High-Volatility Forecast Scenario: Monroe County Prosecutor Democratic Primary

Arrington Predicted at 52.8% Probability of Winning

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WHITE PAPER | MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA | 2026 DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY

Executive Summary

This analysis addresses a core empirical problem in the 2026 local cycle: **no public, traditional polling was identified for the Monroe County, Indiana, Democratic Primary.** We therefore use a structured inference model based on behavioral predictors of the electorate rather than survey-based estimation. Countywide data-mining was automated using an AI-assisted deep-search process that executed 1,415 searches across four local races before modeling.

Key Finding

The model places Benjamin Arrington at **81.2** and Erika Oliphant at **80.8** on the latent scale — a true toss-up with a slight Arrington edge.

Monte Carlo simulation (5,000 iterations) yields Arrington a **52.8% win probability** with a 95% confidence interval of **39.81% – 60.89%**.

Central Analytical Point

The race is functionally a **coin toss** operating in a low-information, high-variance environment. The incumbency firewall is remarkably thin. Activist identity-congruence and reform urgency are nearly strong enough to neutralize the normal institutional benefits of officeholding.

This paper explicitly widens uncertainty through Monte Carlo simulation rather than presenting point scores as poll-equivalent facts.

This paper was prepared for Arrington's campaign. Potential bias is partially mitigated by reliance on an AI-assisted search-and-scoring workflow utilizing GPT-5.4 with deep search, and by the explicit use of Monte Carlo simulation to widen uncertainty bounds.

The Monroe County Electorate

Monroe County's electorate is unusually young, educated, and structurally Democratic by Indiana standards — a countywide Democratic environment with a meaningful reform floor.

143K

Population

2025 estimated county population

~50%

College-Educated

Adults 25+ with at least a bachelor's degree

62.4%

Harris 2024

Kamala Harris's countywide vote share in the 2024 presidential election

16.8%

Poverty Rate

Residents living below the poverty line

That progressive floor is historically specific, not abstract. Bernie Sanders carried Monroe County in the 2016 Indiana Democratic presidential primary — a useful indicator that the local Democratic electorate has repeatedly shown real appetite for activist-coded candidates rather than merely center-left institutional Democrats.

2019 Bloomington City Council District 1

Kate Rosenbarger defeated four-term incumbent Chris Sturbaum by roughly **65.9% to 28.1%** — a landmark case of activist challenger defeating an entrenched incumbent.

2026 District 61 Democratic Race

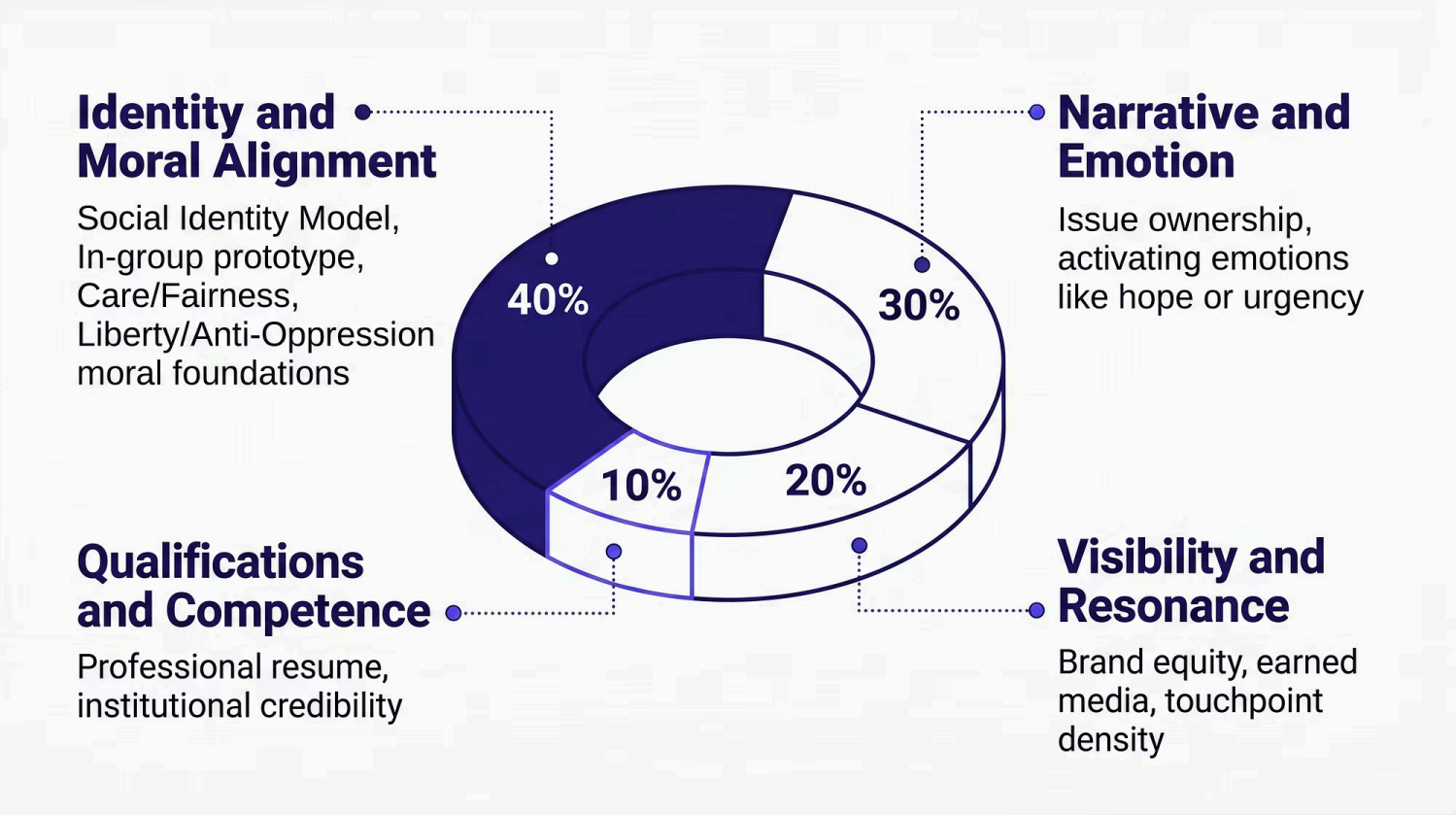
Long-serving incumbent Matt Pierce faces an unusually serious primary challenge from activist candidate Lilliana Young after more than two decades without a primary opponent.

Community Justice Response Priorities

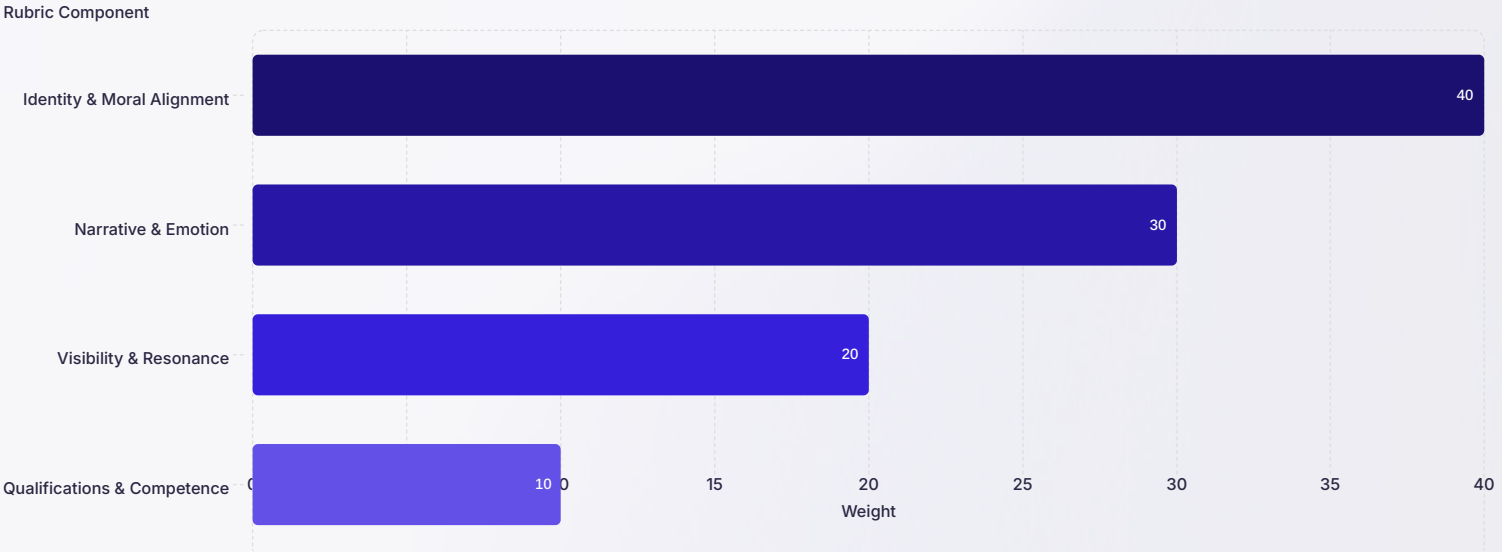
Monroe County's official priorities emphasize treatment over incarceration, dignity in detention, reducing justice-system entry, and addressing inequalities by race, economic status, disability, and sexual orientation.

Scoring Model: The 100-Point Rubric

The 100-point base score for each candidate is constructed through a weighted rubric grounded in social psychology, communication theory, and brand marketing. Each component reflects a distinct dimension of candidate viability within the Monroe County progressive electorate.



Notably, the model utilizes a **Correlation Multiplier** where high identity scores amplify a candidate's visibility, reflecting the reality that a resonant message travels further and faster within a specific cultural semiosphere. This means identity alignment is not merely additive — it is multiplicative in its effect on overall candidate reach.



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Methodology and Model Adjustments

To move from a theoretical base score to a final adjusted prediction, the model applies several environmental modifiers that simulate real-world political friction.

Environmental Modifiers

Retrospective Economic Voting (REV)

Assesses whether the local economic climate provides a tailwind or headwind for incumbents. In this cycle, tension between strong macro-indicators (low unemployment) and acute micro-stressors (housing costs) has **neutralized this modifier to zero**.

Negative Publicity Penalties

Accounts for incumbent disadvantage triggered by public scandal or administrative failure. Utilizes a **Time Decay Factor** ensuring recent controversies carry more weight than historical ones.

Continuity Penalties

Captures the psychological half-life of public outrage, providing a granular look at candidate viability in the weeks leading up to the May 5 primary.

Two Substantive Recalibrations

1. Social Identity Score: Adjusted 2 points upward for the challenger to reflect that Monroe County Democratic primaries reward candidates who present themselves as outspoken structural reformers.

2. Oliphant Visibility Score: Increased by one raw point to account more fully for the institutional attention structure of incumbency — official office presence, accumulated earned media, officeholder familiarity, and repeated public touchpoints.

The base model produces a single weighted score, but single-number forecasts risk false precision. Scores are treated as **latent political advantages**, not as direct percentages of the electorate. Those latent advantages were converted into modeled vote shares conservatively and stress-tested with 5,000 Monte Carlo iterations.

Deterministic Candidate Scores

The table below shows the deterministic means used as the center of the Monte Carlo simulation. These scores reflect all variable adjustments described in the methodology section.

Candidate	Identity & Moral Alignment	Narrative & Emotion	Visibility Raw	Visibility Adjusted	Qualifications	Penalties	Final Latent Score
Erika Oliphant	36.0	23.0	19.0	22.8	9.0	−10.0	**80.8**
Benjamin Arrington	36.0	24.0	11.0	13.2	8.0	0.0	**81.2**

The scores are strikingly close. Arrington's edge in Narrative & Emotion (24.0 vs. 23.0) and the absence of penalties (0.0 vs. −10.0) are the decisive differentiators. Oliphant's higher raw and adjusted visibility scores reflect the institutional advantages of incumbency, but those advantages are insufficient to overcome the penalty drag.

Arrington Edge

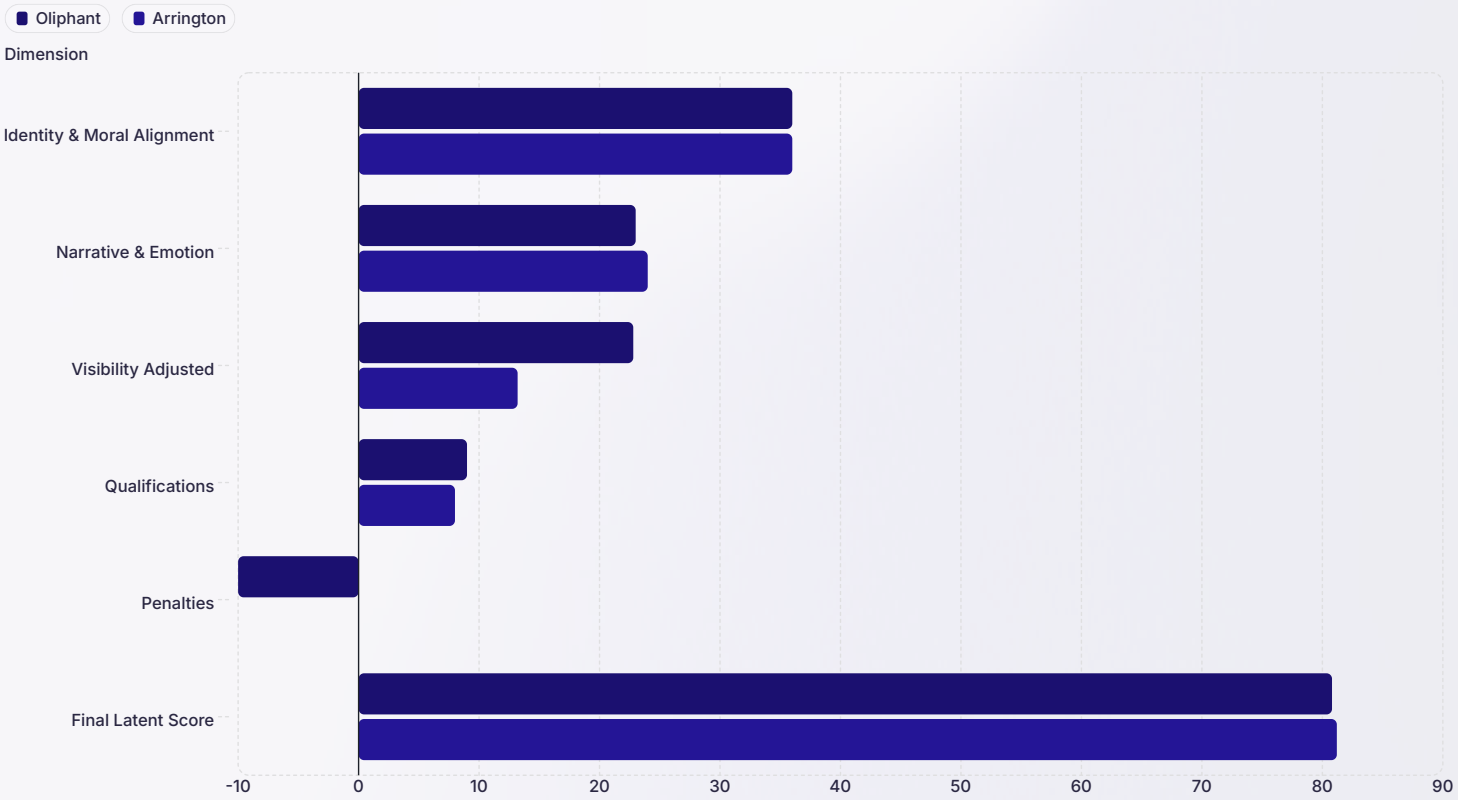
+0.4 points on the latent scale. Driven by stronger narrative scoring and zero penalties applied.

Oliphant Advantage

Higher visibility scores (22.8 adjusted vs. 13.2) reflecting institutional incumbency benefits and accumulated earned media.

Tied Identity

Both candidates score identically on Identity & Moral Alignment (36.0), reflecting genuine ideological competition within the progressive electorate.

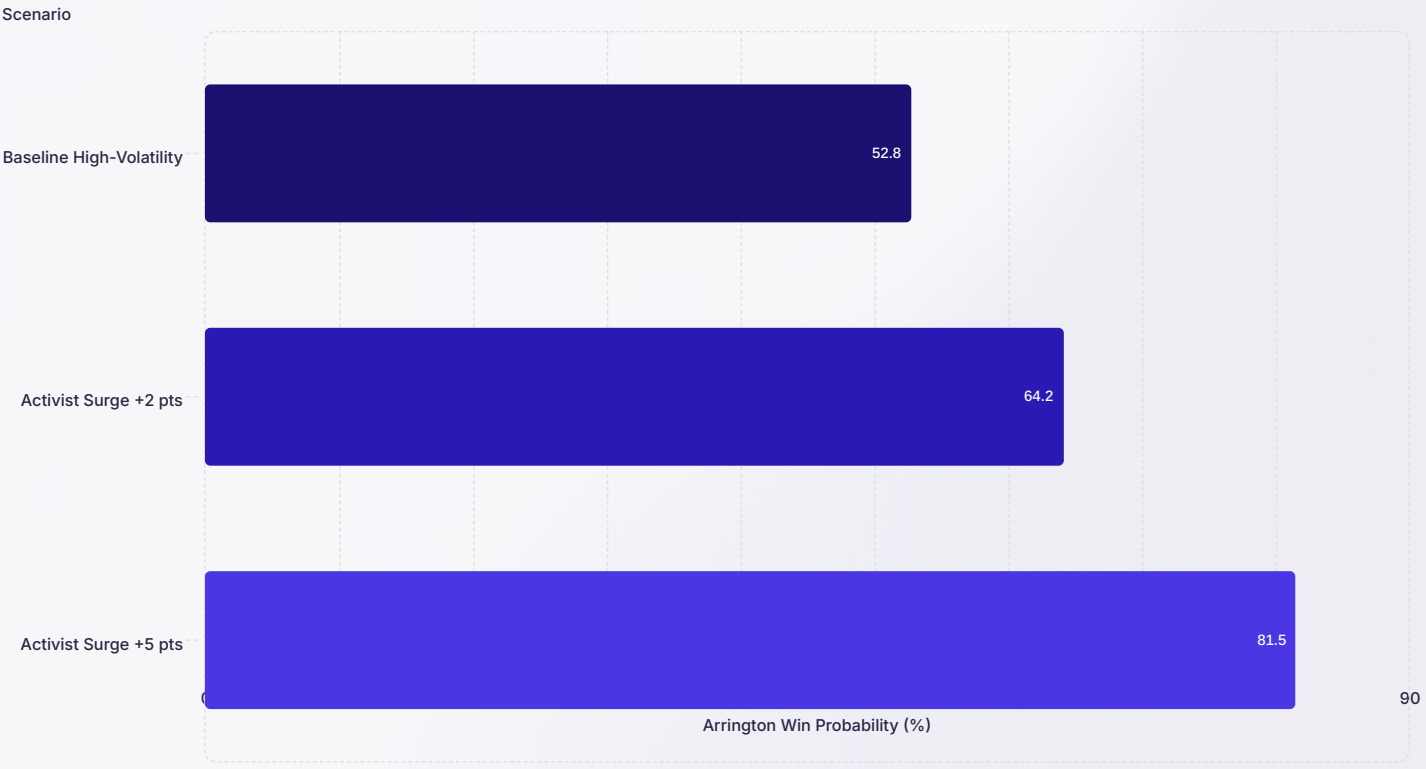


> "The incumbency firewall is remarkably thin. A 0.4-point latent advantage for Arrington is the difference between a coin toss and a near-certain outcome."

Monte Carlo Results: High-Volatility Scenarios

The table below reports the 5,000-iteration High-Volatility simulation outcomes. A 10% increase was injected into both uncertainty and volatility parameters to create wider bounds capturing the possibility that unobserved campaign effects or turnout shocks will push the final tally far from the modeled midpoint. **These are model-based forecasts, not polls.**

Scenario	Mean Arrington Share	Mean Oliphant Share	95% CI for Arrington	Arrington Win Probability
Baseline High-Volatility Model	50.35%	49.65%	39.81% – 60.89%	**52.8%**
Activist Surge +2 Points	52.35%	47.65%	41.81% – 62.89%	**64.2%**
Activist Surge +5 Points	55.35%	44.65%	44.81% – 65.89%	**81.5%**



Crucially, while the "Activist Surge" scenarios represent the clearest path to an Arrington victory, the injected volatility fundamentally changes their interpretation. In prior, lower-variance modeling, a 5-point activist surge guaranteed an Arrington victory with near certainty (94.7%). Under the expanded variance framework, **a 5-point surge yields only an 81.5% win probability**. The widened lower boundary (44.81%) indicates that the incumbent's latent brand equity and the electorate's potential late-stage retreat to strategic caution could still allow Oliphant to survive a demographic wave if volatility breaks in her favor.

Economic and Issue Environment

The economic context is mixed in macro terms but anxious in lived terms — a tension that shapes how voters decode prosecutorial rhetoric.

Economic Indicators

2.8% Unemployment

Bloomington metro area, January 2026 — a strong macro indicator.

0.0%–0.5% Growth Forecast

Indiana Business Research Center projection for 2026, with unemployment potentially rising to 4.0% locally.

305 Experiencing Homelessness

Monroe County 2025 point-in-time count. Affordable housing identified as the primary driver.

The Central Question

The prosecutor's race has coalesced around one principal question: **how loudly and publicly should the office use prosecutorial discretion** in a county that wants progressive outcomes but sits inside a hostile state-level policy environment?

Campaign forums repeatedly returned to:

- Marijuana prosecutions
- Abortion-related nonprosecution
- ICE cooperation and surveillance
- Protest rights and homelessness
- Violent-crime prioritization

> **Arrington** argued that public confrontation is a necessary moral stance rather than a liability. **Oliphant** explicitly warned that public declarations of categorical nonprosecution could invite retaliation from actors such as Todd Rokita and the state's Republican supermajority.

This means the election is partly about values and partly about tactical adaptation to a nationalized and state-constrained environment — a genuine ideological split within the progressive electorate itself.

Marijuana & Drug Policy

Arrington favors categorical nonprosecution as a moral stance; Oliphant warns public declarations invite state-level retaliation from AG Todd Rokita.

ICE Cooperation & Surveillance

A defining civil liberties question in a county with a significant immigrant-adjacent progressive base; Arrington takes a harder public line.

Violent Crime Prioritization

Both candidates claim this as a priority, but differ on whether progressive discretion policies undermine or reinforce public safety credibility.

Theoretical Framework and Variable Logic

The model draws on three distinct academic disciplines, each contributing a distinct layer of explanatory power.

Social Psychology

The identity component is grounded in **Social Identity Theory of Leadership** (Hogg, 2001), which argues that leaders gain legitimacy when perceived as embodying the in-group prototype. In Monroe County, that prototype rewards activist authenticity, structural critique, and moral urgency.

Cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) explains the county's split response: voters can reduce tension between progressive commitments and institutional constraints either by preferring a candidate who loudly affirms their values, or one who protects those values through quieter institutional navigation.

Communication Studies

Framing theory (Entman, 1993) and the semiosphere (Lotman, 2005) explain how Monroe County's criminal-justice culture decodes candidate messaging. Inside this semiotic environment, "marijuana nonprosecution" is not just an administrative choice — it is a signal about courage and autonomy.

The June 2025 dismissal of charges against a former IU football player on speedy-trial grounds is the most electorally relevant negative event. Arrington has turned that incident into a narrative shorthand for managerial failure.

Marketing & Brand Equity

Customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993) dictates that accumulated familiarity, trust cues, and repeated public contact shape low-information voting. Incumbency creates a denser touchpoint ecology — official webpages, media coverage, public awards, and default familiarity.

Challenger brands break through when they crystallize an unmet demand better than the incumbent brand. Arrington's campaign is weaker on accumulated brand familiarity but stronger on a concise value proposition: "safer, fairer future."

Actionable Conclusion and Strategic Limitations

Because the mathematical model is highly volatile and the error margins are wide, the race will be decided entirely by the physical execution of field operations, relational organizing, and turnout mechanics.

Core Strategic Implication

Demographic destiny is not enough to overcome this level of statistical noise. If the challenger relies strictly on macro-environment alignment without aggressive, ground-level activation, the incumbent's visibility network will likely insulate her from defeat.

Model Limitations

The Monte Carlo analysis quantifies uncertainty but does not conjure a survey universe that does not exist. The model does not measure field operations, canvassing, or volunteer density directly, nor paid advertising volume or targeting quality.

Path to Victory

The model predicts that if Arrington effectively makes his platform visible to the electorate, it favors him to win — because he is a better fit for Monroe County's progressive and activist electorate.

The central finding is not that the model "proves" an Arrington win. It is that the race is a **functionally competitive contest** where activist identity-congruence and reform urgency have nearly neutralized the normal institutional benefits of incumbency — and where aggressive field execution is the decisive variable.

This forecast was produced using an AI-assisted deep-search workflow executing 1,415 searches across four local races. Scores are latent political advantage estimates, not poll-equivalent vote shares. All uncertainty bounds were generated via 5,000-iteration Monte Carlo simulation.

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