

Raphael Warnock, pastor of historic black church, announces Senate run

by [Ben Nadler](#) in the [March 11, 2020](#) issue



(AP Photo/David Goldman, File)

Raphael Warnock, pastor of the Atlanta church where Martin Luther King Jr. preached, announced that he's running for the US Senate, challenging recently appointed Republican senator Kelly Loeffler.

With his influential pulpit at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Warnock immediately brings some Democratic star power to the race—and some powerful friends.

Within hours of entering the race, Warnock locked up perhaps the most coveted endorsement in Georgia Democratic politics when Stacey Abrams, the party's 2018 nominee for governor, announced she's supporting his campaign.

“I’m running because I think that this is a critical moment in our state and in our country,” Warnock said in a video on his campaign website. “I want to make sure that kids have a path the same way I did. I want to make sure that seniors aren’t having to make the terrible choice between prescription drugs and buying food.”

Warnock, the son of two pastors, entered the ministry at an early age. After graduating from Morehouse College, he served at churches in Birmingham, Alabama, New York, and Baltimore before becoming Ebenezer’s senior pastor in 2005.

Warnock hasn’t shied away from politics at Ebenezer, where Martin Luther King Sr. and his son played key roles in the civil rights movement. Warnock hosted an interfaith meeting on climate change alongside former vice president Al Gore and championed reforms to the nation’s criminal justice system. In 2015 he considered running for the Senate against John Isakson, before deciding against it.

Georgia’s other Senate seat also is on the ballot, with Republican senator David Perdue seeking a second term. Four Democrats are challenging Perdue: 2017 congressional candidate Jon Ossoff, former Columbus mayor Teresa Tomlinson, 2018 candidate for lieutenant governor Sarah Riggs Amico, and former head of the ACLU’s Georgia chapter Maya Dillard Smith. —Associated Press