers dislike, and is a competitor for the LDP's Osaka branch -- or break ranks and focus on a partnership with, say, the DPFP, whose upper house seats would together with the LDP's constitute a majority. If the ultimate reason for calling this snap election was to establish a more durable foundation for Takaichi's government, she appears likely to emerge from the general election with a stronger hand in implementing her agenda within the LDP and in the Diet, cementing her pivot away from, as she has now repeatedly said on the campaign trail, "excessive austerity."

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