



Here's how AI would handicap the field as of July 2026:

Candidate	Chance of winning GOP nomination	Chance of winning general election (if nominated)
Shad White	35%	90%
Lynn Fitch	25%	90%
Delbert Hosemann	20%	88%
Andy Gipson	10%	87%
Philip Gunn	7%	86%
Field/Other	3%	—

Tier One: The Favorites

1. Shad White (Slight Favorite)

Strengths:

- Largest statewide social media presence among Republican contenders.
- Built a brand around investigations of government spending.
- Strong conservative appeal.
- Excellent fundraising, with one of the largest campaign war chests.

Challenges:

- Polarizing style.
- Will face heavy attacks from establishment Republicans.
- Has never run in a crowded statewide primary of this magnitude.

Overall: White currently has the clearest path if the conservative vote consolidates behind him.

2. Lynn Fitch

Strengths:

- Strong fundraising.
- Well-known statewide.
- Appeals to both business Republicans and social conservatives.
- Could become Mississippi's first elected female governor.

Challenges:

- May struggle to excite grassroots activists as much as White or Gipson.
 - Could get squeezed between establishment and populist wings.
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3. Delbert Hosemann

Strengths:

- Decades of statewide experience.
- Broad donor network.
- Viewed as competent and experienced.
- Appeals to moderates and business interests.

Challenges:

- Will be in his late 70s during the election.
 - Less popular with the MAGA wing than some rivals.
 - May have difficulty generating enthusiasm in a crowded Republican primary.
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Tier Two

Andy Gipson

Already an announced candidate, Gipson has a loyal conservative following and strong rural appeal. His challenge is money—he trails the leading contenders significantly in fundraising.

Philip Gunn

The former House Speaker has a long legislative résumé and recently entered the race. He can point to conservative accomplishments, especially on tax policy, but may find it difficult to separate himself from other established Republicans.

The Wild Cards

Several names have been discussed as potential entrants, including:

- Gregg Harper
- Tommy Duff

Either could reshape the race if they run, particularly Harper because of his high statewide favorability among Republicans and Duff because of the possibility of self-funding.

If Gregg Harper Runs...

AI thinks Harper immediately becomes a top-tier contender.

The revised Republican primary odds would look something like:

1. Gregg Harper — **30%**
2. Shad White — **28%**
3. Lynn Fitch — **18%**
4. Delbert Hosemann — **15%**
5. Andy Gipson — **6%**
6. Philip Gunn — **3%**

Harper's advantages would include a relatively low-negative profile, strong donor relationships, congressional experience, and an ability to appeal across the Republican coalition without being as polarizing as some rivals.

What if Tommy Duff runs

If Thomas (Tommy) Duff enters the Republican primary, he immediately becomes one of the most intriguing candidates—but not necessarily the favorite.

Here's how AI would handicap the race if Duff officially announces today:

Candidate	Chance of winning GOP nomination
Shad White	28%
Thomas (Tommy) Duff	25%
Lynn Fitch	18%
Delbert Hosemann	15%
Gregg Harper (<i>if he runs</i>)	8%
Andy Gipson	4%
Philip Gunn	2%

Why Duff would be formidable

Duff has several assets that very few Mississippi candidates can match:

- **Unlimited financial resources.** As co-founder of Duff Capital Investors and co-owner of Southern Tire Mart, he could spend tens of millions of dollars without depending on traditional fundraising.
- **Business outsider message.** He can argue that Mississippi needs a CEO rather than another career politician.
- **Political relationships.** Through his philanthropy, appointments, and Republican giving, he already knows much of the state's political and business leadership.
- **Name recognition that is growing.** His PAC, speeches, and public appearances have clearly been building a statewide profile while he weighs a run.

He would also face real challenges:

- **No electoral experience.** Mississippi has rarely elected someone governor on their first run for public office, making this an unusually steep climb.
- **Undefined policy positions.** Thus far, Duff has emphasized issues like economic growth and reversing "brain drain," but has offered fewer specifics than established officeholders on issues such as Medicaid, education, and taxes.
- **Crowded Republican field.** If White, Fitch, Hosemann, Gipson, and Gunn all remain in the race, the anti-establishment vote could split while experienced politicians divide the traditional GOP coalition.
- **Intense scrutiny.** His business dealings and personal finances would receive unprecedented examination in a statewide campaign, as recent litigation already illustrates.

At this stage, however, the race remains fluid because major figures have not all officially entered. Fundraising, endorsements, and the evolving Republican primary electorate over the next year will likely determine whether the contest becomes a battle between establishment conservatives and populist conservatives—or whether a consensus candidate emerges.