# DA – Midterms

## 1NC

### TOC

#### Dem victory is likely but not locked in – the plan is the crucial energizer trump needs

Hunt 4-20-18

Albert, executive editor of Bloomberg News, The Blue Wave Is Receding? Not Really, https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2018-04-26/trump-must-accept-the-confirmation-process, msm

Two surveys popped up this week that seem to show improved prospects for Republican House candidates this November. Disregard them! A Washington Post/ABC News poll released on Monday showed that 47 percent of registered voters prefer the Democratic candidate in their district, as against 43 percent who favor the Republican. The gap was about twice as large at the beginning of the year. In a Marist Poll that came out Wednesday, voters preferred a Democratic House candidate by a five-percentage-point margin, unchanged from last month. That kind of mid-sized advantage for Democrats might not be enough to power their quest to regain control of the House of Representatives, for which they will need to pick up two dozen seats now held by Republicans. But Peter Hart, who conducts the Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll, which shows a seven-point Democratic advantage, still thinks the blue wave that Democrats hope for is coming. A Democrat not given to partisan exuberance, Hart cites a more important factor than the generic-preference questions that pollsters are asking now: intensity. Two-thirds of Democrats in his survey expressed a strong interest in this year's election versus 49 percent of Republicans, exactly the intensity advantage Republicans had in 2010, when they won back the House in a landslide. Other positive indicators for Democrats include the near-record number of congressional Republican retirements. Money is also pouring in. In two notable upset victories, an Alabama Senate election in December and a March Pennsylvania House contest, the Democratic winners raised more money than they spent. The Political Hotline reported this week that at least one challenger has outraised more than 40 Republican incumbents. That's unusual. Most important is to look at what voters already are doing this year at the state and local level. Mark Gersh, a seasoned Democratic strategist with encyclopedic knowledge of political geography, has analyzed the six state-legislative districts that flipped this year from Republicans to Democrats. None have flipped the other way in 2018. Two are heavily rural, a Wisconsin state senate district and a Missouri house seat. In Wisconsin, the victorious Democrat ran 17 percentage points ahead of Hillary Clinton's 2016 performance in that district and eight points ahead of Barack Obama four years before. That improvement was almost identical in the Missouri venue. This led the ever cautious Gersh, in a memo, to suggest it's "another signal that Midwestern rural and small-town districts may be more marginal" for Republicans "than previously thought." There also was a huge Democratic victory in a Kentucky state house race in February, with the winner more than doubling the Clinton and Obama tallies there. On the other hand, the Democratic winner of a Connecticut contest in February barely improved on Clinton's victory margin in the district and ran behind Obama's. This could presage trouble for Democrats in that state, where the party's incumbent governor is unpopular. On balance, though, there are still lots of good reasons for Democratic optimism. In Florida, where a half-dozen U.S. House seats, a Senate seat and the governor's office are in play this fall, a Democrat scored a big February win in a Republican-held statehouse seat in Sarasota, running well ahead of Obama and Clinton. With the huge turnout, Gersh concluded, "This race is a significant trend." He perceived the same trend in a New Hampshire victory earlier in the year, noting that "the New Hampshire House typically changes hands when a moderate-high wave is present." Trump's persistent unpopularity, almost a half-year after Republicans passed a tax-cut bill and amid a strong economy, may drag down Republicans in other competitive races this year. To be sure, the president still can energize a dispirited base. In both the special Alabama Senate race last December and the special Pennsylvania congressional contest, election-eve appearances by Trump boosted the Republican turnout, though not by enough to win. But there are only so many election-eve appearances he can make in the fall, and only so many places he's likely to help.

#### Trump gets impeached if GOP gets wiped out – Republican strategist concurs. Shelbourne 1/4

Shelbourne, Mallory. “GOP Strategist: Republicans Will Turn on Trump, Impeach Him If Party Is Blown out in Midterms.” TheHill, 4 Jan. 2018, thehill.com/homenews/campaign/367378-gop-strategist-republicans-will-turn-on-trump-impeach-him-if-party-is-blown. //nhs-VA

\*Brackets in original

A Republican strategist who formerly served as a top aide on Sen. Ted Cruz’s (R-Texas) presidential campaign is arguing that Republicans will turn on President Trump and impeach him should they lose heavily in the 2018 midterms. “When does the Republican Party turn? When they get wiped out. That's what happens. If they get wiped out in [2018], the Republicans will absolutely turn on Donald Trump,” Rick Tyler told MSNBC’s “Morning Joe.” “And I think to the point where they will impeach him and they will get 67 percent of the vote in the Senate to impeach him, to do that. But it will require a wipeout.” While some Democrats have called for Trump to be impeached, a proposed House measure to do so was rejected last month, with a majority of Democrats dismissing the resolution. Democrats are heading into the 2018 midterms with the upper chamber in play after Sen. Doug Jones’s (D) victory in the Alabama special election, which cut the GOP majority to a razor-thin 51-49. Republicans, meanwhile, are facing an internal battle, as former White House chief strategist Stephen Bannon has vowed to challenge the GOP establishment and put up primary challengers against incumbent Republican senators. Democrats would need to flip 24 seats in the midterms to take the House.

#### Trump ensures global nuclear conflict from a collapse of trade, democracy, leadership, the war on terror and antagonism of Iran and North Korea

Hathaway and Shapiro 11/10 International Law Prof at Yale and Law/Philosophy Prof at Yale (Oona, and Scott, THE BIG PICTURE: TRUMP, TRADE, AND WAR, www.publicbooks.org/the-big-picture-trump-trade-and-war/)

President Trump has proven to be a reckless leader. His refusal to denounce white supremacists, his repeated attacks on journalists and free speech, his courting of Vladimir Putin, his attempts to belittle and provoke the North Korean leader—every single one of these acts is corrosive and destabilizing. While the media has understandably focused on the risks of authoritarianism and nuclear war, there is another grave danger that has largely gone unnoticed: President Trump’s rejection of free trade. It may take years before historians fully understand why President Trump won the election. But already we know that his message resonated with an electorate that had suffered from economic dislocation and growing inequality and that was tired of what has been called a “forever war.” Trump promised a new America, an America that put itself (or at least certain parts of itself) first. To the candidate and his electorate, our 70 years of global order were, at best, outdated. As his campaign progressed, Trump began hawking an international agenda built on two pillars: protectionism and isolationism. In a nod to the isolationists and pro-Fascists of 1930s America, he even began referring to this agenda as “America First.” During the 2016 campaign, Donald Trump attacked free trade, promising to erect tariffs and barriers to keep manufacturing and jobs at home, to withdraw from negotiations over the Trans-Pacific Partnership, to renegotiate NAFTA, and to punish China for devaluing its currency. Trump’s critics pointed out many problems with his protectionist positions: protectionism is economically inefficient; it is an assault on the post–World War Two American conception of freedom and liberty; it is a futile fight against globalization—a stance that has been proven, time and again, to be on the wrong side of history. Trump’s isolationism is a retreat from America’s role in world affairs and will lead to global instability; a declaration of defeat in the global war on terror; and an abdication of America’s decades-long policy of spreading democracy and protecting human rights. But the critics missed the biggest problem with Trump’s embrace of protectionism: trade today plays the role in the world order that war once played. Trade gives states a way to influence one another without resorting to force, as was once common. Giving up on trade means giving up on that influence, leaving states with little choice but war. To understand why this is the case, one has to return to what we have described as the “Old World Order.” For hundreds of years, waging war was considered a necessary function to run a state. As described and systematized by the so-called “father of international law,” Hugo Grotius, in the early 17th century, international law permitted states to use force in order to right (perceived or otherwise) wrongs. Actually, it did more than permit war. The system relied on war as a tool of international justice. It was the way in which states collected unpaid debts, obtained compensation for wrongful harms, enforced treaty obligations, and protected religious interests, among much else. In this world, war to enforce legal rights was perfectly legal but economic sanctions by neutrals against belligerents were illegal. Neutrals had a duty of impartiality in a conflict—states outside of a conflict could not offer more favorable trade terms to the state it favored. To do so was illegal, and would give the disfavored state a cause for war. As we argue in our recent book, The Internationalists: How a Radical Plan to Outlaw War Remade the World, that all changed in 1928. Over 60 countries ratified the Kellogg-Briand Pact (also known as the Peace Pact). By outlawing war, the Peace Pact changed the role of war in the international system. War could no longer legally be used between states to resolve disputes, to right wrongs, or to force uncooperative states to cooperate. The Pact did not work overnight, of course. As we show in the book, it took decades to figure out how to make the promise of the Pact a reality. One of the crucial moments came shortly after it entered into force: in 1931, Japan, which was a party to the agreement, committed a clear violation by invading Manchuria. The world was unsure how to respond: surely it could not enforce the prohibition on war with war. But if not war, then what? The answer came when US Secretary of State Henry Stimson wrote to Japan and China on January 8, 1932: “The American Government … does not intend to recognize any situation, treaty, or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the covenants and obligations of the Pact of Paris”—another name for the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The League of Nations quickly followed suit. The doctrine of nonrecognition would become known as the “Stimson Doctrine” and would give rise to a new way to enforce the law: not with war, but with so-called “sanctions of peace.” As Stimson explained in a speech entitled “The Pact of Paris: Three Year Later,” the Pact had set in motion a change in the laws of neutrality, which for the first time permitted states to put in place economic sanctions against parties to a war, using trade, not force, as a way to enforce the law. Economic sanctions thus slowly began to fill the void left by the decision to outlaw war. They became one of the most powerful weapons a country could wield. By placing sanctions on uncooperative nations, the international community could effect change without violence. States could no longer use war to enforce the law, but they could use sanctions to “outcast” misbehaving states. To see how sanctions can be used as a substitute for war, consider the events that led to the Iran nuclear deal. In 2006, the UN Security Council joined the United States in economically isolating Iran. It demanded that Iran stop uranium enrichment and imposed progressively more painful trade sanctions in response to its continued intransigence. As a result, Iran was shut out of global commerce not only by the United States and a few sympathetic countries but by nearly every nation in the world. The sanctions regime was further tightened in 2010 by an obscure office in the US Treasury Department: the Office of Foreign Asset Control, or OFAC. At the behest of OFAC, Congress passed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act, which strengthened US sanctions on the Iranian energy industry and financial sector. Whereas previous measures had targeted only Iranian firms, Congress now authorized the imposition of “secondary sanctions” on any bank, anywhere in the world, that transacted with Iran’s central bank. Any bank placed on the blacklist could be cut off from access to the US financial sector. The United States offered banks a choice: you can do business with the United States or you can do business with Iran; you can’t do both. These sanctions worked remarkably well: Iran’s oil exports fell by more than 50 percent, the value of the nation’s currency (the rial) plummeted, and in 2012, Iran’s economy shrunk by about 7 percent, prompting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to complain: “The enemy has announced that it has imposed sanctions …This is a hidden war. A broad and heavy war, spread across the globe.” Ahmadinejad’s statement was evidence that the sanctions were imposing costs. But as David Cohen, the Treasury official who oversaw OFAC, pointed out, the sanctions were not a secret war. They were instead “done for all the world to see” and, indeed, “done by all the world.” Nor were they actually a war, Cohen continued, but “the alternative to war.” And that alternative worked. In August 2013, Hassan Rouhani succeeded President Ahmadinejad, after running on a platform of improving relations with the rest of the world and sanctions relief. The new Iranian leadership began negotiations with the “P5 plus one”—the permanent five members of the Security Council plus Germany, the economic steward of the EU. In November 2013, they reached an interim agreement limiting Iran’s nuclear program and partially lifting sanctions and made plans to complete a more permanent, comprehensive agreement. For the first time in decades, there was real hope that a nuclear Iran could be prevented through discussions at the negotiating table rather than with military strikes. Now President Trump, by calling into question the United States’ commitment to free trade and global economic integration, is threatening to unilaterally disarm. The less business it does with the rest of the world, the less influence it will have in the modern legal order. Raising trade barriers, and withdrawing from free trade agreements, means giving up power and influence. The President’s twin messages of isolationism and protectionism are dangerous. If the US pulls back from unilateral trade and cooperation, it will be left with fewer diplomatic options. States that outcast themselves find it difficult to outcast other nations. What’s more, giving up the capacity to influence states through trade can cause states to look longingly at the Old World Order tool of influence: war. North Korea is an excellent example of a country caught in this trap. It is so isolated from the global economy that it has little influence over other states other than the threat of military force. Its capacity to exert influence outside its borders depends entirely on its nuclear weapons program; it has nothing else. Indeed, even as Trump has been threatening to withdraw from free trade arrangements, he has been relying more heavily on the military to get what he wants. He has doubled-down on virtually every American military engagement. He has sent US troops into Syria to assist the fight against ISIS. He has stepped up support for the Saudi-led fight in Yemen, even in the face of reported war crimes. He has fired missiles in retaliation for Syrian chemical weapons attacks. In September, Trump announced that he is sending more US troops into Afghanistan. He has loosened the rules of engagement in Afghanistan as well. He has even suggested that he might use the US military in Venezuela. In front of the United Nations, the home of peaceful cooperation, he threatened to “totally destroy” North Korea, implying his willingness to use weapons against millions of civilians. And, most recently, Trump has refused to certify part of the Iran nuclear deal, raising the specter that the deal will break down and Trump will ultimately resort to military force against Iran. The lesson Trump has yet to learn is that in the modern era trade is more than trade. Trade is the power to exert peaceful and effective influence abroad. Giving up on trade means walking away from that influence. “America First” threatens to put America last, at least on the international stage. Trump’s lasting legacy may be even more destabilizing than the most dire predictions issued at the start of his presidency. By pulling back American support for free trade, Trump threatens America’s nearly century-long run of being the “indispensable nation.” Even after he leaves office, that lesson will linger. For decades, the US dollar has been the foundation of the world’s economy, countries have freely lent to the United States, and English has been the dominant language on the international stage. If the United States relinquishes its leadership role, we should wonder: who will fill the void we leave behind?

### Shell

#### Dem wave now—wrecks the agenda—confluence of evidence.

Giroux 1-29 Greg. Elections Reporter for Bloomberg government. "All Signs Point to Big Democratic Wins in 2018." Bloomberg.com. Bloomberg, 29 Jan. 2018. Web. 31 Jan. 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2018-midterm-elections-preview/>. DLuo

(Bloomberg Government)—History, demographics and the national mood are pointing to one conclusion about the 2018 congressional races: Democrats are well-positioned to bring one-party government in Washington under Donald Trump’s presidency to a screeching halt. There’s a confluence of evidence indicating a so-called wave election may be building that would allow Democrats to wrest the House of Representatives from Republican control. A Democratic takeover of the Senate will be harder to achieve. “We are all very sensitive to the political environment we’re in,” said Oklahoma Representative Tom Cole, who led House Republicans’ campaign arm in 2008. Republicans are girding for an “extraordinarily competitive” election. Even if only one chamber flips to the Democrats, Trump’s ability to impose his agenda would be thwarted, and his administration almost certainly would find itself pinned down by investigations and subpoenas from congressional committees. An analysis by Bloomberg Government of historical data, election maps and public polling points to sweeping Democratic gains in the November election, when all 435 House seats and one-third of the Senate are on the ballot. Since the end of World War II, the party in control of the White House has, on average, had a net loss of 26 House seats in midterm elections. Democrats can win control of the House with a net gain of 24 seats in November. They’d need to win two seats to gain a majority in the Senate. Adding to that, Trump’s approval rating at this stage of his presidency, 38 percent, is lower than any of his predecessors going back to Harry Truman, according to Gallup polling data. The less popular the president, the more seats his party tends to lose. Retaking the House in 2018 That translates to “a very poor chance of bucking the midterm odds if it holds at this level,” Republican pollster Lance Tarrance wrote in a Jan. 5 analysis for Gallup. “Trump’s 20-point approval deficit in recent Gallup polling does not bode well for him, in part because none of the past five presidents saw an increase in their approval rating in the year before their first midterm.” President’s Midterm Party Losses Republicans do hold some cards. Those include favorable electoral maps drawn by Republican-dominated state governments after the last census. GOP candidates also should be able to run on solid U.S. economic growth, a 26 percent surge in the S&P 500 Index since Trump took office and an unemployment rate that stood at 4.1 percent at the end of the year. Yet none of the good economic news has budged Trump’s stubbornly low approval ratings so far, or what polls show is a sour public view of the direction of the country. In that environment, Democratic candidates are swarming to run in Republican-held ddistricts and drawing donors. Through the end of September, 145 House Democratic challengers to 73 Republicans raised at least $100,000, according to the Campaign Finance Institute. At a similar point in 2015, 35 Democratic challengers to 25 incumbent Republicans raised more than $100,000. Republicans currently hold a 238-to-193 edge in the House, with four vacancies, and a 51-to-49 advantage in the Senate, but there’s a lot of turnover in their ranks. There are 40 House Republicans who’ve announced they’ll retire or leave to run for another office, or have resigned for other reasons. Several of them are in districts won by Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential race. Among Democrats the number of departures is 16. Three Senate Republicans aren’t running for re-election. Two of them, Jeff Flake of Arizona and Bob Corker of Tennessee, publicly split with Trump and likely would have faced significant primary challenges from the party’s right wing, highlighting some of the ideological splintering among Republicans. Balance of Power \*Independents Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Angus King of Maine caucus with the Democrats and are shown in blue. The off-year and special elections conducted since Trump took office underscore the Republican challenges. Democrats won governors’ offices by wide margins in New Jersey and Virginia while also capturing Republican seats in both states’ legislatures, as suburban voters shifted to Democratic candidates. In Alabama, Doug Jones became the first Democrat elected to the Senate from the state in 25 years in a race that featured a scandal-tarred and controversial Republican who divided his own party, even though he had Trump’s endorsement. “That’s three pretty big canaries in the coal mine that ought to warn you that you’re headed into a turbulent period in the next election,” Cole said. Another indicator comes up on March 13 in a special election for a House seat in southwestern Pennsylvania. Trump won the district by 20 percentage points and Democrats didn’t field a candidate there in the last two elections. But the Republican Party is investing heavily to hang on to it. Trump paid an official visit there on Jan. 18, and both Vice President Mike Pence and House Speaker Paul Ryan are set to help the Republican candidate, Rick Saccone, raise money. If Saccone barely squeaks by, and certainly if Democrat Conor Lamb wins, it would be a shift of momentum that other campaigns will take seriously. Educated Voters Democrats improved their showing in well-educated, historically Republican areas in the 2016 and 2017 elections, so some hard-fought races in the fall will be in the suburbs. Among the House districts that may be in play are those of Representatives Rodney Frelinghuysen and Leonard Lance in New Jersey, John Culberson in the Houston area, Barbara Comstock in the Virginia suburbs near Washington, and Peter Roskam in the Chicago area. “I would not want to be an incumbent Republican member of Congress going into these midterms, especially in a suburban swing community,” said Jesse Ferguson, a former deputy executive director of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the political arm of House Democrats. “It is a toxic brew of typical midterm rejection of the party in power, combined with a historically unpopular president and a historically unpopular congressional agenda.” Little public polling is done for individual House races. But one indicator is the generic ballot preference question on national polls that asks voters whether they would prefer a Democratic or Republican candidate in their district. In the average of polls compiled by RealClearPolitics, Democrats have held a steady lead that’s currently at 7.9 percentage points. Look for Republican candidates in competitive districts to emphasize local issues and legislative accomplishments for their home areas while also highlighting their independence from Trump, if he remains unpopular. “You need to have an identity that is different than just being a generic Republican congressman,” Cole said. Targets for Democrats include the 23 districts that voted in 2016 for Clinton and for a House Republican. Seven are in California. There are another 12 Republican-held districts that Trump won but had voted to re-elect Democratic President Barack Obama in 2012. Seven of those are in New York and New Jersey. Republicans have far fewer opportunities on offense and will look to offset expected losses by targeting some of the 12 districts that voted for Trump and a House Democrat in 2016.

#### Trump gets impeached if GOP gets wiped out – Republican strategist concurs. Shelbourne 1/4

Shelbourne, Mallory. “GOP Strategist: Republicans Will Turn on Trump, Impeach Him If Party Is Blown out in Midterms.” TheHill, 4 Jan. 2018, thehill.com/homenews/campaign/367378-gop-strategist-republicans-will-turn-on-trump-impeach-him-if-party-is-blown. //nhs-VA

\*Brackets in original

A Republican strategist who formerly served as a top aide on Sen. Ted Cruz’s (R-Texas) presidential campaign is arguing that Republicans will turn on President Trump and impeach him should they lose heavily in the 2018 midterms. “When does the Republican Party turn? When they get wiped out. That's what happens. If they get wiped out in [2018], the Republicans will absolutely turn on Donald Trump,” Rick Tyler told MSNBC’s “Morning Joe.” “And I think to the point where they will impeach him and they will get 67 percent of the vote in the Senate to impeach him, to do that. But it will require a wipeout.” While some Democrats have called for Trump to be impeached, a proposed House measure to do so was rejected last month, with a majority of Democrats dismissing the resolution. Democrats are heading into the 2018 midterms with the upper chamber in play after Sen. Doug Jones’s (D) victory in the Alabama special election, which cut the GOP majority to a razor-thin 51-49. Republicans, meanwhile, are facing an internal battle, as former White House chief strategist Stephen Bannon has vowed to challenge the GOP establishment and put up primary challengers against incumbent Republican senators. Democrats would need to flip 24 seats in the midterms to take the House.

#### Trump ensures global nuclear conflict from a collapse of trade, democracy, leadership, the war on terror and antagonism of Iran and North Korea

Hathaway and Shapiro 11/10 International Law Prof at Yale and Law/Philosophy Prof at Yale (Oona, and Scott, THE BIG PICTURE: TRUMP, TRADE, AND WAR, www.publicbooks.org/the-big-picture-trump-trade-and-war/)

President Trump has proven to be a reckless leader. His refusal to denounce white supremacists, his repeated attacks on journalists and free speech, his courting of Vladimir Putin, his attempts to belittle and provoke the North Korean leader—every single one of these acts is corrosive and destabilizing. While the media has understandably focused on the risks of authoritarianism and nuclear war, there is another grave danger that has largely gone unnoticed: President Trump’s rejection of free trade. It may take years before historians fully understand why President Trump won the election. But already we know that his message resonated with an electorate that had suffered from economic dislocation and growing inequality and that was tired of what has been called a “forever war.” Trump promised a new America, an America that put itself (or at least certain parts of itself) first. To the candidate and his electorate, our 70 years of global order were, at best, outdated. As his campaign progressed, Trump began hawking an international agenda built on two pillars: protectionism and isolationism. In a nod to the isolationists and pro-Fascists of 1930s America, he even began referring to this agenda as “America First.” During the 2016 campaign, Donald Trump attacked free trade, promising to erect tariffs and barriers to keep manufacturing and jobs at home, to withdraw from negotiations over the Trans-Pacific Partnership, to renegotiate NAFTA, and to punish China for devaluing its currency. Trump’s critics pointed out many problems with his protectionist positions: protectionism is economically inefficient; it is an assault on the post–World War Two American conception of freedom and liberty; it is a futile fight against globalization—a stance that has been proven, time and again, to be on the wrong side of history. Trump’s isolationism is a retreat from America’s role in world affairs and will lead to global instability; a declaration of defeat in the global war on terror; and an abdication of America’s decades-long policy of spreading democracy and protecting human rights. But the critics missed the biggest problem with Trump’s embrace of protectionism: trade today plays the role in the world order that war once played. Trade gives states a way to influence one another without resorting to force, as was once common. Giving up on trade means giving up on that influence, leaving states with little choice but war. To understand why this is the case, one has to return to what we have described as the “Old World Order.” For hundreds of years, waging war was considered a necessary function to run a state. As described and systematized by the so-called “father of international law,” Hugo Grotius, in the early 17th century, international law permitted states to use force in order to right (perceived or otherwise) wrongs. Actually, it did more than permit war. The system relied on war as a tool of international justice. It was the way in which states collected unpaid debts, obtained compensation for wrongful harms, enforced treaty obligations, and protected religious interests, among much else. In this world, war to enforce legal rights was perfectly legal but economic sanctions by neutrals against belligerents were illegal. Neutrals had a duty of impartiality in a conflict—states outside of a conflict could not offer more favorable trade terms to the state it favored. To do so was illegal, and would give the disfavored state a cause for war. As we argue in our recent book, The Internationalists: How a Radical Plan to Outlaw War Remade the World, that all changed in 1928. Over 60 countries ratified the Kellogg-Briand Pact (also known as the Peace Pact). By outlawing war, the Peace Pact changed the role of war in the international system. War could no longer legally be used between states to resolve disputes, to right wrongs, or to force uncooperative states to cooperate. The Pact did not work overnight, of course. As we show in the book, it took decades to figure out how to make the promise of the Pact a reality. One of the crucial moments came shortly after it entered into force: in 1931, Japan, which was a party to the agreement, committed a clear violation by invading Manchuria. The world was unsure how to respond: surely it could not enforce the prohibition on war with war. But if not war, then what? The answer came when US Secretary of State Henry Stimson wrote to Japan and China on January 8, 1932: “The American Government … does not intend to recognize any situation, treaty, or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the covenants and obligations of the Pact of Paris”—another name for the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The League of Nations quickly followed suit. The doctrine of nonrecognition would become known as the “Stimson Doctrine” and would give rise to a new way to enforce the law: not with war, but with so-called “sanctions of peace.” As Stimson explained in a speech entitled “The Pact of Paris: Three Year Later,” the Pact had set in motion a change in the laws of neutrality, which for the first time permitted states to put in place economic sanctions against parties to a war, using trade, not force, as a way to enforce the law. Economic sanctions thus slowly began to fill the void left by the decision to outlaw war. They became one of the most powerful weapons a country could wield. By placing sanctions on uncooperative nations, the international community could effect change without violence. States could no longer use war to enforce the law, but they could use sanctions to “outcast” misbehaving states. To see how sanctions can be used as a substitute for war, consider the events that led to the Iran nuclear deal. In 2006, the UN Security Council joined the United States in economically isolating Iran. It demanded that Iran stop uranium enrichment and imposed progressively more painful trade sanctions in response to its continued intransigence. As a result, Iran was shut out of global commerce not only by the United States and a few sympathetic countries but by nearly every nation in the world. The sanctions regime was further tightened in 2010 by an obscure office in the US Treasury Department: the Office of Foreign Asset Control, or OFAC. At the behest of OFAC, Congress passed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act, which strengthened US sanctions on the Iranian energy industry and financial sector. Whereas previous measures had targeted only Iranian firms, Congress now authorized the imposition of “secondary sanctions” on any bank, anywhere in the world, that transacted with Iran’s central bank. Any bank placed on the blacklist could be cut off from access to the US financial sector. The United States offered banks a choice: you can do business with the United States or you can do business with Iran; you can’t do both. These sanctions worked remarkably well: Iran’s oil exports fell by more than 50 percent, the value of the nation’s currency (the rial) plummeted, and in 2012, Iran’s economy shrunk by about 7 percent, prompting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to complain: “The enemy has announced that it has imposed sanctions …This is a hidden war. A broad and heavy war, spread across the globe.” Ahmadinejad’s statement was evidence that the sanctions were imposing costs. But as David Cohen, the Treasury official who oversaw OFAC, pointed out, the sanctions were not a secret war. They were instead “done for all the world to see” and, indeed, “done by all the world.” Nor were they actually a war, Cohen continued, but “the alternative to war.” And that alternative worked. In August 2013, Hassan Rouhani succeeded President Ahmadinejad, after running on a platform of improving relations with the rest of the world and sanctions relief. The new Iranian leadership began negotiations with the “P5 plus one”—the permanent five members of the Security Council plus Germany, the economic steward of the EU. In November 2013, they reached an interim agreement limiting Iran’s nuclear program and partially lifting sanctions and made plans to complete a more permanent, comprehensive agreement. For the first time in decades, there was real hope that a nuclear Iran could be prevented through discussions at the negotiating table rather than with military strikes. Now President Trump, by calling into question the United States’ commitment to free trade and global economic integration, is threatening to unilaterally disarm. The less business it does with the rest of the world, the less influence it will have in the modern legal order. Raising trade barriers, and withdrawing from free trade agreements, means giving up power and influence. The President’s twin messages of isolationism and protectionism are dangerous. If the US pulls back from unilateral trade and cooperation, it will be left with fewer diplomatic options. States that outcast themselves find it difficult to outcast other nations. What’s more, giving up the capacity to influence states through trade can cause states to look longingly at the Old World Order tool of influence: war. North Korea is an excellent example of a country caught in this trap. It is so isolated from the global economy that it has little influence over other states other than the threat of military force. Its capacity to exert influence outside its borders depends entirely on its nuclear weapons program; it has nothing else. Indeed, even as Trump has been threatening to withdraw from free trade arrangements, he has been relying more heavily on the military to get what he wants. He has doubled-down on virtually every American military engagement. He has sent US troops into Syria to assist the fight against ISIS. He has stepped up support for the Saudi-led fight in Yemen, even in the face of reported war crimes. He has fired missiles in retaliation for Syrian chemical weapons attacks. In September, Trump announced that he is sending more US troops into Afghanistan. He has loosened the rules of engagement in Afghanistan as well. He has even suggested that he might use the US military in Venezuela. In front of the United Nations, the home of peaceful cooperation, he threatened to “totally destroy” North Korea, implying his willingness to use weapons against millions of civilians. And, most recently, Trump has refused to certify part of the Iran nuclear deal, raising the specter that the deal will break down and Trump will ultimately resort to military force against Iran. The lesson Trump has yet to learn is that in the modern era trade is more than trade. Trade is the power to exert peaceful and effective influence abroad. Giving up on trade means walking away from that influence. “America First” threatens to put America last, at least on the international stage. Trump’s lasting legacy may be even more destabilizing than the most dire predictions issued at the start of his presidency. By pulling back American support for free trade, Trump threatens America’s nearly century-long run of being the “indispensable nation.” Even after he leaves office, that lesson will linger. For decades, the US dollar has been the foundation of the world’s economy, countries have freely lent to the United States, and English has been the dominant language on the international stage. If the United States relinquishes its leadership role, we should wonder: who will fill the void we leave behind?

### States

#### States don’t link to the net benefit.

Disanto 163/18/16. (Jill Disanto, writer for PhysOrg citing Daniel Hopkins who is a political scientist and researcher at UPenn. Researcher explores why voters ignore local politics. March 18, 2016. http://phys.org/news/2016-03-explores-voters-local-politics.html)

Daniel Hopkins, a political scientist at the University of Pennsylvania, says that, while today's voters are more engaged in federal elections, they've pretty much abandoned state and local politics. In a book that he's developing, *The Increasingly United States*, Hopkins, whose research as an associate professor focuses on American elections and public opinion, says American federalism was based on the idea that voters' primary political loyalties would be with the states. But that idea has become outdated. "With today's highly nationalized political behavior, Americans are no longer taking full advantage of federalism. Contemporary Americans are markedly more engaged with national politics than with the state or local politics," Hopkins says. "We now know more about national politics, vote more often in national elections and let our national loyalties dictate our down-ballot choices." The book presents evidence about Americans' voting and political engagement and offers two reasons to explain why today's voters are paying more attention to federal elections. The first, Hopkins says, is a landscape in which the political parties offer similar choices at the national level. "Just as an Egg McMuffin is the same in any McDonald's, America's two major political parties are increasingly perceived to offer the same choices throughout the country," Hopkins says. The second reason is the changes in the media and how Americans get their news, an environment that allows people to follow their interests in national-level politics, making local and state-level politics easy to ignore, he says. "As Americans transition from print newspapers and local television news to the Internet and cable television, they are also leaving behind the media sources most likely to provide state and local information," Hopkins says. "The result is a growing mismatch between the varied challenges facing states and voters' near-exclusive focus on national politics." For The Increasingly United States, Hopkins examined historical and recent surveys from the 50 states, along with election results from gubernatorial and mayoral races dating back nearly a century. He also traced the evolution of political media coverage from The Los Angeles Times' coverage during the Great Depression through the expansion of local television news during the 1960s and the role of social media today. "Voters' attention, engagement and campaign contributions are targeted more toward national politics," Hopkins says. "This 'nationalization' is likely to have profound consequences for state and local politics and policymaking. Accordingly, this book seeks to document and explain the nationalization of contemporary Americans' political behavior." With a secondary appointment in Penn's Annenberg School for Communication, Hopkins studies questions related to racial politics, ethnicity, immigration and urban politics.

## Uniqueness

### Win Now

#### Dems just won another special election; empirics outweigh polls – they’re better predictors for future results. Cameron 2/14

Joseph, Cameron. “Dems Keep Special Election Hot Streak Alive, Winning GOP-Leaning Florida Seat.” Talking Points Memo, 14 Feb. 2018, talkingpointsmemo.com/dc/dems-keep-special-election-hot-streak-alive-winning-gop-leaning-florida-seat. Cameron Joseph is Talking Points Memo's senior political correspondent based in Washington, D.C. He covers Capitol Hill, the White House and the permanent campaign. Previous publications include the New York Daily News, Mashable, The Hill and National Journal. //nhs-VA

Democrats won another hotly contested statehouse seat on Tuesday night, capturing a district on Florida’s Gulf Coast for their 36th state legislative seat flip of the Trump era. Democrat Margaret Good defeated James Buchanan, the son of wealthy Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-FL), by a seven-point margin in a suburban Sarasota-based district President Trump carried by almost five points. The win is the latest for Democrats, who’ve captured Trump-leaning territory across the country, from Wisconsin to New Hampshire to Missouri to Virginia to Washington. And the 12-point shift towards Democrats in this contest is right in line with the average shift that’s occurred in statehouse races across the country towards Democrats since the 2016 elections. Democrats took another victory lap. “Representative-elect Margaret Good’s campaign was dedicated to the people of Sarasota County who are tired of Florida Republicans peddling a Trump agenda counter to their values,” Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee head Jessica Good said in a statement. These wins show how committed Democrats are to turning out against Trump right now across the country, a factor that’s unlikely to change before this November’s midterm elections and a sign that at least one of the factors for a large wave election is firmly in place. And while this suburban seat isn’t as deep red as some others — a Democrat won it in 2006 and President Obama nearly won the county in 2008 — it’s a sign that Democrats can expand the map to areas they haven’t been able to compete in since those wave elections. This race was highly targeted by both parties, with heavy spending on both sides, an endorsement from Vice President Biden and a visit from former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski in the election’s closing days.

#### Dems are riding the wave – new Harvard poll of young voters, who care about policy not party. 4/10

McCormick, More. "Harvard Poll Of Young Voters Shows Democratic Energy For Midterms." Bloomberg.com. April 10 N. p., 2018. Web. 14 Apr. 2018. //nhs-VA

More young voters say they’ll definitely vote in November than have in the last two midterm elections and they increasingly would rather have Democrats than Republicans in control of Congress, a [poll](http://iop.harvard.edu/spring-2018-poll) released Tuesday by Harvard University’s Institute of Politics shows. The survey of adults ages 18 to 29 also reveals younger Americans have greater trust in Amazon and Google than Facebook and Twitter. Those findings come as [Facebook Inc.](https://www.bloomberg.com/quote/FB%3AUS) Chief Executive Officer [Mark Zuckerberg](https://www.bloomberg.com/billionaires/id/15103277) is set to [testify](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-04-09/zuckerberg-to-say-in-testimony-facebook-problems-are-his-mistake) at the Capitol on Tuesday and Wednesday to answer questions about data privacy, fake news, foreign interference in elections, and hate speech. More than a third of young Americans eligible to cast ballots in November -- 37 percent -- say they’ll “definitely be voting” in the elections seven months from now that will decide control of the House of Representatives and the Senate. That’s higher than the poll recorded at about the same point in 2010 and 2014, the two most recent midterm elections, when 31 percent and 23 percent answered that way. “This generation of young Americans is as engaged as we have ever seen them in a midterm election cycle," said John Della Volpe, the institute’s polling director. But expectations of a great surge in voting by America’s youth have been dashed in the past. Turnout in presidential election years is always higher and even former presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama -- two candidates who had a strong appeal to young voters -- were only able to draw just more than [half](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2017/05/voting_in_america.html) of this age group to vote in their first elections. In years when the White House is in play, it’s typical for 7 in 10 senior citizens to vote. Young, self-identified Democrats are driving almost all of the increased enthusiasm, the survey found, with 51 percent saying they’ll “definitely” vote. That’s a 9 percentage point increase since November 2017 and is significantly larger than the 36 percent of Republicans who say the same. At this point in the 2014 election, midway through Obama’s second term, 28 percent of Democrats and 31 percent of Republicans indicated that they would “definitely” be voting, while 35 percent of Democrats and 41 percent of Republicans held a similar interest in voting in the spring of 2010. In that election, Republicans took control of the House from the Democrats. Preference for Democratic control of Congress has grown since the institute’s young voter poll last November, with 69 percent supporting Democrats and 28 percent Republicans. That 41-point gap is up from 32 points in the last survey.

The survey of 2,631 Americans ages 18 to 29 was taken March 8-25. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points on the full sample.

#### Yes dem wave – distaste for trump is the key motivating factor

Cillizza 4-25-18

Chris, CNN Politics Reporter and Editor-at-Large, Just how big is the Democratic wave going to be this fall?, https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/25/politics/arizona-8-special-election-2018-midterms/index.html, msm [graphs omitted]

If you're wondering whether the 2018 midterm elections will be a Democratic wave, you're asking the wrong question. The fall contests will undoubtedly be a national referendum on Donald Trump's first two years in office and, if polling (and history) is to be believed, Democrats will reap the electoral rewards from the negative views of the President among a majority of the country. The real question you should be asking yourself is how large will this wave be? Will it be small (15-20-seat Democratic pickup), medium (25-35-seat pickup) or large (35-plus-seat pickup)? (Reminder: Democrats need to net 23 seats to retake the House majority.) Judging by what happened in an Arizona special election on Tuesday night, the "large" wave option now looks to be very much in play. "If the only data point you had to go on was last night's #AZ08 result, you'd think a 30-40 seat Dem House gain in Nov. would be way low," tweeted David Wasserman, the House editor of the non-partisan Cook Political Report. Here's why. Yes, Republican Debbie Lesko beat Democrat Hiral Tipirneni in the 8th District special election triggered by former Republican Rep. Trent Franks resignation amid claims of sexual harassment. But, Lesko's margin -- 5.2 percentage points -- is far less than the 25 points Mitt Romney won the district by in 2012 or the 21-point margin for Trump in 2016. In a vacuum, that result could be dismissed as simply a one-off -- a special election with two little-known candidates yadda yadda yadda. The problem is that what happened in Arizona on Tuesday -- dramatic Democratic overperformance of the party's candidate -- is far from an isolated incident. Check this out: According to CNN's own resident big brain Harry Enten, "the average improvement for the Democrats has been 17 percentage points versus the partisan baseline. That's better than any party out of power has done in the lead-up to a midterm cycle since at least 1994." The lesson here is obvious: Driven by their distaste for Trump, the Democratic base is turning out in droves. The Republican base, fat and happy with control of the House, Senate and the White House, is less galvanized. And, loosely-affiliated partisans seem to be acting much more like Democrats than Republicans in the elections since Trump won the White House. The threat to Republicans should also be obvious: A month removed from Democratic Rep. Conor Lamb winning a southwestern Pennsylvania seat that Trump carried by 20 points in 2016, Lesko eked out a victory in a seat where Trump won by 21. If seats like Pennsylvania's 18th and Arizona's 8th are competitive, then the number of Republican vulnerabilities is bigger than anyone thought. "There are 147 GOP-held House seats less Republican than #AZ08," tweeted Wasserman. "It's time to start rethinking how many of those are truly safe in November." (A bit of quick math produces this: 62% of the 237 seats Republicans will hold -- once Lesko is sworn in -- are less friendly for the GOP than Arizona's 8th.) Tweeted The New York Times' Nate Cohn: "There are a bunch of open districts that aren't considered top-tier races by most analysts --TX-2, TX-6, FL-6, OH-16, TX-21, FL-15 -- that, by the numbers, look plausibly competitive in a wave election. On paper, they're better Dem targets than, say, AZ-8/KS-4/PA-18." If the Republican playing field is anywhere close to that 147 number, that makes it at least twice as large as most non-partisan political handicappers currently believe it to be. CNN rates 73 Republican seats as potentially competitive. The Cook Report puts 84 Republican districts in that competitive category while Inside Elections, another independent campaign tipsheet, has 58 competitive GOP seats. What we know is that in a wave, seats get washed away that many people didn't even know were competitive. The larger the number of vulnerable districts, the more that could potentially get washed away. And, from a more practical standpoint, Republicans and their aligned super PACs have only so much money to spend in 2018. The more of their own seats that come online as competitive, the more hard decisions party committees and super PACs will have to make about who gets money and who doesn't. Simply stated: Arizona's 8th District results suggests that the coming wave is big -- and getting bigger.

#### Generic ballot is tight but enthusiasm for Dems is up, especially after another special election win. Bradner 3/29

Eric Bradner, CNN. "CNN Poll: Democrats' Edge Dips To 6 Points In Midterm Race For Control Of Congress." CNN. N. p., March 29 2018. Web. 14 Apr. 2018. Eric Bradner is a politics reporter for CNN, based in Washington and focused on the 2018 midterm elections and the 2020 Democratic presidential contest. He also covers the Republican and Democratic parties, their national committees and their donors. //nhs-VA

The Democratic advantage on the generic congressional ballot has tightened to 6 percentage points, [a new CNN poll conducted by SSRS finds](http://cdn.cnn.com/cnn/2018/images/03/29/rel4c.-.2018.pdf). The poll finds that 50% of registered voters say they prefer a Democrat in their congressional district, while 44% say they want a Republican. That's a major shift in favor of the GOP since February, when Democrats held a 16-point edge. It's much closer to January, when their lead was just 5 points. But Democratic voters are much more enthusiastic about casting ballots in November's midterm elections. About half -- 51% -- of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents say they are extremely or very enthusiastic about voting for Congress in November, compared with just 36% among Republicans and Republican-leaning independents. And at the same time, those voters who are deeply enthusiastic about voting give Democrats a better than 20-point lead on the generic ballot: 60% prefer the Democrat in their district, while 38% who prefer the Republican. Overall, just 18% of voters approve of Congress, while 75% disapprove. And an even smaller share of those enthusiastic to vote in the fall, 11%, approve of the way Congress is handling its job. Though Republicans control Congress, voters say they believe Democrats would do a better job of dealing with a host of key issues. Among them: Health care (56% Democrats to 36% Republicans, a sharp change from 2010 when the two parties were nearly even on the issue following passage of the Affordable Care Act), the Russia investigation (51% Democrats to 35% Republicans), immigration (51% Democrats to 40% Republicans) and gun policy (48% Democrats to 40% Republicans). The GOP is favored on just one issue: National security, at 48% to 40% Democrats. The public is split over whether they prefer the Democrats or the Republicans in Congress on the economy (45% choose each party) and the federal budget (43% prefer the Democrats and 42% the Republicans). The findings come just two weeks after Democrats won a stunning victory in a special congressional election west of Pittsburgh, where Conor Lamb -- fueled in part by energized labor unions -- narrowly defeated Republican Rick Saccone in a district President Donald Trump won by 20 percentage points in 2016. The poll showed that Trump's approval rating has ticked up to 42% -- the highest since the 100-day mark of his presidency.

*The CNN poll was conducted by SRSS on March 22-25 among a random national sample of 1,014 respondents, including 913 registered voters, reached on landlines or cell phones by a live interviewer. Results for the full sample have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.7 percentage points. For registered voters, the margin of error is 3.8 points.*

#### Most recent polls prove

Greenwood 4-25-18

Max, Hill Politics Reporter, Nearly half of voters hope for Dems to win majority in 2018: poll, http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/384851-nearly-half-of-voters-hope-for-dems-to-win-majority-in-2018-poll, msm

Nearly half of American voters — 48 percent — would like to see Democrats win control of the House in 2018, according to a Quinnipiac University poll out Wednesday. That compares to 40 percent of respondents who said they want Republicans to maintain power in the chamber, the poll found. Democrats also take the lead among independents, 48 percent of whom said they want control of the House to flip in the midterm elections, according to the poll. Thirty-six percent are hoping for Republicans to maintain control. Likewise, 48 percent of voters overall said that they hope Democrats take control of the Senate, according to the Quinnipiac poll, though the margin was slightly smaller. Forty-two percent of respondents voiced support for Republican control of the Senate. The Quinnipiac poll surveyed 1,193 voters nationwide from April 20-24. Its margin of error is 3.4 percentage points. The poll's findings come as Democrats, energized by President Trump's low approval ratings, work to seize control of Congress in the November elections. The party has also been encouraged by recent Democratic victories in key special elections. In March, for example, Democrat Conor Lamb slid ahead of Republican Rick Saccone to win a House seat previously held by former Rep. Tim Murphy (R-Pa.).

#### Winning now—multiple warrants.

Agosta 11/15 COLUMN: As Democrats listen to voters and win, 2018 might be a wave election By Jeremy Agosta | Published 11/15/17 6:04pm JeremyAgosta http://www.cm-life.com/article/2017/11/column-2018-could-be-a-blue-wave-for-democrats- Justin

In 2016, voters were stuck between a rock and a hard place. I witnessed this first hand. I remember my grandma asking me, “Who do I vote for?” To be honest, I couldn’t confidently give her an answer. I was shocked I didn’t immediately tell her the Democratic candidate represented her best interests and was her best choice. My grandmother felt Hillary Clinton was corrupt and disconnected. I think she was right. In 2016, the Democratic Party did very little to convince Americans they understood what voters wanted. Today, this seems to be changing. They’re showing signs of life by reassuming the role of the working class party. The chief example is the Better Deal, a new policy platform for Democrats which takes the populist policies of Sen. Bernie Sanders and makes them into official party legislative goals. This platform was drafted by Sen. Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi in July. It states Democrats will promote “major infrastructure investment programs, a national paid family leave program and rules to ensure fair work schedules and a raise to the minimum wage.” Democrats are also moving to capitalize on the popularity of Sanders’ single-payer health care message. The single-payer health care legislation drafted by Sanders received 15 Democratic cosigners in the senate, and over 100 Democratic cosigners in the House of Representatives. The Better Deal and support for single-payer healthcare reaffirms the Democratic Party’s commitment to economic policies. But Democrats are also changing in another way — they’re winning. Democrats won two gubernatorial races and a multitude of other statewide seats in Virginia and New Jersey. This might be signs of a wave election in the 2018 midterms. The Virginia gubernatorial race ending with democratic candidate Ralph Northam besting republican candidate Ed Gillespie may be the most significant event. The race mirrored 2016. Northam, seen as a moderate and party insider, ran a relatively restrained campaign and distanced himself from the more controversial elements in his party. He used many of the Better Deal policies in his platform to appeal to Virginia’s working class. Gillespie modeled his campaign off President Donald Trump’s presidential campaign, engaging in social issues like the removal of Confederate monuments and illegal immigration. The election was supposed to be a close race, won by 3 percent with a margin of error of 3 percent, according to FiveThirtyEight.com. Northam won by 9 percent. The gubernatorial election in Virginia is seen largely as a reaction to the incumbent president’s first year in office and a predictor of the midterm elections. This stark electoral victory shows that voters might be turned off because of Trump’s unpopularity that he’s become an anchor. This election bodes well for Democrats in the 2018 midterms. The gubernatorial election and the multitude of statewide seat wins could be because Democrats are listening to voters and running the right candidates, and republicans have a large anchor around their neck. Winning in 2018 will be about mobilizing and energizing voters. The Democratic Party has made the changes to do that. Right now, it seems the Democratic Party has learned from the mistakes of 2016. The 2018 midterms could be a great year for Democrats to challenge republican electoral dominance. As long as democrats continue to stress their commitment to the working class and minorities, and Trump’s unpopularity continues to be a dead weight, Republicans should be scared of a blue wave.

#### 10% lead now, but can shrink.

Friedmann 11-28 (Sarah Midterm Polls Suggest Democrats Would Sweep The Elections If They Were Held Today, Bustle, https://www.bustle.com/p/midterm-polls-suggest-democrats-would-sweep-the-elections-if-they-were-held-today-5554341) zh 11-29-2017

Congressional **Republicans** **could be facing an uphill battle in the 2018 midterm elections**. According to a new generic congressional ballot poll, **Democrats would win the midterm elections if they were held today, as the poll shows Democratic candidates leading Republicans by nearly 10 percent.** However, while this poll certainly indicates that Democrats could stand to be victorious in the 2018 midterm elections, **it is imperative that Democratic candidates do not become complacent**; many factors could ultimately influence the outcome of these elections.

#### Dem majority now which shuts down Trump – opportunities still exist for the GOP

Harwood 10/13 Editor at Large for CNBC covering Washington (John, Trump’s missteps are giving Democrats a better shot at winning back the House, https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/13/trumps-missteps-are-giving-democrats-a-better-shot-at-winning-back-the-house.html)

While President Donald Trump takes a baseball bat to Obamacare and the Iran nuclear deal, odds are rising that he could break the Republican majority in Congress, too. Midterm elections remain just more than a year away. But a leading nonpartisan analyst now sees a slightly better than even chance that Democrats win back the House in November 2018, which would halt Trump's current legislative agenda and even jeopardize his ability to complete his term. "Democrats are on the cusp of where they need to be to take the House back," said the Cook Political Report's David Wasserman, who reviews House races district by district. New ratings Wasserman published Friday alter the outlook of 12 individual House campaigns, in all regions of the country. Eleven of the 12 shifted to the benefit of Democrats. To win back the Speaker's gavel for Nancy Pelosi, Democrats need a net gain of 24 seats in 2018. Wasserman sees a widening playing field in which the Democratic candidate has a chance in 61 GOP-held districts, compared to 20 Democratic-held seats where Republicans have a chance. As in the 2010 midterm campaign during President Barack Obama's first term, the opposition party benefits from intense hostility to a controversial White House incumbent two years in office. Though Republicans have held onto four GOP districts with special elections this year, Democrats have displayed renewed energy by running closer in those districts than they have in the past. "Everything we're seeking now is a mirror image of 2009," Wasserman observed. That includes widening support from the 10 percent share of the electorate he calls "check and balance voters" who seek to constrain the president. The next 12 months give Republicans time to improve their fortunes. In particular, GOP leaders in Congress hope that success in passing tax-cut legislation will re-energize their own voter base after dispiriting failures to repeal Obamacare. But Trump has been battling his own party as well as the Democrats. And he remains historically unpopular for a president this early in his tenure. Gallup on Friday measured the share of Americans who approve Trump's performance at 39 percent, compared with 52 percent for Obama and 47 percent for Bill Clinton at the same points in their first terms. Both those Democratic presidents saw their party lose the House in their first midterm election. President George W. Bush stood at 39 percent at the same point in 2005, during his second term. A year later, his fellow Republicans lost the House. Because current Congressional district lines leave Democratic voters more concentrated in fewer districts, Wasserman figures Democrats need to win the national 2018 popular vote by 7 to 8 percent to gain a majority of seats. That's the size of their lead right now in the national polling average by Real Clear Politics, which shows 46.5 percent favoring Democrats and 38.7 percent favoring Republicans. Democrats also face a tough 2018 battle to recapture the Senate, where Republicans now hold a 52-48 advantage and have fewer seats at risk. Of Senate seats on the ballot, the Cook Report gives Republicans a chance to win 13 held by Democrats, compared to four GOP-held seats where Democrats have a chance. Given the power of the minority in the Senate, however, the consequences of a Democratic House takeover would be greater in any event. As Obama discovered after 2010, a hostile House majority can summarily roadblock a president's legislative priorities.

#### Retirements mean Dem house control in the squo

NYT 11/5 (Departures Promise to Reshape the House, Whether or Not Election Does, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/05/us/politics/house-republican-retirements-midterms-hensarling-smith.html)

With a year left before the midterm elections, the line of senior House Republicans heading for the exits continues to grow. Democrats argue that the wave of retirements will help them retake the House. But regardless of who controls the chamber come January 2019, it is becoming increasingly clear that the House will be a different place, with some of its biggest personalities and powerful committee and subcommittee leaders leaving it behind. “Part of our original thinking was there is always new talent, there are always new people,” said Newt Gingrich, a former House speaker who in 1994 instituted a three-term limit for top Republican committee positions. “I don’t know that having fresh blood is necessarily a bad thing.” He did add, however: “It means we’ll have a few more tough races next year. It means you have less legislative experience, and it is much harder to manage.” Beyond Mr. Smith and Mr. Hensarling, those seeking to depart include Representatives Lynn Jenkins of Kansas, a longtime member of leadership; Jason Chaffetz of Utah, who was the chairman of the high-profile Oversight Committee; Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a moderate but strong voice in Republican foreign policy; Diane Black of Tennessee, the first woman to lead the Budget Committee; and Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania, an Appropriations subcommittee chairman and the leader of House Republican moderates. In all, 27 House Republicans have left, announced their retirements or declared that they were seeking higher office, compared with seven Democrats. Those numbers are expected to rise in the coming weeks, as filing and fund-raising deadlines for next year’s election approach. Just how high could depend on the success or failure of Republicans’ latest legislative push, an ambitious rewrite of the federal tax code that Speaker Paul D. Ryan of Wisconsin has pledged to get through the chamber in a matter of weeks. Should the effort fail, current and former lawmakers said, the number of demoralized Republicans leaving the chamber could jump.

#### GOP loses now because of backlash to Trump—the election is a referendum on his policies—our evidence assumes all their warrants.

Budowsky 17, Brent former Senate aide & LLM, International Finance Law, London School of Economics, “Anti-Trump wave in 2018? THE HILL, 3—1—17, http://thehill.com/opinion/brent-budowsky/321910-budowsky-anti-trump-wave-in-2018, accessed 6-12-17.

There is a high probability that in the midterm elections of 2018, a substantial wave of voters will turn out in large and potentially unprecedented numbers to register their opposition to President Donald Trump and his supporters in the Republican House and Senate. Trump remains the most unpopular and distrusted new president in the history of presidential polling. Trump and Republicans in Congress are trapped together in a Gordian knot. Trump has political ownership of Republicans in Congress, and they have political ownership of him in the eyes of voters. It is important to understand the fundamental difference between presidential elections and midterm elections. A presidential election decides who will lead the nation, and in what big-picture direction. A midterm election, by contrast, is a “yes or no” referendum passing judgment on the party in power. The last three midterm elections brought landslide wave victories for the “out” party. In 2006, the wave election catapulted Democrats to power in Congress as a reaction against the presidency of George W. Bush. In 2010 and 2014, the wave elections similarly catapulted Republicans to power in Congress as a reaction against the presidency of Barack Obama. Historically, the first midterm election of a new president almost always results in the party of that president losing seats in Congress. The last three midterms have imposed extreme losses on the party of the incumbent president. Because of the size and intensity of widespread public disapproval of Trump, which is unprecedented since the presidency of Richard Nixon, the odds favor the 2018 midterms following the pattern of elections in 2006, 2010 and 2014. It is true that in the 2018 Senate elections, far more Democratic seats are in play than GOP seats, and that gerrymandering after the 2010 census gives Republicans an edge. But what makes wave elections different is that extremes in public opinion and extremes of voter intensity against incumbent presidents or parties override all other factors and lead to stunning upsets. There will be an anti-Trump wave in 2018. The only question is whether it is a gigantic and titanic wave which, if current trends continue, as they probably will, is likely. Words cannot fully express the magnitude of increased turnout from anti-Trump voters in 2018, many of whom feel continuing anger and rage about how Trump was elected with the support of a Russian dictator, after the grotesquely shameful intervention of the FBI director, followed by the attempt by Republicans to steal a Supreme Court seat by refusing to even consider the exceptionally qualified nominee of former President Obama. Nor can words fully express the increased turnout that is coming in 2018 from anti-Trump voters who angry, alarmed and fearful of a president and Republican Congress who are taking the nation in a far different direction than most voters supported in 2016. These voters are sickened and frightened by a president who foments racial and religious intolerance and calls political opponents and leading media the “enemies of the people,” mirroring language used by foreign dictators, not American presidents. The Trump base, which represents less than 40 percent of voters, is radically at odds with the rest of the nation. Take ObamaCare. According to a new Marist poll, 60 percent of Americans want ObamaCare to remain as it is or become more progressive. Only 36 percent want ObamaCare repealed or made more conservative.

#### Opposition to Trump will drive turnout—allows Dems to retake the House

Budowsky 17 Brent former aide to Senator Bentsen and LLM, International Financial Law, London School of Economics, “Trump’s 2018 GOP Curse,” THE HILL, 6—14—17, http://thehill.com/opinion/brent-budowsky/337855-budowsky-trumps-2018-gop-curse, accessed 7-13-17.

In the 2018 midterm elections Democrats have a strong chance of regaining control of the House of Representatives, and performing significantly better than expected in Senate elections, because Republicans are cursed by tying their fate to the historically unpopular President Donald Trump. The best way to describe American politics in 2017 is that there is an anti-Trump wave gathering steam across the nation, with his disapproval ratings in a recent Gallup poll reaching 60 percent. The GOP curse is the Democrat’s blessing. Vehement opposition to Trump will powerfully drive voter turnout in 2018. The best way to describe international politics in 2017 is that there is a wave of disapproval of Trump and far-right extremism throughout the democratic world. Austria roundly rejected the far right in its latest presidential election. Then the Netherlands rejected far-right extremism. Then French voters rejected the far-right candidate for president, Marine Le Pen, who was publicly touted by Trump before she was crushed by the landslide victory of Emmanuel Macron. In Britain, conservative Prime Minister Theresa May was humiliated in a snap election after she moved to the right by aggressively championing Brexit and appealing to voters of the far-right UKIP party. Shakespeare wrote there is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune. The tide of the right, the far right and the alt-right has ended and reversed across America and throughout the democratic world. The dark cloud over the Trump presidency appears poised to engulf the Republican Party in the 2018 elections. GOP members of the House of Representatives will be tarred and tainted by the radical, extreme and cruel RyanCare bill that was drafted in secret and rammed through the House. Even Trump, who lavished praise on the RyanCare bill when it passed the House, now describes it as “mean,” leaving House Republicans out on a politically disastrous limb.

#### Dems win now—new Colorado modeling proves.

Miller 10-16 Blair. Award Winning Digital Journalist. "New 2018 House Model Shows Pickups for Democrats, a Possible Challenge for Mike Coffman." 7NEWS. N.p., 16 Oct. 2017. Web. 17 Oct. 2017. DLuo

DENVER – New modeling for 2018 shows Democrats have a better chance than they did in recent weeks of picking up some seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, and that there might be a chance a Democrat knocks off Republican Mike Coffman in Colorado’s 6th Congressional District. Decision Desk HQ put out a new model Monday for the 2018 House midterms, which forecasts that Democrats will end up with 208 seats in the House, up from 194 currently in the House. Most of its forecasts for Colorado aren’t much of a surprise, as incumbents are expected to remain in their seats, lest they be ousted in a primary by a challenger from their own party. But the 6th Congressional District, which Coffman is currently representing for the sixth time, might be in play, according to the models. They show that Democrats have a 60.7 percent win probability in the district and that Democrats will take 52 percent of the vote. That would in theory bode well for the Democrats in the field, which currently include Jason Crow, Levi Tillemann and David Aarestad, who are trying to unseat the Republican Coffman in a district that Hillary Clinton drew 55 percent of the vote in last year. But the district was also considered as being “in play” for Democrats last year, when Coffman defeated Democratic challenger Morgan Carroll 50.9 percent to 42.6 percent. Some conservatives scoffed at the idea that Coffman might be an early underdog Monday, seeing as how Coffman hasn’t been seriously-challenged since 2012, when he narrowly defeated Joe Miklosi. “[Democrats] should sue Decision Desk HQ & others for tricking them into spending so much [money] in #CO06 every cycle,” said Americans For Prosperity Senior Director of Issue Education Michael Fields. But the 6th was the only 2018 Colorado district Decision Desk said was moderately in play in Monday’s release. According to their analysis, Rep. Diana DeGette (D) has a 100 percent chance of winning re-election; a Democrat is 98.5 percent-likely to win the 2nd district that Jared Polis currently holds; and Republicans have a 73.5-percent chance to win the 3rd district where Scott Tipton is trying to get re-elected. Republicans have a 94.2 percent chance to hold Rep. Ken Buck’s 4th district seat, and a slightly-better chance of holding the 5th Congressional District that Doug Lamborn currently represents. Rep. Ed Perlmutter has a 93-percent chance of holding onto Colorado’s 7th Congressional District, according to Decision Desk. The new forecasts come on the last day that candidates have to report their quarterly earnings to the Federal Election Commission. The filings are due by the end of the day, and the subsequent reports should provide more insight into who is challenging whom in the various districts ahead of next spring’s primaries and caucuses.

#### Several structural trends mean Dems win the house now—popularity and agenda reverse that.

CBS 10-16 News, CBS. "Can Democrats Win Back the House?" CBS News. CBS Interactive, 16 Oct. 2017. Web. 17 Oct. 2017. DLuo

Is there any way Democrats can win back the House? They can, although it probably won't be easy. How many seats would the Democrats need to win? 24. That sounds like a lot? It is. However, Democrats do have some things going for them. Such as? For one thing, if history is any indication, the Democrats should win back the House. The president's party typically suffers in off-year elections like the one we'll have in 2018. Recall President Barack Obama's Democrats losing Congress in 2010 or President George W. Bush's Republicans losing Congress in 2006. Or President Bill Clinton's Democrats losing in 1994. CBS News Nation Tracker poll: Americans feel tax reform plans would favor wealthy In fact, as columnist Michael Barone noted in National Review over the summer, the president's party has only won additional seats four times in off-year elections since 1952. The last time that happened is when Republicans picked up seats in the 2002 midterms. However, that was probably the result of the country rallying around President Bush in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Absent that kind of crisis, and given President Trump's stubbornly low approval ratings, it's hard to imagine the GOP picking up many House seats in 2018. Should Mr. Trump's approval ratings remain underwater, major Democratic gains are going to seem more and more like a real possibility. "More than any­thing else, midterm elec­tions are ref­er­enda on the in­cum­bent pres­id­ent," the political prognosticator Charlie Cook wrote in May. If that holds true in this election, which should not be taken for granted due to the uniqueness of this presidency, the GOP may well be in serious trouble given his anemic poll numbers. However, that doesn't necessarily mean that Democrats can win the House. Why is that? The short answer is that it's just really hard to beat incumbents. The old saying is that voters hate Congress but love their congressman. The first half of that sentence is undoubtedly true – a CBS News poll from August found that just about 1-in-5 Americans approve of the job Congress is doing. Still, they're typically reluctant to vote out their own representative. Democrats also suffer from a dearth of particularly vulnerable Republicans in 2018. The top Democratic targets will largely be made up of districts with a GOP representative that otherwise tilt Democratic. However, there's only about nine of those districts, the New York Times wrote last month, which is well short of the 24 seats they need to take back the House. To put that in perspective, Democrats represented 76 Republican-leaning districts when the 2010 election came around, meaning the GOP had dozens of vulnerable incumbents they could target. So Republicans will probably keep the House? We're still more than a year out from the election so it's impossible to know for sure. However, Democrats seem to have the momentum right now, the president is unpopular, and Congress seems unable to do much of anything. That all has Republicans increasingly worried about their grip on the House and Senate. "If we do nothing, if tax reform crashes and burns, if on Obamacare nothing happens, we could face a bloodbath. I think we have the potential of seeing a Watergate-style blowout," Sen. Ted Cruz, a Texas Republican, said Friday, referencing the historic losses the GOP faced after the Watergate scandal in the 1974 election. Democrats are also trying to sidestep the lack of typically vulnerable Republican incumbents by expanding the map as much as possible. They're looking to mount serious challenges against congressmen who haven't had a tough race in years, such as New Jersey Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen, the moderate scion of America's oldest political dynasty, and California Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, an outspoken fan of Vladimir Putin. Democrats are hoping that the numerous veterans they have running for Congress this cycle can flip some seats, including in erstwhile Republican country. For instance, some are hoping 30-year-old Afghan War vet Max Rose could take advantage of an ongoing GOP civil war and make a Trump-friendly New York district turn blue. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, which is the party organ most responsible for House races, says they are targeting 80 seats in 2018. But their incumbents give the GOP an edge right? Yes, although that edge is not as much as it used to be, as voters tend to be less reluctant to vote out incumbents then they have in the past. But the bigger issue for the GOP right now is that a number of Republican House members have already announced their retirements. That means that there will be fewer incumbents the Democrats need to pick off. In competitive districts from Florida to Michigan to Pennsylvania, moderate Republican lawmakers have been heading for the exits. Some of these lawmakers, like Reps. Dave Reichert and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, had been top Democratic targets for years and appeared all but unbeatable in their districts. And if the retirement trend continues, Democrats will have a much easier time flipping the House. Democrats are bullish on their chances in 2018. Still, have the last election cycle showed us, any thing can happen and it's best to not underestimate Mr. Trump's appeal.

### Millennials

#### Trump alienates millennials now, hurting the GOP

Brownstein 16, Ronald journalist, “How Trump Pushed Millennials Out of the Republican Party,” THE ATLANTIC, 11—3—16, www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/trump-alienates-millennials/506345/, accessed 7-14-17.

The problem for Republicans is that even if Trump succeeds in the near-term, his insular appeal to his preponderantly white coalition has exposed the party to a clear long-term risk. Win or lose, all evidence suggests Trump is further alienating a Millennial generation that is already cool to the GOP—and is poised to become the electorate’s largest cohort in 2020. “It’s not like they came into 2016 with a great brand, and with Trump it’s just gotten exponentially worse,” says Andrew Baumann, a Democratic pollster who has extensively studied Millennials this year. Sepulveda agrees. After Trump, he said, for Republicans “there will definitely be a hole to dig out of with young people.” Miami Dade College is an ideal place to measure that deficit. The Millennial generation is defined by its diversity; over two-fifths of Millennials are young people of color. This campus in downtown Miami embodies that diversity in its nearly 90,000 credit-taking students, most of them in two-year programs. Eduardo Padron, its dynamic president, says it awards more two-year degrees to Hispanics than any other college in America and more to African Americans than all but two. Even before Trump, as Baumann notes, Republicans faced a mounting challenge with Millennials. When the very oldest members of the generation (generally defined as those born between 1981 and around 2000) cast their first presidential ballots in 2000, voters under 30 split about evenly between Al Gore and George W. Bush. But as more Millennials entered the electorate, Democrats established a wide advantage. President Obama held his Republican opponents to just 32 percent with voters under 30 in 2008 and 37 percent in 2012. Polls suggest Trump will struggle to reach 30 percent with them—even as nearly 30 million more Millennials are registered to vote this year than in 2012.

#### GOP is bleeding young voters now—Pew study proves

Anderson 17**,** Soltis Kristen journalist, “Time to Panic? Young Republicans Ditching GOP Like Never Before,” WASHINGTON EXAMINER, 5—24—17, www.washingtonexaminer.com/time-to-panic-young-republicans-ditching-gop-like-never-before/article/2624000, accessed 7-14-17.

Another day, another piece of news about the Republican Party's continued problems with young voters. Generally, bad news for Republicans with this group isn't shocking. But a new study shows that the slow bleeding that has occurred for more than a decade has seemingly accelerated, with half of the young Republicans who remain having wandered away from the party in the last 14 months. A few weeks ago, I debunked the notion that younger voters would one day naturally drift back toward the GOP through the natural aging process — that as time passed, young people would become more and more Republican. Now, an incredible new study by the Pew Research Center shows that Republicans are not only failing to make gains with young people as time passes but are also shedding them at a rapid clip. To gain this data, Pew conducted a panel study where the same set of voters were interviewed multiple times over the course of 14 months. In doing so, the Pew team was able to ask people what their party affiliation was and to see how often people changed their answer when reinterviewed months later. In general, Pew finds that most party identification is "sticky" and voters rarely budge from their party affiliation. Except young Republicans. It's been reported often and for many years that Republicans are losing younger people, but what is most shocking about the Pew study is the narrow window in which this wave of defections occurred. In the relatively short time frame of December 2015 to March 2017, nearly half of all young Republicans left their party at some point, with roughly a quarter bidding the GOP adieu for good. No other group, by age or party, wavered so much or defected in such substantial numbers.

### AT: UQ o/w Link

#### Republicans still have time to turn it around.

Silver 11/8 Founder and Editor in Chief of FiveThirtyEight (Nate, The Fundamentals Favor Democrats In 2018, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-fundamentals-favor-democrats-in-2018/)

Democrats had a really good night on Tuesday, easily claiming the Virginia and New Jersey gubernatorial races, flipping control of the Washington state Senate and possibly also the Virginia House of Delegates, passing a ballot measure in Maine that will expand Medicaid in the state, winning a variety of mayoral elections around the country, and gaining control of key county executive seats in suburban New York. They also got pretty much exactly the results you’d expect when opposing a Republican president with a 38 percent approval rating. That’s not to downplay Democrats’ accomplishments. Democrats’ results were consistent enough, and their margins were large enough, that Tuesday’s elections had a wave-like feel. That includes how they performed in Virginia, where Ralph Northam won by considerably more than polls projected. When almost all the toss-up races go a certain way, and when the party winning those toss-up races also accomplishes certain things that were thought to be extreme long shots (such as possibly winning the Virginia House of Delegates), it’s almost certainly a reflection of the national environment. But we didn’t need Tuesday night to prove that the national environment was good for Democrats; there was plenty of evidence for it already. In no particular order of importance: President Trump’s approval rating is only 37.6 percent. Democrats lead by approximately 10 points on the generic Congressional ballot. Republican incumbents are retiring at a rapid pace; there were two retirements (from New Jersey Rep. Frank LoBiondo and Texas Rep. Ted Poe) on Tuesday alone. Democrats are recruiting astonishing numbers of candidates for Congress. Democrats have performed well overall in special elections to the U.S. Congress, relative to the partisanship of those districts; they’ve also performed well in special elections to state legislatures. The opposition party almost always gains ground at midterm elections. This is one of the most durable empirical rules of American politics. So while Northam’s 9-point margin of victory was a surprise based on the polls, which had projected him to win by roughly 3 points instead,1 it was right in line with what you might expect based on these “fundamental” factors. For instance, a simple model we developed based on the generic ballot and state partisanship forecasted a 9-point win for Democrats in Virginia and a 13-point win in New Jersey, pretty much matching their actual results in each state. To put it another way, Tuesday’s results shouldn’t have exceeded your expectations for Democrats by all that much because you should have had high expectations already. Midterm elections — and usually also off-year and special elections — almost always go well for the opposition party, and they’re going to go especially well when the president has a sub-40 approval rating. So, does that mean that Democrats are clear favorites to pick up the House next year? No, not necessarily. I’d say they’re favorites, but not particularly heavy ones. Democrats face one major disadvantage, and they have one major source of uncertainty. The uncertainty is time: There’s still a year to go until the midterms. This could cut either way, of course. The political environment often deteriorates for the president’s party during his second year in office, and one can imagine a variety of factors (from attempting to pass an unpopular tax plan to ongoing bombshells in the Russia investigation) that could further worsen conditions for Repub8licans. One can also imagine a variety of factors that would help the GOP: Democrats overplaying their hand on impeachment; a rally-around-the-flag effect after a war or terror attack; Trump quitting Twitter. (OK, probably not that last one.) That Trump is so unpopular so soon in his term makes all of this harder to predict because there aren’t any good precedents for a president with such a poor approval rating so early on. Democrats also face a big disadvantage in the way their voters are distributed across congressional districts, as a result of both gerrymandering and geographic self-sorting. Although these calculations can vary based on the incumbency advantage and other factors, my back-of-the-envelope math suggests that Democrats would only be about even-money to claim the House even if they won the popular vote for the House by 7 percentage points next year. The Republican ship is built to take on a lot of water, although it would almost certainly capsize if the Democratic advantage in the House popular vote stretched into the double digits, as it stands now in some congressional preference polls.

#### Their evidence underestimates the Dems chances & suburban voters are huge

Silver 11/8 Founder and Editor in Chief of FiveThirtyEight (Nate, The Fundamentals Favor Democrats In 2018, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-fundamentals-favor-democrats-in-2018/)

Nonetheless, my sense is that the conventional wisdom has, to this point, somewhat underrated the Democrats’ chances of having a wave election next year. And it’s for some fairly stupid (although understandable) reasons. One is in the tendency to fight the last war. Journalists and pundits are always chastened by the “lessons” of the most recent election, especially if the outcome was surprising to them. And they usually like to argue that the results represented a realignment or a paradigm shift, rather than — as is more often the case — a fluctuation that came about from a combination of cyclical and circumstantial factors that may not replicate themselves. So they’re often slow to recognize signs that the political climate is shifting in the opposite direction from the supposed realignment, even when they’re really obvious. (Like, say, a Republican winning a Senate seat in Massachusetts only a year after the Democratic president took office.) Second, the pundit class has a poor understanding of polling, and how it performed in 2016 — and it’s making 2018 punditry worse. As I wrote in our live blog on Tuesday night: [It’s] been interesting to see how television pundits adapt to the post-2016 environment. Pretty much everyone on Monday morning’s “Morning Joe” panel predicted that Gillespie would win in Virginia despite Northam’s modest lead in the polls, for instance… [The] segment was a bit worrisome in that it suggests that political pundits and reporters learned the wrong lessons from 2016. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the polls weren’t that far off last year — they were about as accurate as they’d been in past elections. But they were filtered thru a lens of groupthink that was convinced Trump couldn’t possibly win — and so pundits routinely misinterpreted polls and ignored data showing a competitive race. It’s healthy to take away the lesson from 2016 that polls are not always right… But that polls aren’t always right doesn’t mean that one’s gut instinct is a better way to forecast elections. On the contrary, the conventional wisdom has usually been much wronger than the polls, so much so that it’s given rise to what I’ve called the First Rule of Polling Errors, which is that polls almost always miss in the opposite direction of what pundits expect. That the “Morning Joe” panel thinks Gillespie will win might be a bullish indicator for Northam, in other words. If you think numbers like Trump’s 37.6 percent approval rating are “fake news” because polls perpetually underrated Trump before, then the political climate doesn’t look quite as scary for the GOP. However, one needs to be careful about assuming the polling error always runs in the same direction; historically, it’s been just as likely to reverse itself from one election to the next. (For instance, polls lowballed Democrats in 2012 but then did the same to Republicans in 2014.) Finally, there’s perhaps an unhealthy obsession with the white working-class vote, and its potential to sway the 2018 midterms in favor of Republicans. This could be more of a concern for Democrats in 2020. But the midterm electorate is typically more educated and better off financially than the presidential-year one. Also, most of the pickup opportunities that analysts envision for Democrats are in wealthy or at least middle-class areas. On average, the 61 Republican-held Congressional districts that the Cook Political Report rates as competitive rank in the 65th percentile in educational attainment (as measured by the share of adults with at least a bachelor’s degree) and also the 65th percentile in median household income. Some of them are fairly white, and some aren’t — but almost none are both white and working-class. Of course, this logic is somewhat circular: if Democrats aren’t trying to compete for the white working-class vote, outlets like Cook won’t list white working-class districts as being competitive. It’s possible there are some overlooked opportunities, such as in South Carolina’s 5th Congressional District, which Democrats came surprisingly close to winning in a special election earlier this year. Nonetheless, Democrats have quite a few pathways toward winning the House that rely primarily on middle-class and upper-middle-class suburban districts, plus a few districts with growing nonwhite populations. Many of these are in coastal states or in blue states, including four of them in Virginia, four in New Jersey, four in Illinois, five in New York and eight in California, according to Cook’s list. It might not be advisable for Democrats to only target these sorts of districts; history suggests that parties usually benefit from competing ambitiously in all sorts of districts and seeing where the chips fall. But it’s plausible for them to do so and reclaim the House. Come 2020, though, it will be harder for Democrats to win back the Electoral College without rebounding among the white working class. Last thing: while Tuesday’s results may not change the reality of the 2018 outlook all that much, it could change perceptions about it, and that could have some knock-on effects. (Politicians are often like “Morning Joe” panelists in how they think about elections.) Republicans’ retirement issues may get even worse; Democrats’ recruiting may get even better. Republicans might think twice about how they’re proceeding on tax reform — especially given that their current plans could have negative effects on just the sorts of wealthy coastal suburbs where Republicans performed poorly on Tuesday. And there will be lots of recriminations about the race that Ed Gillespie ran in Virginia, which could change Republicans’ thinking on how they should relate to Trump. Some of this is going to be silly: Gillespie did no worse (and no better) than you’d expect given Trump’s approval rating and Virginia’s blue lean. But if those politicians think Tuesday was a huge game-changing deal, they may begin to act like it and create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

#### Both the House and Senate can flip—long-term campaign analysts agree

Caruso 17 Jay journalist, “The Republican Dilemma,” THE ATLANTIC, 6—4—17, www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/06/reining-in-trump/528972/, accessed 7-14-17.

Currently, however, President Trump’s job approval is clinging to the 40 percent threshold. And while Republican members of Congress, save for a select few, are backing the president, his legislative agenda appears stalled, with the prospects of health-care reform tenuous at best. Tax reform, at this point, looks like a pipe dream. Trump's struggles have left Republicans, who had once hoped to gain seats in 2018, worrying they might lose control of both the House and Senate. "Obviously no one knows what is going to happen in next year's midterm elections, but analysts who have watched congressional elections for a long time are seeing signs that 2018 could be a wave election that flips control of the House to Democrats,” Charlie Cook wrote recently in National Journal. Trump keeps adding gasoline to fires, yet House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell behave as if it’s business-as-usual in Washington, D.C. If there is anything to explain their reticence in publicly rebuking Trump, it likely comes from GOP fears of alienating Trump voters across the country.

#### Democrats can win the midterms, but they need anti-Trump leverage – giving him legitimacy usurps that

Kilgore 17 – Ed Kilgore, Managing Editor of The Democratic Strategist, an online forum, and a Senior Fellow at the Progressive Policy Institute, April 2nd ("Here’s What Democrats Need to Do to Take Congress in 2018," Daily Intelligencer, Available online at http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/04/what-democrats-need-to-do-to-take-congress-in-2018.html, Accessed 7/9/2017)

Democrats emerged from the 2016 election confused, depressed, and virtually powerless. But it hasn’t taken long for them to regain their psychological mojo, aided as they have been by a combination of fear, anger, and Donald Trump’s inept first few months in office. “The resistance” started at the grassroots, taking visible form in protests at events held by Republican members of Congress in their home districts. After the GOP’s initial plan to repeal Obamacare was scrapped in March, the excitement spread to Washington, D.C. When Florida senator Bill Nelson, a mild-mannered centrist, announced he would filibuster the Supreme Court nomination of Neil Gorsuch, it was clear that Democrats had found a new spirit of unity and defiance. The expected postelection “struggle for the soul” of the Democratic Party has now been replaced by optimism that the party might actually make a comeback in the next election. “There’s a storm that’s going to hit Republicans in 2018,” Representative Joaquin Castro, a Texas Democrat, told the New York Times. “The only question is if it is going to be Category 2 or Category 5.” Thanks to a highly adverse Senate landscape in 2018 — Democrats must defend 25 seats, ten in states carried by Trump — the House offers the best opportunity to disrupt the GOP’s congressional stranglehold. Democrats will need 24 seats to win a majority there — 23 if Jon Ossoff wins his special election in Georgia later this month. In February, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee announced it was putting full-time organizers on the ground in 20 GOP districts as part of a midterm strategy it calls “March Into ’18.” The plan will attempt to channel the resistance into election campaigns — especially in the 23 House districts represented by Republicans that Trump lost to Clinton in 2016. Will Anti-Trump Fury Help Flip the Electoral Map for Democrats? House Republicans will not give up their majority easily. The GOP continues to benefit from district maps aggressively gerrymandered after it picked up six governorships and 20 state legislative chambers in 2010. In 2012, the first cycle after the redistricting, the GOP won 234 House seats despite actually losing the national popular vote. In states like Florida, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, GOP House delegations continue to be far larger than the party’s statewide popular vote would suggest. Aside from defending its own seats (the National Republican Congressional Committee’s “Patriot Program” is dumping money into the races of ten Republican incumbents it perceives as vulnerable), the GOP will go on the offensive against ten House Democrats who represent districts carried by Trump. Another presumed advantage for Republicans is in turnout patterns: Young and minority voters rarely participate proportionately in non-presidential elections; the whiter voters who have been trending bright red do. But precisely because the Trump presidency is not normal, Democrats have reason to believe Republicans won’t benefit from their normal advantages. Trump’s brand of conservatism, if that’s what it is, has turned off many college-educated white voters, who tend to turn out in midterms. That may pose a particular problem for suburban moderate Republicans, like Peter Roskam, who represents suburbs west of Chicago, and Erik Paulsen, whose district on the outskirts of Minneapolis went for Clinton over Trump by nine points. Democratic base enthusiasm is becoming a tangible asset. Grassroots volunteer activity is up sharply, as reflected in the 2,000 canvassers working for Ossoff in Georgia’s Sixth District special election. Democratic fund-raising expectations were initially low after the 2016 results, when some large donors openly questioned their return on investment and demanded an “autopsy” of what went wrong. But there has been an astonishing upsurge in small contributions to Democratic and progressive causes, much of it online. Initial candidate recruitment for tough races is also looking good, especially among women newly mobilized for public service by the global marches of January. The Democrats also have one trend on their side: Midterm elections are mostly referenda on the occupant of the White House. Barring exceptional luck or exceptionally good conditions, almost all presidents lose popularity by the midterms. Of the last 20 midterms, the president’s party lost House seats in 18 (the exceptions were in 1998 and 2002, when presidents Clinton and George W. Bush, respectively, had unusually high job-approval ratings). Trump’s approval ratings are famously low for a new president, and if they continue to lag, Republicans are going to lose House seats in 2018. In 2006, the same George W. Bush whose party did so well in 2002 lost 30 House seats and control of the chamber after he limped into the midterms with a job-approval rating of 37 percent, roughly where Trump is today. The steady trend toward straight-ticket voting means it will be difficult for House Republicans to separate themselves from an unpopular president. But it’s too early to tell just how much the taint of Trump will spread or if it will be enough for Democrats to win a majority. The possibility that enthusiasm, unity, a more favorable mix of voters, and Trump’s misdeeds could produce a turnout revolution for Democrats will get early tests this year in Georgia’s special congressional election and the off-year state elections in New Jersey and Virginia. The March Cook Political Report race ratings list only 23 highly competitive seats, and 12 of them are held by Republicans. Cook shows 25 districts as “likely Republican.” Democrats will need to flip a number of the long shots to get to their magic number. But there is certainly a recent precedent for that. At this point in 2009, Cook showed only 23 House seats held by Democrats as being vulnerable. By Election Day in 2010, that number had swollen to 101, and the GOP made a net gain of 63, with 52 Democratic incumbents losing. “Tsunami” elections like those Democrats are hoping for in 2018 often build slowly. But across the country anti-Trump activists believe they can see big waves gathering. We may hear their distant thunder very soon. –Ed Kilgore

### ---senate

#### Heller, Moore, lose—Dems can take those seats.

Ellison 11-13 2017 Keith Ellison, vice chair of the democratic party and general badass, Believes Democrats Will Take Back the House and Senate, Denver.David Zalubowski / AP CLARE FORAN NOV 13, 2017 POLITICS https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/11/democrats-house-senate-2018-keith-ellison/545606/- Justin

Keith Ellison has a prediction. The deputy chair of the Democratic National Committee believes that Democrats will win back not just the House of Representatives in 2018, but the Senate as well. “We’re going to take the House and we’re going to take the Senate,” the Minnesota congressman told me during a recent interview, following Democratic victories in the New Jersey and Virginia governors’ races on Tuesday and down-ballot wins in other states. Hawks It wasn’t until June that chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Ben Ray Luján, a Democratic congressman from New Mexico, publicly said that “the House is in play in 2018,” or put another way: Democrats have a realistic shot at taking control back from Republicans in the midterm elections. Winning back the House is a tall order, but winning back the Senate is likely to be even more difficult, which is why most Democrats in Congress aren’t confidently predicting it will happen. The Senate map favors Republicans, who only have to defend eight seats while Democrats have to protect 25, including in states President Trump won by double-digit margins like North Dakota, West Virginia, Montana, and Indiana. Ellison has been right before when others weren’t. In a now-famous viral television exchange from 2015, Ellison said that Donald Trump had momentum, adding,“we better be ready for the fact that he might be leading the Republican ticket.” That pronouncement led ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos to laugh, before replying, “I know you don’t believe that.” Ellison believes there’s still a lot of work to be done, however, to engage the Democratic grassroots, and rebuild trust in the party and the DNC. During the interview, Ellison said that the DNC should put a formal policy in place to ensure that no candidate or campaign ever has an inside track or unfair control over the party. A transcript of our conversation, lightly edited for clarity and length, follows. Clare Foran: What do you think are the takeaways from the elections in Virginia and New Jersey where Democrats won both of the governors’ races? Keith Ellison: When it comes to Virginia, I think it’s a foreshadowing of good things to come. The American people are patriotic and love their country. When you see a president trashing it, green-lighting white supremacy and Nazis, which he did do after Charlottesville, they step up and the Democratic Party has to be ready to step up and train, resource, and provide a fair election process for them. Foran: Were you surprised at how many Democratic gains there were in the Virginia House of Delegates? Political analysts did not think that was going to happen. Ellison: When I was campaigning with [Virginia governor-elect Ralph] Northam and [Virginia lieutenant governor-elect Justin] Fairfax, we were always talking about the down-ballot races, always talking about taking the House [of Delegates] back. A lot of people might have thought it was just exuberance and a sense of optimism, but I believed we could take it back. Foran: Do you think Democrats can take back the House of Representatives in 2018? Ellison: We’re going to take the House and we’re going to take the Senate. Foran: Really? It would be pretty hard to take back the Senate given the number of seats Democrats have to defend. Ellison: It will be hard. But look at Nevada, [Republican Senator] Dean Heller [who is facing reelection in 2018] doesn’t know whether he’s coming or going. He doesn’t know whether he wants to protect health care or oppose health care. Foran: Do you think the party is melding its progressive and establishment wings? Or do you think any Democrat who runs at this point has to adopt a progressive agenda because that’s where the party is headed? Ellison: There is more income and wealth inequality in this country than since the Great Depression. What some folks would label or call progressive is just responding to the economic realities of literally millions of Americans. Sixty-three percent of Americans don’t know what they’d do if they had an unexpected $500 bill. So is it progressive to say they should be able to handle that bill? I don’t know, call it whatever you want, I call it responsive government. Foran: Well, regardless of labels, do you think more Democrats are getting the message that they need to address those kinds of concerns? Ellison: Yes. My opinion is that any Democrat who is not responsive to the economic challenges of working Americans will not be able to win. Foran: How are you feeling about the Alabama special election race? Do you think Doug Jones, the Democratic candidate, has a shot? Could he win even in a deeply red state? [Editor’s note: This conversation took place before news broke on Thursday afternoon of sexual misconduct allegations against Roy Moore, the Republican candidate in the race.] Ellison: Alabama is a blue state in the making. It’s full of folks who want a better life, who want higher pay. I think Roy Moore is, he’s a perfect villain, he’s a gun-toting racist, law-violating theocratic person. And Doug Jones is a civil-rights hero. If we don’t win, it means only one thing, we have not gone to the grassroots and mobilized the people enough. Foran: Roy Moore made statements objecting to the fact that you were sworn into Congress because of your Muslim faith. Is it troubling to you to see that some Republicans in the Senate endorsed him? Ellison: Of course it’s deeply troubling to me, but it’s not surprising. The Republican party has been running on anti-Muslim hate for years. I’ll never forget Herman Cain saying hateful things about Muslims, or Newt Gingrich, this guy Frank Gaffney was an adviser to Ted Cruz. Foran: Do you think the party is doing enough to back Doug Jones in his race? Ellison: We’re trying. But only time will tell. The election will tell. I believe there are enough Alabamians who need a better economic future to elect Doug Jones. The question is will we reach them in time for the election. “[T]he DNC should never, ever, enter into a relationship with anybody in a primary, which advantages that one candidate above any other.

### ---virginia

#### Virginia predicts a wave---turnout’s up and anti-Trump messaging is succeeding

Severns 11-6 Maggie Politico reporter, 11/6/17, “For Democrats, Virginia’s Elections Are a Petri Dish,” https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/11/06/virginia-election-2017-state-legislature-house-delegates-northam-gillespie-215791

In the weeks ahead of Tuesday’s vote, top national Democrats have been repeating a mantra: If the party wants to create a wave next year, it starts in Virginia. Unlike the much-hyped special elections in Georgia and Montana earlier this year, where Republicans had built-in structural advantages, the governor’s race and delegate contests are taking place on relatively even political ground. Democratic groups have been eager to use the off-off-year election as a petri dish to experiment and predict what will happen in 2018, occasionally to the annoyance of Democratic campaigns. But most of the money and new technology has received a warm embrace: Obama’s national redistricting group, the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, has spent more than a million dollars in Virgina, much of it towards piloting a program with MobilizeAmerica, another new group, allowing out of state volunteers to phone bank and canvas for candidates. Jason Kander’s voting rights group, Let America Vote, opened up its first field office in the state this year. The night after his halting faceoff with Hugo, Tanner—this time, relaxed, chatty and insistent that he hadn’t been nervous the night before—mingled at an event hosted by one such experimental out-of-state organization, Silicon Valley-based Win the Future, at George Mason University. The group was cofounded earlier this year by LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman and a cohort of other executives and activists, who hope to mine Virginia voters for technology-based answers to the Democratic Party’s electoral ills. The event was arranged into stations manned by volunteers with laptops teaching people to make GIFs, memes and other share-able ways to spread enthusiasm for a candidate. About two dozen students, many of them from George Mason’s art and design program, circulated. Adam Werbach, a California-based activist and cofounder of Win the Future, told me that campaigns tend to embrace “innovation cloaked in what worked in a different industry 10 years ago.” The group is working to collect data at events like this on new approaches to getting out the vote. On this night, data collection ends early: The event was scheduled to end at 7:45 but cleared out half an hour earlier. There are some signs that this year will be different for Virginia Democrats. In the state house, Democrats lead Republicans 49 percent to 38 percent in a generic ballot match-up between the two parties, according to October polling by Christopher Newport University. Some local elections have also shown promise: In an open contest to replace a Republican-backed school board member in Fairfax County in August, a candidate backed by Democrats won with twice the number of voters as her opponent. Volunteers are in Virginia, too: volunteers and staff working with the state party made more than 200,000 phone calls on behalf of Democratic candidates as of the end of October, for example, more than three times the number they’d made at that point in 2013. There’s also a wild card: No one knows what the impact of new grassroots groups like Indivisible will be. The Northam campaign and other Democratic campaign groups are planning on an electorate that doesn’t look much different from 2013. But it’s not hard to imagine Democratic turnout surging in certain areas. In tiny House of Delegates races, just a couple hundred votes could be enough to change an outcome. But the surge of national interest in these local contests carries risks for Democrats, too. Tia Walbridge’s opponent, Dave LaRock, said he sees “a lot of Democrats trying to make an example of Virginia. Not just Democrats, but out of state liberals.” He sounded impressed with her canvassing volunteers, who he’s spotted frequently, as well as by the large sums of money Walbridge has raised and the frequent mailers she sends out to constituents. “Honestly, we’ve stayed away from the negative politics. She is a very radical feminist, extreme pro-abortion, and you know, I could go on, but it’s a very distinct contrast and I’ve refrained from highlighting that, though I think it makes her incompatible with the district,” LaRock said. “She campaigns with Tom Perriello; I campaigned with Ken Cuccinelli.” \*\*\* The thing that Democrats have discovered most clearly in Virginia this year is that they don’t yet know how to win races in the age of Trump. “My theory of the case is that we do best when we can link our opponent to Trump as if they’re acting like him,” explained David Toscano, the Democratic leader in the House of Delegates. “When we can make that link, our message is so much stronger.”

### ---at: gerrymandering

#### even with gerrymandering Tuesday’s election best predictor –

Rakich 11/8, Politics Writer for 538 (Nathaniel, The 2017 Elections Suggest Incumbency Won’t Save Republicans In 2018, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-2017-elections-suggest-incumbency-wont-save-republicans-in-2018/?ex\_cid=538twitter)

True, it may seem like possibly, maybe flipping one state legislative chamber doesn’t stack up to those other accomplishments. But more than their implications for governance of Virginia, Tuesday night’s legislative results should cheer Democrats because of what they represent: the best bellwether to date of the 2018 congressional elections. Ahead of Tuesday, liberals were already rightly bullish about their midterm prospects because of the clear pattern of Democratic overachievement in special elections for congressional and state legislative seats in 2017. Historically, special-election results, in the aggregate, have been a pretty good omen for how a party will do in the following midterms, but it’s best not to rely too heavily on such a small sample of fickle data points (these elections are, by definition, special). And now with Tuesday’s 100 elections for the Virginia House of Delegates and 40 elections for the New Jersey state Senate, we have more than twice as much legislative-election data as we did coming into the week. As FiveThirtyEight contributor David Wasserman has pointed out, these regularly scheduled elections are better approximations of 2018’s U.S. House elections. Unlike special elections, in which unpredictable turnout levels can favor one party and skew the results, Virginia’s and New Jersey’s elections occurred concurrently with those states’ gubernatorial elections (36 states will select a governor in 2018), a pairing that typically leads to more predictable turnout. Perhaps most importantly, these legislative elections were predominantly not open-seat races, as vacancy-triggered special elections obviously are. Tuesday was our first chance to see whether Democrats could still beat expectations when going up against the powerful force of incumbency advantage. The answer — as we’d expect with actual incumbents on the ballot — is that Democrats did well on Tuesday but didn’t outperform expectations to the degree they have in special elections this year. On average, the party’s candidates for Virginia House of Delegates and New Jersey state Senate won by margins that were 3 percentage points better than their district’s partisan lean. Unsurprisingly, incumbency was a major factor in how Democrats fared. In open seats and districts with Democratic incumbents, the party outperformed the partisan lean by a healthy amount — although not by the same 14 points by which they beat the partisan lean in special state legislative elections the last time we examined this question. But in districts with Republican incumbents, Democrats basically matched the district’s partisan lean. In Virginia specifically, the main reason that Democrats were able to win so many House of Delegates races on Tuesday was that so many Republicans were occupying blue seats. Going by our partisan lean metric, 50 House of Delegates seats are naturally Republican-leaning and 50 are naturally Democratic-leaning; going into Tuesday, Republicans held all 50 of the former and 16 of the latter. If the current leader wins in every race, though, Republicans would hold only two Democratic-leaning seats in the next House of Delegates (Democrats would also hold two Republican-leaning ones). Put another way, Tuesday was a corrective election. Basically, the national environment (as expressed by the generic ballot and other indicators) was friendly enough to Democrats that it neutralized Republicans’ incumbency advantage on Tuesday. If this holds in 2018, that may be enough to put the U.S. House in play. And, of course, not all seats Republicans will be defending will feature incumbents, further brightening the outlook for Democrats. The more Republicans continue to retire from Congress, the clearer the Democrats’ path to a House majority will become.

### ---at: timeframe

#### Predictions this far out are very accurate

Enten 11/10 Senior political writer and analyst for FiveThirtyEight (Harry, There’s No Reason To Think Republicans Will Be In Better Shape A Year From Now, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/theres-no-reason-to-think-republicans-will-be-in-better-shape-a-year-from-now/)

An ABC News/Washington Post poll and a separate CNN survey released this week both found Democrats leading Republicans by 11 percentage points on the generic ballot. That’s a big lead — the type of lead that results in wave elections like Tuesday’s. It’s also just a hair larger than the Democratic advantage in the FiveThirtyEight average of generic ballot polls. But the really bad news for Republicans: There’s a good chance they won’t be able to eat too much into that lead by the 2018 midterms. The generic congressional ballot, even more than a year before a midterm, has historically been quite predictive of what will eventually occur in the following year. It was predictive in April, and it’s even more predictive now. You can see this phenomenon in the chart below. The chart shows the margin by which the presidential party leads on the generic ballot in an average of polls in October a year before the midterm compared with the national House margin in the midterm election. Every midterm cycle since 1938 is included, with the exception of 1942 and 1990, for which we don’t have polling at this point in the cycle. The generic ballot polls a year from the election and the eventual House results are strongly correlated (+0.90). Importantly, past elections suggest that any big movement on the generic ballot from this point to the midterm tends to go against the president’s party. That movement explains why the Democrats lost ground in 2010 and 2014 in the generic ballot polls when they controlled the White House, while they maintained their lead in 2006 when Republicans held the White House. (With a similar set of data, I used the generic ballot to forecast Democratic problems early on in the 2010 cycle.) Indeed, recent election outcomes show that Republicans should be worried about what the generic ballot is showing. The results in Tuesday’s gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey were called perfectly by the generic ballot once we control for the partisan lean of each state. The special election results this year have also been in line with a big Democratic lead on the generic ballot. Still, we are a year from the midterms. The generic ballot estimate at this point, while good, has not been a perfect predictor of the following year’s House results even after controlling for which party holds the presidency. Given these occasional past errors, it is certainly plausible that Republicans could keep the actual deficit in their national House margin down to just a few percentage points instead of the 8 or 9 points they’re down now. Losing by only a few points nationally would likely be enough for them to hold onto the House. On the other hand, there’s no reason to think that Republicans will be in any better shape nationally a year from now. The Democratic lead on the generic ballot has about doubled since April, which is as far back as the FiveThirtyEight generic ballot tracker goes. That’s in line with both historical trends of support for the president’s party declining the closer we get to a midterm and a president whose low job approval rating is wearing on his party. The bottom line is that although Republicans may see the national environment improve, there’s no reason to think it will. That’s bad news for them heading into 2018.

#### Models are strong enough to accurately predict this far out

Jackson 8/9 Vice President and program director of Ipsos’ US strategic research and polling practice (Chris, The 2018 Midterms Are Looking Blue, www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-2018-midterms-are-looking-blue\_us\_598adb63e4b030f0e267c89f

A data-driven approach to election prediction takes into account the structural context of an election scenario, and the primary explanatory factors for the 2018 midterm elections are purely structural in nature. Our analysis allows us to look towards 2018 with clearer eyes. If the 2018 midterm elections were held today, the Republicans would lose control of the House by about seven seats. But they shouldn’t necessarily blame Trump: the reasons are almost entirely out of his hands. There is a ‘rhythm’ to politics and control of the House of Representatives; this is something we can explore using a 5-variable regression model to forecast House seats. This model was tested with data from all midterm congressional elections from 1946 to 2006, a total of 17 data points. The specific model inputs include: 1. Presidential approval ratings, taken from Gallup [LINK] from 1946 to 1990 and from multiple poll averages thereafter 2. The number of Republican seats in the previous congress, a lagged variable 3. The difference in poll data on the “Generic Congressional Ballot” question (Republican share minus Democrat share) [LINK] 4. The party of the sitting president 5. The difference in House seats (Republican minus Democrat) as the dependent variable Our House model, which has a high predictive value, suggests an estimated 27-seat gain by Democrats, translating into a net 7-seat Democrat advantage. Our model shows that the two strongest drivers are the Generic Congressional Ballot polling and the party of the president. The fact that the president is a Republican speaks to the “structural” nature of the rhythm of House control. The party newly in control of the White House is in some ways automatically disadvantaged at the next midterm election. Any Republican ― not just President Trump ― would notably increase the Republicans’ chances of losing the House. We would add that the debate over healthcare is also hurting Republicans right now. Healthcare is an issue on which Democrats are typically seen as stronger, and the political chaos around ACA / AHCA will naturally hurt Republicans more than Democrats. There are some notable caveats that may apply here. First, Democratic advantage may be underestimated due to gerrymandering, which has traditionally helped Republicans. Second, this estimate is based on the present moment, including Trump’s current approval ratings [LINK] and data on today’s Generic Congressional Ballot [LINK]. That said, the highly predictive value of this model paired with the immutability of key variables (number of seats and President’s party) suggest that this prediction is a solid one. It is certainly not outside the realm of possibility that Trump’s ratings will remain as low as they currently are. Indeed, they have not improved significantly from the earliest ratings [LINK] taken of him prior to his election as President. Despite Trump’s lack of support, this model does not factor in the President as an individual, so even a change in the President himself (due to impeachment or any other cause) would not change some of the key model inputs.

### AT: Impeach Now

#### Zero chance of GOP-led impeachment

Cesca 17 Bob journalist, “Forget Impeachment: Donald Trump Can Be Driven from Office, But Probably Not that Way,” SALON, 1—31—17, www.salon.com/2017/01/31/forget-impeachment-donald-trump-can-be-driven-from-office-but-probably-not-that-way/, accessed 7-13-17.

We simply don’t know how far south President Trump’s approval numbers will descend, given his irrational, insecure, thoroughly unpresidential behavior and the emerging bloc of Democrats and sensible Republicans who emphatically despise him and his goon squad. But all things being equal, it’s highly unlikely Trump will be impeached and convicted while the Republicans still control both chambers of Congress. As much as we would all love to witness such an event, the tendency for establishment GOP players to put party ahead of nation precludes their making rational choices concerning Trump’s presidency before significant damage is inflicted, politically and otherwise. While there is surely a comprehensive menu of impeachable offenses on the current police blotter and still to come, it’s next to impossible to see House Republicans proceeding with substantive investigations and an eventual vote to impeach. Simply put: Should Trump be impeached? Absolutely. Will he be? Unlikely.

#### GOP-led impeachment is unlikely in the near-term—political downsides, wait and see

Drutman 17, Lee journalist, “Will Republicans Impeach Trump?” VOX, 6—1—17, www.vox.com/polyarchy/2017/6/1/15726278/will-republicans-impeach-trump, accessed 7-13-17.

For congressional Republicans, these are uncertain calculations. Proceeding to impeachment has big risks, with limited and highly uncertain benefits. It seems more likely congressional Republicans will wait and see, and cling to the increasingly small hope that Trump will be exonerated, or that somehow the steady thrum of scandal abates and they can get on with whatever it was they thought they could accomplish. But the political calculus will change as the facts change. Investigations will reveal more. The moment when impeachment becomes a reality is the moment that the majority of congressional Republicans look at the pile of evidence, and the media narratives surrounding that evidence, and can no longer credibly tell themselves that impeachment is not an inevitability. Given the uncertain calculus behind impeaching Trump, and the need for a large number of congressional Republicans to all get on the same page to make impeachment successful, the case for impeachment will need to be incredibly compelling — on both political and evidentiary grounds. And this may be the biggest reason impeachment is unlikely to happen immediately: Republicans have to mostly unify around it. And just as Trump benefited from internal party division in the presidential primary, internal party division may continue to keep him in office.

#### No impeachment—house leadership and midterm election posturing.

Cheney 10-11 KYLE- Reporter for Politico and B.A. from Boston University. "House Democrat Pulls Trump Impeachment Measure." POLITICO. N.p., 11 Oct. 2017. Web. 01 Nov. 2017. https://www.politico.com/story/2017/10/11/trump-impeachment-house-democrats-243674 DLuo

A House Democrat pulled back from an attempt Wednesday to force a vote on impeaching President Donald Trump, but insisted he's not giving up. Rep. Al Green (D-Texas) said he wants to give his colleagues more time to read and digest his proposal. “There will be a vote. But what I’ve done thus far would not call for a vote,” Green said in a phone interview. “This situation is very dynamic.” Green discussed an impeachment resolution on the House floor Wednesday, arguing that Trump had brought “disrepute on the presidency.” Under procedural rules, Green can force a vote on the measure, even in the Republican-controlled House. But Green told POLITICO he opted against filing it as a so-called privileged motion, a move that would trigger a vote on the measure within days. A push for an impeachment vote would defy Democratic leaders, who have swatted away attempts by their most rabid anti-Trump members to seek the president’s ouster. Asked whether she supports an impeachment resolution, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said flatly, “No.” Two sources said Democratic leaders privately pressured Green not to force the vote at this time. Still, Green, who has agitated for Trump’s impeachment for months, said he might still plow ahead soon. “Dr. King was right. The truest measure of the person is not where you stand in times of comfort and convenience when everybody’s with you … you may have to stand alone,” Green said. “I have accepted the fact that I may be standing alone and that I may receive criticism from contemporaries, but I also believe that I do what my conscience dictates.” Democratic leadership sources said they anticipated Green’s gambit but didn’t know exactly when it was coming. Green indicated he intended to seek a vote last week but decided to hold off after the mass shooting in Las Vegas. An impeachment vote would highlight how many Democrats support Trump's removal from office less than a year into his tenure. A vote on a procedural step toward impeachment could be an awkward and consequential decision for lawmakers in competitive districts.

#### No impeachment before midterms—Pelosi.

Caygle 11-1 Heather. Congressional Reporter for Bloomberg and POLITICO. "Pelosi Moves to Muzzle Trump Impeachment Talk." POLITICO. Politico, 01 Nov. 2017. Web. 01 Nov. 2017. https://www.politico.com/story/2017/11/01/trump-impeachment-talk-pelosi-244336 DLuo

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi offered a forced smile recently when asked on MSNBC about a Tom Steyer-sponsored ad that calls for President Donald Trump’s impeachment. “That’s a great ad,” Pelosi said twice, before rushing to plug the Democrats’ Better Deal economic agenda as the TV hit wrapped up. Pelosi played it off, but privately she was peeved. She told lawmakers at a Democratic leadership meeting soon after that she had reached out to the Democratic megadonor to tell him that his $10 million ad campaign is a distraction. (A source close to Steyer said he hasn’t spoken with Pelosi since the ad launched.) Pelosi is eager to show her party can govern — in contrast to the chaos surrounding Trump — and she believes that a reputation as the “no drama" Democrats is key to taking back the House in 2018 and whisking her backing into the speaker’s chair. While not an official slogan, Pelosi has discussed the strategy broadly in recent leadership and caucus meetings, urging members to avoid talk of impeachment and resist taking Trump’s bait on whatever topic is dominating his Twitter feed that day. “There’s nothing any of us can say in Congress that is going to change people’s view of Donald Trump,” said freshman Rep. Ro Khanna, a Silicon Valley progressive who agrees with Pelosi’s strategy. “What they need is us to help them form their view of whether the Democratic Party is ready to lead.” Pelosi and House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer of Maryland both issued cautious statements Monday after former Trump campaign aides were indicted in special counsel Robert Mueller’s Russia probe. The House Democratic leaders reiterated their calls for an independent commission while carefully avoiding any speculation about Trump’s potential collusion with Moscow in the 2016 campaign. Privately, Pelosi has suggested that the Russia probe could lead to the unraveling of Trump’s presidency, going so far as to say “the proof is in the Putin” at a Democratic leadership meeting earlier this year. But in public, the California Democrat is encouraging her rank and file to take a measured approach to all things Trump, banking on the strategy that, by next November, the president and congressional Republicans will bomb with voters on their own. Pelosi has warned lawmakers about wading too deeply into Trump-created distractions, most recently at a leadership meeting last week, where she cited the controversy surrounding NFL players kneeling during the national anthem and the president’s attacks on Rep. Frederica Wilson (D-Fla.) over his phone call to a soldier’s widow. Instead, she has urged Democrats to stay focused on policy battles, telling members at their caucus meeting last week they “will be in the majority” if Republicans head into the midterms without a single major legislative accomplishment. That doesn’t mean House Democrats will ignore Trump or his tweets. But Democratic leaders think responding to every culture war salvo from the president will only muddy their message heading into the midterms. Pelosi has encouraged lawmakers to talk up what a Democratic majority can deliver for voters, plugging their economic message on repeat in hopes that it eventually will break through with voters. “In my opinion it cannot happen fast enough,” said Rep. Cheri Bustos, a moderate Democrat whose northwestern Illinois district was carried by Trump last year. “If we get asked about Frederica Wilson or the NFL or Russia, we can answer that. But then let’s get back to what’s on people’s minds.” The party’s Trump-focused message fell flat last year, as Democrats picked up only six seats in the House after boasting about the potential for double-digit gains and lost big in working-class districts that dot the Rust Belt. This time around, Democratic leaders purposefully avoided including divisive social issues in their agenda rollout this summer. Their “no drama” approach to Trump’s controversies is an extension of that strategy. Keeping Democrats united won’t be easy for Pelosi. The caucus ranges from progressive rabble-rousers like Khanna — who ousted a Democratic incumbent last year and called for a primary challenge to Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California — to a dozen Democrats sitting in Trump-won districts like Bustos. “It is difficult because [Trump’s] actions are so outrageous,” said Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.). “And it’s ongoing work, by all of us, not just leadership” to stay focused. The approach risks angering progressive groups and liberal donors, some of whom have declared all-out war on Trump and have threatened to primary Democratic lawmakers who don’t do enough to take on the president. But some lawmakers say their hands are tied — that the best way to defeat Trump’s agenda is by regaining the majority, and the best way to be back in the majority is to avoid focusing too much on Trump. In terms of the Indivisible Movement to resist Trump's agenda, Rep. John Larson (D-Conn.) said, "There’s a role and a place for that. But the vast majority of people are scared to death about their own futures,” “When you haven’t been in the majority since 2010, you want to make sure that given the opportunity we have in front of us to take back the House, that you remain focused,” Larson added. “And that’s the only way any progressive agenda is going to have the opportunity to see the light of day.” Indivisible, the grass-roots progressive group formed after Trump’s election, declined to comment. Meanwhile, even as the Russia probe heats up, Democratic leaders have been working behind the scenes to quell any chatter about impeachment. For them, the topic is a distraction from defeating Republicans' tax push in the short term and could turn off independent voters down the road. Democratic leaders pressured Rep. Al Green to relent on forcing a vote on impeaching Trump after the Texas Democrat reignited the issue on the House floor recently. Hoyer was seen having a long, intense chat with Green just off the House floor during the debate. And then there’s Steyer’s ad, and many House Democrats agree with Pelosi on that. “I certainly don’t think that that’s a helpful effort,” Khanna said of the ad. Steyer said in a statement, “This isn’t about me, or Rep. Pelosi. This is about giving a voice to the American people who are demanding the political establishment stand up to Trump.” There is at least one pol who is happy to comment on Steyer’s impeachment push. “Wacky & totally unhinged Tom Steyer, who has been fighting me and my Make America Great Again agenda from beginning, never wins elections!” Trump tweeted.

## AT: Thumpers

### No Thumpers

#### No thumpers.

Golshan 4-9-18

Tara, politics reporter for vox, All the things Congress probably isn’t going to do this year, https://www.vox.com/2018/4/9/17206630/congress-unfinished-business-midterms-agenda, msm

But as lawmakers return to the Capitol Building after the spring recess, don’t expect them to take up many — if any — of these pressing concerns. As the midterm election season ramps up, Congress is expected to avoid major controversial issues and stick to confirmation hearings and political messaging bills. As USA Today’s Eliza Collins pointed out, “the performance of Congress over the past five midterm election lead-ups — from the Easter break to Election Day in 2014, 2010, 2006, 2002 and 1998 — backs up the common belief that nothing much is accomplished during that dead-zone period.” There have been few exceptions, like when Democrats held wide majorities, and in the wake of major national events like the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Congress’s massive spending bill — a $1.3 trillion funding package that will keep the government open through September 30 — was widely regarded as their last major legislative fight of the year. But on health care, immigration, guns, and infrastructure, there are still a lot of policies that were supposed to see action and haven’t yet. There’s a lot of unfinished business. DACA and other immigration issues will likely get the silent treatment Last September, Trump’s administration pledged to sunset the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, throwing the sympathetic, yet still contentious, issue of young undocumented immigrants on Congress’s plate. The fate of the program is now in limbo in the courts, and Congress still doesn’t seem poised to act. After months of failed negotiations, senators have already voted down four immigration proposals. The bill that had Trump’s blessing, which would have given 1.8 million undocumented immigrants a path to citizenship but substantially gutted the legal immigration system, received the fewest votes. The only comprehensive bipartisan proposal on the table not only failed to win enough votes but was panned by Trump’s administration. In the House, Speaker Paul Ryan has been slowly whipping votes for a conservative immigration proposal that wouldn’t offer a path to citizenship at all. So far the proposal has failed to shore up enough support even among House Republicans. In other words, lawmakers have essentially thrown up their hands on the issue. But Trump isn’t over it. He spent much of the time lawmakers were on recess angrily tweeting for the end of DACA and calling for hardline immigration reforms. It’s not clear whether Trump will make enough noise for Congress to actually act. But at this point it’s clear Republicans would rather avoid the issue altogether. Activists are calling for more gun control. Republicans have moved on. The day after Congress left town, at least 1.2 million people participated in March for Our Lives events across the United States. Prompted by students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, where a mass shooting killed 17 in early February, the rallies were a culmination of weeks of activism and calls to action around gun control and school safety. Gun control has been something of a white whale for Democratic politicians for years. After every mass shooting, Congress enters into a cycle of talking but not acting. At the beginning of this year, Republicans actually rolled back an Obama-era rule that made it harder for people with mental illness to buy a gun. But the shooting in Parkland reignited the gun control debate more vigorously, and some Democratic-led proposals initially gained the backing from President Donald Trump. Before lawmakers left town, they did pass some gun-related pieces of legislation: the Fix NICS Act, which did not create new background check rules but reinforced existing ones, and the STOP School Violence Act, which established $50 million in grants for school safety, including infrastructure and improving reporting systems. They also clarified that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can conduct research on gun violence, something that has long been stifled by the Dickey Amendment, which states federal dollars can’t “promote gun control.” Activists are calling for a lot more, and much of the debate around gun control remains unresolved, ranging from the Democratic push for an assault weapons ban to the bipartisan Toomey-Manchin amendment that would expand background checks to online sales and gun shows. Already, it seems, leaders don’t have much appetite to get into those more contentious policy fights. The Obamacare stabilization package that can’t This congressional term began with health care, as Republicans, in power of the House, Senate and White House, attempted to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act. That effort failed. Instead, Republicans managed to repeal the individual mandate, a tax on those who opt out of buying health insurance, and some began to propose ways to stabilize the Obamacare markets. The latest iteration of the Obamacare stabilization package, which Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) co-sponsored with Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), would have funded cost-sharing reduction subsidies, which help insurance companies keep down premium costs, for three years and pumped billions of dollars into reinsurance funding, which essentially backstops insurance companies’ expenses with high-cost patients. The idea was to put the stabilization package in the spending bill. But the White House and Republican leadership also included language that would prevent the Obamacare payments from going toward any insurance plan that covers abortions — which Democrats said would adversely impact low-income women. Neither party was willing to concede, and the Obamacare stabilization funding was dropped altogether.

#### No legislation until after the dead-zone period

DeBonis 4-7-18

Mike, Congressional reporter for the Washington Post, Congress is back at work, without much legislating on the agenda, https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/congress-is-back-at-work-without-much-legislating-on-the-agenda/2018/04/07/f4f252e6-39b1-11e8-acd5-35eac230e514\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\_term=.b63f75bdfd4d, msm

When Congress returns Monday, lawmakers will confront numerous critical issues — including trade, immigration and digital privacy — but they will be hard-pressed to act. An absence of hard deadlines and the political realities of an election year mean that the $1.3 trillion spending bill that President Trump begrudgingly signed into law last month is probably the last significant legislation to pass Congress before voters go to polls in November. Instead, the House is preparing to take a largely symbolic vote on a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget and to try to reverse some spending while also finishing up a banking deregulation bill and drafting legislation to address the opioid crisis. The Senate, meanwhile, is likely to spend much of the rest of the year trying to confirm Trump nominees — including more judges as well as the president’s picks to lead the State Department and the CIA after last month’s Cabinet shuffle. The lack of high-stakes legislating — such as last year’s all-hands-on-deck GOP efforts to undo the Affordable Care Act, which ultimately failed, and pass a landmark tax overhaul, which is now law — is prompting grumbles from rank-and-file Republicans eager to do more, with their majority at stake in November’s midterm elections. “It was a darn good year — taxes were down, regulations were down, the economy was growing,” said Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), a co-founder of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, describing 2017. “But 2018? We’ve done one [spending] bill that the American people strongly dislike, and certainly Republican voters strongly dislike. . . . So, yeah, we got to do more this year.” But there are obstacles to taking decisive action on key GOP agenda items over the next seven months. A razor-thin Senate majority, deep intraparty divides and a limited Democratic appetite for bipartisan cooperation are limiting what Republican leaders are entertaining for the months ahead. The Trump administration’s plans for an ambitious infrastructure initiative have generated little enthusiasm on Capitol Hill, where conservative lawmakers are wary of authorizing more federal spending, while Democrats are pushing to pay for a more extensive plan by rolling back some of the GOP’s tax cuts — a complete nonstarter for Republicans. Immigration talks have come to a standstill after a frantic effort to cut a deal that would protect young undocumented immigrants known as “dreamers” from deportation fell short last month in a flurry of sniping between the parties. With Trump’s cancellation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program in court-ordered limbo, probably until next year, there is little appetite to rekindle talks before the election. And while Trump’s recent decisions to slap tariffs on foreign goods have made scores of lawmakers anxious about an emerging trade war, GOP congressional leaders are loath to rein in the vast powers Congress has delegated to the president to set trade policy. The House Ways and Means Committee will hold a hearing Thursday to examine the tariffs, but efforts to roll them back have not gained significant traction. Instead, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) appears to be gearing up to grind through confirmations, including potentially tricky fights to install Mike Pompeo as secretary of state, Rear Adm. Ronny L. Jackson as secretary of veterans affairs and Gina Haspel as CIA director. Pompeo could face a confirmation hearing as soon as this week, where he is likely to get pointed questions about the Trump administration’s foreign policy objectives — particularly with regard to North Korea. Jackson, meanwhile, is facing widespread skepticism about his qualifications to lead VA after serving as White House physician. Haspel’s nomination has generated fierce opposition from many Democrats and tough questions from key Republicans over her role in post-9/11 “enhanced interrogation techniques” that critics have described as torture. The bulk of the public attention on Capitol Hill this week, however, won’t be focused on lawmakers but on Mark Zuckerberg. The Facebook founder and chief executive is set to testify before Senate and House committees in separate appearances Tuesday and Wednesday to address the company’s privacy practices in the wake of revelations that a political firm employed by the Trump campaign accessed the private data of 87 million Facebook users. Although the klieg lights will shine brightly on the digital- ­privacy issue this week, there are no concrete plans among lawmakers to pursue new regulations for the tech industry to respond to the Facebook revelations or any of the other high- ­profile data breaches that have eroded public trust in Silicon Valley — though that could change after Zuckerberg’s testimony.

### AT: Syria Strike

#### Nobody cares about foreign policy. Sullivan 4/6

Sullivan, Peter. *Thehill.com*. N. p., April 6 2018. Web. 14 Apr. 2018.

Voters rank health care as the top issue heading into this year’s midterm elections, [according to](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/voters-say-health-care-is-their-top-issue-in-the-2018-election-thats-a-good-sign-for-democrats_us_5ac642e2e4b09d0a119103c4) a HuffPost/YouGov poll released Friday.

More registered voters picked health care as the top issue than any other topic when asked to pick their top two issues, the poll found.

Thirty percent of voters picked health care, compared to 25 percent each who said guns and immigration as well as 24 percent who said the economy. Just 12 percent said [Donald Trump](http://thehill.com/people/donald-trump)’s record as president.

#### Did you not pay attention last year his approval rating went up and then a week later went back down.

#### Trump is playing to his base – doesn’t guarantee anything about the people affected by the plan. Lee 4/13

Lee, Carrie. "Analysis | Why Has Trump Been Threatening To Attack Syria? (Hint: It’S Probably Not About Syria.)." Washington Post. N. p., 13 Apr. 2018. Web. 14 Apr. 2018. //nhs-VA

Trump is playing to his base The real reason for the attack threats is probably this: Midterms are approaching, the Russia investigation is escalating and former FBI director James B. Comey’s book is being released. Research shows that diversionary wars — wars started to distract the public from domestic unrest — are [hard to start](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0bc8/a4c06b87b488f3f7204d447c57d0ff1d359e.pdf) in [democracies](http://pages.ucsd.edu/~bslantchev/courses/pdf/Levy%20-%20Diversionary%20Theory%20of%20War%2C%20A%20Critique.pdf) and rarely have the [intended effect](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/benefit-of-the-doubt-testing-an-informational-theory-of-the-rally-effect/CEF2140068A606F5E8CB2DBBC26A6F50). Military operations in an already existing conflict are much easier to manipulate — and are not as risky as starting a war. [My research](https://carrieannleedotcom.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/lee_thepoliticsofmilitaryoperations.pdf) finds that, during periods of political fragility, U.S. presidents systematically manipulate the timing and tempo of military operations. That’s true most often in the lead-up to elections, when public opinion quite literally determines the fate of a president. However, presidents also manipulate military operations when they need support from their domestic political base — for example, during negotiations over major pieces of legislation, bids for legacy, midterms or while threatened with impeachment. Trump bookended his tweets about Syria with comments both about special counsel Robert S. Mueller III’s [investigation](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/984020136255541248) and relations with [Russia](https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/984032798821568513). That suggests that the president sees these as linked. And with Republicans expecting to take heavy losses in the midterms, Trump may see an airstrike on Syria as a way to motivate Republican voters and boost his approval ratings. If he does order a missile strike, Trump would be in good company, historically speaking. President Franklin D. Roosevelt scheduled the World War II [invasion of North Africa](https://warontherocks.com/2017/11/16075/) before the 1942 midterm elections. President Richard B. Nixon prematurely announced a [peace deal](https://www.amazon.com/Vietnam-History-Stanley-Karnow/dp/0140265473) on Vietnam on the eve of the 1972 general election. And President Bill Clinton [launched airstrikes](https://www.nytimes.com/1998/12/17/world/attack-iraq-overview-impeachment-vote-house-delayed-clinton-launches-iraq-air.html) against Sudan and Afghanistan the day that Monica Lewinsky appeared before a grand jury. Trump would also be learning from experience. His April 2017 airstrikes in Syria met with [approval ratings of more than 66 percent](https://www.politico.com/story/2017/04/poll-syria-airstrikes-237133) from the general public and 82 percent from Republicans. The strikes stopped a month-long [downhill slide](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/trump-approval-ratings/) in his approval ratings and drew attention away from congressional Republicans’ inability to repeal the Affordable Care Act, as they had promised.

#### Trump approval rating stable – no impact. 538 4/26

You should know this website anyway. <https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/trump-approval-ratings/?ex_cid=rrpromo>. 4/26/18 //nhs-VA



### AT: Gun Control

#### Trump flip-flops and McConnell’s obstinacy means legislation doesn’t hit the floor. Stolberg and Kaplan 3/1

Stolberg, Sheryl Gay, and Thomas Kaplan. “Senate Republicans Shun Trump's Gun Control Ideas.” The New York Times, The New York Times, 1 Mar. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/03/01/us/politics/trump-republicans-gun-control.html. Sheryl Gay Stolberg is the Congressional Correspondent for The New York Times. Thomas Kaplan is a reporter in the Washington bureau covering Congress. //nhs-VA

WASHINGTON — The top lobbyist for the National Rifle Association claimed late Thursday that President Trump had retreated from his surprising support a day earlier for gun control measures after a meeting with N.R.A. officials and Vice President Mike Pence in the Oval Office. The lobbyist, Chris Cox, posted on Twitter just after 9 p.m. that he met with Mr. Trump and Mr. Pence, saying that “we all want safe schools, mental health reform and to keep guns away from dangerous people. POTUS & VPOTUS support the Second Amendment, support strong due process and don’t want gun control. #NRA #MAGA.” Mr. Trump tweeted about an hour later, “Good (Great) meeting in the Oval Office tonight with the NRA!” Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the White House press secretary, declined to provide details about the previously unannounced meeting. A spokeswoman for the N.R.A.’s lobbying arm, which Mr. Cox leads, did not respond to requests for further comment. But the twin tweets suggest that it may have taken the gun rights group only a little over a day to persuade the president to back away from his apparent embrace of gun control during a remarkable, televised meeting on Wednesday with members of Congress. In that meeting, Mr. Trump called for comprehensive legislation that would, among other things, expand background checks to firearms purchased at gun shows and on the internet — a measure favored by Democrats but anathema to the N.R.A. He also stunned lawmakers from both parties by suggesting that he would support measures to allow the authorities to seize guns from mentally ill people or those who could pose a danger without first following due process, like appearing before a judge. “I like taking the guns early,” he said, adding, “Take the guns first, go through due process second.” The reaction from the N.R.A.’s allies on Capitol Hill to those comments was fierce the next day, as conservatives vowed that such measures would not become law regardless of Mr. Trump’s declarations. But Mr. Trump kept mostly quiet on the subject Thursday. In a morning tweet, he said that “many ideas, some good & some not so good,” had been discussed at the session on Wednesday, and he again endorsed the idea of improving background checks. He added, “Respect 2nd Amendment!” Mr. Cox, in his post Thursday night, singled out due process as something Mr. Trump supports — a suggestion that Mr. Cox had explained to the president that conservatives would revolt against gun seizures by the government without due process. On Wednesday, Democrats and gun control activists had expressed hope, as well as skepticism, about Mr. Trump’s surprising support for legislation to more strictly regulate guns — something that the Republican Party and the N.R.A. have long opposed. By Thursday night, several expressed resignation to the late-night statements by the president and Mr. Cox. “Unsurprising, but no less revolting,” tweeted Matt Bennett, a longtime advocate of gun control and a top official at a center-left Washington think tank, in response to Mr. Cox’s comment. On Capitol Hill earlier Thursday, a number of Republicans sought to distance themselves from Mr. Trump’s remarks at the Wednesday session. Some who voted against legislation in 2013 that would have expanded background checks said Mr. Trump had said nothing that changed their minds. And several party newcomers, who were not present for the emotional debate prompted by the 2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., said they could not support such a bill. “So far there’s been a lot of chopping, but I don’t see any chips flying, and I don’t think that’s going to change,” said Senator John Kennedy, a freshman Republican from Louisiana known for his colorful analogies. Others were more to the point. “He has not changed my mind,” said Senator Shelley Moore Capito, Republican of West Virginia. In a sign that there will be no rush to advance gun legislation, Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the Republican leader, told reporters that he had no intention of bringing a gun measure to the Senate floor next week. And Senator John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Republican, dismissed Wednesday’s White House meeting as a “brainstorming session” that would not dictate policy. Mr. Cornyn is the chief sponsor of the so-called Fix NICS Act, which would incentivize states and federal agencies to improve their reporting to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, or NICS, for gun purchases. The measure, which people on both sides of the gun debate agree is modest, has 49 sponsors in the Senate. Mr. Cornyn has said he would like his legislation to serve as a “base bill” that could be a starting point for a debate in which other senators could offer amendments. But even the Fix NICS Act is facing a hurdle: Mr. McConnell cannot sidestep Senate rules to bring it to the floor quickly for a vote because unanimous consent is required to do so, and at least one senator, Mike Lee, Republican of Utah, has objected. And at least one Democratic senator, Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, said Democrats might seek to block a stand-alone Fix NICS bill, because it does not go far enough.

### AT: Economy

#### Economy isn’t a causal relationship. Hunt 2/4

Hunt, Albert R. “Voters Feel Good About the Economy, Not About Trump.” Bloomberg.com, Bloomberg, 4 Feb. 2018, www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2018-02-04/voters-feel-good-about-the-economy-not-about-trump. Albert R. Hunt is a Bloomberg View columnist. He was the executive editor of Bloomberg News, before which he was a reporter, bureau chief and executive Washington editor at the Wall Street Journal. //nhs-VA

It’s about the public’s optimistic view of the economy during the first year of Donald Trump’s presidency and the simultaneously pessimistic view of Trump himself. The contrast is striking. Polls show overwhelming satisfaction with the state of the economy, the most since the final three years of President Bill Clinton’s administration and the early months of the George W. Bush presidency. Investor and consumer confidence are on a roll. In January, the Dow Jones Industrial Average and S&P 500 index both rose by about 5 percent. Last week, the Conference Board reported that consumer confidence was nearing a 17-year high. At the same time, no president has had job-approval and personal-popularity ratings as low as Trump’s after one year in office. Polls show him to be much less admired personally at the same stage of his presidency than his two White House predecessors, Barack Obama and George W. Bush. His personal poll ratings also lag former Vice President Joe Biden’s and the 2012 Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney’s. “Like cars with good shock absorbers, presidents with personal popularity seem to take the bumps,” said Peter Hart, a Democratic pollster. For Trump, he said, “it can only be described as a year of personal alienation.” The president gets negative marks on integrity, temperament and knowledge. Trump’s ratings improved a bit last week after his State of the Union speech on Tuesday. He was an effective cheerleader for the tax cuts enacted in January, which he credited with improving the economy. As always with Trump, facts were a casualty: His claim that the economy has added 200,000 jobs a month since his election was 17 percent too high, with the real number actually lower than the number created in the same period in Obama’s final year. The economy did add 200,000 jobs in January, the Labor Department reported on Friday. The tax cut may have played a part, but it wasn’t, contrary to his boast, anywhere near the largest in history. He is far from the first president to make false claims or exaggerations in State of the Union speeches and lots of other venues. In touting the Affordable Care Act, for example, Obama claimed dozens of times that “if you like your health care plan, you can keep it.” That was false. But there’s no question about Obama’s basic respect for the truth. By contrast, no president has lied as often, as blatantly and as casually as Trump. He seems to believe that if you repeat a falsehood enough, many people will come to believe it. That may be a political strength. Many Republicans think of Trump as a super salesman, a P.T. Barnum of presidents. And the soaring public confidence in the economy gives people a rationale for turning a receptive ear to Trump’s exaggerated claims. The president’s supporters argue that more of these voters will come around. “It takes time for people to feel the good news in the economy,” said Andrew Surabian, a protege of Trump’s former strategist Steve Bannon and senior adviser to the pro-Trump Great American Alliance. “Over time, what he is doing will take full effect.” Democrats tend to disagree. The economy, they contend, has been strong since Trump took office, including during periods when Trump’s popularity was falling. The political pluses of the tax cuts are overrated, they contend, while the political perils of threatened cuts in Social Security and Medicare are real. They’re betting that most voters outside Trump’s loyalist base will not warm to his polarizing tactics and mean-spirited public pronouncements. Of course, the economy isn’t the only thing that will ultimately determine how Americans come to see Trump. A foreign crisis or the outcome of special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation of possible links to Russian interference in the U.S. campaign could also have a strong impact. And let’s not forget that presidents have far less influence on economic ups and downs than many people tend to think — no White House has ever controlled the business cycle. The long recovery from the 2008 financial crisis can’t go on forever, so matter how sunny the outlook appears.

### AT: Infrastructure

#### Infra bill fails – needs 9 Dems and Ryan’s support. Levitz 2/1

Levitz, Eric. “Trump's Infrastructure 'Plan' Is Shoddily Built - and Sure to Collapse.” Daily Intelligencer, New York Media, 1 Feb. 2018, nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2018/02/trumps-infrastructure-plan-is-badly-built-sure-to-collapse.html. Associate Editor of Daily Intelligencer. //nhs-VA

And the White House proposal is every bit as unworkable in political terms as it is in policy ones. The administration needs significant support from Senate Democrats to pass any infrastructure bill into law. And yet, Trump’s plan calls for the federal government to fund its $200 billion share of the package entirely through spending cuts. The White House did not specify the targets of this austerity in its briefing with the Times, but previous reports suggest that the money would come from cuts to funding for social welfare programs and, of all things, [mass transit.](https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-budget/three-key-questions-about-the-trump-infrastructure-plan) Meanwhile, the plan stipulates that rural communities would receive a disproportionate share of the federal funds, and calls for scrapping various regulations that impede development — including some meant to protect the environment. Even if the president had copied the Democratic Party’s [official infrastructure plan](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/democrats-set-to-unveil-a-trump-style-infrastructure-plan/2017/01/23/332be2dc-e1b3-11e6-a547-5fb9411d332c_story.html?utm_term=.1b63a9370ab2) verbatim, Chuck Schumer’s caucus might be reluctant to vote for it. The Donkey Party has a shot at winning a wave election this November, and, thus, has little incentive to help Trump pass a popular, bipartisan bill before then. Thus, the idea that nine Senate Democrats would vote for an infrastructure package that cuts social spending and transit funding (a.k.a. infrastructure funding for urban areas, where Democrats live), reduces environmental regulation, and steers a disproportionate share of its funds to (predominantly red) rural areas is utterly delusional. And the notion that congressional Republicans are ready and eager to flesh out the details of Trump’s infrastructure plan for him is nearly as bizarre. According to the Times, the White House’s blueprint is vague by design — the administration is ready to support “virtually any bipartisan proposal from Capitol Hill,” and thus is content to deploy the same “hands-off approach” it did with its tax cut. The flaw in this scheme is, of course, that congressional Republicans had a modicum of expertise — and overwhelming interest — in making regressive changes to the tax code. By contrast, Paul Ryan’s caucus has evinced no interest in increasing spending on public investments (beyond those that can be used to [kill people overseas](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/12/12/trump-signs-700-billion-military-budget-into-law.html)), and little unity on precisely what government spending should be cut. Our country’s infrastructure is in urgent need of investment. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that more than $2 trillion in new funds are needed by 2025 to safeguard the functioning of our roads, bridges, mass transit, airports, and water systems. And, in theory, there should be room for bipartisan consensus on this issue: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a core Republican constituency, has called for financing nearly $400 billion in new infrastructure spending with a higher gasoline tax, new funds for worker training and development, and reforms streamlining the permitting process. Democrats have voiced support for proposals broadly similar to the Chamber’s. And the president has given every indication that he would be happy to support [a “big government” approach](http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/05/donald-trump-is-campaigning-on-the-new-deal.html) to the infrastructure problem. But Grover Norquist and Charles Koch have more sway in today’s GOP than the Chamber does. And Donald Trump has neither the interest nor the ability necessary to challenge his party’s aversion to public investment.

### AT: Tax Bill

#### Procedurals make a gaffe, not a win, and massively unpopular.

Fuller 12-19 Matt. Congresional Reporter @ HuffPost, House Leadership Reporte for Roll Call. "Republicans Goof Up While Passing Tax Bill." Republicans Goof Up While Passing Tax Bill. HuffPost, 19 Dec. 2017. Web. 19 Dec. 2017. <https://m-huffpost-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us\_5a395ec8e4b0c65287acc5f5/amp>. DLuo

WASHINGTON ― After years of false starts and failed promises, House Republicans had another one Tuesday: They passed a tax bill with provisions that were struck down by the Senate parliamentarian. Even though House Republicans had already congratulated themselves in a series of speeches, the House will have to vote again on Wednesday, after the Senate passed a new version of the final tax bill, 51-48, on a party-line vote with John McCain (R-Ariz.) absent. House Republicans had passed what they thought would be the final tax proposal on Tuesday, 227-203 with 12 Republicans voting no, but now a slightly different bill from the Senate ― with the stricken provisions omitted ― will go back to the House for final approval on Wednesday before the tax legislation goes to President Donald Trump for his signature. It’s a small gaffe but one typical of this process. Republicans rushed a bill to the floor and ended up embarrassing themselves. Still, this hiccup is just a formality. Even though the Senate parliamentarian struck down college savings provisions benefiting home-schooled children ― a provision important to Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) ― the bill still flew through the Senate and is almost certain to clear the House with the same members voting for and against it. The bill is, without a doubt, Trump and the GOP Congress’s most significant legislative achievement since Republicans gained control of the House, Senate and White House. But the “win” may end up costing Republicans. This bill is far from the congressional victory Republicans had sought to run on during next year’s midterm elections: It’s deeply unpopular, with approval ratings that were already significantly under water and grew worse over the past few weeks as the legislation neared final passage. A CNN poll in November showed 31 percent of voters viewing the tax bill favorably, with 45 percent opposing it. A poll conducted in the past week showed 33 percent supporting the bill, but 55 percent now against it. Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) told reporters Tuesday morning that he had "no concerns whatsoever" about the popularity of the tax bill. When Senate Republicans passed their initial version of the measure just a few weeks ago, many Republicans didn’t care that the bill wasn’t popular. Republicans simply believed the lack of support was due to bad polling and voters not fully understanding the proposal. Likewise, Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) told reporters Tuesday morning that he had “no concerns whatsoever.” “I got to say, if people are out there on TV telling mistruths, disguising the facts of this thing, that’s going to make it unpopular,” Ryan said, adding that taxpayers will be happy when they see changes in their pay next year ― both from adjustments to taxes withheld from their paychecks and higher pay from booming business conditions.

#### Tax is our uniqueness magnifier—it’s spinned as unpopular now, but Dem compromises destroy that narrative and cedes 18.

Rich 12-20 Rich, Frank. Reporter at New York Magazine. "Frank Rich: How Democrats Can Win the Spin War Over the Trump Tax Cuts."Daily Intelligencer. N.p., 20 Dec. 2017. Web. 20 Dec. 2017. <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/12/frank-rich-how-democrats-can-win-the-tax-cut-spin-war.html>. DLuo

You don’t need to hear from me all the ways in which this egregious bill is a boon to the wealthiest Americans at the expense of everyone else. But the immediate political consequences of the bill are less clearcut. Yes, as things stand now, the bill has the “lowest level of public support for any major piece of legislation enacted in the past three decades,” as USA Today put it; even Obamacare polled higher upon passage in 2009. But it would be foolish for Democrats to assume this makes 2018 a slam dunk: Among other gimmicks, the bill is cleverly structured so that most Americans will see some sort of tax cut, however nominal, in their paychecks next year. Much of the bill’s dire longer-term impact on the middle class and the poor won’t kick in by the 2018 midterms. This means that the political consequences of the tax bill’s passage could be up for grabs next year. Already, the GOP’s biggest donors, the bill’s biggest beneficiaries, have been pouring money into campaigns to sell it to voters. It’s up to Democrats to get into the trenches with tough and clever counter-messaging that will explain in concrete and un-wonky terms why the bill is a disaster for most Americans. Mere scare words (eg., Nancy Pelosi’s invocation of “Armageddon”) will not reach those turned-off-by-Trump suburbanites who have been defecting from the GOP in special elections this year, from Virginia to Alabama. The midterms could well be a wave election but not if Democrats fail to make their case and instead repeat the Clinton campaign error of expecting anti-Trumpism to do most of the work for them.

#### It’s massively unpopular.

Long 12-16 Heather. Reporter for the Washington Post. "Analysis | Why Republicans Shouldn’t Be so Optimistic Their Tax Bill Will Be a Big Win." The Washington Post. WP Company, 16 Dec. 2017. Web. 20 Dec. 2017. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/12/16/why-republicans-shouldnt-be-so-optimistic-their-tax-bill-will-be-a-big-win/?utm\_term=.4dec089f9870>. DLuo

Republicans are on the verge of passing a massive tax cut for businesses that is deeply unpopular with the American public. They are doing it with no Democratic votes and at a moment when the U.S. economy looks pretty healthy (typically, tax cuts are most effective when the economy is struggling and the government wants to revive it). A surprising number of chief executives admit their top plan for the extra cash is to pay shareholders more, not grow jobs and wages. Billionaire chief executive Michael Bloomberg went so far as to declare the bill a "trillion-dollar blunder." So all of this raises the obvious question: Why are Republicans doing this? Political analysts say it's all about the 2018 midterm elections. President Trump and Republicans swept into office in November 2016 and so far have few major legislative achievements, even though they control the White House and both chambers of Congress for the first time since 2007. "The American people are just not going to accept the fact that we do not get our job done after we’ve talked about this for years," Rep. Diane Black (R-Tenn.) said Thursday on Fox News. Black is chair of the House Budget Committee and a member of the conference committee that spent the past week hammering out the final tax bill. "We need to get this over the line." Getting a tax cut done shows the GOP is doing something, particularly on an issue — tax cuts — that has been at the core of Republican orthodoxy since the Reagan era. The surprise victory of Democrat Doug Jones in Alabama also means Republicans would likely have a harder time passing a bill like this next year. But pursuing legislation that most of the country doesn't like is still very risky. Poll after poll shows only about a third of Americans think it's a good idea. The vast majority feel it's heavily skewed to the rich and big businesses. Yet Republicans are optimistic. Why? Perhaps because most Americans are getting a tax cut under this plan, and if growth gets even hotter and unemployment gets even lower by Election Day, voters could reward the GOP, at least in the short term. GOP mentality: growth conquers all For Republicans, the fundamental belief driving this tax bill is that it will unleash substantially stronger economic growth that will solve many of America's problems — from debt to inequality. The thinking goes like this: Give corporations a massive tax cut and most Americans a decent-sized cut. Then business leaders and families will turn around and spend that tax savings on buying stuff and hiring more workers. That, in turn, should generate even more economic growth, causing businesses to employ more people and incomes to rise a lot for the first time in decades.

### AT: Corrections Act

#### Doesn’t thump – McConnell won’t let the bill get to the floor. Swan 2/11

Swan, Jonathan. “Grassley Twists Trump's Arm for Criminal Justice Reform.” Axios, 11 Feb. 2018, www.axios.com/grassley-trump-criminal-justice-reform-b952d53f-7fa3-40f8-a04c-5c7d4474f89e.html. //nhs-VA

I checked in with Chuck Grassley, the powerful Senate Judiciary Chairman, who's been twisting arms for his (and Dick Durbin's) Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act. **Why it matters:** Grassley-Durbin is the most ambitious bipartisan criminal justice reform bill out there. On Thursday, the Judiciary Committee will vote on it. Little known fact: 20 senators are co-sponsors. **What we're hearing:** There's scant appetite in the Trump administration for Grassley's bill, which combines both prison reform (including programs to rehabilitate prisoners) and sentencing reform (shorter sentences for non-violent criminals.) Grassley introduced the same bill last Congress but McConnell refused to bring it up for a vote. Attorney General Jeff Sessions can live with prison reform, but adamantly opposes anything that could be perceived as "soft on crime." Trump has similar instincts. And even the White House's most passionate criminal justice reform advocate, Jared Kushner, believes they're better off shooting for what is achievable — prison reform only — rather than getting nothing at all, according to sources with direct knowledge. (Though Kushner personally backs criminal justice reform overall.) A White House official told me they spent 6 months listening and learning on this topic and don't see a path forward at this time on criminal justice reform but do see a path forward on prison reform.

#### Bill dies in the senate. Hagstrom 2/15

Hagstrom, Anders. “Sentencing Reform Makes It Out Of Committee, But Its Future Remains Uncertain.” The Daily Caller, The Daily Caller, 15 Feb. 2018, dailycaller.com/2018/02/15/chuck-grassley-sentencing-reform/. Justice Reporter. //nhs-VA

\*Brackets in original

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley’s sentencing reform bill in a 16-5 vote Thursday, a result Grassley has achieved before only for the bill to die in the Senate. Grassley’s fellow Republicans accounted for all five of the votes against the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act (SRCA), while it enjoyed universal support from the committee’s 10 Democrats. If passed into law, the bill would reduce mandatory minimum sentences for certain drug and violent offenses as well as introduce prison reforms aimed at cutting recidivism rates. Grassley, a Republican, found himself in a similar situation in the last Congress, where his 2015 version of the SRCA made it out of committee, but was never called for a vote in the Senate. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, a Republican, voted against the bill, arguing its retroactive effect went too far in allowing current inmates to petition to have their sentences reduced. Utah Senator and fellow Republican Orrin Hatch argued the bill didn’t go far enough, claiming it should include “mens rea” reforms, which take into account whether an offender had criminal intent. Only Louisiana Sen. John Kennedy, a Republican, expressed a fundamental opposition the bill, claiming sentencing reforms in his home state had been a “disaster.” His home state has the highest incarceration rate in the country, a reality the state legislature tried to change in 2017 with a 10-bill criminal justice package. The White House has also been hesitant to embrace sentencing reform, with President Donald Trump endorsing only prison reforms in his State of the Union address. His son-in-law and senior advisor Jared Kushner butted heads with Attorney General Jeff Sessions on how far the administration’s reforms should go. Kushner wants sentencing and prison reform, but Sessions is a long-time advocate for “tough on crime” policies in courtrooms and prisons. For now, the pair appear to have reached a compromise in which Sessions won’t speak out against prison reforms and Kushner won’t try to cut sentences. In line with that compromise, Sessions wrote a letter slamming Grassley’s bill as a “grave error” Wednesday because it includes both prison and sentencing reforms. Grassley replied with a statement on Twitter saying he was “incensed” by Sessions’ opposition – a feeling he reiterated in his opening remarks Thursday. “[Sessions] is now the Attorney General and is charged with executing the laws that Congress passes, not interfering with the legislative process,” Grassley said. “Certainly we value input from the Department of Justice, but if General Sessions wanted to be involved in marking up this legislation, maybe he should have quit his job and run for the Republican Senate seat in Alabama.” The future of sentencing reform is now in the hands of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who chose not to bring Grassley’s 2015 version to a vote in the 114th Congress.

### AT: Spending Bill

#### Spending bill is not a legislative victory. It’s temporary and empirically isn’t touted as a win – the public sees it as necessary but insufficient legislation. Wilkie 12/22

Wilkie, Christina. “Trump Signs GOP Tax Plan and Short-Term Government Funding Bill on His Way out of Town.” CNBC, CNBC, 22 Dec. 2017, www.cnbc.com/2017/12/22/trump-signs-gop-tax-plan-short-term-government-funding-bill.html. Political Reporter for CNBC.com. Wilkie quotes Trump //nhs-VA

President Donald Trump on Friday signed into law a massive $1.5 trillion tax bill, capping off a yearlong effort by the White House and Republicans in Congress to slash tax rates for both corporations and individuals. Trump also signed a short-term spending bill to fund the government, just hours before the midnight Friday deadline to avoid a partial government shutdown. Speaking to reporters during an impromptu signing ceremony, Trump called the tax plan, "a bill for the middle class and a bill for jobs." He also touted the positive reaction that the bill's corporate tax cuts have garnered from the business community. "Corporations are literally going wild," he said. The president had initially planned to sign the tax bill in early January, he said, but decided to sign it Friday morning after he listened to cable news shows discussing whether the bill would become law in time for Christmas. "I watched the news this morning, and they're all saying, 'will he keep his promise? Will he sign it by Christmas?'" Trump said, "and so I called downstairs, I said 'Get it ready, we have to sign it now.'" The GOP contends that the more than $1.4 trillion in tax cuts contained in the bill will spark business investment, hiring and wage growth. Democrats call the Republican proposal a giveaway to corporations at the expense of the middle class, issuing dire warnings about the $1 trillion or more it is projected to add to federal budget deficits over a decade. Trump, however, said that "Democrats very much regret" not having backed the Republican tax cuts. "They wanted to be a part of it," he said, adding that in the coming year, "I really do believe we're going to have a lot of bipartisan work done." For now, the enactment of the tax bill hands Republicans a much-needed victory going into next years midterm elections. Democrats, meanwhile, have seized on dismal public opinion polling on the plan and the fact that most individual tax cuts would expire under it while a massive corporate tax decrease would be permanent. The short-term spending bill, while not nearly as large or as contentious as the tax reform, was nonetheless critical to avoiding what could have been a disastrous government shutdown over the holidays. The continuing resolution extends current spending levels through January 19. and funds the popular Children's Health Insurance Program until March. The emergency funding legislation also contained what's called a "pay-go waiver," a provision that suspends the rules governing how Congress has to pay for certain programs. Without the waiver, Trump would have had to wait until the New Year to sign the expensive tax cuts into law, or risk triggering draconian automatic spending cuts.

### AT: Shutdown

#### Shutdown has no long-term impact; if anything, it makes the GOP more dire for results. Enten 1/20

Enten, Harry. “The Government Shutdown Effect: Big In The Short Term, Small After That.” FiveThirtyEight, FiveThirtyEight, 20 Jan. 2018, fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-government-shutdown-effect-big-in-the-short-term-small-after-that/. Harry Enten is a senior political writer and analyst for FiveThirtyEight. //nhs-VA

Indeed, prior shutdowns haven’t had long-term electoral implications. Republicans recovered on the generic ballot by February 1996, just a month after the final shutdown of that period ended. And in the elections later that year, they held onto their majorities in both the House and Senate. Clinton, meanwhile, recovered his lost support by March 1996. He would go on to easily win reelection later in 1996. Basically, America put the same people who shut the government down back in office. The 2013 shutdown tells the same story. Despite losing the blame game, Republicans jumped to a lead on the generic ballot by late November 2013 — their first of the year. In the 2014 midterms, they expanded their majority in the House and won back the Senate. Meanwhile, Obama continued a long-term decline in his approval ratings in the months following the 2013 shutdown, but recovered to his pre-shutdown approval level by April 2014. Obviously, we’re dealing with a very small sample size in terms of historical examples. We don’t have a ton of polling with which to examine the political effects of prior shutdowns. So, perhaps this shutdown will prove different. Americans list dissatisfaction with government as the most important problem facing the country. In such an environment, the government shutdown could, for example, be held up by Democrats during the midterm campaign as the ultimate demonstration of the inability of Republicans to get things done on an issue (DACA) that most Americans support. But your safest bet right now — at least until we get more polling as this story unfolds (or ends) — is that the long-term electoral effects of the shutdown will be minimal.

### AT: Healthcare

#### Trump not tied to healthcare bill – McConnell gets stuck with the blame. Hartmann 7/19

Hartmann, Margaret. "Who's to Blame for the GOP Health-Care Debacle, Trump or McConnell?" NYMAG.com. NYMAG, 19 July 2017. Web. 30 July 2017. <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/07/is-mcconnell-or-trump-to-blame-for-gop-health-debacle.html>. //nhs-VA

Now that it appears the Republican Party’s seven-year crusade to repeal Obamacare and replace it with their own mysterious alternative is finally dead (for now, at least), the GOP is on the hunt for someone to scapegoat. As New York’s Jonathan Chait argued, the real reason for Trumpcare’s defeat is that “it was never possible to reconcile public standards for a humane health-care system with conservative ideology.” That’s not an explanation you can present to voters, so for months Republicans have been trying to shift the blame for their health-care struggles, pointing at times to House Speaker Paul Ryan, the Freedom Caucus, moderate House Republicans, the Congressional Budget Office, and, of course, Democrats. Though senators carefully avoided being labeled “the Republican who saved Obamacare,” conservative commentator Hugh Hewitt suggested true conservatives won’t soon forget the list of defectors. But ultimately, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell was the one caught holding the hot potato (or in this case the widely hated bill that would have uninsured millions of Americans). McConnell’s reputation as a master tactician is a large part of the reason the bill got as far as it did. Speaker Ryan initially had to call off a vote on the American Health Care Act in the House, and when it passed in May several House members said they only voted for it on the assumption that the Senate would make it less horrible. McConnell decided complete secrecy was the best approach to this process. He spent May and June crafting his bill behind closed doors, then unveiled legislation that looked like AHCA with an even less catchy name (the Better Care Reconciliation Act, or BCRA). While the impossibility of resolving conservative and moderate Republicans’ goals for the health-care system was the biggest obstacle to passage, McConnell’s underhandedness helped seal its fate. Shortly before senators Mike Lee and Jerry Moran came out against the bill, Republicans learned McConnell had been making wildly different claims about what BCRA would do, depending on whom he was talking to. Senator Ron Johnson called this a “breach of trust,” and on Tuesday he wouldn’t say if he would continue to support McConnell as speaker. “I don’t know what’s going to happen moving forward,” Johnson said, according toPolitico. “I didn’t develop the process, let’s put it that way.” The health bill’s failure has seriously damaged McConnell’s reputation and raised doubts about his ability to push through the rest of Trump’s agenda, but the vast majority of Republican senators remain supportive. And McConnell is not done maneuvering. Though it became even clearer on Tuesday that a “straight repeal” of Obamcare can’t make it out of the Senate, McConnell said he intends to hold a vote anyway. As New York’s Ed Kilgore explained, this is a way for McConnell to absolve himself from blame: Most likely he wants to preempt any future conservative argument that he never intended to repeal Obamacare fully, and didn’t even try it. And in particular, he wants to deflect any fire coming from the White House, which has been promoting the revived repeal-and-delay strategy in recent days. McConnell is also giving conservatives a shillelagh with which to beat Republican moderates who fail to go along with repeal, and perhaps even to mount primary challenges against them in 2018 or beyond. He understands that, like every GOP congressional leader, he holds his gavel at the sufferance of the right. And what of that other figure in all this, the person who the GOP health-care plan is named for, despite his objections? President Trump said on Tuesday that he’s disappointed, but made it very clear that he bears no responsibility for the failure of Trumpcare: He also said his plan was now “to let Obamacare fail, it will be a lot easier. And I think we’re probably in that position where we’ll let Obamacare fail. We’re not going to own it. I’m not going to own it. I can tell you the Republicans are not going to own it. We’ll let Obamacare fail and then the Democrats are going to come to us.” The president appeared disengaged from the Senate health-care battle, which was McConnell’s doing. The majority leader reportedly said he could handle the job himself, and the White House trusted him because he’s the Bizarro World Olivia Pope.

Prefer:

1. Even if Trump latched on to healthcare in the end, people aren’t blaming him for it; they’re more upset with party leaders who made it a core part of their campaign.
2. Empirics prove – Paul Ryan took the blame on the house bill and either McConnell or any Republican who voted “no” will take it here.
3. Healthcare bill was **unpopular**; people are glad it died, so marginal support for the bill didn’t actually change Trump’s approval rating

## Links

### Legislative Wins

#### GOP has time to turn it around – people care about policies more than the president. Sullivan 4/6

Sullivan, Peter. *Thehill.com*. N. p., April 6 2018. Web. 14 Apr. 2018.

Voters rank health care as the top issue heading into this year’s midterm elections, [according to](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/voters-say-health-care-is-their-top-issue-in-the-2018-election-thats-a-good-sign-for-democrats_us_5ac642e2e4b09d0a119103c4) a HuffPost/YouGov poll released Friday.

More registered voters picked health care as the top issue than any other topic when asked to pick their top two issues, the poll found.

Thirty percent of voters picked health care, compared to 25 percent each who said guns and immigration as well as 24 percent who said the economy. Just 12 percent said [Donald Trump](http://thehill.com/people/donald-trump)’s record as president.

#### The threshold for the link is low – Trump needs any bipartisan victory

Cook and Dawsey 17 – Nancy Cook and Josh Dawsey, White House reporters for POLITICO, 2017 ("Tax reform becomes a must-win issue for the White House," POLITICO, Available online at http://www.politico.com/story/2017/07/19/tax-reform-becomes-must-win-for-trump-240691, Accessed 7/21/2017)

With President Donald Trump’s effort to undo Obamacare derailed by opposition from Republican senators, the White House has turned its attention to its next big shot at a big win: tax reform. The long-held GOP goal of re-engineering the U.S. tax system has now become a political imperative for the Trump administration, which has yet to deliver any major legislative victories despite Republican control of the White House and both houses of Congress. “They know they could really use a win,” said Larry Kudlow, an informal economic adviser to the Trump campaign, who met with Trump last week. “The president, from the get-go, has been much more comfortable with tax cuts than health care.” Donors and influential Republicans are particularly eager to see tax reform completed before the 2018 midterms — both for their own bottom lines and because it will be harder for Republicans to hold on to Congress without policy accomplishments, White House advisers and outside supporters fear. “If Republicans fail to repeal or at least substantially roll back Obamacare, it raises the stakes dramatically to pass into law a big, bold tax-reform plan,” said Tim Phillips, who leads Americans for Prosperity, the political group backed by the Koch brothers. “On the political side, the biggest problem that Republicans could face in 2018 is not a partisan battle. It's a sense of incompetence and inability to govern that will be most painful,” *said Josh Holmes, a longtime McConnell adviser and former chief of staff.* “Unless they can figure out how to reverse this quickly, you can see where this cascades into more issues past health care,” Holmes added. But consensus on the political value of achieving tax reform ahead of the 2018 midterm elections does not equal agreement on the policy details — and that could bedevil Trump’s next big policy push, just as the health care effort was undermined by insurmountable differences between moderates and conservatives in the Republican Caucus.

#### Trump’s lack of capital gives Dems leverage to make gains in the midterms --- he has to find a way to create the perception that he is a deal maker

Graham 17 Writer at The Atlantic, 2017 ("It's (Still) Never Trump's Fault," Atlantic, Available online at https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/07/its-still-never-trumps-fault/534066/, Accessed 7/21/2017)

Not that the president was ready to accept any blame. Just as he did after the House’s first attempt at repeal failed in March, Trump blamed Democrats: This makes no more sense than it did in March. Democrats are a minority in the Senate, and both the repeal-and-replace and the clean-repeal plans failed because the Republican caucus couldn’t unify. The Democrats were never a factor in the debate. That’s not surprising: Why would any Democrat work to repeal the party’s signature policy achievement of the last decade in order to replace it with a plan that would leave tens of millions of people uninsured and increase premiums for many? The broadside against Dems came only about 10 hours after promising that they would work together to replace Obamacare—and an a hour and a half before Trump called for the Senate to invoke the nuclear option and totally eliminate the filibuster. Meanwhile, Trump wants credit for almost not failing. “Essentially, the vote would have been pretty close to—if you look at it—48-4. That's a pretty impressive vote by any standard,” the president said at the White House on Tuesday, referring to the basic standard of reaching a bare majority of votes required for all legislation as “impressive,” a bravura act of bar-lowering. (Indeed, most bills these days require 60 votes, and it was only thanks to the reconciliation process that this bill needed only 50.) Trump has the answer: He needs voters to send him a supermajority in the Senate: The bad news for Trump is that presidents typically lose seats in Congress during their first midterm election. That rule holds even for presidents who are not as historically unpopular as Trump is (a situation his failure to deliver repeal is unlikely to help); some forecasters believe 2018 could produce a Democratic wave. The president has one more idea. “Let Obamacare fail,” he said Tuesday. “It will be a lot easier. And I think we’re probably in that position where we’ll just let Obamacare fail. We’re not going to own it. I’m not going to own it. I can tell you, the Republicans are not going to own it.” Perhaps he is right, but it wouldn’t be surprising if he were wrong. Given unified control of the House, Senate, White House, and Supreme Court, as well as several failed attempts at repeal, the Republican Party will have a hard time convincing voters it doesn’t own the bill. (Don’t ask me, though. Ask Donald Trump, who in September 2013 tweeted, “NO GAMES! HOUSE @GOP MUST DEFUND OBAMACARE! IF THEY DON’T, THEN THEY OWN IT!”) Although the collapse of the Senate bill echoes the March collapse of the House’s health-care bill closely, Trump doesn’t seem to have learned much from it. Perhaps the successful resuscitation of the House bill convinced the White House that the hands-off strategy worked well. The demise of the Senate bill shows, just as President Obama before him learned, that there are dangers in deference. One notable difference this time was that no one expected Trump to contribute meaningfully to passing the bill. As the climax of the House bill neared in March, members of the House leadership team took to talking about Trump as “the ultimate closer.” There was no such talk from Senate leaders this time around. As I wrote when the bill collapsed, Trump seemed to be overestimating his ability to bounce back from defeat. The president didn’t bring policy experience, or governing know-how, to Washington. What he brought was a reputation as an effective dealmaker. Once squandered, that reputation is difficult to reclaim, and his irrelevance to the Senate repeal-and-replace effort demonstrates that. One can understand, given Trump’s shaky salesmanship so far, why congressional Republicans would be reluctant to let Obamacare collapse and trust that Trump would successfully pin that on Democrats. In the business world, Trump could quietly walk away from a deal, even if it meant taking a loss of millions of dollars. In New York real-estate, a few big losses were survivable, even if it meant lighting money on fire. Politics doesn’t work that way. It is possible that McConnell, whose reputation for wiliness is bruised but not broken by the health-care collapse, will find some way to revive repeal, but Trump’s failures of marketing, strategy, and tactics on Obamacare repeal are the equivalent to lighting political capital on fire. If that was unwise in March, it’s foolhardy now, when Trump’s position is, thanks to the Russia matter, weaker than ever. Six months into his presidency, the president has squandered his reputation as a dealmaker and spent away whatever political capital he had at the start of his presidency. Even worse, he has no major legislation to show for it.

#### GOP struggle to find Senate candidates will scuttle momentum – legislative win brings recruits out of the woodwork and revitalizes their chances

Phillips 17 Amber journalist, “Do Senate Republicans Have a Trump Recruiting Problem? (Part 2),” WASHINGTON POST, The Fix, 7—5—17, www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2017/07/05/do-senate-republicans-have-a-trump-recruiting-problem-part-two/, accessed 8-27-17.

Here's a brewing irony for Senate Republicans: If they have a near-perfect run in 2018 races, they could get close to the coveted filibuster-proof majority of 60 out of 100 seats. There are 10 Senate Democrats running for reelection in states President Trump won, while Republicans, who currently have a 52-seat majority, only have one or two vulnerable candidates. But Republicans have struggled to recruit top candidates in these Trump states. A lack of a clear leader is leading to a bunch of lower-tier candidates jumping into the race, which means Republicans could spend the next year in potentially expensive (and, in some cases, divisive) primaries in some key states. This isn't the end of the world, but it's not a perfect start for a perfect run for Republicans. It's a trend we noticed in April that is still going on today, with news that Rep. Ann Wagner (R-Mo.) will not challenge one of the Democrats' most vulnerable senators up for reelection in 2018, Claire McCaskill (Mo.). A similar dynamic is playing out in these Trump states where Senate Democrats are trying to win reelection next year, such as: In Wisconsin, Rep. Sean P. Duffy (R) decided not to run to challenge Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D). There are at least six possible GOP candidates who could try to challenge Baldwin. In Indiana, Rep. Susan Brooks (R) decided not to run against Sen. Joe Donnelly (D), possibly the most vulnerable Senate Democrat. Her colleagues, GOP Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita, do look like they'll run, and they've already started attacking each other in pretty dramatic ways, like accusing the other of planting negative stories or making “unhinged” comments. In Pennsylvania, Rep. Patrick Meehan (R) decided not to run against two-term Sen. Robert P. Casey Jr. (D). Now there are at least four Republicans who have launched campaigns, from state representatives to a real estate developer and an energy executive. Pennsylvania Republicans tell National Journal they'd feel better about the race if either U.S. Reps. Lou Barletta or Mike Kelly decided to run. (Both have said they're thinking about it.) In West Virginia, a state Trump won by more than 40 (!) points, U.S. GOP Rep. Evan Jenkins is running to try to unseat Sen. Joe Manchin III (D). But a super PAC recently jumped into the race in favor of likely GOP candidate Attorney General Patrick Morrisey and attacked Jenkins as a Manchin “mini me.” In Ohio, state Treasurer Josh Mandel (R) is the leading candidate to challenge two-term Sen. Sherrod Brown (D). But a wealthy investment banker and GOP donor decided to run, too. And Montana Republicans lost their top recruit, Ryan Zinke, after Trump picked him to be his interior secretary. Attorney General Tim Fox (R) also said no thanks to challenging two-term Sen. Jon Tester (D), which has left the state auditor as the biggest name among half a dozen potential candidates. Finally, in North Dakota, Republicans don't have a candidate yet to challenge Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D), another state Trump won by double digits (20 points). Basically, Democratic operatives point out, there are Republican primaries in nearly every competitive Senate race right now. What's going on here? A few things: In many of these states, if the Democrat could be unseated, it's possible Republicans could hold the seat for a long time. And the more likely your party is to win a race, the more likely on-the-fence candidates are to jump in. But that doesn't explain why some top recruits in these states said “no.” Everyone has different reasons (Duffy in Wisconsin has eight kids, Zinke in Montana took a Cabinet appointment instead). But if any of these races were an easy win, you'd think more experienced politicians would say “yes” to getting in. That more haven't suggests: 1) It's not going to be as easy as the numbers suggest to take down some of these Senate Democrats, many of whom won tough races in 2012 in red-leaning states and have been in office for almost a dozen years. 2) There could be a Trump factor weighing heavily against Republicans' calculations. History tells us the party in power generally loses seats in the next congressional midterm; more so if the president is unpopular. And pretty much since he took office, Trump has been the least-popular president in modern times. 3) The longer Republicans in Congress go without a legislative win, the harder it is for them to sell their candidacy on a state level. Republicans need to pass a health-care bill they can sell. They'd like to get tax reform done, too. Right now, they have not done any of that. 4) A few closer-than-expected special elections in Georgia, Kansas and Montana for Republicans raise the possibility that the Democrats' base is fired up in a way it wasn't in past congressional elections. (Though Republicans won all of the elections.)

### ---at: anti-base

#### The base doesn’t care about ideology, just wins—the plan increases support.

Goldberg 17 (Jonah. "Trump and His Supporters Don't Care about Ideology. They Just Want to 'win'." Los Angeles Times. Los Angeles Times, 12 Sept. 2017. Web. 28 Sept. 2017. <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-goldberg-trump-chance-gardener-20170912-story.html>.) DLuo

President Trump isn’t nearly as kind-hearted nor as dimwitted , but there are two relevant similarities: Both Chance and Donald have an unhealthy addiction to television, preferring it to reading. Second, neither really understands what’s going on around them but benefits from being surrounded by people who see what they want to see. Last week, the president took the opening offer on a debt-limit deal from Sen. Charles E. Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic leaders in the Senate and House, respectively. A person close to the GOP leadership told Axios, “He accepted a shakedown when he was holding all the cards. ... This is quite literally a guy who watches 'ER' trying to perform a surgery.” Op-Ed Column Trump and his supporters don't care about ideology. They just want to 'win' President Donald Trump, accompanied by first lady Melania Trump, on at South Lawn of the White House in Washington on Sept. 10, 2017. (Associated Press) Jonah Goldberg I used to worry that Donald Trump was Lonesome Rhodes in a better suit. I’m starting to wonder if he’s Chance the Gardener in a worse suit. Just in case you don’t get the references, Rhodes was the lead character, played by Andy Griffith, in Elia Kazan’s 1957 film, “A Face in the Crowd,” the best movie ever made about the dangers of populism and mass media. Chance the Gardener was the lead character, played by Peter Sellers, in Hal Ashby’s “Being There,” a brilliant, 1979 film based on the Jerzy Kosinski novel about a simple-minded gardener who had never been outside his employer’s home until the man died. Because Chance speaks in fortune cookie aphorisms about gardening, he’s mistaken for a man of deep wisdom and is lifted to heights of power in Washington. ADVERTISING President Trump isn’t nearly as kind-hearted nor as dimwitted , but there are two relevant similarities: Both Chance and Donald have an unhealthy addiction to television, preferring it to reading. Second, neither really understands what’s going on around them but benefits from being surrounded by people who see what they want to see. Last week, the president took the opening offer on a debt-limit deal from Sen. Charles E. Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic leaders in the Senate and House, respectively. A person close to the GOP leadership told Axios, “He accepted a shakedown when he was holding all the cards. ... This is quite literally a guy who watches 'ER' trying to perform a surgery.” Paid Post LEARN MORE 7 Places That Show Off the Amazing Fall Colors in America As the weather turns from hot and humid to crisp and breezy, nature brings on some amazing colors. Trump’s real mandate was to be 'not Hillary Clinton' — and he fulfilled it on Day 1. Aghast conservatives are probably exaggerating the significance of the move in terms of policy and tactics. Fights over the debt limit rarely yield the rewards conservatives hope for. But the move could have lasting consequences. Why? Here’s a clue: According to reports, the president was ecstatic over the favorable coverage he received for his “bipartisanship.” “I got a call early this morning,” Schumer told the New York Times. “He said, ‘This was so great!’ Here’s what he said: ‘Do you watch Fox News?’ I said, ‘Not really.’ ‘They’re praising you!’ Meaning me. But he said, ‘And your stations’ — I guess meaning MSNBC and CNN — ‘are praising me! This is great!’” Despite his “fake news” refrain, Trump doesn’t hate the mainstream media the way his most ardent supporters do. They sincerely believe it’s a hostile opponent in the culture war, while Trump’s anger is more that of a jilted lover. His whole life has been marked by an obsession with publicity. His supporters, though, are oddly blind to that fact. Normally, when conservatives or Republicans deviate from the party line, the knee-jerk assumption among activists is that they are doing so out of a desire to win praise from the liberal media and invitations to Georgetown cocktail parties. If that’s often unfair, it may actually be the case for Trump, and yet his base insists that if he “wins,” it must also be a win for conservatives. So deep is the desire to see the Trump they thought they were getting, they bend the facts to fit their heroic narrative. The widespread animosity toward the GOP leadership among many Trump supporters only fuels the delusion that Trump can do no wrong. “Punishing” House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is now its own reward because they are part of the “globalist swamp” Trump was elected to drain. In his “60 Minutes” interview, former White House strategist Stephen K. Bannon insisted that the establishment is “trying to nullify the 2016 election.” Never mind that the House has passed most of Trump’s agenda (Obamacare repeal and replace, funding the wall, etc). Bannon is working on the assumption that Trump has a mandate for his potted “economic nationalism.” The truth is that Trump’s real mandate was to be “not Hillary Clinton” — and he fulfilled it on Day 1. With the exception of appointing conservative judges, all of Trump’s other scattershot policies earned only partial support from GOP voters, which is why Ryan and most other Republicans over-performed Trump in the election. The other truth is that Trump craves praise more than he cares about implementing his defenestrated strategist’s “economic nationalism.” And his supporters want Trump “wins” more than conservative ones, which is why we can expect more of what we saw last week.

#### Winning helps Trump—even on things his base opposes

Marshall 17 Josh political analyst, “Trump’s Base Support Begins to Erode,” TALKING POINTS MEMO, 4—3—17, https://talkingpointsmemo.com/edblog/trumps-base-support-begins-to-erode, accessed 6-11-17.

These numbers are notable and entertaining. But the most interesting data in the latest batch of polls comes from the McClatchy/Marist poll. In this poll, released on the 31st, Trump has an approval number at 38%, down from 41% in February, broadly in line with other polls. Lee Miringoff, who runs the Marist poll, discusses the various details of the poll here. Really every number is dismal. But this, I think, is the most significant. From the Marist write-up … There has been a profound shift in public opinion about whether or not President Trump is fulfilling campaign promises. 57% of Americans either strongly agree, 18%, or agree, 39%, that Trump is making good on the promises he made on the campaign trail. This is down from 71% in February. Regardless of party, fewer voters think he is keeping his word. Of note, 83% of Trump’s Republican base, down from 96% previously, believe Trump is fulfilling campaign promises. “President Trump needs a major legislative win to get on track,” says Dr. Lee M. Miringoff, Director of The Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. “No doubt the GOP in Congress will be closely watching the president’s standing among Republican voters.” Those are steep drops and this is the big danger for Trump – likely a much greater danger, in the short term at least, than the scandal investigations most politicos are focusing on. Trump’s inability to repeal Obamacare is, I suspect, most of what is showing up in this drop. He simply failed to do something that, at least in numerical congressional majority terms, should have been simple. That made him look weak and ineffectual – frankly, silly. That and not corruption or ties with Russia is what will eventually sink Trump with his base. It’s worth noting that many Trump voters actually would have been hurt by the repeal of Obamacare. But political perceptions are never that linear or straightforward. Especially for the kind of politics Trump appeals to, strength and the ability to compel action is central to support, even when the object of support is trying to do things individual supporters might not entirely agree with. Beyond the Obamacare repeal debacle, I suspect the reality is starting to sink in that Trump doesn’t have any clue what he’s doing as President and his top staffers and advisors show an almost unprecedented level of infighting and disorganization. Trump simply hasn’t been able to get much of anything done. He continues to treat executive orders as a kind of proxy for legislation, even though the great majority of his EOs have pretty minimal effect. A new president whose party controls Congress should pass a mass of legislation in his first months in office. That’s been true of Trump’s last three predecessors – each of whom had total or near total control of Congress. Trump is well into his first hundred days, has passed no substantial legislation and looks unlikely to do so any time soon.

### GOP Cooperation

#### Riling up the base is critical—Dems cannot compromise with Trump and the GOP if they want to prevail in the midterms

Parton 17 Heather Digby Parton, journalist, “Forget About ‘Reaching Out’ to Trump Voters, Democrats—That’s a Pointless, Self-Destructive Strategy,” SALON, 2—24—17, www.salon.com/2017/02/24/forget-about-reaching-out-to-trump-voters-democrats-that-is-a-pointless-self-destructive-strategy/, accessed 6-13-17.

I suspect that most Latinos, African-Americans and American Muslims also feel their “outreach” might not be welcome. Moreover, people whose lives are being directly affected by the horrific policies for which these Trump voters cheered and clapped during the campaign should really not be asked to do it. It’s insulting and cruel, not to mention downright dangerous in some cases. If members of the Democratic coalition must show empathy toward these voters and try to persuade them that they have made the wrong choice, it probably should be done by members of the one group that doesn’t seem to offend these folks: white males. Luckily, there are a lot of them out there who can take on this task. But all of this raises the fundamental question of whether it’s even necessary. Obviously, the Democrats have fallen short and need to do something to start winning majorities in the Congress and the presidency. There have been thousands of articles and posts written about whether they should try to boost the turnout of the party’s base, appeal to nonvoters, approach moderate Republicans or attempt to convert Trump voters. Many in the press seem obsessed with the last activity and pay little attention to the other approaches. A piece by Paul Waldman in The American Prospect made a persuasive argument as to why Democrats shouldn’t bother with Trump voters, at least not yet. He described various types of Republicans such as the major Trump fans who wear those awful T-shirts, the party regulars who figured Trump would at least give them a conservative Supreme Court and cut their taxes and the “what the hell” voters who just took a flyer on disruption and change. He said if Democrats are going to reach out to Trump voters, those in the last group are the most likely to be amenable to outreach. But Waldman explained that trying to appeal to any of those people is the last thing Democrats should do if they are seeking to create a wave election in 2018: Right now, the Democrats’ constituents are feeling horrified, terrified, and generally pissed off. Which is just what produces the kind of midterm election they need. That’s because midterm elections are all about enthusiasm — which almost always means anger. It’s the reason the president’s party usually loses seats in midterm elections: because the people who are angry enough to increase their turnout are the ones who dislike the president. Turnout in recent midterms has been in the 30s, meaning that nearly two-thirds of voters decide to stay home when there’s no presidential race. So it’s all a question of which voters get to the polls. That’s why right now, if Democrats want to win in 2018, they need to highlight the things that will get their own voters as worked up about Trump as possible: his scary appointees, his retrograde executive actions, his constant lies, his self-dealing and corruption, and the tremendous damage he and Republicans in Congress are preparing to do. In other words, Democrats need to be as partisan as possible, and forget about “reaching out.” He suggested that after the midterms will be the time to look to those “change” voters because by then Trump will have shown that he doesn’t have the magical powers necessary to turn back the clock to before the 1960s, and a few of them might decide they want to try “change” again or will just stay home. One of the most difficult aspects of dealing with someone like Trump is that he’s so personally and politically erratic it’s hard to know how to plan the opposition in advance. But it is safe to say he won’t be able to deliver on most of his promises — and what he will deliver is unlikely to be popular with anyone other than his diehard fans. In the meantime, the most important order of business is to do everything necessary to take back the Congress in 2018 and stop him from doing his worst. Trying to appease Trump voters is exactly the wrong strategy. It only threatens to throw cold water on all the building energy that will get Democrats, independents and anyone else who is appalled by this presidency out to the polls.

#### Opposition to GOP plans is critical to Dems mobilizing the grassroots—necessary to drive turnout and win the midterms

Kilgore 17 Ed journalist, “Democrats’ Secret Weapon: Republicans Own Everything Now,” NEW YORK MAGAZINE, 1—29—17, http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2017/01/democrats-secret-weapon-republicans-own-everything-now.html, accessed 6-14-17.

There is, however, one structural handicap Democrats have recently had in midterms. Their coalition now depends heavily on precisely those voters who have been, since time immemorial, least likely to participate in nonpresidential elections: young and minority voters. Conversely, the Republican base skews older and whiter, and older and whiter voters are disproportionately more likely to show up for midterms. As President Obama recently said: “What I was able to do during my campaigns, I wasn’t able to do during midterms. I didn’t crack the code on that.” For Democrats, cracking the midterm code more than likely means generating the kind of serious grassroots mojo that will help motivate and then mobilize turnout. And that’s where Inauguration Day and the day just after it offered another bit of potential good news for Democrats: The massive marches and protests we are seeing make the progressive uprising against George W. Bush look like a sandbox temper tantrum. That is only more true after this past weekend and the massive backlash against Trump’s temporary travel ban against seven Muslim countries. There is nothing about Donald Trump (or Paul Ryan or Mitch McConnell) that suggests these protests will go away any time soon. And already, some Democratic thinkers can envision a passionate, if diffuse, grassroots movement emulating the tea party’s success eight years ago in channeling public fear and frustration into pressure on officeholders in both parties and into preparation for the midterms. Indeed, this could be just what the donkey ordered: a relentless grassroots campaign of resistance to Trump and his allies, combined with a strategically and tactically flexible cadre of Democrats in Congress prepared to wage guerrilla warfare against GOP plans while staying alert to opportunities to exploit GOP divisions. Such divisions (not to mention confusion and disarray) are popping up everywhere, on issues ranging from defense spending to taxes to Obamacare. And the leadership of a lone-wolf eccentric like Donald Trump means they will probably continue to erupt. But even if total partisan war consumes Washington, a campaign of progressive resistance could not but help Democrats turn out their vote in 2018.

#### GOP is divided now – any cooperation with the GOP devastates Democrats

Snell 17 – Kelsey Snell, reporter for The Washington Post, April 1st ("Democrats have a new and surprising weapon on Capitol Hill: Power," The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/democrats-have-a-new-and-surprising-weapon-on-capitol-hill-power/2017/04/01/e2ba46c0-16e3-11e7-ada0-1489b735b3a3\_story.html?utm\_term=.debccc3ef9ec)

Democrats in Congress have a new and surprising tool at their disposal in the era of one-party Republican rule in President Trump’s Washington: power. It turns out that Republicans need the minority party to help them avoid a government shutdown at the end of April, when the current spending deal to fund the government expires. And Democrats have decided, for now at least, that they will use their leverage to reassert themselves and ensure the continued funding of their top priorities — by negotiating with Republicans. “I think we have a lot of leverage here,” said Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.). Republicans “are going to need our help putting together the budget, and that help means we can avoid some of the outrageous Trump proposals and advance some of our own proposals.” The fact that Republicans need Democrats to vote for a temporary spending measure to avoid a shutdown gives Democrats leverage to force the GOP to abandon plans to attack funding for environmental programs and Planned Parenthood. And it also allows Democrats to block Trump’s top priority — the wall along the U.S.-Mexico border — which the president seeks to factor in to this latest round of budget negotiations. It comes at a time when Republicans on Capitol Hill are badly divided and President Trump’s ambitious agenda — a health-care overhaul, his 2018 budget blueprint, a tax proposal and an infrastructure program — has yet to get off the ground. Since the failure of the House GOP’s health-care plan, Trump has signaled he may work with Democrats to achieve major goals. Coupled with the negotiations over the spending measure, such a statement could foreshadow a major and unexpected power shift in Washington in which the minority party has far more influence in upcoming legislative fights than was initially expected. “I think most of our caucus wants to work with them,” said Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) in a recent interview, referring to the GOP. “But it requires working in a compromise way.” But cooperation with their GOP counterparts — and possibly even with Trump — is a risky move for congressional Democrats, who are being pressured by the more liberal wing of their party to obstruct the GOP and Trump at all costs. Part of that energy is playing out in the Senate over the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, as Democrats have vowed to block his confirmation, potentially leading to an explosive fight next week to change Senate rules. Hill Democrats are betting voters will view any attempt to compromise on spending as further evidence that the fractured GOP is unable to govern. If the talks fail and a shutdown approaches, voters might then blame Republicans for failing to keep the government open despite their control of the House, Senate and White House, several Democratic aides reasoned. There is a sense among many Democrats that bipartisanship isn’t necessarily toxic, even in an environment in which ardent liberals continue to protest at town hall meetings. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and other Democrats think voters see Democrats taking steps to defend existing policies — such as battling the American Health Care Act or blocking funding for a border wall — and understand the big picture.

#### Compromise isn’t an option – reconciling with Trump ruins any chance for progressive change and ensures midterm losses

Faris 17 – David Faris, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Roosevelt University, where he teaches Egyptian and Middle Eastern Politics, February 3rd ("How to save red-state Democrats," The Week, Available online at http://theweek.com/articles/677430/how-save-redstate-democrats, Accessed 7/7/2017)

The time for compromise, civility, and moderation is over. This is political war. Earlier this week, Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) made the simple and seemingly non-controversial statement that she supports hearings for President Trump's Supreme Court nominee, Neil Gorsuch. "We should have a full confirmation hearing process and a vote on ANY nominee for the Supreme Court," she tweeted just hours before the nomination was announced. Liberals across America subsequently exploded with rage. In simpler times (before Republicans cynically iced the Merrick Garland nomination), McCaskill's would have been an uncontroversial stance. Until recently, this was precisely how the Senate worked. But the Democratic base, righteously infuriated that the GOP's six-year ransacking of D.C. resulted in a total takeover of American government, is in no mood for compromise. In response to outrage from the freshly mobilized left, McCaskill backpedaled, reiterating her support for the filibuster and stating that Gorsuch will need 60 votes to clear the Senate. McCaskill's wavering is symbolic of a larger problem: The 2018 Senate map is abysmal for Democrats, who will be defending far more seats than the GOP, mostly in hostile territory like Missouri and North Dakota. But any attempt to save these endangered Democrats by currying favor with Trump and his voters can only end one way: in estrangement from the Democratic base, humiliation by Trump, and then defeat in 2018. Instead, McCaskill and Co. need to Google Map their spines, dig in, and fight like hell. You can sympathize with their basic dilemma. Democratic senators like McCaskill, North Dakota's Heidi Heitkamp, and Montana's Jon Tester represent states that are far more conservative than the average elected Democrat. A strategy of positioning themselves to the right of the Democratic caucus makes some intrinsic sense. Conservative voters inclined to reject anyone with a (D) after their name might take a second look at someone who supports gun rights, for instance, or who capably represents the ideological preferences of their actual constituents. It's an age-old gambit in the Senate: Establish your maverick bona fides and glide to victory as a respected independent. Unfortunately, there is zero evidence that this strategy actually works anymore. The instinct to pursue moderation and compromise with the Trump administration is deeply misguided. The only thing that can save McCaskill is a big, beautiful tsunami of Democratic votes in 2018. Political memories in this country seem to be pretty short, but we've been here before, way back in the halcyon days of 2014. In that year's midterm massacre of Senate Democrats, those who lost their seats were almost exclusively Democrats representing red states, like Mark Begich of Alaska and Mark Pryor of Arkansas (the 2014 Mark Massacre also claimed Mark Udall of Colorado and spared only Virginia's Mark Warner). Most of these senators had made concerted efforts to distance themselves from President Obama. Pryor voted against an expansion of background checks for firearms sales, vocally opposed same-sex marriage, and talked about Jesus in ways that would have made Jerry Falwell proud. He was still handed one of the most epic defeats ever suffered by a sitting senator, losing to Tom Cotton by 16 points. Louisiana's Mary Landrieu was one of the biggest thorns in the side of Democratic leadership during the debate over the Affordable Care Act, joining with Joe Lieberman and Ben Nelson to help spike the "public option," and spent her last days in office crusading pitifully for the Keystone pipeline. She still lost by 12 points. There was really nothing that these doomed red-state Democrats could have done to avoid the partisan undertow of a Republican wave election. After all, the same dynamics have slowly eroded the number of Republicans representing blue states. In today's partisan environment, dressing yourself up as a moderate doesn't do much to save your skin. Just ask former Illinois Sen. Mark Kirk (R) or former Minnesota Sen. Norm Coleman (R) or former Massachusetts Sen. Scott Brown (R). Voters can see right through the ruse, and are starting to understand that senatorial maverick-y-ness is less important than whether or not your team controls the chamber and how popular the president is. Wave elections, in fact, are how this new crop of endangered senators got or held their seats in the first place. Tester was lucky to run in the 2006 Democratic wave and then squeaked by with 48 percent of the vote on President Obama's coattails in 2012. Heitkamp also won a razor-thin race in 2012. Their presence in the caucus is valuable, of course, but Democrats need to be realistic about how it happened. This isn't neuroscience. And the sooner the Democratic leadership processes and understands this basic reality, the better the chance that they will actually be able to hold some of these endangered seats in 2018. Instead of protecting the McCaskill wing of the party by looking the other way while they stab the base in the back, Chuck Schumer and his allies must do everything in their power to forge a unified front opposing everything — from executive orders to the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. Senators who wander off the reservation are going to be abandoned by the base or challenged in primaries. Ruthless, unapologetic obstruction must then be coupled with a plan to nationalize the 2018 elections and to turn every single race in the country — from the bloodest red Congressional district in the Meth Belt all the way up to McCaskill's Senate seat — into a referendum on our odious president and the Vichy Republicans providing covering fire for him. This should be easiest thing Democrats ever have to do. The Trump administration has thus far been an appalling fiasco. While his abominable Muslim ban might split the country down the middle politically, the administration's plans on other fronts, like selling off national parks to oil speculators, are extremely unpopular and should benefit rural senators like Heitkamp and Tester. The scale of the inbound economic destruction — from throwing millions of people off their health insurance to the coming spike in consumer goods prices that will result from Trump's idiotic trade wars — should do all the work necessary to make the Republican Party radioactive. McCaskill's unpaid interns should be able to throw together a capable mashup of footage tying her opponent to the corrupt president and his cabal of white nationalists and granny-starvers. Trump's approval ratings are already abysmal, rivaling the low points of George W. Bush's post-Iraq favorability. And this is the honeymoon period! McCaskill and the Democrats have only one choice: Band together, fight, and win — or at least go down with their dignity intact.

### Plea bargaining

#### Everyone on the political spectrum hates plea bargaining. Hayes n.d.

Hayes, Christi. “Three Reasons Why Plea Bargains Are So Controversial.” The Law Dictionary, thelawdictionary.org/article/three-reasons-plea-bargains-controversial/. //nhs-VA

While we are used to seeing criminal cases play out before juries on television shows and in cinemas, the truth is that nowadays most criminal cases are resolved [behind closed doors](https://thelawdictionary.org/behind-closed-doors/) in the form of plea bargains. During a [plea bargain](https://thelawdictionary.org/plea-bargaining/), the accused agrees to plead [guilty](https://thelawdictionary.org/guilty/) to some or all of the charges against him or her in exchange for some sort of concession from the [prosecution](https://thelawdictionary.org/prosecution/), such as reduced charges or the [recommendation](https://thelawdictionary.org/recommendation/) of a lower sentence. In many cases, the prosecution will also expect the accused to do something else in exchange for such concessions, such as testifying as a witness in another criminal trial. While plea bargains account for the vast majority of convictions in felony cases nowadays, they are highly controversial. Here are three reasons why plea bargains stir up so much debate. Guilty People Get Off Easy One popular complaint against plea bargains is that they result in relatively light sentences for people who are guilty of criminal offenses. In many plea bargains, the prosecutor agrees to drop the more serious charges against the defendant or else will recommend to the judge a reduction in sentencing. As a result, the defendant will often receive a sentence that is lower through a plea bargain than he or she would have received had the case gone to trial and resulted in a guilty verdict. The counterargument to this point, however, is that a trial provides no guarantee of a conviction and that at least a plea bargain results in a guilty verdict. Constitutional Rights Are Compromised Conversely, many legal experts criticize plea bargains for compromising the [constitutional](https://thelawdictionary.org/constitutional/) rights of defendants. In fact, when entering into a plea bargain defendants [agree to waive](https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/plea_bargain) a number of their constitutional rights, including the right to a [trial by jury](https://thelawdictionary.org/trial-by-jury/), the right not to self-[incriminate](https://thelawdictionary.org/incriminate/), and the right to question hostile witnesses. It is important to note, however, that although plea bargains do require the waiver of constitutional rights, the constitutionality of plea bargains themselves have repeatedly been upheld by the [Supreme Court](https://thelawdictionary.org/supreme-court/). Innocent People May Plead Guilty Finally, one of the most controversial aspects of plea bargains is that they occasionally lead to wrongful convictions. In some cases, an innocent defendant may choose to plead guilty to a reduced sentence over fear that going to trial could lead to a wrongful conviction on a higher charge. In fact, a [number of studies](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2014/11/20/why-innocent-people-plead-guilty/) have shown that about 10 percent of exonerated felons were originally convicted on the basis of a false guilty plea, almost always the result of a plea bargain. While pleading guilty to a crime one is innocent of may sound strange, it can act as a self-protective measure in some instances.

### Innocents

#### People think the government should act to decrease wrongful convictions – now is key. Blandisi et. al 15

Blandisi, I. M., Clow, K. A., & Ricciardelli, R. (2015). Public Perceptions of the Stigmatization of Wrongly Convicted Individuals: Findings from Semi-Structured Interviews. The Qualitative Report, 20(11), 1881-1904. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/ tqr/vol20/iss11/13 Isabella M. Blandisi received her Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Criminology, Justice and Policy Studies and her Master of Arts in Criminology—both from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. Her Master's thesis looked at public perceptions of wrongful conviction through semi-structured interviews. //nhs-VA

Minimal research has examined how the public views wrongful convictions and exonerees (e.g., Bell et al., 2008). Even though our respondents were not directly asked about stigma and wrongful conviction, most of the interviewees spontaneously voiced their views on the topic. Respondents voluntarily discussed how stigma would make it difficult for exonerees to acquire gainful employment, how being incarcerated contaminates exonerees with stigma, how the innocence of exonerees may be doubted, and how others may be concerned about acquiring a courtesy stigma if they interact or befriend an exoneree. Although these issues have been noted by exonerees or previously suggested by researchers (e.g., Clow, Ricciardelli, & Cain, 2012; Vollen & Eggers, 2005; Westervelt & Cook, 2008, 2010), our findings demonstrate that members of the public are also aware of these issues, which has not been noted in the literature presently. In particular, our findings provide new insights into public knowledge regarding wrongful conviction. Individuals are aware of numerous factors leading to stigma, recognize that stigma manifests in many forms, and most importantly, the public seems to understand the long-term implications of stigma for exonerees. Based on this, the continued lack of government action (e.g., no Canadian legislation to provide compensation, governments failing to offer apologies, false criminal records are not automatically expunged) is surprising. The majority of interviewees believed that people stigmatized exonerees by discrediting them in light of their wrongful conviction. Our findings suggest that an exoneree’s incarceration elicits stigma. Interviewees applied their negative sentiments toward prisons onto exonerees who have been imprisoned—constructing frames for exonerees originally used for prisoners and offenders. Respondents also brought forth the idea that contact with prison and offenders may negatively change the exoneree, leading people to avoid exonerees as a potential threat or danger in and of themselves. Some respondents also acknowledged that courtesy stigma fears contributed to discriminatory actions against exonerees. For instance, interviewees presented the idea that employers may avoid hiring an exoneree in order to preserve the reputation of their business—suggesting prognostic framing techniques. Finally, in regards to public doubt, the exoneree’s innocence and concerns over their prison experiences—including fears of courtesy stigma—seemed to underlie stigmatization according to interviewees. When discussing doubt, respondents mostly tied the exoneree to the crime for which he or she was wrongly convicted. They felt exonerees were further stigmatized and doubted if they were convicted of more serious crimes like murder or the sexual assault of children, which seems to suggest that societal frames fluctuate based on the danger an individual is thought to represent. In other words, the more serious the conviction, the more dangerous and avoidable the exoneree is believed to be. Overall, the voices in our data can be interpreted to show an interplay between stigma theory and the framing approach.

### Corporations

#### The aff is “drain the swamp” – revitalizes Trump. Wooley 1/7

Wooley, Lynn. “Story of 2018 Midterm Elections Not Written Yet -.” WBDaily, 7 Jan. 2018, www.wbdaily.com/elections/story-2018-midterm-elections-not-written-yet/. Lynn Woolley is a hard-hitting, Texas-based talk show host who pulls no punches in his daily 3-hour analysis of politics and current events. //nhs-VA

If Trump could do more to drain the Swamp, he’d be a hero to many people that believe the government class is privileged at taxpayer expense. Draining the Swamp is difficult because the Swamp does not wish to be drained. But Trump, if he steps it up, could use this method of beefing up support. The bottom line for the GOP: If Trump keeps his promises and the economy continues to boom, voters will take notice. **What helps the Democrats?** Democrats are hoping that Trump can be made to look unfit for office. It’s that simple. They know that the Anti-Trump media will pound him day in and day out. MSNBC is a lost cause when it comes to journalism. CNN has better journalists, but they are all bound and determined to get Trump. Impartiality and objective reporting at these networks is history. If voters believe what CNN and the rest say about Trump – that hurts the GOP in the midterms. Some of Trumps’ tweets – such as the ones blasting Kim Jong Un are actually helpful. But the feud with former adviser Steve Bannon is not. Both men look silly fighting over who gets credit for the election 2016 victory. They should meet, shake hands, and work for the same goals – draining the Swamp, and building the Wall. After all, the two men have similar political beliefs. The Trump-Bannon fight helps Democrats. If the Democrats succeed in stopping the Trump agenda; if they get the DACA fix they want and still manage to kill the Wall — that hurts the Republicans. If the Trump economy was to tank, or the Tax Bill proves unpopular, Democrats and daily feature-papers will crow.

### Police Reform

#### Unanimous consensus on police reform to enhance accountability. Ekins 17

Ekins, Emily. "Poll: Americans Are Not As Divided On Policing As Headlines Suggest." *The Federalist*. N. p., 1/26/2017. Web. 15 Apr. 2018.

Although whites (57 percent), blacks (36 percent), and Hispanics (49 percent) disagree about whether police are [held accountable](https://www.cato.org/policing-in-america/chapter-3/perceptions-police-accountability-integrity) for misconduct in practice, strong majorities of all three groups support reforms intended to enhance accountability. For instance, 79 percent of Americans [support](https://www.cato.org/blog/79-want-police-misconduct-investigated-independent-agency) having outside law enforcement agencies investigate police misconduct, rather than leave it to the department to handle in-house (21 percent). Although most jurisdictions allow police departments to internally investigate and discipline their own officers, majorities of Americans regardless of race or ethnicity think independent investigations would better enhance police accountability. Americans of all racial backgrounds also agree that on-duty police should wear body cameras to record their interactions with citizens, with 89 percent in support. People [think](https://www.cato.org/policing-in-america/chapter-4/police-body-cameras) body cameras can help keep bothcitizens and police accountable by protecting the police from false accusations and keeping police honest by recording their on-duty interactions. **A Majority Support De-escalation Training for Police** Americans disagree about whether police tactics are “too harsh.” Fifty-six percent of African Americans think tactics are too harsh, but 67 percent of whites and 58 percent of Hispanics think they’re “about right.” However, Americans of all racial backgrounds agree police could do more to de-escalate confrontations with citizens and could benefit from additional training (68 percent). Such a reform is broadly popular with solid majorities of whites (62 percent), Latinos (78 percent), and blacks (82 percent) all in [support of providing police officers with additional confrontation training](https://www.cato.org/policing-in-america/chapter-4/training). Americans Want Police to Be Transparent The survey [found](https://www.cato.org/policing-in-america/chapter-4/voluntary-interactions) that Americans also want police to be transparent about stops and searches. Most jurisdictions in the U.S. don’t require police officers to inform citizens when a police stop and search is voluntary or mandatory. However, a strong majority of Americans (73 percent) think police should notify citizens when a stop is voluntary and they may decline to be searched. Even though most Americans have nothing to hide, many may resist added scrutiny from police or government when given the choice.

"New Poll Shows Surprising Consensus Among Democrats And Republicans On Police Reform." Mic.com. N. p., 2018. Web. 15 Apr. 2018. Staff Writer. //nhs-VA

Recent measurements of American public opinion have painted a picture of a nation divided over the fairness of our criminal justice system along the lines of race and political ideology. Whites trust the police more than blacks; conservatives trust the police more than liberals. But a*Washington Post*[poll](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2014/12/29/republicans-and-democrats-have-vastly-different-views-on-race-and-police-but-they-agree-on-solutions/) reveals a rare moment of deep consensus across the political spectrum on two measures for reforming the police.

The survey, which was conducted after the recent non-indictment of police officers who caused the deaths of unarmed black men Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York, shows that 86% of Americans support requiring that patrol officers in their communities wear video cameras while on duty, and 87% support having [independent prosecutors](https://mic.com/articles/105726/the-eric-garner-case-exposes-a-huge-problem-with-how-we-prosecute-police-officers) handle oversee cases in which  police kill unarmed citizens.

Even among Republicans who think the grand jury was right to decline to indict the police officer whose chokehold caused Garner's death this summer, 76% percent support independent prosecutors, according to the *Washington* *Post.*

These instances of cross-partisan agreement are noteworthy given the stark divides between liberals and conservative and whites and blacks on [virtually everything else](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2014/12/29/republicans-and-democrats-have-vastly-different-views-on-race-and-police-but-they-agree-on-solutions/) covered by the survey. For example, 80% of white Republicans consider Brown and Garner's death to be isolated incidents, while 60% of white Democrats believe they're part of a broader pattern. Blacks are twice as likely as whites to doubt the sufficiency of police training on restraining the use of force, and even more skeptical than whites on whether police are held accountable for misconduct.

All this is taking place against a backdrop in which recent police brutality incidents have corresponded with whites reporting [increasing faith](https://mic.com/articles/106314/more-white-people-than-ever-before-think-police-aren-t-racist) in the police to be color blind when it comes to protecting their local community.

So if the nation is so deeply at odds on the fairness of the police, then what explains the points of consensus on police reform? The answer lies in the fact that body cameras and independent prosecutors can't easily be filtered through the conventional language of political ideology. Body cameras haven't (yet) been racialized or associated with pro- or anti-authoritarian sentiment, and at face value they sound fair to respondents who have by and large never had to contemplate how to improve law enforcement practices.

A key factor to explaining these reforms' universal appeal is how they dovetail with a foundational American value that's been explored by a number of political scientists: equality of opportunity. As ardent believers in meritocracy, Americans don't believe in equal outcomes; on average they do think that, ideally, everyone should have a fair shot. (Consider the bipartisan popularity of improving educational performance as a means of mitigating poverty, as opposed to the European approach of expanding the provision of social services and aid.) While most people polled couldn't possibly have deep knowledge of the legal process for prosecuting misbehaving cops, body cameras sound like objective arbiters of justice, and it's hard to fault the idea of an independent advocate.

### CJS Reform

#### CJS reform is the best platform for Republicans in the midterms. Harris 2/11

* Party in power legislation that electorate supports and is bipartisan
* CJS reform is does that – public support is 80-90% and republican support is as high as dem
* Pollsters agree – currently advising repub congress people to do it

Harris 2/11 [Holly Harris; 02/11/18 09:00 AM EST; “The American people have spoken: Reform our criminal justice system”; <http://thehill.com/opinion/criminal-justice/373315-the-american-people-have-spoken-reform-our-criminal-justice-system> //BWSWJ]

Now that the pomp and circumstance from President Trump’s first State of the Union address has dispersed, our country faces the hard realities of governing in an election year. A news cycle focused on what divides us, perpetual budget and government funding shortfalls, and a fear that every vote may be used in a negative TV ad threaten to squander any hope of legitimate bipartisan policymaking that will move our country in the right direction. That difficult dynamic demands that Congress and the executive branch champion legislation that clears two critical hurdles: First, it needs to garner significant bipartisan support. Second, leaders need to be reassured that it will fall in line with the desires of the electorate. No issue meets those two standards more convincingly than criminal justice reform. Republicans and Democrats are both invested in fixing the justice system, which makes it difficult for either side to politicize this effort. That wouldn’t be smart politics anyway. Polls show widespread support for specific reforms that will lower the swelling prison population, save money, and make communities safer. This support is strong among voters in both parties, as well as Independents and women, who are swinging elections in this country. Three-quarters of American voters think the country’s criminal justice system needs to be significantly improved, according to a poll conducted earlier this year by the conservative polling firm Public Opinion Strategies on behalf of the Justice Action Network. That conviction is shared equally among Republicans, Democrats and Independents. Robert Blizzard, who conducted the poll, said, “I can’t think of a more positive issue to run on that has more bipartisan support.” His advice matters, as his firm polls for more than a quarter of the Republicans in the House. The president gave justice reform a major boost when he told millions of Americans that opportunity should extend to everyone, even those in prison, and he called for second chances for returning citizens. Consider for a moment what a significant departure this language is from the “lock them up and throw away the key” rhetoric used in the past. Congress must now stop using the president as an excuse not to bring criminal justice bills to a vote. The House and Senate are both expected to consider legislation later this year that would implement some of the reforms that voters crave, and the president’s words on the world’s grandest political stage gave Congress a clear runway to act. Any credible pollster out there would tell members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to tackle this issue and “go big before you go home.” Voters, by wide margins, favor major changes to our criminal justice system. Nine out of 10 American voters believe we should break down the existing barriers that make it harder for people leaving jails to find work and support their families. Republicans are just as likely to hold that view as Democrats. That is overwhelmingly good news for supporters of “ban the box” or “fair chance hiring” policies, which dozens of states have adopted that would prevent public employers from asking job applicants whether they have been convicted of a crime before they have a chance to explain their qualifications for the job. Two-thirds of all voters want Congress to enact this policy at the federal level, and Republican governors from Kentucky, Georgia, Arizona, Oklahoma and Indiana have recently taken up this cause. Attitudes of Americans toward incarceration have shifted dramatically since a generation of Republicans and Democrats enacted tough-on-crime policies at the state and federal levels in the 1980s and 1990s. Voters now demand more policies that give judges and the justice system more discretion to tailor punishments specifically to individual crimes and cases. One of the best examples of this shift is the overwhelming opposition to mandatory minimum sentences. Some 87 percent of voters want judges to have more discretion to sentence nonviolent offenders on a case-by-case basis rather than saddle them with formulaic sentencing requirements that have clogged our prisons with people convicted of nonviolent crimes. That includes 83 percent of Republicans. It’s mind-boggling that this issue is controversial in Washington. Not only do Americans want to change how many people we lock up and for how long, they also want policies that will get them back on track. Some 85 percent of voters think the primary goal of our justice system should be to rehabilitate people so they can become productive, law-abiding members of society. Americans now understand that investing in more treatment rather than more prisons will ultimately make us all safer when these individuals do not return to crime. Americans no longer believe everyone who commits a serious but nonviolent crime should automatically wind up in prison. Some 87 percent of voters would like governments at the state and federal levels to shift some of the money spent incarcerating nonviolent offenders toward alternative programs, like electronic monitoring, community service or probation. A majority 59 percent feel strongly about it. Budget concerns are one driver of these changing attitudes. American voters overwhelmingly believe we spend too much money locking people up, and should spend more on treating drug addiction, helping victims and preventing future crimes. Voters also want to see more oversight of prisons to ensure taxpayer funds are being spent responsibly. These issues have strong support among men and women alike, but the numbers are particularly high among women. That matters, not only because women represent the fastest growing segment of the prison population, but also because as a voting bloc, women typically have more influence on the outcome of an election than men. That doesn’t mean this issue is all about politics, but doing the right thing is often a lot easier when people agree with you.

#### CJS reform is seen as a bipartisan achievement – it’s exactly what Trump needs. Holden 17

Holden, Mark. “Criminal Justice Reform Is Ripe for Bipartisan Achievement.” TheHill, 3 Jan. 2017, thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/judicial/312492-criminal-justice-reform-is-ripe-for-bipartisan-achievement. Mark Holden is general counsel and senior vice president at Koch Industries. //nhs-VA

Criminal justice reform has been one of the few policy areas where Republicans and Democrats have forged bipartisan consensus. They have come close to passing reform the past two years, and now it’s up to GOP lawmakers to pick up where they left off. Leaders as diverse as Sens. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) and Mike Lee (R-Utah) agree that the current system is broken. It’s not hard to see why. Our criminal justice system is the largest and most expensive in the world. Roughly two million individuals are incarcerated in the United States. Yet about half of all federal prisoners are non-violent drug offenders for whom prison may not be the most effective solution. But for all the people we lock in prison, and all the money we spend to keep them there, we have created a system that too often mandates punishments that in no way fit the crime, prevents people from leading productive lives, and makes communities less safe in the process. That’s why it’s critical that leaders in Congress take up criminal justice reform. If they focus on six key areas of reform, there’s a real possibility that legislation could pass in both the House and Senate, even with the Senate’s 60-vote threshold, a bar not easily achieved on other issues. Here are the six areas of reform – and the reasons they have a viable path to becoming law. First, we need to reform the grand jury process and rein in prosecutorial overreach. As Judge Kozinski has advocated, lawmakers should require open file discovery, so prosecutors hand over all evidence favorable to an accused person, and also establish truly independent prosecutorial review units to investigate abuses. **Reason it could pass:** The case for curtailing prosecutors’ power is neither Republican, nor Democrat; it’s a matter of justice. That’s why politicians as far right as Sen. Ted Cruz and as far left as Hon. Janet Napolitano have called for such reforms as an essential step to making sure every individual is treated fairly according to the law, rather than a given prosecutor’s agenda. It’s also why groups as diverse as the American Conservative Union and the American Civil Liberties Union have supported prosecutorial reform. With powerful groups on both sides of the aisle advocating for reform, lawmakers are likely to look carefully at the issue. Second, we must protect every citizens’ Sixth Amendment rights. When it comes to federal cases, Congress should ensure that all individuals – regardless of income level – have an adequate chance to retain counsel before they appear in court. It should also explore the model that some states have moved to, which allows defendants to choose a private lawyer from a list of options, rather than being appointed a lawyer who may not offer a competent defense. **Reason it could pass:** Lawmakers have a duty to protect the inalienable rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights, which includes the right to representation. Failing to do so creates a constitutional crisis and risks creating a conflict of interest within government. Though improving individuals’ representation has often been an issue associated with the left, in recent years a number of right-leaning leaders have championed reforms, especially as it’s become apparent that some defendants are woefully incompetent. Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) held a hearing on the subject last year, and other Republican members have recognized the need for reform. Third, the punishment must fit the crime. Congress should reform mandatory minimums that don’t make sense and increase the use of “safety valves,” which allow judges to use their discretion for non-violent offenses if the offender meets certain requirements. These reforms are particularly important for low-level and non-violent offenders (mostly involving drug crimes), who too often languish in prison for years or even decades at a time at great cost to their families and our society at large. **Reason it could pass:** There was broad bi-partisan support for several sentencing-focused bills last Congress, many of which incorporated elements of the popular Smarter Sentencing Act and state reforms that have already proven successful. Some reforms have already garnered enough support to become law, such as the 2010 Fair Sentencing Act, which Attorney General nominee Sessions co-sponsored. Fourth, prisons should leave individuals better off than when they came in. Prison rehabilitation programs have proven to reduce the chance of re-offense and save taxpayer dollars. **Reason it could pass:** The Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act also includes rehabilitation reforms, which were widely supported. Fifth, Congress should give worthy individuals a chance to rejoin society and find fulfillment in their lives. Lawmakers could start by “banning the box” from federal employment applications so that individuals with a record can be considered for government jobs. Congress, however, should not mandate that companies “ban the box,” but should allow them to voluntarily do so. Congress should also clear the record of qualifying youth and non-violent federal offenders; limit solitary confinement for juveniles; and establish effective rehab, educational, and vocational programs so that every individual leaves prison a better person than when they came. **Reason it could pass:** In 2016, the House overwhelmingly passed a bill that did make some modest reforms to the treatment of juveniles, and the Senate companion bill has almost unanimous support. A number of companies have already voluntarily adopted a “ban the box” policy, and have seen its positive effects on their company and society as a whole. Finally, Congress needs to dramatically scale back the federal criminal code and ensure that all criminal laws have adequate criminal intent, also known as “mens rea.” The criminal code is a stunning 27,000 pages and comprises an estimated 4,500-6,000 criminal laws – and that doesn’t even include the thousands of additional federal regulations that impose criminal punishments. Many penalize people who had no idea they were committing a crime – missing a basic historical requirement that once existed in the criminal law to protect people from being unfairly prosecuted. **Reason it could pass:** Historically, such protections have garnered bipartisan support. In recent years, however, some extreme leftists have voiced concerns that such reforms could harm the environment. But 59 Democrats in the House, including Judiciary Ranking Member John Conyers and Rep. Jackson Lee, already saw the importance of protecting citizens, especially the most vulnerable, against being convicted of crimes they had no idea they committed. For any who still remain skeptical, left-leaning Yale Law Professor Gideon Yaffe makes a compelling case for liberals’ support of such reforms in *The New York Times*. Republicans have actively supported such reforms for over a decade. Any one of these reforms would improve our federal justice system – and have a profound effect on our society. Taken together, they will make communities safer, support our brave law enforcement officers, save taxpayer dollars, and empower individuals in need of a second chance. That’s precisely why Republicans and Democrats alike will have a difficult time answering to their constituents if they resist such reforms. Doing so would be a clear political move that overlooks the millions of Americans who would be better off as a result of this bipartisan achievement. If President-elect Trump and the GOP Congress take up criminal justice reform, it will be a sure sign that they are willing to look beyond party lines in order to improve people’s lives. That would be good start to putting individuals’ safety and wellbeing ahead of partisan politics.

#### The public can get behind CJS reform – it has overwhelming support. Wheeler 16

Wheeler, Lydia. “Poll Shows Bipartisan Support for Criminal Justice Reform.” TheHill, 11 Feb. 2016, thehill.com/regulation/legislation/269085-poll-shows-bipartisan-support-for-criminal-justice-reform. Lydia Wheeler is a regulations reporter. //nhs-VA

More than half of voters believe federal prisons house too many drug offenders, according to a national poll from the Pew Charitable Trusts. The poll found that 61 percent of voters think there are too many drug offenders behind bars and say more of that space should be used for people who have committed acts of violence or terrorism. Out of 1,200 voters surveyed by phone last month, almost eight in 10 voters, 79 percent, say judges should be given the flexibility to determine sentences based on the facts of each case when considering drug offenses, while 77 percent say the same policy should be used for all cases. Only 18 percent find the proposal unacceptable for drug cases and 19 percent find it unacceptable for all cases. Though the poll said Democrats and independents are most likely to prefer judicial discretion to mandatory minimums, 60 percent of Republicans and 66 percent of law enforcement households agree that changes to the current system are needed.

### Deportations

#### The public wants protections against deportations – immigration reform makes Trump seem like a great negotiator. Clement and Nakamura 9/25

Clement, Scott, and David Nakamura. “Survey Finds Strong Support for 'Dreamers'.” The Washington Post, WP Company, 25 Sept. 2017, www.washingtonpost.com/politics/survey-finds-strong-support-for-dreamers/2017/09/24/df3c885c-a16f-11e7-b14f-f41773cd5a14\_story.html?utm\_term=.7be59b85b1a7. Scott Clement is the polling director at The Washington Post, specializing in public opinion about politics, election campaigns and public policy. David Nakamura covers the White House. He has previously covered sports, education and city government and reported from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Japan. //nhs-VA

Majorities of Americans strongly support two potential components of immigration legislation this fall, including deportation protections for younger undocumented immigrants and requiring employers to verify workers are in the United States legally, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll. The findings suggest that President Trump and Congress might have a path to a major deal on immigration reform that has eluded Washington for three decades. Trump has said he is open to compromise with Democrats on a bill that would provide legal status for immigrants brought to the country illegally as children, known as “dreamers,” combined with tougher border security measures. The Post-ABC survey finds 86 percent support for dreamers who had been eligible for renewable two-year work permits under a deferred action program started by President Barack Obama to remain in the country. Trump’s administration announced this month that it will end the program, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, and begin to phase out work permits in March if lawmakers do not act.

The Washington Post-ABC News poll was conducted Sept. 18-21 among a random national sample of 1,002 adults reached on cellular and landline phones. Overall results carrying a plus or minus 3.5-point margin of sampling error.

#### Immigration reform is k2 midterm victory for the GOP. Cardona 1/3

Cardona, Maria. “GOP Should Support DREAM Act to Support Itself in Midterms.” TheHill, 3 Jan. 2018, thehill.com/opinion/immigration/367185-gop-should-support-dream-act-to-support-themselves-in-midterms. Maria Cardona is an opinion contributor. //nhs-VA

The dichotomy is striking because in mid-2017, Trump, in one fell, callous swoop, ended Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the Obama-era program for these young immigrants, known as "Dreamers", that let them temporarily stay and work, study or serve in the military until a permanent solution could be found for them. At the time, Trump promised they would be taken care of and they didn’t need to worry — an easy thing to say when you are sipping champagne in your gilded golf club while these kids are worried they may be deported at any time. While Trump may not care about the fate of these young immigrants, he should care about his political fate and that of his party, which is already in jeopardy in 2018. It will be further in danger if he doesn’t work toward a fair solution that keeps his word to protect these workers, students and military personnel who are as American as he is except for a piece of paper. Trump’s most recent tweet about DACA betrays this fear. He hypocritically accuses Democrats of “doing nothing on DACA” and goes on to laughably predict that “Hispanics will go hard against Dems, will start ‘falling in love’ with Republicans and their President!” Let’s not insult the intelligence of the American people, especially Hispanics. Trump’s current approval rating among Latinos remains dismally low. They know who it was that called Mexicans rapists and who accused a Mexican-American judge of not being capable of doing his job because of his Mexican heritage. They know who wants to get rid of birthright citizenship, who wants to build a 2,200-mile wall and make Mexico pay for it, and who speaks of the public safety threat from illegal aliens when in fact, the immigrant population commits crimes at a much lower rate than those who are American-born. Latino voters also know, as do most Americans, over 80 percent of whom favor letting the Dreamers stay in this country legally, that these young immigrants positively contribute to our society and to our economy and that the vast majority of them are living honest and honorable lives. In fact, removing these workers from their jobs would cost the U.S. economy nearly half a trillion dollars in GDP loss over the next decade. Additionally, employers would face more than $6.3 billion in unnecessary turnover costs to recruit, replace and train almost 800,000 new employees. There are brilliant Dreamer students at our universities working on life-saving research on the human heart and on drone technology to make agricultural work more efficient, while their parents are doing back-breaking labor in those same fields. Many are putting their lives on the line to defend this great country — the only country they have ever known and the one they call home. They deserve better than a president who has used them as political fodder at his rallies. Trump knows rescinding the DACA program was a politically fraught move. Let’s remember that shortly after that, it was President Trump who, during a meeting at the White House, promised to work with Democratic leaders on a DACA solution without demanding construction of his ridiculous wall, or any other obvious poison pill that would do nothing but guarantee gridlock. He has since cynically gone back on that promise. After all, much of his base would not forgive him for letting undocumented immigrants stay in this country. Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa), one of the most anti-immigrant activists in Congress, privately urged Trump to not allow any passage of DACA. Trump is now demanding construction of the wall and an end to chain migration in exchange for a DACA deal. Let’s be clear: Democrats have always supported strong robust and additional border security, whatever it is called. But a 2,200-mile wall is physically impossible to build on the southern border, is fiscally irresponsible and is not supported by many Republican members of Congress and governors from border states. It is a non-starter with Democrats. Caught between his unforgiving supporters and what he knows is a politically dangerous path if he does not pass DACA, Trump is now disingenuously accusing Democrats of “doing nothing for DACA” even though they have been the ones, along with sensible Republicans, who have worked on a DREAM Act that would protect Dreamers and allow them to continue their valuable contributions to our country. In fact, a bipartisan DREAM Act is sitting on House Speaker Paul Ryan’s (R-Wis.) desk right now and could be brought to a vote tomorrow and pass with overwhelming bipartisan support. Every day that passes without that bill being called to a vote is one more day Trump and the GOP leadership prove they are prioritizing short-term political expediency over a common-sense permanent solution for these brave young immigrants. That is not a good look for Republicans, who are already in the political danger zone going into the 2018 midterm elections, where they will need to appeal to minority voters in order to prevent a shellacking. If Trump and Republicans would support a clean DREAM Act, which Americans want and Dreamers deserve, it would indeed be a Happy New Year for these young immigrants. It could also shape up to be a better year for Republicans than what it is looking like so far.

### Sexual Harassment

#### Americans overwhelmingly support ‘zero-tolerance’ on sexual harassment – that gives Trump the upper hand heading into 2018. Kurtzleben 12/14

Kurtzleben, Danielle. “Poll: Americans Overwhelmingly Support 'Zero Tolerance' On Sexual Harassment.” NPR, NPR, 14 Dec. 2017, www.npr.org/2017/12/14/570601136/poll-sexual-harassment-ipsos. Danielle Kurtzleben is a political reporter assigned to NPR's Washington Desk. She appears on NPR shows, writes for the web, and is a regular on the NPR Politics Podcast. Her reporting is wide-ranging, with particular focuses on gender politics, demographics, and economic policy. Before joining NPR in 2015, Kurtzleben spent a year as a correspondent for Vox.com. As part of the site's original reporting team, she covered economics and business news. Prior to Vox.com, Kurtzleben was with U.S. News & World Report for nearly four years, where she covered the economy, campaign finance and demographic issues. As associate editor, she launched Data Mine, a data visualization blog on usnews.com. A native of Titonka, Iowa, Kurtzleben has a bachelor's degree in English from Carleton College. She also holds a master's degree in Global Communication from George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs. //nhs-VA

Nearly 9 in 10 Americans believe that "a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment is essential to bringing about change in our society." At a time when partisan opinions are so polarized on a range of issues, Republicans and Democrats are relatively similar in believing that society should crack down hard on sexual harassment, a new poll from Ipsos and NPR suggests. About three-quarters of Democrats and about two-thirds of Republicans agreed, for example, that "pretty much every woman has experienced some form of sexual harassment in her life." And around 6 in 10 Democrats and 7 in 10 Republicans agreed that "it can be hard sometimes to tell what is sexual harassment and what is not." While the differences between parties' beliefs in many cases were modest, they were still significant on some questions. For example, 35 percent of Republicans agreed with the idea that "nearly all instances of sexual harassment would end if the woman simply told the man to stop," compared to 20 percent of Democrats. Those differences on some issues come out most prominently among a couple of demographics in particular. "Those groups for sure — Republican men and Democratic women — are driving the effects big-time," said Janine Beekman, associate research scientist at Ipsos. For example, on some questions Democratic women and Republican men occupy two ends of an opinion spectrum, with the other two groups floating in the middle. Fifteen percent of Democratic women believe that "nearly all instances of sexual harassment would end if the woman simply told the man to stop." Forty-three percent of Republican men agree with that statement. And Democratic women seem to be leading the charge on having many conversations about sexual harassment. Roughly half of Democratic women said they're talking "a lot" or "some" about sexual harassment with their families, compared to around one-third of Republican men**,** Republican womenand Democratic men.

The NPR/Ipsos poll of 1,133 adults was conducted online between December 8 and 12, 2017, and has a credibility interval of +/- 3.3 percentage points for the full sample. Credibility intervals are +/- 5.6 percentage points for Democrats, +/- 6.1 points for Republicans, and +/- 6.8 percentage points for independents. The interval was +/- 7.2 percentage points for Democratic women, +/- 9.1 percentage points for Democratic men, +/-8.4 percentage points for Republican women, and +/- 9.0 percentage points for Republican men.

#### Sexual harassment is a critical issue in midterms that the ruling party wants to come ahead on – Alabama proves. Schneider 12/17

Schneider, Elena. “Wave of Misconduct Claims Reshape 2018 Elections.” POLITICO, 17 Dec. 2017, www.politico.com/story/2017/12/17/2018-midterms-sexual-harassment-299576.Elena Schneider is a campaign pro reporter for POLITICO, where she focuses on House and Senate races. Before joining the 2016 politics team, Schneider was a news assistant and freelancer for the New York Times’ D.C. bureau. Her work has also appeared in the Texas Tribune, Texas Monthly and Business Insider. She earned a Master’s and a Bachelor’s in Journalism from Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism. //nhs-VA

\*Brackets in original

The wave of sexual harassment allegations on Capitol Hill is already beginning to reshape the 2018 election landscape, crushing some campaigns under its pressure but providing breakthrough opportunities for others. Sexual harassment-related scandals have already claimed four House members — Reps. John Conyers (D-Mich.), Trent Franks (R-Ariz.), Blake Farenthold (R-Texas) and Ruben Kihuen (D-Nev.), who announced Saturday he would not seek reelection after his own party leadership called for his resignation. In Minnesota, the resignation of Democratic Sen. Al Franken has thrown a wrinkle into the 2018 Senate map — now, party strategists must contend with the prospect that his appointed successor, Tina Smith, will receive a competitive challenge when she attempts to win a full term. Members of Congress aren’t the only ones being felled by new revelations. On Friday, a female candidate, Andrea Ramsey, quit her Democratic bid to challenge Rep. Kevin Yoder (R-Kan.) after news broke that her company settled a sexual harassment suit, even though she denies the allegations. Yet the nation’s moment of reckoning on sexual harassment isn’t simply shaking up the upcoming midterm election by forcing candidates and incumbents out of races — it’s also altering the traditional terms of debate. In Florida, where Democrat Mary Barzee Flores is running in a crowded primary to replace retiring GOP Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, the former state circuit judge focused her first ad on the issue of sexual misconduct in the workplace. “I’ve heard about other candidates who are speaking out and it wouldn’t surprise me if, more and more, women talk about this,” said Flores, whose ad pointed to a former manager who assaulted her. “We’re making it clear that we’re not just going to sweep this stuff under the rug.” In one competitive Northern Virginia race, the issue is center stage in part due to Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-Va.) who is leading the charge in Congress, along with Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.), to reform how sexual harassment cases are handled. On the Democratic side, Lindsey Davis Stover, a former Obama official running in a crowded primary field, filed a Freedom of Information Act request to “reveal the secret payouts authorized in congressional sexual misconduct” cases, according to a statement from her campaign. What’s still unclear is how the spate of sexual harassment scandals might sway voters in 2018. Early public polling suggests Democratic voters are more likely to believe accusations of misconduct than Republicans. A Monmouth University pollreleased this week found that 37 percent of Republicans believe such reports about GOP legislators are accurate, while 63 percent of Democrats trust those reports about Democratic lawmakers. “The struggle lies in the fact that [sexual harassment] is coming out in races across the country — in legislative bodies, in federal bodies and in both parties. Every time it happens, even in in some other state, it affects the mindset of voters,” said Luke Macias, a Republican consultant based in Texas. Some GOP strategists’ worry their party’s response to various scandals could further hurt them among suburban voters and women, two blocs that they can’t afford to lose as they try to defend their 24-seat majority in the House. “The loss of urban and suburban voters in 2016 plus sexual harassment scandals is probably not a good way to secure these moderate Republican and Independent voters long-term,” said Kevin Shuvalov, a Republican strategist based in Texas. “It’s an opening for Democrats to go get voters who aren’t naturally available to them.” Republican pollster Robert Blizzard warned that “women voters, especially Independent women, are a key audience in the ‘18 election up and down the ticket across the country,” so to “be perceived as weak on this issue at your own peril.” “Candidates are waiting to see what other allegations might surface and what opportunities arise as a result,” said Martha McKenna, a Democratic consultant. “We’ve seen how suburban women react to these charges which could put even more seats in play.” Some strategists see the issue as a potential boon for challengers in both parties, since they can recast the cascade of resignations as another example of members of Congress “expecting special treatment,” said Molly Murphy, a Democratic consultant.

### Retributive Justice

#### Public support is high for retributive justice – opinions on offenders don’t change. Shah 2/6

Shah, Sami. “Retribution in Law.” Daily Times, 6 Feb. 2018, dailytimes.com.pk/196057/retribution-in-law/. The writer is a corporate lawyer and an alumnus of SOAS, University of London. //nhs-VA

\*Bracketed for gendered language

Retributivism is a theory of punishment, which holds that the best response to a crime is a punishment proportional to the offence, inflicted because the offender deserves it. Prevention of future crimes (deterrence) or rehabilitation of the offender is not to be considered in determining punishments. For individuals who believe in the theory hold that when an offender breaks the law, justice requires that he or she suffers in return. They maintain that retribution is different from revenge because retributive justice is only directed at wrongs, has inherent limits, is not personal, involves no pleasure at the suffering of others, and employs procedural standards. If the prison is a correctional facility, and the incarcerated are put behind the bars for them to be given a certain chance in the future, why are those who serve the prison sentence — imposed on them by the laws of the land — not given a fair standing? There have been way too many cases of revenge where the masses at large have decided to take the law into their own hands. The ‘rule of the mob’ and ‘lynch law’ have no justification in today’s society. We have a constitution, and a set of rules legislated by the parliament to follow. It’s another discussion to justify the extent to which the laws promulgated by the parliament are ‘just’ or ‘unjust. ’ Media coverage is concentrated on the horrific experiences of the victims. An individual — the alleged accused — could have been wrongly set up by the opposing parties. It could have been someone, somewhere at the wrong place and time. To assume an individual guilty, just because others have formed that opinion of the accused, is downright demeaning and unjust on the part of the masses at large. And then to escalate the situation and follow suit of a few criminals within the mob, and to lynch and assault the alleged accused — making a court of justice on the streets — has become a norm in our society. There are always two sides to a story. The alleged accused and the opposing party could have a personal vendetta to resolve. The accused — not being able to muster enough strength in the form of gathering enough support — could be wrongly dealt with, in many instances losing their lives to the mobs at large. With the loss of the alleged accused’s life on the streets, no justified trial can take place, and due to the extremely adversarial nature of the criminal justice system, justice is denied to the accused and their relatives. In another instance, when an offender is released from a prison sentence, [they are] ~~he is~~ still blamed for the alleged wrong [they] ~~he~~ committed, and the police and the victims continue to blame [them] ~~him~~, even though, in law, the convicted [they] man is eligible for parole and [their] ~~his~~ incarceration is no longer necessary. The public perception rarely changes about the ex-offender, and [they have] he has to live with the notion of being judged for the remainder of his lifetime.

### Inequality

#### Inequality and “draining the swamp” flips the election. Morici 2/12

Morici, Peter. “Inequality Will Drive the Midterm Elections.” MarketWatch, 12 Feb. 2018, www.marketwatch.com/story/inequality-will-drive-the-midterm-elections-2018-02-12.Peter George Morici, Jr. is an American economist and Professor of International Business at the R.H. Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland, College Park. //nhs-VA

For Republicans, it is dangerous to focus too much on the moment — immigration reform and avoiding government shutdowns—when the more enduring threat to their grip on power are charges of insensitivity about inequality. In a market economy, sometimes it is necessary to reward innovation and hard work, but too often class differences are abused by cynical politicians. Inequality can be too extreme. Future prosperity is not well served when the children of the poor and working classes are trapped in dysfunctional communities and denied access to decent schools, universities and other means for escape. In a democracy, politicians can exploit those conditions with quite destructive consequences. Fraudulent Social Security disability pensions, food stamps, subsidized housing and free health care are significantly responsible for many able-bodied adults dropping out of the workforce. Within a few years, those often render recipients virtually unfit for gainful employment and create a class of voters beholding to promiscuous politicians. All too often progressives cling to simple explanations for inequality—racial and gender biases, accidents of birth and so forth. That can make the reasonable attainment owing to differences in personal enterprise immoral and something to be slain by an elaborate system of redistributionist policies and regulations that can hamstring labor markets and slow growth—to the ultimate penalty of rich and poor alike. It’s all menacingly self-reinforcing. Excessive public assistance and preferences dulls ambition and slows growth, which ultimately exacerbate inequality. In turn, those create greater opportunities for liberal politicians to preserve their power and positions by promising new confiscation of wealth and punishments on innocent productive citizens. Now progressives want to streamline the process by providing everyone with a guaranteed annual income. Vote buying and retribution gone wholesale! It is not inequality ordinary Americans dislike. They recognize the need to reward creativity and ambition but have contempt for unfair advantages. In particular, those bestowed by rich parents on children or politicians to campaign donors and demographic groups that vote in blocks for leaders who deliver reliably on their demands. Rural and small-town America has been devastated by globalization and technological change, failing schools and poorly crafted free trade agreements. President Barack Obama responded with more handouts and flawed free trade deals. The voice that candidate Donald Trump heard deep in the heartland was from disaffected and economically disenfranchised white voters. They are tired of politicians patronizing their plight, the liberal media denigrating their values, and intellectuals pushing global governance. Most importantly, they want jobs not handouts, opportunities not finger-pointing and guilt. The GOP tax cut will make American-based businesses more competitive and lift economic growth a bit, but it will mostly raise prosperity on the two coasts and among communities served by top-flight universities—for example, Ann Arbor and the research triangle in North Carolina. Rifle-shot trade actions for aluminum, solar panels and a few other products may provide some deserved relief from unfair import competition but don’t offer a systemic solution for subsidized Asian imports and a continually growing trade deficit with China. Overall, the Trump administration and GOP Congress—much like President George W. Bush and his GOP Congress before them—are hardly addressing the genuine concerns of the great mass of voters who put them in power. Yet, the clients and executive class of the liberal state see the GOP as an existential threat to their systems of privileges and persecution so carefully erected during the Clinton and Obama years. The recent elections in Alabama and Virginia sent a clear message. The coalition that profits most from their insidious systems of entitlements and preferences so carefully erected by successive Democratic governments is energized to turn every election into a Dump Trump referendum and to turn out in great numbers, whereas the GOP base, disappointed, doesn’t have the same mojo. Trump would do well to refocus his energies on disassembling the apparatus of political correctness in practice and implementing radical trade reforms, or reconcile to the GOP losing control of Congress in 2018 and the presidency in 2020.

### Mass Incarceration

#### Public is strongly against mass incarceration – it’s a huge issue. Pendergrass 12/12

Pendergrass, Taylor. “Tough-on-Crime Prosecutors Are Out of Step With Public Views.”American Civil Liberties Union, American Civil Liberties Union, 12 Dec. 2017, www.aclu.org/blog/mass-incarceration/smart-justice/tough-crime-prosecutors-are-out-step-public-views. Taylor Pendergrass is a senior campaign strategist for the ACLU Campaign for Smart Justice. //nhs-VA

These are all real quotes from elected prosecutors, the most powerful people in the criminal justice system. There are approximately 2,400 elected prosecutors in America, and these views may well be common among them. But the public appears to be moving away from these misconceptions. A first-of-its-kind poll conducted by the ACLU’s Campaign for Smart Justice shows that voters of every persuasion across the United States — in red states and in blue states alike — strongly prefer elected prosecutors who are committed to reducing incarceration, tackling racial disparities, and being transparent. Approximately nine out of 10 likely voters surveyed said that it was important for their prosecutor to prioritize alternatives to incarceration. This includes 83 percent of Republicans polled. Eighty-eight percent of voters also said they were more likely to support a prosecutor who actively works to reduce racial bias in the criminal justice system. And 91 percent want prosecutors to reduce sentences in instances where people were treated unequally because of their race. Respondents also want a prosecutor who makes a commitment to transparency, with 85 percent favoring a prosecutor who shares data and policies with the public. The poll also reveals one major reason why “tough on crime” prosecutors get returned to office even though their extreme beliefs are significantly out of step with the majority of constituents: Many voters simply know too little about who their local prosecutor is or what they are up to. Once armed with that information, three-quarters of voters say their prosecutor is “very important” and that they would vote for a candidate committed to reform. To bridge the gap between voters’ values and the pro-incarceration practices of many elected prosecutors, the ACLU Campaign for Smart Justice and state ACLU affiliates have joined other partners in a nationwide public education effort. There are over 1,000 top prosecutors up for election in 2018 alone. The ACLU is knocking on doors, issuing reports, holding public events, and spreading awareness online about prosecutors in California, Kansas, Oregon, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Texas, and many more states to come. This nationwide poll sends a strong signal to the growing number of recently elected reform-minded prosecutors that voters are going to continue to support them if they follow through on an aggressive agenda to address mass incarceration and racial disparities. These results should also encourage many more reform-minded candidates to enter prosecutor elections, which are uncontested at notoriously high rates, and challenge the status quo. These poll results promise that, with a lot of hard work, in the future a person who embraces discredited “tough on crime” policies and denies that racism permeates the criminal justice system will no longer be able to get a job as a top prosecutor, except perhaps through a presidential appointment.

### Natives

#### Natives are becoming key players in national elections – empirics prove.

Worden 14 (Dennis, legislative director for the Native American Contractors Association and a Coeur d' Alene Tribal member. He is with the Center for Global Policy Solutions Greenhouse with The OpEd Project, TruthOut,“A Campaign Primer: Native American Voters Count”, September 13, 2014, http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/26166-a-campaign-primer-native-american-voters-count)

Back in session and gearing up for campaigns before the November midterm elections, the political coverage will likely focus on two aspects of a Congressional race: who will win and who will vote. **We can look forward to more fill-in-the-blank, predictable reporting. It usually goes like this: Will this candidate win? And will women, Latinos, blacks, labor, the Tea Party or youth turn out to vote for the candidate?** Yet in this year's election campaign, **one crucial voting bloc that is slowly gaining attention for its role in key races is the Native American vote.** **Particularly in close contests in Western states,** the Native vote can swing a victory one way or another. **For many political pundits, the Native voting bloc is also one of the least understood, or perhaps the least appreciated.But as Native Americans gain a larger voice politically,** the issues important to this group should also gain more attention by those in Congress. It makes sense that the Native vote has not attracted the scrutiny of the political establishment so far. Even as recently as the 2010 census, **Native Americans comprise 5.2 million of the country's** 308 million **people**. These numbers, especially when divided among the 50 states, would seem to dilute their political impact on elections. However, **especially in states with high concentrations of Native voters,** the impact of this constituency on elections is palpable. Even more than numbers, you can look to history for the lack of attention to Native issues and Native voters. For decades, many Americans viewed Native Americans as a relic of the past (or as sports mascots). Natives were not considered citizens - and thus could not vote in elections - until 1924, just 90 years ago. It was not until 1948 that Natives could vote in every state. By the time Natives could vote most of the United States already viewed Indians as a people of the past. If Indians were not viewed as part of modern America how can they influence modern American politics? Where people did recognize the existence of Natives, the reality of poverty, small numbers of registered voters or lack of political influence, resulted in a political environment where these votes were largely ignored. **Still, over the last 15 years, Natives have developed their economies, registered voters and engaged more fully in the political and policy process.** The results have been dramatic. **In some Western states,** the Native vote can decide the outcome of an election. **Just ask former Sen. Slade Gorton (R-Washington). In 2000, he was unseated by Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Washington) in part because tribes viewed Gorton as so anti-tribal that they decided to unite against him.** Since then, tribes and political parties have slowly and quietly engaged Natives in tight races to support pro-tribal candidates**. Sen. Jon Tester (D-Montana) may owe his two terms in the Senate to tribal communities. Sen. Lisa Murkowski's (R-Alaska) historic write-in campaign during the general election largely was the result of Native voters who were fearful of what Republican candidate Joe Miller's vote would bring to their communities. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-Washington) also focused on Native turnout for her successful election. This year, Sen. Mark Begich (D-Alaska) implemented a massive voter turnout machine across thousands of miles focused on Natives who live in isolated villages.** Both parties are learning the Native vote is not partisan. The two tribal citizens serving in the House are both Republicans: Reps. Tom Cole (R-Oklahoma) and Markwayne Mullin (R-Oklahoma). Many who may vote for Begich will also likely vote for Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), the dean of the Republican conference in the House. The National Republican Senatorial Committee appointed Murkowski to lead outreach to tribal communities, and Cole leads a similar effort for House Republicans. To be sure, more campaigns and party operatives understand the importance of the Native vote, but it is questionable if the broader political establishment and political media truly understands and appreciates the impact the Native vote has had on federal elections since 2000. **As more and more Native Americans vote, particularly in key races, politicians must engage on these issues at a policy level, not only when they are asking for votes.** Native issues can no longer be an ancillary product of Congress, but must be addressed regularly and with meaning.

### **Animals**

#### Animal rights have bipartisan support – empirics. Kelly 4/13

[Erin Kelly, 4-13-2017, "Congress finds bipartisanship on animal protection issues," USA TODAY, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2017/04/13/congress-finds-bipartisanship-animal-protection-issues/100386846/] nhs-GA

WASHINGTON — Congress has found something cute and cuddly to agree on. Plagued by bitter division and fierce infighting, Republican[s] and Dem[s]ocratic lawmakers have found rare consensus on legislation to protect dogs, cats, horses, tigers and bunnies from abuse. In the first few months of the new 115th Congress, House members and senators have introduced more than a dozen bipartisan bills on animal welfare, including a measure to bar people from keeping tigers, lions, and other big cats as pets and legislation to outlaw the sale of shark fins in the U.S. About half of those stand a strong chance of passage this session, said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States. "I think we're positioned for success," Pacelle said. "You have such a diverse group of people — from conservative Freedom Caucus members to moderate Republicans to liberal Democrats — who have come together on an issue they know their constituents care about." Americans' passion for animals is what's driving Congress to act, said Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Fla., the new co-chairman of the bipartisan Congressional Animal Protection Caucus, which has more than 120 members. "The biggest reason that this issue crosses party lines is that is has so much public support," said Buchanan, who was named the 2015 "legislator of the year" by the Humane Society. "About a third of my district is seniors, and most of them have pets that they love. I've had dogs and cats and horses myself, but I never realized how much passion there was for animals until I got this job 10 years ago. It comes up at almost every one of my town halls." Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., co-chairman of the caucus, said Americans have become increasingly vocal about how much they care about their pets, wildlife and farm animals. "Members of Congress are realizing that protecting animals is not just the right thing to do, it's also developing to become potent politically," he said. Blumenauer said that point was underscored last fall in Oklahoma, where animal protection advocates defeated a "right to farm" ballot initiative that critics said would have allowed abusive "puppy mill" operators to shield themselves from laws against animal cruelty. Residents of the conservative[s] state, which voted overwhelmingly for Donald Trump in the same election, defeated the initiative by about 20 points.

## Internals

### \*Top\*

### Midterms = Referendum

#### Midterms are tied to Trump—Virginia proves

Novak 11-1 Jake. Senior Columnist at NBC "Wild and Nasty Virginia Election Becomes a Referendum on Trump." CNBC. CNBC, 01 Nov. 2017. Web. 01 Nov. 2017. <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/11/01/virginia-election-a-big-test-for-trump-commentary.html>. DLuo

Anyone suffering withdrawal from last year's presidential election thriller can check all the wild and wacky boxes by focusing on the governor's race in Virginia. Election Day is next week, but it's already been a contest where anything can happen and anything goes. Virginia's election for governor has traditionally been seen as an early bellwether for new presidents as it happens one year after the presidential election. Plus, since Virginia has become more of a swing state, the results will have more meaning than this year's other governor's race in a solid blue New Jersey. What's more, since incumbents can't run for a second consecutive term as governor in the Old Dominion, the playing field is uncommonly even and more open to national political issues as opposed to local personality politics. But that means one national personality is dominating more and more of the race: President Donald Trump. President Trump's policies and his political tone have made more than a cameo appearance in this election between Democrat Ralph Northam and Republican Ed Gillespie. Gillespie has ruffled feathers by taking a Trumpian stand against illegal immigrant gangs and trying to tie the murderous MS-13 gang to policies Northam supports. A Latino group supporting Northam countered with an even more controversial ad showing scared minority children being chased by a truck with a "Gillespie for governor" sticker and a Confederate flag. (That ad was pulled Tuesday after the deadly terror truck ramming incident in New York City). Earlier in the race, the Democratic Party in Virginia also sent out a mailer showing President Trump and Gillespie with pictures of white supremacists marchers inserted below them. If the Virginia election wasn't a referendum on President Trump before those ads were aired, it certainly is now. Another similarity between this race and the 2016 election is that the polls are all over the place. There are wild swings in different polls almost daily. One survey put out last week by Hampton University has Gillespie up by eight points. Another one a week later from Quinnipiac University had Northam up by 17. Overall, Northam is still favored by most of the polls. But with those kinds of wild swings, the race is essentially an unpredictable tossup. If the polling industry was looking to recover much of the credibility it lost in the presidential election with some kind of universally accurate prediction of this race, that chance has already been lost. But the real question for the political class is what this election will mean when the votes are actually counted. Here are the best answers to that question depending on the three potential outcomes: If the Republican Gillespie wins, then it signals that allying with President Trump and some of his signature controversial policies is far from fatal for GOP candidates. Remember that Hillary Clinton beat President Trump in Virginia last year by more than five percentage points and current Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe is a Democrat, so any win for a Republican there would be a net gain for the GOP. If the Democrat Northam wins, and wins by a better margin than those five points, look for Democrats to become more emboldened to focus on President Trump in the midterm elections over local issues. Republican candidates will also be more likely to try to distance themselves from the president if possible. Of course, if the election turns out to be decided by a razor thin margin of about three points or less, all bets are off. Everyone will just have to go back to reading the other political tea leaves to determine their 2018 or 2020 strategies. But what we do know now is that we have a too close to call contest that's heavily dominated by pro-Trump and anti-Trump sentiment. And while approval polls are what we've had to rely on since last year to gauge this president's support, we're about to get the results from the one kind of poll that really counts. No one has seriously ever said: "As Virginia goes, so goes the nation." But after this coming Tuesday, we might be able to say that the Virginia election is a strong test of where the nation is right now.

#### People see midterms as a referendum on Trump – Virginia, New Jersey, and Alabama all prove. Krasny 12/31

Krasny, Ros, et al. “Trump Ramps Up Rhetoric Early on Eve of Mid-Term Election Year.”Bloomberg.com, Bloomberg, 31 Dec. 2017, www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-31/trump-ramps-up-rhetoric-early-on-eve-of-mid-term-election-year. //nhs-VA

Warning signs for Republicans came in November’s elections, in which Democrats won the Virginia and New Jersey governor’s races and numerous down-ballot contests in what some saw as in part a referendum on Trump. The upset victory by Doug Jones in the Alabama special U.S. Senate election in December also charged up Democratic voters. Jones was the first Democrat elected to the Senate from the deeply Republican southern state in a quarter-century. Support for his opponent, Roy Moore, slipped after he was accused of preying on teenage girls when he was in his 30s, even though the former judge had vocal backing from Trump heading into the election. Trump and Republicans hope a rising economy and record stock prices will buoy the party in November’s races, although the condition of both by Election Day could shift. The president regularly references the stock market in his comments, and on Sunday made the impossible-to-verify claim on Twitter that “If the Dems (Crooked Hillary) got elected, your stocks would be down 50% from values on Election Day.” Trump tested out a line at a recent fundraiser -- “how’s your 401(k) doing” -- in a bid to bind his presidency to the rising stock market and voters’ pocketbooks. But only about 45 percent of private-sector workers participate in any employer-sponsored retirement plan, and the lower-income workers prominent among Trump’s political base are the least likely to hold money in such an account. “The GOP’s best shot to hold Congress is to convince Americans that Trump’s pro-business policies and the Republican tax-cut bill are responsible for the growth seen since the election,” Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia’s Center for Politics, said in an email. Trump’s low approval rating will help define the midterm races, which are partly “a measure of presidential popularity,” Sabato said. “That is precisely what will give the GOP heartburn all the way through November,” he said. “Many voters will want to limit and roadblock Trump. Voting Democratic is the way to achieve that.”

### Dems Stop Agenda

#### Dems stall the agenda.

Seitz-Wald 17 5-15-17 (Alex Seitz-Wald is a political reporter and contributor for MSNBC - *Democrats’ Agenda: Win House in 2018, Investigate Donald Trump* - http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/democrats-vs-trump/democrats-agenda-win-house-2018-investigate-donald-trump-n759106)

If Democrats win the 24 seats they need to retake the House, they wouldn't just get the ability to block Republicans' legislative agenda, along with the president's. They would also gain control of Congress’ oversight authority, which they could use to dig into everything from Trump's possible ties to Russia to his alleged business conflicts of interests to potentially even his tax returns. They could flood the Trump administration with subpoenas, compel testimony from witnesses, schedule public hearings, issue reports, and create special committees like the one Republicans started to probe Benghazi. The Oversight Committee, for instance, has the largest House staff outside the Speaker's Office, with over 120 attorneys, investigators and support staff, according to a former committee aide. “They have the power to go after every executive agency — and it’s basically unlimited,” said former Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., who was the top Republican on the Oversight Committee when Democrats wielded that power against George W. Bush during his final two years in the White House.

#### Dem gains will stop doomsday.

Oparah 17 2-16-17 (Ogechi Oparah is a writer and contributor for Fayette Democratic Women - *Why the 2018 Midterm Elections Are Important* - http://fayettedemocraticwomen.org/why-the-2018-midterm-elections-are-important/)

As each day passes, there seems to be a new addition on the list of doomsday scenarios. Facing a dangerously intemperate and uncontrolled president with vast powers at his disposal, it’s critically important that we maintain a clear understanding of what’s at stake in the midterm elections, and how much could go wrong if left to chance. Given the mobilization of left-leaning Americans since the 2016 election and the unpopularity of Trump – which is likely to increase – it’s tempting to imagine a Democratic sweep that would reclaim control of the US Congress. This would provide crucial political leverage to push back against Trump and republican policies at all levels. The November 6, 2018 midterm elections will provide an opportunity to make this happen because: All 435 seats in the House and 33 seats in the Senate will be on the ballot, which will provide an opportunity for Democrats to regain seats in Congress. The more democratic candidates elected during the midterms, the more strength they’ll have to block legislation or nominees they don’t support in Trump’s third and fourth years. Redistricting will be on the ballot as we elect state governors, state legislators and local officials. Many of the legislators elected on November 6, 2018 will draw the congressional and legislative redistricting lines after the 2020 census. The Democratic Party is taking aggressive action to prevent Republicans from obtaining the same systematic advantage in congressional and state legislative redistricting that they implemented in 2010 to lock Democrats out of power in Congress and legislative chambers across the country. We must have District maps that are properly drawn and are representative of our diverse communities. Local elections matter! These elections have more impact and influence over citizen’s everyday lives than one may think. Local Fayette County officials make decisions on your taxes, schools, clean water, health care, law enforcement, and the judiciary to name a few. Not voting in these critical elections allows for small groups whose interest may not align with the majority of citizens to commandeer local politics. We paid dearly in the 2016 election. But, we can correct that by staying focused on what’s at stake in the midterm elections and getting out the vote. The 2018 midterm elections are only two years away. We must start paying attention, NOW!

#### Only midterm gains in 2018 combined with Trump can push the agenda.

Daily Kos 16 (Daily Kos is a group post and internet forum focused on liberal American politics - *2018 Senate election is just around the corner and we should start paying attention NOW­* - https://www.dailykos.com/story/2016/10/27/1587437/-2018-Senate-election-is-just-around-the-corner-and-we-should-start-paying-attention-NOW)

While the presidential election obviously is at the top of our minds currently, the elections in 2018 will arguably have a bigger impact on government nationwide in the aggregate going forward. A third of the Senate, the entire House of Representatives, two thirds of governors, and the vast majority of state legislature seats will be up for election in two years. If you’re one of those people who only vote for president, then wonder why all we get is gridlock and bickering, its because too many people forget to pay attention to all these “less important” races. All the president can really do is sign off on or veto things. Its up to Congress and the state governments to actually enact laws. For now, I will just lay out the landscape in the Senate. In light of two solid losses to Barack Obama nationally, the Republicans have been able to justify their continued obstruction by pointing to the huge gains they made in both the 2010 and 2014 midterm elections up and down the ballot. We will only be able to break the back of the nihilist Ted Cruz wing of the party by reversing that trend and showing them that governance matters and WE are the majority party in this country (actually beating Ted Cruz in Texas would go a long way toward reaching that goal too). Winning the White House isn’t good enough, we need to show them we will win even during off years where they supposedly have the advantage. Only then will there be a real reckoning within the Republican Party.

### Turnout Key

#### Dems can take the midterms – increased turnout is the critical variable

Cohn 17 – Nate Cohn, writer for the New York Times, 2017 ("Democrats Are Bad at Midterm Turnout. That Seems Ready to Change.," New York Times, Available online at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/05/upshot/democrats-are-bad-at-midterm-turnout-that-seems-ready-to-change.html, Accessed 7/21/2017)

Donald J. Trump’s low approval ratings and the palpable enthusiasm of progressives nationwide have Democrats dreaming of a big win in next year’s midterm elections. But to pull that off, they’ll need to overcome one of their biggest challenges of the last decade: low turnout in off-year contests. The Democratic turnout in those elections has been extremely weak — worse than many public analysts have suggested. Democrats have depended on young and nonwhite voters, two groups that produce low turnout in midterm contests. Nationwide, Republicans were more than 20 percent likelier to vote than Democrats (defined by party vote history and registration) in 2010 and 2014, according to an Upshot analysis of voter file data from the company L2. But there are early signs this could be changing. If it does in 2018, it will be consistent with a longer-term trend in which the party out of power benefits in midterm elections, seemingly from a stronger turnout. Democrats have fared well in recent special elections, and they have turned out in strong numbers in the four contests where complete turnout numbers are now available: a relatively uncompetitive special election in Iowa’s 45th State Senate district in December, two January contests in Virginia, and Delaware’s 10th State Senate district race in February. In Delaware, the turnout for Democrats and the unaffiliated matched 2014 levels, while Republican turnout was five percentage points lower. In the end, the partisan composition of the electorate was about the same as in 2016, and Democrats won the race. (For a special election in a state senate race, simply matching previous turnout levels is an impressive feat.) In Iowa, Democratic turnout was far higher than Republican turnout, improving the Democratic share of the electorate by 14 points since the last midterm election. The turnout data is harder to interpret in Virginia, where voters do not register with a party. But Republican primary voters outnumbered Democratic primary voters by a somewhat smaller number in both contests than they did in the 2014 elections. The trend toward higher Democratic turnout appears to be continuing in the April 18 special election for Georgia’s Sixth Congressional District, where early voting has recently gotten underway. So far, the party’s turnout is running about twice as high as it did at this point in 2014, while Republican turnout is about half what it was. It would be unfair to judge Republican voters too harshly for their low turnout at this stage — they are trying to decide among 11 candidates. (I wouldn’t have voted yet, either.) But the higher Democratic turnout is striking, and if it holds it suggests that the Democratic candidate Jon Ossoff will benefit from stronger party turnout than in the past. A few elections aren’t enough to prove that turnout is really shifting. But there are other signs of higher Democratic enthusiasm, like the millions who marched and protested a day after Mr. Trump’s inauguration, or the abundant fund-raising for Mr. Ossoff. Parties out of power have long tended to do very well in midterm elections. It has been less clear why — maybe because of turnout, or because voters swing across parties to check the president. If it’s because of turnout, the Democratic midterm turnout problem might just solve itself with a Republican in the White House. If it’s not because of turnout, Democrats might be disadvantaged by an unfavorable electorate, even in the sort of election they’re supposed to win. The available evidence is limited, but it suggests that the party out of power enjoys stronger turnout than the party holding the White House. The best evidence comes from Iowa, which has voter turnout data by party registration going back to 1980. It tells a fairly consistent story: Democrats usually have worse turnout in midterm elections, but the Republican edge is greatest when Democrats hold the presidency. The Democratic turnout disadvantage is smaller — or basically nonexistent — when Republicans hold the White House. On average, Republican turnout has been just 6 percent higher than Democratic turnout in midterm elections when Republicans have held the White House, like in 1982, 1986, 1990, 2002 and 2006. Republican turnout has been 17 percent higher than Democratic turnout in midterm elections when Democrats have held the presidency — like in 1994, 1998, 2010 and 2014. The same pattern shows up in the lower-quality data available elsewhere. It’s far too early to say whether Democrats can return to the relative parity they enjoyed in the Bush and Reagan years, especially since the Democratic coalition is younger and more diverse than it was then. But the history of midterm turnout, the recent special elections, the protests, the donations and the early vote all seem consistent with the same story: The Democrats might be fixing their midterm turnout problem.

#### Turnout is key to Dem chances in the midterms—it is possible, but need strong enthusiasm in the base

Cohn 17 Nate political analyst, “Democrats Are Bad at Midterm Turnout. That Seems Ready to Change,” NEW YORK TIMES, The Upshot, 4—5—17, www.nytimes.com/2017/04/05/upshot/democrats-are-bad-at-midterm-turnout-that-seems-ready-to-change.html, accessed 7-14-17.

Donald J. Trump’s low approval ratings and the palpable enthusiasm of progressives nationwide have Democrats dreaming of a big win in next year’s midterm elections. But to pull that off, they’ll need to overcome one of their biggest challenges of the last decade: low turnout in off-year contests. The Democratic turnout in those elections has been extremely weak — worse than many public analysts have suggested. Democrats have depended on young and nonwhite voters, two groups that produce low turnout in midterm contests. Nationwide, Republicans were more than 20 percent likelier to vote than Democrats (defined by party vote history and registration) in 2010 and 2014, according to an Upshot analysis of voter file data from the company L2. But there are early signs this could be changing. If it does in 2018, it will be consistent with a longer-term trend in which the party out of power benefits in midterm elections, seemingly from a stronger turnout. Democrats have fared well in recent special elections, and they have turned out in strong numbers in the four contests where complete turnout numbers are now available: a relatively uncompetitive special election in Iowa’s 45th State Senate district in December, two January contests in Virginia, and Delaware’s 10th State Senate district race in February. In Delaware, the turnout for Democrats and the unaffiliated matched 2014 levels, while Republican turnout was five percentage points lower. In the end, the partisan composition of the electorate was about the same as in 2016, and Democrats won the race. (For a special election in a state senate race, simply matching previous turnout levels is an impressive feat.) In Iowa, Democratic turnout was far higher than Republican turnout, improving the Democratic share of the electorate by 14 points since the last midterm election. The turnout data is harder to interpret in Virginia, where voters do not register with a party. But Republican primary voters outnumbered Democratic primary voters by a somewhat smaller number in both contests than they did in the 2014 elections. The trend toward higher Democratic turnout appears to be continuing in the April 18 special election for Georgia’s Sixth Congressional District, where early voting has recently gotten underway. So far, the party’s turnout is running about twice as high as it did at this point in 2014, while Republican turnout is about half what it was. It would be unfair to judge Republican voters too harshly for their low turnout at this stage — they are trying to decide among 11 candidates. (I wouldn’t have voted yet, either.) But the higher Democratic turnout is striking, and if it holds it suggests that the Democratic candidate Jon Ossoff will benefit from stronger party turnout than in the past. A few elections aren’t enough to prove that turnout is really shifting. But there are other signs of higher Democratic enthusiasm, like the millions who marched and protested a day after Mr. Trump’s inauguration, or the abundant fund-raising for Mr. Ossoff. Parties out of power have long tended to do very well in midterm elections. It has been less clear why — maybe because of turnout, or because voters swing across parties to check the president. If it’s because of turnout, the Democratic midterm turnout problem might just solve itself with a Republican in the White House. If it’s not because of turnout, Democrats might be disadvantaged by an unfavorable electorate, even in the sort of election they’re supposed to win. The available evidence is limited, but it suggests that the party out of power enjoys stronger turnout than the party holding the White House. The best evidence comes from Iowa, which has voter turnout data by party registration going back to 1980. It tells a fairly consistent story: Democrats usually have worse turnout in midterm elections, but the Republican edge is greatest when Democrats hold the presidency. The Democratic turnout disadvantage is smaller — or basically nonexistent — when Republicans hold the White House. On average, Republican turnout has been just 6 percent higher than Democratic turnout in midterm elections when Republicans have held the White House, like in 1982, 1986, 1990, 2002 and 2006. Republican turnout has been 17 percent higher than Democratic turnout in midterm elections when Democrats have held the presidency — like in 1994, 1998, 2010 and 2014. The same pattern shows up in the lower-quality data available elsewhere. It’s far too early to say whether Democrats can return to the relative parity they enjoyed in the Bush and Reagan years, especially since the Democratic coalition is younger and more diverse than it was then. But the history of midterm turnout, the recent special elections, the protests, the donations and the early vote all seem consistent with the same story: The Democrats might be fixing their midterm turnout problem.

### \*Actor-Plan IL\*

### Trump – Sessions Tied

#### Trump and Sessions are linked – a win becomes politicized regardless. Gurman 1/28

Gurman, Sadie. “Battered but Still Loyal to Trump, Sessions Endures as AG.” PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, 28 Jan. 2018, www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/battered-but-still-loyal-to-trump-sessions-endures-as-ag. Sadie Gurman covers the Justice Department for The Associated Press in Washington. //nhs-VA

What Sessions sees as doing the right thing, though, often appears to others as doing Trump’s bidding. Critics say Sessions is too loyal, dangerously politicizing his department in an effort to appease Trump. Sessions told senior prosecutors to look into Hillary Clinton’s activities after Trump demanded investigations of his 2016 Democratic rival, and he has been eager to pursue investigations into Trump grievances, such as media leaks. Lawmakers accuse Sessions of stonewalling congressional committees investigating the Trump campaign by repeatedly saying he doesn’t recall key events. Some say Sessions’ public silence in the face of Trump’s assaults on the department is demoralizing to employees and threatens its independence from the White House. Sessions said Friday that it’s the department’s responsibility to identify past mistakes and that a “culture of defensiveness is not acceptable.” “It seems he recognizes he is in such a weakened position, if he wants to stay in Trump’s good graces he has to at least make a show of responding to Trump’s demands, and that’s extremely dangerous,” said William Yeomans, who spent nearly 30 years at the department under Democratic and Republican administrations. One example that raised eyebrows: Sessions’ plan to confront the opioid crisis hews so closely to Trump’s that White House aide Kellyanne Conway was on hand in the Justice Department’s seventh-floor conference room when he announced it. Sessions declined to address specific actions by his department but said it carries out “the law without regard to the political consequences or to poll numbers or who benefits and who doesn’t,” and Trump supports that. Even if Sessions is complying with Trump’s demands and pursuing his agenda, the attorney general has yet to find himself back in favor with the president. Before Sessions’ decision to withdraw from the Russia investigation, Trump used to call Sessions periodically and seek his counsel. Now the two men rarely speak, and Sessions at times has resorted to asking West Wing aides to pass messages to Trump.

### ---SCOTUS

#### Supreme Court was a huge topic for the 2016 presidential race.

de Vogue 16 (Ariane, Reporter for CNN, CNN, How **the Supreme Court could affect the 2016 election**, January 8, 2016, http://www.cnn.com/2016/01/08/politics/supreme-court-abortion-contraception-immigration-election/index.html)

 (CNN)As much as the **Supreme Court** justices dislike political labels, its **rulings will undoubtedly thrust it into the center of the presidential race with decisions coming up on** abortion, contraceptive coverage, affirmative action, organized labor, voting rights and possibly immigration. **The decisions are likely to reverberate on the campaign trail as candidates use them to remind voters of a presidential election truism**: The winner will likely get to nominate several justices over the next few years. **Three justices** -- the liberal Ruth Bader Ginsburg; conservative Antonin Scalia; and Anthony Kennedy, often a swing vote on key social issues -- **will be 80 or older by Election Day. Republican Sen. Ted Cruz has often cited the importance of the court in his speeches, as he appeals to conservatives who might be unhappy with recent rulings on Obamacare and same-sex marriage.** "You know, we have a Supreme Court right now that is an activist, fundamentally illegitimate court," he told an audience in Rock Rapids, Iowa, on Wednesday. **Cruz believes that the nomination of Chief Justice John Roberts by President George W. Bush was a mistake, especially after Roberts voted in favor of the Affordable Care Act.** "A handful of judges rewrote Obamacare," Cruz said, "in order to force that failed law on millions of Americans." This term also highlights the difference just one justice can make on the bench. When it considers the cases on affirmative action and abortion, for instance, it will be discussing court precedent crafted in part by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. She retired from the bench in 2006 and was ultimately replaced by Justice Samuel Alito, who could vote to chip away at those precedents. "It's a fascinating moment because we are entering 2016, and the court has the potential to place itself in the heart of the political debate that we are having in the country," said Neera Tanden, president of the left-leaning Center for American Progress. The court is poised to rule on cases this term that are the "building blocks" of the progressive movement, she said. **Here are the cases the court is considering that could play a big role in the presidential race:** Abortion In March, the court will hear the first major case on abortion rights since 2007. At issue are key parts of Texas' 2013 abortion law that requires that doctors who perform abortions have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital and mandates that clinics upgrade their facilities to hospital-like standards. Abortion rights supporters say the law is one of the strictest in the nation and that if the Supreme Court agrees with a lower court's decision and allows two provisions of the law to go into effect, the number of available clinics in the state is expected to fall to about 10. Supporters of the law argue it's meant to protect women's health. Other states have similar legislation percolating through the lower courts. **Abortion is always an issue that can fire up base voters on both sides, and a ruling would likely come in late June, just as the general election battle heats up.** Contraceptive mandate For the fourth time, the court will hear a challenge targeting the Affordable Care Act. The latest case concerns a challenge from religious nonprofit groups, including the Little Sisters of the Poor, to the so-called contraceptive mandate. That's the requirement that demands group health plans provide a full range of contraceptive coverage to women at no cost. It's a follow-on to the Hobby Lobby case, where in 2014, the court sided with closely held for-profit companies that objected to providing certain contraceptives. It's another ruling that could come in late June. Immigration This month, the court is expected to announce whether it will wade into the dispute concerning President Barack Obama's executive actions on immigration. Texas and 25 other states are challenging the programs that would allow millions of undocumented immigrants to apply for programs that could make them eligible for work authorization and some associated benefits. Lower courts have so far sided with Texas and temporarily frozen the programs from going into effect. The Obama administration hopes the court will take up the issue this term and reverse the lower court to green light the programs before the next election, but the timing, should the court agree, will be very tight. Affirmative action CNN's Chris Cillizza cuts through the political spin and tells you what you need to know. By subscribing, you agree to our privacy policy. In December, the court seemed divided on a major affirmative action case challenging the race-conscious admissions plan at the University of Texas, with supporters of the school fearful that the the justices are poised to curtail the use of race as one factor in admissions. All eyes will be on Kennedy, the Ronald Reagan nominee who is often the deciding vote in tight cases. He has supported a government interest in diversity but has yet to rule in favor of an affirmative action plan. Supreme Court divided in University of Texas affirmative action case Scalia's comments at oral arguments, however, have grabbed most of the attention. Scalia, referencing friend-of -the court briefs that argued that affirmative action in higher education could do more harm than good for some minority applicants, started a political storm when he said, "There are those who contend that it does not benefit African-Americans to get them into the University of Texas where they do not do well, as opposed to having them go to a less-advanced school." Voting rights The court heard another big case in December challenging the "one person, one vote" doctrine in a dispute that could change the way that states draw their legislative lines. The principle dates back to the Earl Warren court when the justices held that legislative districts must be drawn so they are equal in population. The court, however, never defined whether the doctrine applies to the general population or the voting population. The plaintiffs in the case, supported by the conservative group Project on Fair Representation, argue that their vote is being diluted in relation to voters in other districts that have similar numbers of people but fewer eligible voters. Civil rights groups are watching the case carefully, fearful that if the court rules with the plaintiffs, it could shift power from urban areas -- and from districts that tend to vote Democratic and include a higher percentage of individuals not eligible to vote such as noncitizens, released felons and children -- to rural areas that tend to vote Republican. Labor unions This month, justices will hear arguments in a case that could weaken the coffers of public sector unions and threaten thousands of contracts between unions and governments across the country. The challenge is brought by a group of public school teachers in California who argue that the court should rule that compelling so-called "agency fees" from nonmembers violates the First Amendment. Court precedent holds that while a public sector union can't demand money from nonunion members for political or ideological spending, it can require those employees to pay for workplace bargaining such as wages, grievance processing and workplace conditions. In the past, Alito has hinted it's time to overturn precedent, but Justice Elena Kagan and others have strenuously defended it.

#### SCOTUS rulings generate conversation into the public that steal the main issues of the election.

Gonzales 15 (Nathan L., Reporter for Roll Call, Roll Call, “4 **Court Cases That Could Impact the 2016 Elections**”, Dec 3, 2015, http://www.rollcall.com/news/home/4-court-cases-impact-2016-elections)

**Breaking news can be hard to predict, except when it’s tied to a controversial court case**. **Candidates and consultants spend their time, energy and dollars staying on message — trying to focus voters on winning issues. But** breaking news**, even something such as a court decision that can be anticipated,** often derails those plans by interjecting a subject that wasn’t in the campaign prospectus into the national conversation. It’s far too early to declare which issues will be decisive in the 2016 elections, but a handful of court cases are likely to become news throughout the next year. That would force candidates for president, the Senate, and the House to respond, creating opportunities for them to shine — or to say something controversial, even stupid. Of course these news events could be trumped by bigger breaking news, such as another terrorist attack. **The Supreme Court’s decision on Whole Woman’s Health v. Cole will have policy and political implications, considering many Democrats believe conservatives who oppose legal abortion are using health standards at abortion clinics as a Trojan horse to restrict access to abortion services.** The Supreme Court will decide whether a lower court’s decision places an “undue burden” on women in Texas seeking an abortion, because the law's stricter standards for clinics would reduce their number and increase the distance many women would have to travel to obtain an abortion. SCOTUSblog has much more detailed analysis of the case. **But no matter what the justices decide, the court’s decision will make abortion something to talk about, at least briefly.** Democrats are emboldened by their party’s positioning on the issue, last year’s Colorado Senate race notwithstanding. But both sides will likely try to rally their bases in the wake of the decision. The **Supreme Court is also set to hear Personhuballah v. Alcorn , involving redistricting in Virginia. Redistricting isn’t as polarizing as abortion, but it’s inherently political.** The court will review whether Virginia lawmakers improperly “packed” minority voters into Democratic Rep. Robert C. Scott’s district at the expense of their influence elsewhere in the state, as explained by The Washington Post . In the near term, the ruling could turn GOP Rep. J. Randy Forbes’ district into a Democratic seat, although the timing is complicated with a March 31 filing deadline, as pointed out in Simone Pathe’s Roll Call piece . But a decision could have an impact beyond Virginia if Democrats use it as a precedent to challenge maps in other states on the same grounds. Want insight more often? Get Roll Call in your inbox email address “Both cases are likely to be argued in late February or March,” according to SCOTUSblog editor/reporter Amy Howe, “Obviously there’s no way to know for sure, but **both issues are sufficiently contentious (especially abortion) that I can easily see waiting for decisions until June.**” **Before next summer, a series of court cases in Baltimore could interject issues of race, inequality, and police brutality into the national conversation.** On Monday, jury selection began in State v. William Porter, one of the police officers facing criminal charges surrounding the death of Freddie Gray, who was fatally injured while in police custody, which sparked rioting in Charm City. Porter, who has pleaded not guilty, is charged with manslaughter, second-degree assault, misconduct in office and reckless endangerment. The trial could last a few weeks, according to The Baltimore Sun , but it’s just the first of six, separate, consecutive trials . The others are scheduled to begin between the beginning of January and the beginning of March. Depending on the verdicts, there is the potential for more protests and rioting, and candidates could be asked to comment on the pictures and events that capture cable news channels. Republicans hope a local case in Union County, Illinois, will boost the party’s prospects of holding the majority in the Senate. Democratic Rep. Tammy Duckworth is listed as a defendant in a case , Butler et al. v. Duckworth et al., that stems from her time as head of the state Department of Veterans Affairs. The complaint alleges workplace retaliation by two employees of a southern Illinois veterans home, as explained by The Chicago Tribune . The suit was dismissed by a federal judge in 2008 as a "garden variety workplace case," refiled in state court and dismissed again, but then narrowed and brought back a third time. Duckworth denies treating the employees unfairly, but the trial is set to begin April 4, just a couple weeks after the March 15 primary. Republicans dream of Duckworth taking the stand and hope the trial is a game-changer for GOP Sen. Mark S. Kirk, who is seeking a second term and is the most vulnerable senator in the country. The Rothenberg & Gonzales Political Report /Roll Call rate the Illinois Senate race as Tossup/Tilt Democratic, but that might understate Kirk’s challenge as a Republican running for re-election in a Democratic state in a presidential year. Democrats are very confident in their standing in the race and are counting Illinois as the first step on their path back to the majority. If Kirk wins because of Duckworth’s demise, Democrats would need to defeat another, stronger Republican incumbent elsewhere to have any chance of winning back the Senate. But at this point, the case looks like a long-shot to change the dynamic enough to boost Kirk’s prospects. There are at least a couple of other cases that could be decided next year, though most of their impact could come after 2016. For example, the court may decide to take up cases on immigration , campaign finance , and voter identification . The Supreme Court already has Evenwel v. Abbott on the docket for next year. According to SCOTUSblog, the case will answer whether the "one-person, one-vote" principle require states to use voter population, as opposed to total population, when drawing state legislative districts. “If the court in Evenwel simply reaffirms that states can use total population, the case will be no big deal,” said Rick Hasen of Election Law Blog. “But if the Court upsets things and requires the use of total voters in drawing districts, it would shift power away from cities and Democrats and toward rural areas and Republicans, at least in states with large Latino populations.” “**That would have great long-term impact on representation**,” Hasen explained, “**but short term it could make the court itself an issue in the campaign.**” Breaking news can be hard to predict, except when it’s tied to a controversial court case.

### Trump – GOP Tied

#### Trump tied to GOP – it’s embedded in midterms.

Budowsky 17 (Brent, an aide to former Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Texas) and Rep. Bill Alexander (D-Ark.), then-chief deputy majority whip of the House. He holds an LL.M. in international financial law from the London School of Economics an aide to former Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Texas) and Rep. Bill Alexander (D-Ark.), then-chief deputy majority whip of the House. He holds an LL.M. in international financial law from the London School of Economics, The Hill, “Budowsky: Anti-Trump wave in 2018?”, 03/01/17, http://thehill.com/opinion/brent-budowsky/321910-budowsky-anti-trump-wave-in-2018)

**There is a high probability that in the midterm elections of 2018, a substantial wave of voters will turn out in large and potentially unprecedented numbers to register their opposition to President Donald Trump and his supporters in the Republican House and Senate.** Trump remains the most unpopular and distrusted new president in the history of presidential polling. Trump and Republicans in Congress are trapped together in a Gordian knot. Trump has political ownership of Republicans in Congress, and they have political ownership of him in the eyes of voters. **It is important to understand the fundamental difference between presidential elections and midterm elections.** A presidential election decides who will lead the nation, and in what big-picture direction. **A midterm election, by contrast, is a “yes or no” referendum passing judgment on the party in power.**

#### The GOP is inexorably tied to Trump

Waldman 17 Paul journalist, “How Much Longer Can Republicans Defend Trump Over Russia?” THE WEEK, 3—3—17, http://theweek.com/articles/683374/how-much-longer-republicans-defend-trump-over-russia, accessed 7-13-17.

But the pressure is growing. The Sessions story broke late Wednesday, and throughout the day Thursday more and more members of Congress — not just Democrats as you'd expect, but Republicans, too — publicly called on Sessions to recuse himself from any investigation into the ties between Russia and the Trump campaign. He acquiesced on Thursday afternoon and now won't oversee any investigations into Trump's 2016 campaign. That's all well and good, but it was really the absolute minimum he could have done. Indeed, the idea that Sessions, Trump's first endorser in the Senate and his key policy adviser throughout the campaign, could objectively guide an investigation into that campaign was ludicrous on its face, even before we learned of his own Russia ties. But recusal is easy. As of now there aren't any Republicans agreeing with Democrats that this ever-widening scandal requires an independent commission like the one that investigated the Sept. 11 attacks, a commission that won't be run by Republicans as worried about their own preservation as about getting to the truth. For now, Republicans are still worried about how this or any Trump administration scandal might affect them. Their fates are tied to the White House. An electorate angry at the president is what produces big midterm losses, the kind where a member can get swept out of office through no fault of his own. So anything they can do to help Trump also helps themselves. That means they have every incentive to want this scandal to just go away. At some point, though, that calculation could change. There might come a day when Trump's standing has fallen so far that their only hope to avoid getting his stench all over them is to speak out against him. But we haven't reached that point yet; they still serve their own interests more by helping him than by distancing themselves from him.

### \*Impeachment\*

### Generic

#### Dem midterms win forces GOP to throw Trump overboard to save the party

Silver 17 (Nate, founder and editor in chief of FiveThirtyEight, 5-22-17, “Will Donald Trump Be Impeached?” https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/chance-donald-trump-impeached/)

The bottom line: A Democratic takeover of the House — perhaps an even-money proposition — is not quite a prerequisite for Trump’s impeachment and removal, but it would greatly increase the odds. It would also give the Democrats far greater powers to investigate Trump and to subpoena key materials, which could create additional bases for impeachment charges. In 1868, Republicans in Congress had the power to replace Andrew Johnson, a Democrat who had run with Abraham Lincoln on the National Union ticket, with a Republican president. And there was absolutely nothing Democrats could do about it. The circumstances were unusual. Johnson had ascended to the presidency after Lincoln’s assassination, and the vice presidency was vacant. Instead, the line of succession 10 would have given the presidency to the Republican Benjamin Wade, the president pro tempore of the Senate. Republicans had an overwhelming majority in the Senate in the midst of Reconstruction, so they didn’t need any Democratic votes to convict Johnson and replace him with Wade. Republicans didn’t quite do it; instead the vote was 35-19 in favor of conviction, one short of the number needed. But the prospect of a Wade presidency was an influential factor in determining senators’ votes, encouraging Radical Republicans to vote to convict Johnson (since Wade was a fellow Radical) but discouraging moderates from doing so. While Johnson may have been an extreme case, it’s reasonable to assume that the identity of the president’s successor is a factor in the impeachment calculus. Pence is more conservative than Trump and was widely praised by GOP leaders at the time he became Trump’s running mate; he’s also a more predictable politician than Trump and formerly held a leadership position in the Republican-led House. He also has decent favorability ratings, at least for the time being. In short, Republicans have some reasons to prefer Pence to Trump, which could make removing Trump more palatable. (Of course, that’s assuming that Pence isn’t implicated in any sort of scandal himself.) The bottom line: If the theory is that you shouldn’t hire a well-qualified understudy because he makes your job more vulnerable, then Trump made a mistake in picking Pence as his running mate. Pence isn’t popular with everyone, but he’s likely to be broadly acceptable to Republicans in the House and Senate, and they’re the ones with impeachment votes. Articles like this one, in which Republicans begin to “whisper” about the probability of a President Pence, should be seen as a bearish indicator for Trump. All that work … and I’m still not going to give you a precise number for how likely Trump is to lose his job. That’s because this is a thought experiment and not a mathematical model11. I do think I owe you a range, however. I’m pretty sure I’d sell Trump-leaves-office-early stock (whether because of removal from office or other reasons) at even money (50 percent), and I’m pretty sure I’d buy it at 3-to-1 against (25 percent). I could be convinced by almost any number within that range. The easiest-to-imagine scenario for Trump being removed is if Republicans get clobbered in the midterms after two years of trying to defend Trump, the Republican agenda is in shambles, Democrats begin impeachment proceedings in early 2019, and just enough Republicans decide that Pence (or some fresh face with no ties to the Trump White House) gives them a better shot to avoid total annihilation in 2020. In some sense, then, the most important indicators of Trump’s impeachment odds are the ones you’d always use to monitor the political environment: presidential approval ratings, the generic congressional ballot and (if taken with appropriate grains of salt) special election results. What makes this time a little different is that if Republicans think the ship is sinking, impeachment may give them an opportunity to throw their president overboard first.

#### Dems winning midterms is key to impeach Trump

Goldberg 6/14 – Jonah Goldberg, Senior Editor at the National Review, 2017 ("Trump will probably be impeached if Republicans lose the House," AEI, http://www.aei.org/publication/trump-will-probably-be-impeached-if-republicans-lose-the-house/)

The 1998 midterm election was a debacle for Republicans, particularly then-speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. Since Reconstruction, no president had seen his party gain seats in the House in a midterm election six years into his presidency. Gingrich, who made the election a referendum on impeaching President Bill Clinton, resigned after the loss. Clearly, voters had sent the signal, “Don’t do it.” The White House thought it had dodged a bullet. But one morning, over Thanksgiving break, then–White House chief of staff John Podesta was running in Washington’s Rock Creek park when it hit him: GOP leaders are “not going to let their members off the hook. They’re going to beat and beat and beat on them until they vote for impeachment.” It fell to Podesta to tell the still-celebrating White House staff that the midterms meant nothing, that the push to impeach the president in the House was a runaway train that could not be derailed. “This thing is rigged,” Podesta announced at a Monday-morning staff meeting. “We are going to lose.” President Trump’s White House could use a John Podesta about now. Because no one seems to have told Trump’s team that the Democrats are every bit as committed to impeaching Trump as the GOP was to impeaching Clinton. The difference, of course, is that the Democrats don’t control the House — yet. If they did, as the Washington Examiner’s Byron York rightly noted recently, impeachment proceedings would already be underway. And if the Democrats take back the House in 2018, it won’t matter to most members whether the country as a whole supports impeachment, because the voters who elected them — and the donors who supported them — will be in favor of it. (A recent Public Policy Polling survey found that 47 percent of Americans support impeachment while 43 percent oppose it.) Personally, I think it would be folly to impeach the president given what we know now. But that’s meaningless. The phrase “high crimes and misdemeanors” notwithstanding, the criteria for impeachment have little to do with criminal law and everything to do with politics. If 218 members of the House think it is right — or simply in their political interest — to impeach the president, he can be impeached. Whether two-thirds of the Senate decides to remove the president from office is also an entirely political decision. Given the likely composition of the Senate after the next election, however, that remains unlikely. Then again, who knows? Given how Trump responds to criticism and political pressure, would you want to bet that the tweeter-in-chief would be a model of statesmanlike restraint during an impeachment ordeal? So many of his current problems are the direct result of letting his ego or frustration get the better of him. What fresh troubles would he mint when faced with removal from office? What might he say under oath to the special counsel? Clinton, recall, was impeached and disbarred because he perjured himself in a deposition. House minority leader Nancy Pelosi has cautioned against making the midterms a referendum on impeachment. But that is an electoral strategy, not a plan for when she gets the speaker’s gavel. And even if she declines to go straight to impeachment hearings on Day One, a Democratic-controlled House would still be a nightmare for the White House. Any hope of passing a conservative agenda would die instantaneously. Worse, once Democrats gained the power to subpoena documents and compel testimony from members of the administration, the Hobbesian internal politics of today’s White House would look like a company picnic by comparison. In short, the only hope for the Trump presidency is for the GOP to maintain control of the House. According to various reports, the GOP thinks it can hold on by running “against the media” in 2018. As pathetic as that would be, it might work. Though I doubt it. A better strategy would be to actually get things done. And the only way for that to happen is for both houses of Congress to get their act together. Voting bills out of the House may be enough to justify a Rose Garden party, but it will do little to sway voters who’ve been told for years that the GOP needs control of all three branches to do big things. Trump won’t be on the ballot in 2018, but his presidency will hang in the balance.

#### Trump gets impeached if GOP gets wiped out – Republican strategist concurs. Shelbourne 1/4

Shelbourne, Mallory. “GOP Strategist: Republicans Will Turn on Trump, Impeach Him If Party Is Blown out in Midterms.” TheHill, 4 Jan. 2018, thehill.com/homenews/campaign/367378-gop-strategist-republicans-will-turn-on-trump-impeach-him-if-party-is-blown. //nhs-VA

A Republican strategist who formerly served as a top aide on Sen. Ted Cruz’s (R-Texas) presidential campaign is arguing that Republicans will turn on President Trump and impeach him should they lose heavily in the 2018 midterms. “When does the Republican Party turn? When they get wiped out. That's what happens. If they get wiped out in [2018], the Republicans will absolutely turn on Donald Trump,” Rick Tyler told MSNBC’s “Morning Joe.” “And I think to the point where they will impeach him and they will get 67 percent of the vote in the Senate to impeach him, to do that. But it will require a wipeout.” While some Democrats have called for Trump to be impeached, a proposed House measure to do so was rejected last month, with a majority of Democrats dismissing the resolution. Democrats are heading into the 2018 midterms with the upper chamber in play after Sen. Doug Jones’s (D) victory in the Alabama special election, which cut the GOP majority to a razor-thin 51-49. Republicans, meanwhile, are facing an internal battle, as former White House chief strategist Stephen Bannon has vowed to challenge the GOP establishment and put up primary challengers against incumbent Republican senators. Democrats would need to flip 24 seats in the midterms to take the House.

#### Dem wins in the house kill Trump—it’s worse than impeachment.

Murray 10-16 Sara. CNN White house correspondent."Trump Allies Worry That Losing the House Means Impeachment." CNN. Cable News Network, 16 Oct. 2017. Web. 17 Oct. 2017. DLuo

Top White House aides, lawmakers, donors and political consultants are privately asking whether President Donald Trump realizes that losing the House next year could put his presidency in peril. In more than a dozen interviews, Republicans inside and outside the White House told CNN conversations are ramping up behind the scenes about whether Trump fully grasps that his feuds with members of his own party and shortage of legislative achievements could soon put the fate of his presidency at risk. Trump, McConnell spoke by phone, will meet Monday Donors who trekked to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in support of House Speaker Paul Ryan were treated to a slide show late this summer to fundraise off those very fears, according to multiple attendees. Among the slides: An overview of the Democrats who would be tapped to lead key committees if the GOP loses control, including Rep. Elijah Cummings as the head of the House Oversight Committee. To some attendees, the subtext was clear. If Republicans forfeit the House, Democrats will almost certainly create a spectacle that will derail conservatives' agenda and the remainder of Trump's first term -- a spectacle complete with a raft of new subpoenas, a spotlight on the Russia investigation and, many are convinced, impeachment proceedings. "When Democrats take control of the House they will absolutely move for articles of impeachment," one Trump confidant predicted. Alex Conant, a partner at GOP public affairs firm Firehouse Strategies, said Trump should focus on protecting his own party. "The number one thing Trump should be doing to save his presidency is helping congressional Republicans maintain their majorities," Conant said. "Instead he's allowing his allies like Steve Bannon to really undermine Republican reelection campaigns. It's just reckless and politically naive considering how devastating it would be to his presidency." Conant served in George W. Bush's White House when Democrats swept control of the House and Senate in the 2006 midterm elections -- and remembers the constant stream of investigations and subpoenas, a stream he said is sure to look more like a deluge in the Trump administration. "It just cripples your agenda. You're constantly forced to play defense," Conant said. The primary problem Republican handwringing over losing control of the House has played out largely in public. But in the hushed conversations that follow, Republicans have wondered whether Trump fully grasps the misery Democrats could unleash on his presidency. A number of Republicans asked not to have their names used in order to speak candidly about a sensitive topic. "If we lose the House, he could get impeached. Do you think he understands that?" one top GOP donor recalled an exasperated Republican senator saying privately. "Won't it be ironic that Steve Bannon helped get the President elected and impeached?" another top Republican official said in a moment of venting. Bannon, who served in the White House as Trump's chief strategist before he was fired in August, is planning to field primary challengers against nearly every Republican senator up for reelection. "Right now, it's a season of war against a GOP establishment," Bannon proclaimed at the socially conservative Values Voter Summit over the weekend. At Values Voter Summit, Bannon declares 'war' on GOP establishment It's the latest in a string of political calculations that are set to backfire on the President, some Republicans warned. "It will be on steroids, the amount of lawyers, investigations, inspector generals that come out of the woodwork" if Democrats win back the House, predicted Sara Fagen, who served as Bush's White House political director. "It will be very debilitating in a way they don't understand yet." Marc Short, director of legislative affairs at the White House, said the White House hasn't resigned itself to the notion of losing the House. "We don't have a defeatist approach on this," Short said. "There's no doubt that history suggests that there's sort of a recalibration after the first midterm, but I don't think we view it as that means it has to go that way." And he insisted the President is cognizant of the havoc Democrats could cause if they regain control of the House. "I think the President's keenly aware of that," Short said, adding that he expects Democrats would move forward with articles of impeachment if they win the majority. GOP operatives are already envisioning Trump family members and acquaintances being dragged up to Capitol Hill over months to testify. "Once the House is lost, then it just becomes, 'Let's look into Don Jr.'s tweets, let's subpoena his country club locker,'" one GOP strategist quipped. "Nothing is going to get done." "It's so much more painful than going right to a proceeding of impeachment," another senior Republican operative added. Another GOP congressional aide predicted the Democrats would make Trump's life a "living hell." Top White House officials have openly discussed the threat of impeachment among themselves, multiple sources said. And to many, the risk to Trump's presidency is obvious. But White House personnel are loath to broach the topic with the President, sources said. "Nobody over there is interested in delivering really bad news to the President on a consistent basis," the GOP operative said, particularly when it comes to the potential for impeachment proceedings. "Like, 'hey, this could be a real thing. You shouldn't be so dismissive about it, because Chuck (Schumer) and Nancy (Pelosi) aren't your friends.'"

### AT: Dems Don’t Do It

#### Dem control of the House is sufficient to trigger Judiciary subcommittee that ramps up investigations --- causes new impeachment movement.

Osnos 17 Evan 5/8. Evan Osnos joined The New Yorker as a staff writer in 2008, and covers politics and foreign affairs. His recent subjects include the reconstruction of a train crash that exposed the underside of China’s boom; a group of Chinese tourists on their first trip to Europe; and a barber who set out to beat the house in Macau. “How Trump Could Get Fired,” The New Yorker. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/05/08/how-trump-could-get-fired

Because the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives will almost certainly not initiate the ouster of a Republican President, the first step in any realistic path to impeachment is for Democrats to gain control of the House. The next opportunity is the 2018 midterm elections. Republicans have been relatively confident, in part because their redistricting in 2010 tilted the congressional map in their favor. But Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a Republican economist and the president of the right-leaning American Action Forum, believes that the chances of control shifting to the Democrats is greater than many people in either party realize. “After a party takes the House, the Senate, and the White House, they typically lose thirty-five seats in the House in the next midterm,” he told me. “Republicans now hold the House by twenty-three seats, so, as a going proposition, they’re in trouble. They need to do really, really well.” Unfortunately for the congressional G.O.P., unpopular Presidents sow midterm fiascos. Since 1946, whenever a President has had an approval rating above fifty per cent, his party has lost an average of fourteen seats in the midterms, according to Gallup; whenever the rating has been below fifty per cent, the average loss soars to thirty-six seats. Steve Schmidt, the Republican consultant, is concerned that, in 2018, the Party faces a convergence of vulnerabilities akin to those which pertained during the 2006 midterms, whose outcome George W. Bush characterized as “a thumping.” Schmidt told me, “The last time Republicans lost control of the House of Representatives, it was on a mix of competency—Iraq and Katrina—and corruption in government, with the Tom DeLay Congress.” The Trump Administration has a comparable “basic competency issue,” he said. “The constant lying, the lack of credible statements from the White House, from the President on down to the spokesperson, the amateurishness of the threats to the members of Congress, the ultimatums, the talk of ‘enemy lists’ and retribution.” Tom Davis, who twice led Republican congressional-election efforts during fourteen years as a representative from Virginia, believes that his former colleagues are overly complacent. “These guys need a wake-up call. They’re just living in la-la land,” he said. He pointed out that regardless of the final outcome of an attempt to impeach—the two-thirds majority in the Senate remains a high bar to clear—Democratic control of the House would immediately make Trump more vulnerable to investigations. “If the gavels change hands, it’s a different world. No. 1, all of his public records, they will go through those with a fine-tooth comb—income taxes, business dealings. At that point, it’s not just talk—they subpoena it. It gets ugly real fast. He has so far had a pass on all this business stuff, and I don’t know what’s there, but I’ve got to imagine that it’s not pretty in this environment.” If Democrats retake the House, the Judiciary Committee could establish a subcommittee to investigate potential abuses and identify specific grounds for impeachment. The various investigations of Trump already in process will come into play. In addition to allegations of business conflicts and potential Russian collusion, Trump is facing dozens of civil proceedings. In a case in federal court, he is accused of urging violence at a campaign rally in Louisville, Kentucky, in March, 2016, where he yelled, referring to a protester, “Get ’em out of here.” In a New York state court, he is facing a suit brought by Summer Zervos, a former contestant on “The Apprentice,” who alleges that he sexually assaulted her in 2007. The constitutional question of whether a President could be impeached for offenses committed before he took office is unsettled, but, as Clinton’s case showed, civil proceedings contain risks whenever a President testifies under oath.

### AT: No grounds

#### 3 possible grounds for impeachment – charges are whatever the House thinks they are. Bacon 3/1

Bacon, Perry. “The Midterms Could Set Trump On A Path Toward Impeachment.”FiveThirtyEight, FiveThirtyEight, 1 Mar. 2018, fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-midterms-could-set-trump-on-a-path-toward-impeachment/. Perry Bacon Jr. is a senior writer for FiveThirtyEight. //nhs-VA

You might think this should be No. 1 on my sequential list, but I think I’m correct in listing it here. In many ways, an impeachment offense is whatever a majority of House members thinks it is. In Clinton’s case (perjury, obstruction of justice), Congress made a legal (rather than a moral or political case) against the president. In Trump’s case, Democrats are talking about three general charges, two of which take that legalistic approach: A: “High misdemeanors”:The impeachment resolutions pushed by Green were basically a list of Trump actions that the Texas representative considers egregious acts by an American president, including Trump’s remarks after Charlottesville; his reported reference to “shithole” countries whose residents he did not want to immigrate to the United States; and his criticism of NFL players who refused to stand during the national anthem to protest racial inequality in the U.S. I suspect that some Democrats would be uncomfortable pushing this type of impeachment resolution, because it’s essentially a case against Trump’s political style, as opposed to one accusing him of formal legal violations. It could risk leading to a political tit for tat, leaving future Democratic presidents vulnerable to impeachment on similar grounds. B: Obstruction of justice: A group of six House Democrats, including Green and led by Memphis-area Rep. Steve Cohen, has separately written an impeachment resolution arguing that Trump’s conduct around the Russia investigation, particularly his firing of FBI Director James Comey, is evidence of obstruction of justice. The findings of Mueller’s investigation obviously could have a major impact on the impeachment conversation and efforts, particularly with regard to obstruction of justice allegations against Trump. If Mueller publicly declared that Trump had not obstructed justice, that would not bar House Democrats from reaching the opposite conclusion — but it would surely make doing so more politically fraught. Alternatively, if Mueller concluded that Trump *did* obstruct justice but opted to defer to Congress on whether to issue an indictment, that would make it easier for House Democrats to more forward with impeachment proceedings. And if Trump agreed to speak to Mueller and committed perjury in the process, that testimony could become the basis for impeachment. C: Emoluments:The Cohen resolution also argues that Trump is violating the Constitution’s “emoluments clause” forbidding a U.S. president from taking money from foreign governments. The resolution argues that officials from foreign governments are staying at the Trump International Hotel in Washington to, in effect, funnel money to Trump.

### AT: Pelosi Doesn’t Do It

#### Pelosi gets outnumbered by pro-impeachment caucus post-election. Bacon 3/1

Bacon, Perry. “The Midterms Could Set Trump On A Path Toward Impeachment.”FiveThirtyEight, FiveThirtyEight, 1 Mar. 2018, fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-midterms-could-set-trump-on-a-path-toward-impeachment/. Perry Bacon Jr. is a senior writer for FiveThirtyEight. //nhs-VA

But I don’t think Nadler’s and Pelosi’s current reluctance about impeachment is necessarily a great predictor of how House Democrats overall will view the issue at this time next year. The number of House Democrats in favor of impeachment could grow. I think it will. Why? First, current Democratic members of Congress could be pushed by their constituents to adopt the pro-impeachment position. Democrats hate Trump, who has a 9 percent approval rating among them, according to Gallup. A recent NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll found that 70 percent of Democrats want the House to hold impeachment hearings. Trump is showing few signs that he’ll start appealing to Democrats, and his conduct amid the Russia investigation (such as sharply criticizing the FBI and Justice Department for continuing the probe) is likely to reinforce the feeling among Democrats that he is impeding the investigation. Also, California businessman Tom Steyer is funding a national campaign of television commercials calling for Trump’s impeachment (reportedly over Pelosi’s objections), which could move liberal-leaning voters to urge their members of Congress to push for Trump’s ouster. And by early 2019, there will likely be numerous Democratic presidential candidates in Iowa and New Hampshire whipping up even more anti-Trump sentiment among party activists. Secondly, if Democrats win a majority in November, there will be new members coming to Congress. Most congressional primaries have not happened yet, but it will be worth watching how many of the Democrats who win the primary in districts currently held by Republicans back impeachment. The number I’m watching for is 150. Taking back the House means that Democrats will have at least 218 seats. And if the number of Democrats in favor of impeachment proceedings grows from the 66 who supported Green’s second measure to 150 over the next year, that would give the pro-impeachment group a clear two-thirds majority of the party’s House members. I’m not sure that Nadler or Pelosi can stop an impeachment push if it has that kind of backing. In that case, I expect that the vast majority of Democrats would fall in line and back impeachment rather than irritate liberals back home — likely resulting in enough pro-impeachment sentiment to impeach Trump.

#### Too much base pressure to impeach. Acosta and Landers 4/11

Jim Acosta and Elizabeth Landers, CNN. "Republicans Fear Potential Impeachment Move If Democrats Win In 2018." CNN. N. p., April 11 2018. Web. 14 Apr. 2018. Jim Acosta is a Chief White House Correspondent at CNN. Elizabeth Landers is a CNN Politics Video Producer. //nhs-VA

There are growing concerns inside the White House and among GOP leadership that Democrats will immediately seek to impeach President Donald Trump should Republicans lose control of the House this November, six White House and congressional sources tell CNN. "POTUS is aware" of the concern, one White House source said, describing the hand-wringing inside the West Wing over the upcoming midterms as "the anticipation of death." Hoping to avert that potential scenario Trump is expected to campaign hard for House Republicans in the November elections, the source said, citing internal White House planning. "(Trump) doesn't want anyone to say he didn't fight hard to keep the House," the source added. However, not all Democrats believe that impeachment is the path to victory for 2018. "Let the investigation play out. In the meantime, our focus should be on demonstrating why we will do more for families than the GOP and expose the reckless waste and abuse of government resources in this administration," former Hillary Clinton campaign manager Robby Mook told CNN. "We do that by subpoenaing records and getting them out in the open so taxpayers can see how badly they're being ripped off." In the House, the prevailing concern among Republican lawmakers is that House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi will have no choice but to initiate impeachment proceedings should she succeed in seizing the speaker's gavel. "I'm sure Pelosi will have immense pressure from the base to impeach," a top GOP congressional aide added. "That's logical," another senior Republican aide in the House said. The fears of a wave election that would sweep Republicans from power in the House and perhaps usher in Democrat-led impeachment proceedings in 2019 are now heightened with the coming exit of Speaker Paul Ryan. One White House official said there are worries among the President's aides that Ryan's choice not to seek re-election might signal to other members who are concerned about losing their races that they shouldn't run, either. A source familiar with Ryan's thinking said the speaker understands that much of Washington will read his announced departure as a something of a concession that Democrats are likely to take the House. "He is well aware what some may say but also quite sure no battleground district or race will be decided based on his decision," the source said. "No one has put Republicans in a better place to hold the majority than the speaker." Mook is not as optimistic that Democrats will sweep the House: "Democrats need to remember that gerrymandering is real and we have to win well over a majority of the national vote to win the House. This is harder than it looks."

### AT: Senate Blocks

#### 1. Control of the house guarantees necessary oversight authority that would result in impeachment

Seitz-Wald 17 (Alex Seitz-Wald is a political reporter and contributor for MSNBC - Democrats’ Agenda: Win House in 2018, Investigate Donald Trump” 5/17, http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/democrats-vs-trump/democrats-agenda-win-house-2018-investigate-donald-trump-n759106)

If Democrats win the 24 seats they need to retake the House, they wouldn't just get the ability to block Republicans' legislative agenda, along with the president's. They would also gain control of Congress’ oversight authority, which they could use to dig into everything from Trump's possible ties to Russia to his alleged business conflicts of interests to potentially even his tax returns. They could flood the Trump administration with subpoenas, compel testimony from witnesses, schedule public hearings, issue reports, and create special committees like the one Republicans started to probe Benghazi. The Oversight Committee, for instance, has the largest House staff outside the Speaker's Office, with over 120 attorneys, investigators and support staff, according to a former committee aide. “They have the power to go after every executive agency — and it’s basically unlimited,” said former Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., who was the top Republican on the Oversight Committee when Democrats wielded that power against George W. Bush during his final two years in the White House.

#### 2. House action will spur enough Senate GOPers to flip

Nelson 17 (Michael Nelson is the Fulmer Professor of Political Science at Rhodes College and a Senior Fellow at the University of Virginia’s Miller Center., “OPINION | Midterms may provide Dems control — and chance to impeach”, 8/22, http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/the-administration/348001-midterms-may-provide-dems-control-and-chance-to-impeach)

Clearly, Trump is unpopular, historically so for a recently-elected president and shedding “strongly support” backing even among Republican voters. It’s also clear that many Republican legislators would be much happier with President Mike Pence instead of President Trump. Even among GOP voters, Pence’s numbers are higher than Trump’s. And public attitudes toward impeachment as a weapon of political combat show no signs of abating. It comes down to the partisan composition of Congress. The Republican-controlled 115th Congress is unlikely to impeach Trump. But the Democrats may well take control of the House in the 2018 midterm election and — depending on the extent of Trump’s unpopularity — conceivably could buck the odds and win the Senate even though they will be defending 25 seats and the Republicans only nine. Such an outcome would make impeachment by a majority of the Democrat-controlled House likely and perhaps alarm enough Republican senators so that a two-thirds majority for removal could be forged in that chamber

#### The threshold is only six- as long as current trends continue.

Kamarck 17 (Elaine, Senior Fellow in the Governance Studies program as well as the Director of the Center for Effective Public Management at the Brookings Institution, “TRUMP IS JUST SIX SENATE VOTES AWAY FROM IMPEACHMENT”, 8/17, http://www.newsweek.com/trump-just-six-senate-votes-away-impeachment-651857)

At some point in 2019 (if not sooner) a Republican Senator may walk into the Oval Office and say to President Trump: “Mr. President, we don’t have the votes,” at which point the Trump presidency will end in a resignation or a conviction in the Senate. This scenario actually occurred forty-three years ago this summer when Republican Senator Barry Goldwater walked into the Oval Office and told Republican President Richard Nixon that they didn’t have the votes in the Senate to save his presidency. Following impeachment in the House, a trial takes place in the Senate. Conviction requires two-thirds of the Senate and by my count there are already twelve senators who have shown a willingness to take on the president when they believe he is in the wrong. If you add that to the forty-eight Democrats in the Senate (who have shown no inclination to work with this President), Donald Trump could be six votes away from conviction in the Senate. Of course this assumes that the forces now in motion continue on their same trajectory and result in an impeachment vote. They are: the investigations into the Trump campaign; evidence of weakness in the Republican base; historical trends indicating a possible Democratic takeover in the House; and, last but not least, defiance in the Senate. [1] This last trend should be particularly worrisome for the president. Article I of the Constitution gives them the last word on the presidency. And yet instead of making friends in the Senate, Trump has done exactly the opposite. After the Senate failed to pass his Obamacare replacement, Trump took to Twitter to denounce them as “fools” and “total quitters.” That could not have gone over well with the senators who opposed him along the way. One of them, Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine), arrived home to an impromptu gathering of supporters at the Portland airport who applauded her vote against the president’s replacement of Obamacare. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) was defiant after being called out by the president, saying “ No second thoughts at all. None,” after her vote against the president on health care. Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) has been none too pleased with the efforts to repeal Obamacare, insisting that it “ does not go far enough in lowering premiums for middle-class families.” But perhaps the most high profile opposition to the president came from Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), who returned to Washington from his hospital bed to cast the dramatic and final vote killing the Republican replacement for Obamacare. After Trump, during the presidential campaign, ridiculed McCain’s seven years in a prison camp in Hanoi, the Arizona senator showed he is clearly not afraid to take on the president. Another Republican senator from the west, Dean Heller (R-Nev.) also felt free to criticize the President and vote against him on several key issues. Senators Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) have been vocal in their opposition to the president’s budget—especially the proposed cuts in drug treatment programs. Capito threatened to lead “a bipartisan group of my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee and in the Senate to reject those proposed cuts.” They are part of the 18 Republican senators who voted against the Trump budget. A second major setback for the president in the Senate was passage of a Russia sanctions bill that curtailed the president’s freedom of action in adjusting sanctions—a clear signal that an overwhelming number of senators don’t trust the president on Russia issues. As a further reflection of that inter-branch distrust, there are two bipartisan bills in the Senate which would check the president’s ability to fire the special prosecutor Robert Mueller looking into the Russia issue. One is sponsored by Senator Thom Tillis (R. N.C.) and Senator Christopher Coons, (D-Del.) and the other by Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Senator Cory Booker (D-N.J.). Senator Graham has gone so far as to warn the president that firing Mueller would mark “the beginning of the end of the Trump Administration.” And then there is the man who used to be the president’s closest friend in the Senate, Jeff Sessions, who endorsed Trump when no one else would and became his Attorney General only to suffer weeks of embarrassing insults from the President. Senators such as Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) have defended Sessions against the president, warning that if Sessions is fired there will not be a confirmation hearing for another attorney general this year. Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) has been a consistent thorn in President Trump’s side, repeatedly questioning his foreign policy appointments and insisting in an op-ed, “Make no mistake, no matter who is president or what their party is, it is my firm belief that the president needs congressional authorization for military action, as required by the Constitution.” Finally, Senator Jeff Flake, (R-Ariz.) wrote an entire book accusing President Trump of abandoning conservative Republican principles. Flake is facing a tough re-election race, and his book Conscience of a Conservative (the same title used by his hero Senator Barry Goldwater 57 years ago), is either a Hail Mary play, a genuine attack on what Trump has done to his party, or both. In it he writes, “Never has a party so quickly or easily abandoned its core principles as my party did in the course of the 2016 campaign.” These 12 Republicans have no fear of the president. You could probably add Senator Cory Gardner (R-Colo.), who is up for re-election in 2020 and whose state also voted for Clinton in 2016. The president needs to start making friends in the United States Senate.

#### Base support is reigning impeachment calls in—loss in House reverses that.

Werner 10-9 Erica. Contributor at the AP, International News Organization. "Bob Corker Isn't the Only Republican Afraid of Donald Trump." Time. Time, 9 Oct. 2017. Web. 16 Oct. 2017. DLuo

(WASHINGTON) — Sen. Bob Corker is hardly the only Republican lambasting Donald Trump and raising dark concerns about harm the president might cause the U.S. and the world. He's just the only one who's sounding off in public. With his Twitter broadsides and his explosive New York Times interview — he charged that Trump could set the nation "on the path to World War III" — Corker gave voice to concerns that circulate widely on Capitol Hill about an unpredictable president whose tendency to personalize every issue creates risks for the nation. But Trump's enduring popularity with a segment of the GOP base serves as a political muzzle that keeps most elected Republicans from saying anything similar, even those who believe it to be true. The few Republican senators who did provide public views on Monday aligned themselves with Trump, not Corker. For example, Montana's Steve Daines' office said simply that the senator "has confidence in the president." GOP Sen. John Barrasso disagrees with Corker, according to his office. Referring to Barrasso and Trump, the Wyoming senator's office said, "On tax cuts, border security, and rebuilding American infrastructure, they fight the same fight." Barrasso is among the establishment Republicans who face potential primary challenges from pro-Trump activists on the right, heightening the political dangers if they should break with the president. The Associated Press sought to contact all 52 Republican senators on Monday for their response to Corker's comments and ask whether they believe Trump is fit for office, a question Corker declined to answer in the Times interview. With the Senate on recess this week and many offices closed for Columbus Day, the inquiries elicited few responses, and those who did largely declined comment. ADVERTISING Corker offered no solution to the problem he identified so graphically. Trump is the president, and few doubt that he will remain so, despite constitutional provisions for impeachment or for the vice president to take over if the commander in chief cannot discharge his duties, Moreover, Republicans' political fortunes remain tied to the president's. They need his signature if they are to rescue a flagging agenda and pass a tax overhaul, a goal many believe is imperative if the GOP is to retain control of Congress in next year's midterm elections. So unlike Corker, who recently announced he is not running for re-election in Tennessee, even GOP Trump critics will continue to mute their concerns about his behavior and try to work with the administration. "Sen. Corker, who's been a strong supporter of the president in the past, is essentially saying the emperor has no clothes," said Michael Steel, who served as spokesman to former House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio. But, Steel added, "The president was elected under our constitutional system and that's where we stand. Congressional leaders are going to continue concentrating on doing everything they can to get big things done for the American people, and they hope to have as much support from the administration as possible." Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the target of Trump attacks after the Senate's failure to pass health care legislation, didn't directly answer when asked at an event in Hazard, Kentucky, whether he shared Corker's sentiments. "Sen. Corker is a valuable member of the Senate Republican caucus and he's also on the Budget Committee and a particularly important player as we move to the floor on the budget next week," McConnell said. His comments underscored what has frustrated Republicans most about the Trump-Corker feud, which burst open Sunday when Trump began tweeting, inaccurately, that Corker had begged for his endorsement and decided not to run for re-election when Trump turned him down. Trump will need Corker if he is to get big tax changes through the Senate, where the narrow GOP majority thwarted McConnell's efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. And Corker also figures to be a key player if Trump moves as expected to unwind the Iran nuclear deal. Republicans do frequently complain about Trump's attacks on fellow Republicans like McConnell, his failure to stay focused on his legislative agenda and his tendency to make demands on Congress and then blame lawmakers for poor results. But those GOP comments are nothing like Corker's apocalyptic statements. "The senators who vocally criticize the president understandably get an outsized amount of media attention but are not representative of how the caucus overall wants to approach Trump," said Alex Conant, formerly a top adviser to Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida. "There are Republican senators who truly believe the president is great." For House Republicans, who face voters every two years and largely represent conservative districts where support for the president remains strong, there's even less incentive to turn against the commander in chief. Sixty-eight percent of Republican voters approve of Trump, though that's down from 80 percent in March, according to a recent AP-NORC poll. Rep. Mark Meadows of North Carolina, chairman of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, criticized Corker, saying he finds "those type of comments to not be appropriate especially coming from the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, and certainly not in keeping with what I know of the way that things are conducted in the West Wing, having been there multiple times." "It's really easy to be bold when you're not coming back," Meadows added of Corker.

### MAGNIFIER—Win = Resign

#### House win causes trump to resign – dems release of damaging tax returns compels it

Graham 17 --- luke, political reporter @ CNBC, CNBC, https://www.cnbc.com/2017/08/21/donald-trump-president-may-resign-over-tax-returns-if-democrats-win-in-2018.html

A Democrat win in 2018 could end the Trump presidency, says analyst A win for the Democrats in Congress next year would allow them to publish Donald Trump's tax returns, according to IHS Markit's John Raines If there is some damaging information in the returns, President Trump may decide to resign Tony Schwartz, the ghost-writer behind Trump's 'Art of the Deal', told CNN he predicts Trump will quit the job in months A win for the Democrats in Congress next year will cause problems for the Donald Trump administration that may even result in the president resigning from his post, a political risk analyst has suggested. "If the Democrats win in 2018 as far as the House of Representatives, they can then actually publish the tax returns of the president," John Raines, head of political risk at IHS Markit, told CNBC. "So is there something in those tax returns that could actually cause damage to the president? All of a sudden he feels compelled to do something like resign." If the Democrats gained a majority in Congress, they could take control of certain Congressional committees. Some of these committees have the power to request anyone's tax returns, including those belonging to the president. These committees could then share the returns with other members of the committee or make them public. The president's tax returns have been a hot button political issue since the election campaign, when Trump became the first major presidential candidate since the 1970s not to release his tax returns. The president claimed he could not release them because he was under audit by the IRS. Raines says there would have to be a major issue within the tax returns for the majority of the Republican Party to turn against him. "At this point, 80 to 85 percent of Republicans are still with this president. Republican congressmen, whether it be senators or house members, it's going to be very difficult for them to make that (decision on impeachment) unless there's some real smoking gun there." Raines added that the actual prospects of impeachment remain quite low at this point. Last week, U.K. betting firm Paddy Power cut odds on Trump to resign from office, after Tony Schwartz, the ghost-writer behind the president's memoir 'Art of the Deal', told CNN he predicts Trump will quit the job in months. He also said on Twitter that he would be "amazed" if the president lasts until the end of the year. Bookmaker Paddy Power said large amounts of money was being bet on odds of 6/4 that Trump will resign, forcing the company to cut the odds to even money (where the profit on the bet will be the same as the amount staked). "Tony Schwartz spent 18 months with Trump when helping ghost-write his memoir and while that must have been totally unbearable – it also means he knows The Donald pretty well," Paddy Power said in a press release on Friday. "After an awful week for the president that has seen other issues like North Korea pushed into the shadows it's no surprise punters are latching onto the fact Trump might call it a day."

#### Even if it doesn’t get through the Senate it repeats Nixon.

Cesca 17 Bob 1/31/. Bob Cesca is a regular contributor to Salon.com. He's also the host of "The Bob Cesca" podcast, and a weekly guest on both the "Stephanie Miller Show" and "Tell Me Everything with John Fugelsang." “Forget impeachment: Donald Trump can be driven from office, but probably not that way,” Salon. http://www.salon.com/2017/01/31/forget-impeachment-donald-trump-can-be-driven-from-office-but-probably-not-that-way/

Is there another way? Can Trump be removed from office without an impeachment and conviction? Possibly. If you recall your history, president Richard Nixon was in the process of being impeached as a consequence of the Watergate revelations, but that process never reached the House floor for a vote. It was ultimately the GOP establishment, led by senator Barry Goldwater, who approached Nixon and asked him to step down for the good of the nation. The odds of this occurring with Trump seem high. Pre-inauguration catastrophes aside, Trump’s entire first week in office was largely about his deranged obsessions and vendettas. Not more than several days in, for example, Trump held a closed-door meeting with congressional leadership and reportedly wasted much of that time ranting about his crowd sizes and a kooky Alex Jones conspiracy theory about voter fraud. That’s only one of many harrowing stories of Trump’s disturbing behavior inside the White House. Suffice it to say, members of the congressional leadership have to know about this. They’re witnessing it first hand. Can he descend further into madness? Sure. He’s a weak, insecure and blindingly delusional man who can’t stop relitigating trivialities like his crowd (or hand) sizes. There’s a very real possibility that as his presidency grows increasingly embattled, he’ll become more isolated and secluded, perhaps locking himself inside a random safe space somewhere in the White House, trapped in a Mobius loop of obsessions and delusions, poring over cable news while photographs of the inaugural crowds and protest marches litter the floor — and his Sharpie marker scribblings all around. Basically, this would be Howard Hughes at his worst. Knowing Trump’s behavior so far, coupled with the reality that he doesn’t seem mentally or physically prepared for the stress and rigors of the presidency, some version of the Nixonian endgame seems plausible. Finally, the other factor here is the condition of the economy. If there’s a recession or a sudden uptick in the unemployment figures, Trump will likely accuse the numbers of being “fake news.” But Americans may be less patient with this unlikable, garish cartoon character whose central campaign promises aren’t panning out. Don’t forget: He repeatedly declared himself to be “the greatest jobs president God ever created.” If there's anything shy of that, we’ll see moderate and independent Trump voters jumping ship, leaving only the dregs and the hotheads to flack for Trump on Fox News. Conversely, however, we shouldn’t ignore the possibility of a military conflict or, heaven forbid, a major terrorist attack. Both are nightmare scenarios, to be sure — as we know the lives at stake. Politically speaking, there’s the distinct possibility of a suddenly very popular Donald Trump sitting in the Oval Office with virtual carte blanche from a scared population. Sleep tight. This is all to suggest that, yes, Trump can be driven from office prematurely. He’s his own worst enemy and he continues to inadvertently reveal himself as mentally unfit to fulfill the duties of the presidency. But hoping against hope for a legislative vote to get him out is a red herring.

## Answers

### AT: Too Far Off

#### Now is the key time – special elections over the next few months could help determine overall recruitment for 2018

Barabak 17 Mark 3/20 LA Times http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-na-pol-house-control-midterms-2017-story.html

Can Democrats claw their way back to power in the House? They're counting on Trump to help Paul Ryan and President Trump Looking at the numbers, Democrats seem to have a better chance seizing control of the Senate in 2018 than winning a majority and clawing their way back to power in the House. Republicans hold a mere 52-48 Senate majority while outnumbering Democrats in the House by 44 seats, with five vacancies. But elections are not about mathematics, or determined by probability. Though Democrats need to win just three seats to take over the Senate, the lay of the political landscape appears to strongly favor Republicans, who are defending nine seats in the 2018 midterm elections, compared to more than twice that — 25 — for Democrats. In the House, Democrats need a gain in the neighborhood of 24 seats to take control.There are about 50 seats, give or take, that appear reasonably competitive. That suggests at least a decent chance that power could shift. The most important factor will be President Trump and his standing with voters by the time November 2018 rolls around. Although he won’t be up for reelection until 2020, his policies and performance will be very much on the ballot in the midterm election. (For some, his super-sized personality will also be factor.) Remind me again, when is election day in 2018? On Nov. 6. How many House seats will be up? Unlike in the Senate, where roughly a third of members face reelection every six years, all 435 House seats will be on the ballot. But only about 50 or so are competitive? Well, that could change, especially if Trump’s subpar approval numbers fall even further. But for all the talk of voter anger and the widespread contempt for Congress registered in opinion polls, the overwhelmingly majority of incumbents will be sent back to Washington — most without having to break a sweat. Nice work if you can get it! Indeed. In many states, politicians did a masterful job drawing congressional boundaries that effectively eliminate serious competition, by loading up districts with voters who can be counted on to vote for one party or the other. Also, the growing inclination of people to live among like-minded peers means that most Republicans and Democrats represent districts that tilt strongly toward one or the other major party. That said, there are 23 Republicans representing districts that Democrat Hillary Clinton carried in 2016, and 12 Democrats sitting in districts that Trump won. Here's why the 2018 Senate election will be crucial for President Trump and his Democratic foes » Isn’t it right about now you bring up historical trends? Yup, and here we go: The president’s party has lost seats in 18 of the last 20 midterm elections, with an average loss of 33 seats in that time. When’s the last time we had a midterm election with a Republican president? Wow, really down in the weeds, aren’t you? That would be 2006 — which happens to be the year Democrats won control of the House after being in the minority for 12 years. So that’s promising for Democrats, isn’t it? Yes, but. In this age of Trump, all the usual assumptions and historical patterns have to be taken with that proverbial shaker of salt. Democrats were convinced he would not only lose the White House but prove a major drag on down-ballot candidates. They even entertained visions of a 30-seat House pickup giving them the majority after November. But Democrats won only six seats and, of course, were wrong about who’d be sitting in the White House right now. But the dynamics of midterm election are different, no? One would think so. Typically, the midpoint of a president’s term is a chance for voters to weigh in with a progress report of sorts. And, human nature being what it is, the frustrated and discontented are more likely to muster themselves to vote than those who are happy and contented. That’s why the president’s party almost always loses seats. Holy-moly, I’m on the edge of my seat! Do we really have to wait until November 2018 to see what happens? Yes, but. There are a handful of special elections in the next few months to fill vacant House seats and while there’s a serious danger of over-interpreting the results, the outcome could offer a few clues. In Los Angeles, nearly two dozen candidates are vying to replace state Atty. Gen Xavier Becerra in a district that is virtually certain to elect a Democrat on June 6. (The primary election is April 4.) Similarly, in Montana, Kansas and South Carolina, Republicans seem very likely to hang onto the seats that Ryan Zinke, Mike Pompeo and Mick Mulvaney, respectively, gave up to join the Trump administration. The most intriguing of the contests is taking place in Georgia, in a suburban Atlanta district that Trump barely won. The incumbent, Tom Price, stepped down to become secretary of Health and Human Services. If Democrats could snatch the seat away, or even keep the contest relatively close, that could offer a huge psychological boost. Yeah, but psychology doesn’t win elections any more than probability. True enough. But a strong Democratic showing would suggest the oppositional energy that has manifested itself at town halls and street protests could translate into a strong turnout in the midterm election. And that, in turn, could encourage prospective Democrats to take the plunge and run in 2018; right now is prime recruiting time. I'm marking my calendar! When is that Georgia election? The first round takes place on April 18. If no candidate receives a majority, the top two finishers, regardless of party, will advance to a runoff on June 20.

#### Sustained engagement by activists is key to rebuild the party and win in 2018.

Skocpol 17 Theda, professor of government and sociology at Harvard University, http://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2017/1/5/14176156/rebuild-democratic-party-dnc-strategy

**Effective political organization in America is always centered in and across the states** — and that middle level of organization is what Democrats must reinforce. **They must embrace a year-round, face-to-face organizational style**. Devising poll-tested messages and delivering them through television and radio ads and social media is no longer enough, if it ever was. **Only people on the ground can network and engage in respectful two-way conversations**. A new DNC head must put big resources into state parties and prod them to give year-round support to local supporters who can inject themselves into ongoing conversations everywhere, not just on MSNBC or in big cities. Furthermore, the new DNC head will have to find ways to replicate most innovative and effective state party strategies — like those devised in New Hampshire and Nevada, swing states that performed well for the Democrats. Old formulas for reinforcing time servers in state parties will not work. Organize locally to oppose the Trump GOP What can ordinary rank-and-file Democrats and their allies do? They can express opinions to the roughly 447 (mostly state-level) party leaders who will select a new DNC head in late February — but should not wait until then to mobilize locally. **The Tea Party example of 2009-’10 shows how effective largely spontaneous, grassroots local groups can be in challenging an incoming president’s agenda and shifting political conversations at all levels**. As Vanessa Williamson and I documented in our book The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism, **roughly a quarter of a million conservative citizen activists managed to use largely voluntary methods and shoestring resources to create some 900 regularly meeting local Tea Party groups** from 2009 through 2011. **Those groups**, agitated against Obama administration reforms, took over or **influenced local Republican Party committees, and pushed state and national elected representatives to oppose changes they did not want. What made these Tea Party activists different from** liberal professional advocates or **Occupy** Wall Street protestors **was their use of the machinery of party politics** — and the exertion of pressure on representatives from local districts. Tea Partiers did not just run urban demonstrations, posture for media outlets, or make appeals to Washington DC. Recently, a group of former Democratic congressional staffers has drawn insights from the Tea Party experience to prepare “Indivisible: A Practical Guide for Resisting the Trump Agenda.” This offers practical advice to local citizen volunteers who want to form groups to agitate against the Trump-GOP agenda and pressure legislators to oppose or delay such damaging measures as Obamacare repeal, tax cuts for the rich, anti-immigrant measures, dismantling of environmental protections, and privatization of Medicare and Social Security. Turning out for town halls and contacting local congressional offices are the keys, these authors wisely say. I would only add that local groups can also work to make Trump policies and their deleterious consequences visible by writing letters to editors, speaking to local associations and church groups, and talking with their friends and neighbors. In turn, **local volunteer efforts can become excellent points of contact for beefed-up statewide Democratic Party organizations**.

### AT: Dem Win Inevitable

#### Dem win is not inevitable, turnout key—concentrated vote, anti-Trump sentiment motivates GOP voters too

Young 17 J.T. former Treasury Department official, “Trying to Find Evidence ofa Midterm ‘Wave’ Democrats yearn to Feel a Landslide coming But There’s No Sign of It,” WASHIGNTON TIMES, 5—31—17, www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/may/31/democrats-midterm-landslide-might-be-illusory/, accessed 8-30-17.

Democrats‘ recent experiences scream “2018 landslide” to them, but reality whispers of much less. Neither Republicans’ past midterms nor current circumstances match those which inflicted huge midterm losses on Democrats. Additionally, it is unclear whether Democrats can reverse their recent midterm disadvantage in core support. In the past quarter-century, Democrats have twice suffered huge losses in their presidents’ first midterm elections. With Bill Clinton in 1994, Democrats lost 54 House and nine Senate seats. With Barack Obama in 2010, they lost 63 House and six Senate seats. From Democrats‘ perspective, their presidents — each of whom was later re-elected — immediately endured unrelenting Republican opposition. Resulting Republican congressional majorities was then instrumental in denying Democrats their third consecutive presidential terms — despite their candidates winning the popular vote — in 2000 and 2016. The lessons Democrats have taken from this are these: Presidents’ first midterms are dangerous and all-out opposition works. Added to these history lessons, Democrats see even greater opportunity in an unpopular Donald Trump and Republicans’ frequent inability to work together. As they await 2018, Democrats already are counting the days and sizable future gains. The problem in Democrats‘ seemingly perfect scenario is that their history does not match Republicans’ past experience or current circumstances. In 2002, George W. Bush’s first midterm, Republicans gained seven House and two Senate seats. Current Republican numbers in Congress are much smaller than Democrats‘ in 1994 and 2010. Democrats‘ 1994 and 2010 average was 257 House and 57 Senate seats; Republicans hold just 241 House and 52 Senate seats. Republicans’ lower numbers also reduce their likelihood of losing the number of seats Democrats did. Further, President Trump won 230 House districts and 30 states last November. This should further help Republicans running in 2018. And 2018’s 34 Senate races decidedly favor Republicans: Democrats must defend 25 seats, with 10 in states Mr. Trump won. In contrast, Republicans must defend just one Senate seat in a state won by Hillary Clinton. More important, Democrats‘ core supporter percentages have fallen — while Republicans’ have risen — in the most recent midterm elections. In 2010 and 2014, Democrat voters fell as percentage of the electorate from their preceding presidential election levels. Republicans as a percentage of the electorate increased in both those midterms. The same pattern holds for liberals and conservatives in those midterms, too. The last two midterms, therefore, raise the question of whether Democrats‘ core supporters will come to the polls without a Democrat running for president. Other questions confront Democrats‘ dreams of a big 2018 as well. One group of questions centers on Democrats‘ anti-Trump animosity. It will take more than just today’s anti-Trump intensity to beat congressional Republicans in 18 months. The obvious concern for Democrats: Can it be sustained? A lot can happen in a year-and-a-half. Each of the last three presidents had their lows, but all also experienced significant upticks in popularity during their presidencies. If there is a silver lining in Mr. Trump’s comparatively low ratings now, it is that any upturn will appear comparatively larger. And even if sustained, high anti-Trump intensity alone is not enough — that intensity must be broadly dispersed. Simply racking up large protest votes against Mr. Trump in blue areas will not change Congress’ balance. Mrs. Clinton’s popular vote win last November proves the pitfall of running up big margins in too few areas. The anti-Trump intensity must penetrate into Republican areas, and do so enough to elect Democrats — moral victories do not flip seats. That will not be easy when Mr. Trump won a decided majority of states and congressional districts. Another group of questions centers on Republicans’ intraparty divisions. “Never Trump” Republicans undoubtedly hurt Mr. Trump last November. However, there is no reason to believe these Republicans will not support congressional Republicans in 2018. For Democrats, voting Democrat doubles as an anti-Trump vote; for Republicans, withholding support for congressional Republicans amounts to cutting off your nose to spite your face. An anti-Trump feeling among Republicans should instead encourage them to vote for congressional Republicans in 2018. For them, congressional Republicans serve as an important counterweight to Mr. Trump within their party. As a result, congressional Republicans could well run ahead of Mr. Trump in many areas, further raising the threshold Democratic candidates must clear. In theory, Democrats appear to have a golden opportunity to inflict a major 2018 midterm loss on Republicans. The problem is that in practice, things have not worked nearly so well for Democrats in midterms past. And there are several current reasons why Republicans’ past midterm advantage may carry into November 2018. Democrats‘ past pains may not predict their envisioned future gains after all.

### AT: Russia Hacks

#### No ballot interference – only propaganda, which is a link magnifier. Rosenberg et al 2/13

Rosenberg, Matthew, et al. “Russia Sees Midterm Elections as Chance to Sow Fresh Discord, Intelligence Chiefs Warn.” The New York Times, The New York Times, 13 Feb. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/us/politics/russia-sees-midterm-elections-as-chance-to-sow-fresh-discord-intelligence-chiefs-warn.html. Matthew Rosenberg is an American journalist who covers national security issues for The New York Times. The Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Charlie Savage is a Washington correspondent for The New York Times. Michael Wines is a national correspondent for The New York Times and writes about voting and other election-related issues. //nhs-VA

Russia appears eager to spread information — real and fake — that deepens political divisions. Bot armies promoted partisan causes on social media, including the recent push to release a Republican congressional memo critical of law enforcement officials. The bots have also sought to portray the F.B.I. and Justice Department as infected by partisan bias, said Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, the top Democrat on the intelligence committee. “Other threats to our institutions come from right here at home,” he said. “There have been some, aided and abetted by Russian internet bots and trolls, who have attacked the basic integrity of the F.B.I. and the Justice Department. This is a dangerous trend.” Russia does not, however, appear to be trying to penetrate voting machines or Americans’ ballots, United States officials said. “While scanning and probing of networks happens across the internet every day, we have not seen specific or credible evidence of Russian attempts to infiltrate state election infrastructure like we saw in 2016,” Jeanette Manfra, the chief cybersecurity official at the Department of Homeland Security, said in an interview last week. Right now, Mr. Pompeo said, Russia is trying to focus on what are known as influence operations — using social media and other platforms to spread favorable messages — not hacking. “The things we have seen Russia doing to date are mostly focused on information types of warfare,” he said. Intelligence officials and election-security experts have said both the states and federal agencies have made significant progress in addressing voting system vulnerabilities since 2016, when state-level officials could not even be warned of attacks because they lacked the necessary security clearances. The intelligence community was focused on gathering information about potential attacks and then sharing it with local and state election officials, Mr. Coats said during the hearing. Mr. Coats called Moscow’s meddling “pervasive.” “The Russians have a strategy that goes well beyond what is happening in the United States,” he said. “While they have historically tried to do these types of things, clearly in 2016 they upped their game. They took advantage, a sophisticated advantage of social media. They are doing that not only in the United States but doing it throughout Europe and perhaps elsewhere.” Mr. Pompeo was also asked about reports last week by The New York Times and The Intercept that American intelligence agencies spent months negotiating with a Russian who said he could sell stolen American cyberweapons and that the deal would include purportedly compromising material on Mr. Trump. The negotiations were conducted through an American businessman who lives in Europe and served as a cutout for American intelligence agencies. Mr. Pompeo called the reporting “atrocious, ridiculous and inaccurate” and said the C.I.A. had not paid the Russian. The Times, citing American and European intelligence officials, said only that American spies had paid the Russian $100,000 for the cyberweapons using an indirect channel. Those weapons were never delivered. The Russian did provide information on Mr. Trump, which intelligence agencies refused to accept and remains with the American businessman. “Our story was based on numerous interviews, a review of communications and other evidence. We stand by it,” said Dean Baquet, the executive editor of The Times. Mr. Pompeo did appear to acknowledge the operation itself, saying that “the information that we were working to try and retrieve was information we believed might well have been stolen from the U.S. government.” He and the other intelligence chiefs, including Adm. Michael S. Rogers, the departing director of the National Security Agency, also addressed the slew of other threats they see facing the United States. They cited North Korea’s nuclear program, Islamist militants in the Middle East and even illicit drug trafficking, especially the smuggling of cheaply made fentanyl, a powerful opioid responsible for thousands of deaths each year. But as has been the case for years, the intelligence leaders presented cyberactivities of rival nations and rogue groups as the foremost threat facing the United States. They warned that such risks were likely to only grow, citing China, Iran, North Korea and Russia, along with militant groups and criminal networks, as the main agitators. To ease the flow of information, the Department of Homeland Security is trying to get at least one election official in each state a security clearance. To date, 21 officials in 20 states received at least interim “secret”-level clearances, Ms. Manfra said in the interview. The federal government is also working to provide states with enhanced online security “to ensure the American people that their vote is sanctioned and well and not manipulated in any way,” Mr. Coats said. Homeland Security has added 32 states and 31 local governments to a system that scans internet-connected systems in the federal government every night for vulnerabilities, offering weekly reports and fixes to any issues they find, Ms. Manfra said. Specialists also spend weeks auditing cyberdefense systems in both federal agencies and state elections offices, and last month, the department decided to prioritize requests for the latter to ensure that they get done swiftly, she added. Virtually every state is taking steps to harden voter databases and election equipment against outside attacks and to strengthen postelection audits. When the National Association of Secretaries of State holds its winter meeting this weekend in Washington, half of the sessions will be devoted wholly or in part to election security. New standards for voting equipment were approved last fall that will effectively require manufacturers to include several security improvements in new devices. States are moving to scrap voting machines that do not generate an auditable paper ballot as well as an electronic one; Virginia has decertified most of its devices, Pennsylvania has declared that all new devices will produce paper ballots, and Georgia — a state whose outdated equipment produces only electronic voting records — has set up a pilot program to move to paper.

### Dougherty 1AR

#### The base doesn’t care about ideology, just wins—the plan increases support; this card will take out your link turns.

Goldberg 17 (Jonah. "Trump and His Supporters Don't Care about Ideology. They Just Want to 'win'." Los Angeles Times. Los Angeles Times, 12 Sept. 2017. Web. 28 Sept. 2017. <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-goldberg-trump-chance-gardener-20170912-story.html>.) DLuo

President Trump isn’t nearly as kind-hearted nor as dimwitted , but there are two relevant similarities: Both Chance and Donald have an unhealthy addiction to television, preferring it to reading. Second, neither really understands what’s going on around them but benefits from being surrounded by people who see what they want to see. Last week, the president took the opening offer on a debt-limit deal from Sen. Charles E. Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic leaders in the Senate and House, respectively. A person close to the GOP leadership told Axios, “He accepted a shakedown when he was holding all the cards. ... This is quite literally a guy who watches 'ER' trying to perform a surgery.” Op-Ed Column Trump and his supporters don't care about ideology. They just want to 'win' President Donald Trump, accompanied by first lady Melania Trump, on at South Lawn of the White House in Washington on Sept. 10, 2017. (Associated Press) Jonah Goldberg I used to worry that Donald Trump was Lonesome Rhodes in a better suit. I’m starting to wonder if he’s Chance the Gardener in a worse suit. Just in case you don’t get the references, Rhodes was the lead character, played by Andy Griffith, in Elia Kazan’s 1957 film, “A Face in the Crowd,” the best movie ever made about the dangers of populism and mass media. Chance the Gardener was the lead character, played by Peter Sellers, in Hal Ashby’s “Being There,” a brilliant, 1979 film based on the Jerzy Kosinski novel about a simple-minded gardener who had never been outside his employer’s home until the man died. Because Chance speaks in fortune cookie aphorisms about gardening, he’s mistaken for a man of deep wisdom and is lifted to heights of power in Washington. ADVERTISING President Trump isn’t nearly as kind-hearted nor as dimwitted , but there are two relevant similarities: Both Chance and Donald have an unhealthy addiction to television, preferring it to reading. Second, neither really understands what’s going on around them but benefits from being surrounded by people who see what they want to see. Last week, the president took the opening offer on a debt-limit deal from Sen. Charles E. Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic leaders in the Senate and House, respectively. A person close to the GOP leadership told Axios, “He accepted a shakedown when he was holding all the cards. ... This is quite literally a guy who watches 'ER' trying to perform a surgery.” Paid Post LEARN MORE 7 Places That Show Off the Amazing Fall Colors in America As the weather turns from hot and humid to crisp and breezy, nature brings on some amazing colors. Trump’s real mandate was to be 'not Hillary Clinton' — and he fulfilled it on Day 1. Aghast conservatives are probably exaggerating the significance of the move in terms of policy and tactics. Fights over the debt limit rarely yield the rewards conservatives hope for. But the move could have lasting consequences. Why? Here’s a clue: According to reports, the president was ecstatic over the favorable coverage he received for his “bipartisanship.” “I got a call early this morning,” Schumer told the New York Times. “He said, ‘This was so great!’ Here’s what he said: ‘Do you watch Fox News?’ I said, ‘Not really.’ ‘They’re praising you!’ Meaning me. But he said, ‘And your stations’ — I guess meaning MSNBC and CNN — ‘are praising me! This is great!’” Despite his “fake news” refrain, Trump doesn’t hate the mainstream media the way his most ardent supporters do. They sincerely believe it’s a hostile opponent in the culture war, while Trump’s anger is more that of a jilted lover. His whole life has been marked by an obsession with publicity. His supporters, though, are oddly blind to that fact. Normally, when conservatives or Republicans deviate from the party line, the knee-jerk assumption among activists is that they are doing so out of a desire to win praise from the liberal media and invitations to Georgetown cocktail parties. If that’s often unfair, it may actually be the case for Trump, and yet his base insists that if he “wins,” it must also be a win for conservatives. So deep is the desire to see the Trump they thought they were getting, they bend the facts to fit their heroic narrative. The widespread animosity toward the GOP leadership among many Trump supporters only fuels the delusion that Trump can do no wrong. “Punishing” House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is now its own reward because they are part of the “globalist swamp” Trump was elected to drain. In his “60 Minutes” interview, former White House strategist Stephen K. Bannon insisted that the establishment is “trying to nullify the 2016 election.” Never mind that the House has passed most of Trump’s agenda (Obamacare repeal and replace, funding the wall, etc). Bannon is working on the assumption that Trump has a mandate for his potted “economic nationalism.” The truth is that Trump’s real mandate was to be “not Hillary Clinton” — and he fulfilled it on Day 1. With the exception of appointing conservative judges, all of Trump’s other scattershot policies earned only partial support from GOP voters, which is why Ryan and most other Republicans over-performed Trump in the election. The other truth is that Trump craves praise more than he cares about implementing his defenestrated strategist’s “economic nationalism.” And his supporters want Trump “wins” more than conservative ones, which is why we can expect more of what we saw last week.

#### 1 is base supports tough-on-crime – (a) this card is from August 2016; prefer our evidence on recency with regards to public perception of CJS reform (b) your ev: bipartisan momentum to reform a criminal justice system

#### 2 is tough policing – (a) this card is from August 2017; misses out on controversial issues like immigration and the shutdown, which forces Trump into a situation where any legislation is a win

#### 3 is GOP win – (a) assumes no wave – our ev directly contradicts this claim (b) from October 2017; doesn’t account for retirements and special elections (c) only assumes open seats; our ev says Dems can challenge incumbents

#### 4 is Corrections Act thumper – (a) bill won’t get to a vote. Swan 2/11

Swan, Jonathan. “Grassley Twists Trump's Arm for Criminal Justice Reform.” Axios, 11 Feb. 2018, www.axios.com/grassley-trump-criminal-justice-reform-b952d53f-7fa3-40f8-a04c-5c7d4474f89e.html. //nhs-VA

I checked in with Chuck Grassley, the powerful Senate Judiciary Chairman, who's been twisting arms for his (and Dick Durbin's) Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act. **Why it matters:** Grassley-Durbin is the most ambitious bipartisan criminal justice reform bill out there. On Thursday, the Judiciary Committee will vote on it. Little known fact: 20 senators are co-sponsors. **What we're hearing:** There's scant appetite in the Trump administration for Grassley's bill, which combines both prison reform (including programs to rehabilitate prisoners) and sentencing reform (shorter sentences for non-violent criminals.) Grassley introduced the same bill last Congress but McConnell refused to bring it up for a vote. Attorney General Jeff Sessions can live with prison reform, but adamantly opposes anything that could be perceived as "soft on crime." Trump has similar instincts. And even the White House's most passionate criminal justice reform advocate, Jared Kushner, believes they're better off shooting for what is achievable — prison reform only — rather than getting nothing at all, according to sources with direct knowledge. (Though Kushner personally backs criminal justice reform overall.) A White House official told me they spent 6 months listening and learning on this topic and don't see a path forward at this time on criminal justice reform but do see a path forward on prison reform.

#### (b) bill dies in the senate. Hagstrom 2/15

Hagstrom, Anders. “Sentencing Reform Makes It Out Of Committee, But Its Future Remains Uncertain.” The Daily Caller, The Daily Caller, 15 Feb. 2018, dailycaller.com/2018/02/15/chuck-grassley-sentencing-reform/. Justice Reporter. //nhs-VA

\*Brackets in original

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley’s sentencing reform bill in a 16-5 vote Thursday, a result Grassley has achieved before only for the bill to die in the Senate. Grassley’s fellow Republicans accounted for all five of the votes against the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act (SRCA), while it enjoyed universal support from the committee’s 10 Democrats. If passed into law, the bill would reduce mandatory minimum sentences for certain drug and violent offenses as well as introduce prison reforms aimed at cutting recidivism rates. Grassley, a Republican, found himself in a similar situation in the last Congress, where his 2015 version of the SRCA made it out of committee, but was never called for a vote in the Senate. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, a Republican, voted against the bill, arguing its retroactive effect went too far in allowing current inmates to petition to have their sentences reduced. Utah Senator and fellow Republican Orrin Hatch argued the bill didn’t go far enough, claiming it should include “mens rea” reforms, which take into account whether an offender had criminal intent. Only Louisiana Sen. John Kennedy, a Republican, expressed a fundamental opposition the bill, claiming sentencing reforms in his home state had been a “disaster.” His home state has the highest incarceration rate in the country, a reality the state legislature tried to change in 2017 with a 10-bill criminal justice package. The White House has also been hesitant to embrace sentencing reform, with President Donald Trump endorsing only prison reforms in his State of the Union address. His son-in-law and senior advisor Jared Kushner butted heads with Attorney General Jeff Sessions on how far the administration’s reforms should go. Kushner wants sentencing and prison reform, but Sessions is a long-time advocate for “tough on crime” policies in courtrooms and prisons. For now, the pair appear to have reached a compromise in which Sessions won’t speak out against prison reforms and Kushner won’t try to cut sentences. In line with that compromise, Sessions wrote a letter slamming Grassley’s bill as a “grave error” Wednesday because it includes both prison and sentencing reforms. Grassley replied with a statement on Twitter saying he was “incensed” by Sessions’ opposition – a feeling he reiterated in his opening remarks Thursday. “[Sessions] is now the Attorney General and is charged with executing the laws that Congress passes, not interfering with the legislative process,” Grassley said. “Certainly we value input from the Department of Justice, but if General Sessions wanted to be involved in marking up this legislation, maybe he should have quit his job and run for the Republican Senate seat in Alabama.” The future of sentencing reform is now in the hands of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who chose not to bring Grassley’s 2015 version to a vote in the 114th Congress.

#### 5 is AG – (a) CX checks (b) Trump and Sessions are linked – a win becomes politicized regardless. Gurman 1/28

Gurman, Sadie. “Battered but Still Loyal to Trump, Sessions Endures as AG.” PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, 28 Jan. 2018, www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/battered-but-still-loyal-to-trump-sessions-endures-as-ag. Sadie Gurman covers the Justice Department for The Associated Press in Washington. //nhs-VA

What Sessions sees as doing the right thing, though, often appears to others as doing Trump’s bidding. Critics say Sessions is too loyal, dangerously politicizing his department in an effort to appease Trump. Sessions told senior prosecutors to look into Hillary Clinton’s activities after Trump demanded investigations of his 2016 Democratic rival, and he has been eager to pursue investigations into Trump grievances, such as media leaks. Lawmakers accuse Sessions of stonewalling congressional committees investigating the Trump campaign by repeatedly saying he doesn’t recall key events. Some say Sessions’ public silence in the face of Trump’s assaults on the department is demoralizing to employees and threatens its independence from the White House. Sessions said Friday that it’s the department’s responsibility to identify past mistakes and that a “culture of defensiveness is not acceptable.” “It seems he recognizes he is in such a weakened position, if he wants to stay in Trump’s good graces he has to at least make a show of responding to Trump’s demands, and that’s extremely dangerous,” said William Yeomans, who spent nearly 30 years at the department under Democratic and Republican administrations. One example that raised eyebrows: Sessions’ plan to confront the opioid crisis hews so closely to Trump’s that White House aide Kellyanne Conway was on hand in the Justice Department’s seventh-floor conference room when he announced it. Sessions declined to address specific actions by his department but said it carries out “the law without regard to the political consequences or to poll numbers or who benefits and who doesn’t,” and Trump supports that. Even if Sessions is complying with Trump’s demands and pursuing his agenda, the attorney general has yet to find himself back in favor with the president. Before Sessions’ decision to withdraw from the Russia investigation, Trump used to call Sessions periodically and seek his counsel. Now the two men rarely speak, and Sessions at times has resorted to asking West Wing aides to pass messages to Trump.

#### (c) No jurisdiction for the AG - your card is talking about the Alaska attorney general. Winkler 10

Winkler, Sarah. “How an Attorney General Works.” HowStuffWorks, HowStuffWorks, 23 Mar. 2010, people.howstuffworks.com/government/local-politics/attorney-general1.htm. //nhs-VA

As the chief officer of the Department of Justice, the attorney general *enforces* federal laws, provides legal counsel in federal cases, interprets the laws that govern executive departments, heads federal jails and penal institutions, and examines alleged violations of federal laws. In addition, the attorney general may be called upon to represent the United States in the Supreme Court in cases of exceptional importance. The attorney general serves in the Cabinet of the president of the United States. The attorney general is in charge of supervising United States attorneys and marshals in their respective judicial districts. While attorneys are responsible for prosecuting offenses against the United States and prosecuting or defending in proceedings in which the United States requires representation, marshals issue orders and processes under the authority of the United States. States attorney generals have many of the same duties as the federal attorney general but on a smaller statewide scale. The specific duties of attorney general vary from state to state. Some attorney generals are elected in statewide contests, while others are appointed by the governor, legislature or supreme court. The projects that an attorney general can take on are wide ranging. For example, Eric Holder has voiced opinions on waterboarding, the close of Guantanamo Bay detention camp and the transfer of accused terrorists to jails on U.S. soil. On the state level, attorney generals might challenge the constitutionality of a law. In recent news, 11 state attorney generals have moved to challenge the constitutionality of the healthcare reform bill [source: Richey].

### Greenhill 1AR

#### 1 is Roy Moore and across the aisle – (a) our uniqueness evidence is more recent; considers new trends where the GOP is rising but Dems can hold off (b) the DA isn’t about the senate it’s about the house (c) the plan is bipartisanship that gives Trump a win (d) assumes Trump is a rational actor in reaching across but our ev says dems obstruct the agenda

#### 2 is resign – (a) cites Tony Schwartz, the guy who helped write The Art of the Deal; not an actual advisor – the line that says he knows Trump well is a quote from Paddy Power, the betting company (b) our argument: requires house to trigger impeachment first, which can only happen post-midterms

#### 3 is tweets and staging – (a) impact isn’t diversionary, it’s erratic and abruptly isolationist foreign policy (b) diversionary war possible – Syria missile strike proves

#### 4 is too early – (a) top level

#### Predictions this far out are very accurate – prefer math over their unwarranted theorizing

Enten 11/10 Senior political writer and analyst for FiveThirtyEight (Harry, There’s No Reason To Think Republicans Will Be In Better Shape A Year From Now, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/theres-no-reason-to-think-republicans-will-be-in-better-shape-a-year-from-now/)

An ABC News/Washington Post poll and a separate CNN survey released this week both found Democrats leading Republicans by 11 percentage points on the generic ballot. That’s a big lead — the type of lead that results in wave elections like Tuesday’s. It’s also just a hair larger than the Democratic advantage in the FiveThirtyEight average of generic ballot polls. But the really bad news for Republicans: There’s a good chance they won’t be able to eat too much into that lead by the 2018 midterms. The generic congressional ballot, even more than a year before a midterm, has historically been quite predictive of what will eventually occur in the following year. It was predictive in April, and it’s even more predictive now. You can see this phenomenon in the chart below. The chart shows the margin by which the presidential party leads on the generic ballot in an average of polls in October a year before the midterm compared with the national House margin in the midterm election. Every midterm cycle since 1938 is included, with the exception of 1942 and 1990, for which we don’t have polling at this point in the cycle. The generic ballot polls a year from the election and the eventual House results are strongly correlated (+0.90). Importantly, past elections suggest that any big movement on the generic ballot from this point to the midterm tends to go against the president’s party. That movement explains why the Democrats lost ground in 2010 and 2014 in the generic ballot polls when they controlled the White House, while they maintained their lead in 2006 when Republicans held the White House. (With a similar set of data, I used the generic ballot to forecast Democratic problems early on in the 2010 cycle.) Indeed, recent election outcomes show that Republicans should be worried about what the generic ballot is showing. The results in Tuesday’s gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey were called perfectly by the generic ballot once we control for the partisan lean of each state. The special election results this year have also been in line with a big Democratic lead on the generic ballot. Still, we are a year from the midterms. The generic ballot estimate at this point, while good, has not been a perfect predictor of the following year’s House results even after controlling for which party holds the presidency. Given these occasional past errors, it is certainly plausible that Republicans could keep the actual deficit in their national House margin down to just a few percentage points instead of the 8 or 9 points they’re down now. Losing by only a few points nationally would likely be enough for them to hold onto the House. On the other hand, there’s no reason to think that Republicans will be in any better shape nationally a year from now. The Democratic lead on the generic ballot has about doubled since April, which is as far back as the FiveThirtyEight generic ballot tracker goes. That’s in line with both historical trends of support for the president’s party declining the closer we get to a midterm and a president whose low job approval rating is wearing on his party. The bottom line is that although Republicans may see the national environment improve, there’s no reason to think it will. That’s bad news for them heading into 2018.

#### (b) we’ll answer every warrant

* a. underreporting: our polls take an average of polls like 538 does; Rasmussen is an inaccurate and overrates Trump – it’s a C+ poll at best
* b. economy: **not a causal relationship. Hunt 2/4**

Hunt, Albert R. “Voters Feel Good About the Economy, Not About Trump.” Bloomberg.com, Bloomberg, 4 Feb. 2018, www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2018-02-04/voters-feel-good-about-the-economy-not-about-trump. Albert R. Hunt is a Bloomberg View columnist. He was the executive editor of Bloomberg News, before which he was a reporter, bureau chief and executive Washington editor at the Wall Street Journal. //nhs-VA

It’s about the public’s optimistic view of the economy during the first year of Donald Trump’s presidency and the simultaneously pessimistic view of Trump himself. The contrast is striking. Polls show overwhelming satisfaction with the state of the economy, the most since the final three years of President Bill Clinton’s administration and the early months of the George W. Bush presidency. Investor and consumer confidence are on a roll. In January, the Dow Jones Industrial Average and S&P 500 index both rose by about 5 percent. Last week, the Conference Board reported that consumer confidence was nearing a 17-year high. At the same time, no president has had job-approval and personal-popularity ratings as low as Trump’s after one year in office. Polls show him to be much less admired personally at the same stage of his presidency than his two White House predecessors, Barack Obama and George W. Bush. His personal poll ratings also lag former Vice President Joe Biden’s and the 2012 Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney’s. “Like cars with good shock absorbers, presidents with personal popularity seem to take the bumps,” said Peter Hart, a Democratic pollster. For Trump, he said, “it can only be described as a year of personal alienation.” The president gets negative marks on integrity, temperament and knowledge. Trump’s ratings improved a bit last week after his State of the Union speech on Tuesday. He was an effective cheerleader for the tax cuts enacted in January, which he credited with improving the economy. As always with Trump, facts were a casualty: His claim that the economy has added 200,000 jobs a month since his election was 17 percent too high, with the real number actually lower than the number created in the same period in Obama’s final year. The economy did add 200,000 jobs in January, the Labor Department reported on Friday. The tax cut may have played a part, but it wasn’t, contrary to his boast, anywhere near the largest in history. He is far from the first president to make false claims or exaggerations in State of the Union speeches and lots of other venues. In touting the Affordable Care Act, for example, Obama claimed dozens of times that “if you like your health care plan, you can keep it.” That was false. But there’s no question about Obama’s basic respect for the truth. By contrast, no president has lied as often, as blatantly and as casually as Trump. He seems to believe that if you repeat a falsehood enough, many people will come to believe it. That may be a political strength. Many Republicans think of Trump as a super salesman, a P.T. Barnum of presidents. And the soaring public confidence in the economy gives people a rationale for turning a receptive ear to Trump’s exaggerated claims. The president’s supporters argue that more of these voters will come around. “It takes time for people to feel the good news in the economy,” said Andrew Surabian, a protege of Trump’s former strategist Steve Bannon and senior adviser to the pro-Trump Great American Alliance. “Over time, what he is doing will take full effect.” Democrats tend to disagree. The economy, they contend, has been strong since Trump took office, including during periods when Trump’s popularity was falling. The political pluses of the tax cuts are overrated, they contend, while the political perils of threatened cuts in Social Security and Medicare are real. They’re betting that most voters outside Trump’s loyalist base will not warm to his polarizing tactics and mean-spirited public pronouncements. Of course, the economy isn’t the only thing that will ultimately determine how Americans come to see Trump. A foreign crisis or the outcome of special counsel Robert Mueller’s investigation of possible links to Russian interference in the U.S. campaign could also have a strong impact. And let’s not forget that presidents have far less influence on economic ups and downs than many people tend to think — no White House has ever controlled the business cycle. The long recovery from the 2008 financial crisis can’t go on forever, so matter how sunny the outlook appears.

* c. Mueller – Trump polls increasing despite Mueller literally indicting 13 nationals; no ties to the election
* d. shutdown - **no long-term impact; if anything, it makes the GOP more dire for results. Enten 1/20**

Enten, Harry. “The Government Shutdown Effect: Big In The Short Term, Small After That.” FiveThirtyEight, FiveThirtyEight, 20 Jan. 2018, fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-government-shutdown-effect-big-in-the-short-term-small-after-that/. Harry Enten is a senior political writer and analyst for FiveThirtyEight. //nhs-VA

Indeed, prior shutdowns haven’t had long-term electoral implications. Republicans recovered on the generic ballot by February 1996, just a month after the final shutdown of that period ended. And in the elections later that year, they held onto their majorities in both the House and Senate. Clinton, meanwhile, recovered his lost support by March 1996. He would go on to easily win reelection later in 1996. Basically, America put the same people who shut the government down back in office. The 2013 shutdown tells the same story. Despite losing the blame game, Republicans jumped to a lead on the generic ballot by late November 2013 — their first of the year. In the 2014 midterms, they expanded their majority in the House and won back the Senate. Meanwhile, Obama continued a long-term decline in his approval ratings in the months following the 2013 shutdown, but recovered to his pre-shutdown approval level by April 2014. Obviously, we’re dealing with a very small sample size in terms of historical examples. We don’t have a ton of polling with which to examine the political effects of prior shutdowns. So, perhaps this shutdown will prove different. Americans list dissatisfaction with government as the most important problem facing the country. In such an environment, the government shutdown could, for example, be held up by Democrats during the midterm campaign as the ultimate demonstration of the inability of Republicans to get things done on an issue (DACA) that most Americans support. But your safest bet right now — at least until we get more polling as this story unfolds (or ends) — is that the long-term electoral effects of the shutdown will be minimal.

* e. mercurial Trump – this is terminally non-unique; nothing Trump can do will overwhelm a legislative win, but also Trump only focuses on the bill until the midterms instead of stupid diversionary tweets

#### 5 is no risk of a link – any risk that the plan is a good idea gives Trump a legislative win that he’ll tout until the midterms

#### 6 is no internal link – cross-apply above, any win takes away anti-incumbency anger that fuels midterm turnout

#### 7 is Mueller – house can trigger impeachment based on obstruction of justice charges; even if the Mueller investigation doesn’t come to fruition yet, we access a Nixon effect where massive amounts of subpoenas and GOP pressure pushes Trump to resign

Graham 17 --- luke, political reporter @ CNBC, CNBC, https://www.cnbc.com/2017/08/21/donald-trump-president-may-resign-over-tax-returns-if-democrats-win-in-2018.html

A Democrat win in 2018 could end the Trump presidency, says analyst A win for the Democrats in Congress next year would allow them to publish Donald Trump's tax returns, according to IHS Markit's John Raines If there is some damaging information in the returns, President Trump may decide to resign Tony Schwartz, the ghost-writer behind Trump's 'Art of the Deal', told CNN he predicts Trump will quit the job in months A win for the Democrats in Congress next year will cause problems for the Donald Trump administration that may even result in the president resigning from his post, a political risk analyst has suggested. "If the Democrats win in 2018 as far as the House of Representatives, they can then actually publish the tax returns of the president," John Raines, head of political risk at IHS Markit, told CNBC. "So is there something in those tax returns that could actually cause damage to the president? All of a sudden he feels compelled to do something like resign." If the Democrats gained a majority in Congress, they could take control of certain Congressional committees. Some of these committees have the power to request anyone's tax returns, including those belonging to the president. These committees could then share the returns with other members of the committee or make them public. The president's tax returns have been a hot button political issue since the election campaign, when Trump became the first major presidential candidate since the 1970s not to release his tax returns. The president claimed he could not release them because he was under audit by the IRS. Raines says there would have to be a major issue within the tax returns for the majority of the Republican Party to turn against him. "At this point, 80 to 85 percent of Republicans are still with this president. Republican congressmen, whether it be senators or house members, it's going to be very difficult for them to make that (decision on impeachment) unless there's some real smoking gun there." Raines added that the actual prospects of impeachment remain quite low at this point. Last week, U.K. betting firm Paddy Power cut odds on Trump to resign from office, after Tony Schwartz, the ghost-writer behind the president's memoir 'Art of the Deal', told CNN he predicts Trump will quit the job in months. He also said on Twitter that he would be "amazed" if the president lasts until the end of the year. Bookmaker Paddy Power said large amounts of money was being bet on odds of 6/4 that Trump will resign, forcing the company to cut the odds to even money (where the profit on the bet will be the same as the amount staked). "Tony Schwartz spent 18 months with Trump when helping ghost-write his memoir and while that must have been totally unbearable – it also means he knows The Donald pretty well," Paddy Power said in a press release on Friday. "After an awful week for the president that has seen other issues like North Korea pushed into the shadows it's no surprise punters are latching onto the fact Trump might call it a day."

#### 8 is polls untrustworthy – remember when debaters could beat midterms without cards???? Yeah me neither. Predictions this far out are very accurate – prefer math over their unwarranted theorizing

Enten 11/10 Senior political writer and analyst for FiveThirtyEight (Harry, There’s No Reason To Think Republicans Will Be In Better Shape A Year From Now, https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/theres-no-reason-to-think-republicans-will-be-in-better-shape-a-year-from-now/)

An ABC News/Washington Post poll and a separate CNN survey released this week both found Democrats leading Republicans by 11 percentage points on the generic ballot. That’s a big lead — the type of lead that results in wave elections like Tuesday’s. It’s also just a hair larger than the Democratic advantage in the FiveThirtyEight average of generic ballot polls. But the really bad news for Republicans: There’s a good chance they won’t be able to eat too much into that lead by the 2018 midterms. The generic congressional ballot, even more than a year before a midterm, has historically been quite predictive of what will eventually occur in the following year. It was predictive in April, and it’s even more predictive now. You can see this phenomenon in the chart below. The chart shows the margin by which the presidential party leads on the generic ballot in an average of polls in October a year before the midterm compared with the national House margin in the midterm election. Every midterm cycle since 1938 is included, with the exception of 1942 and 1990, for which we don’t have polling at this point in the cycle. The generic ballot polls a year from the election and the eventual House results are strongly correlated (+0.90). Importantly, past elections suggest that any big movement on the generic ballot from this point to the midterm tends to go against the president’s party. That movement explains why the Democrats lost ground in 2010 and 2014 in the generic ballot polls when they controlled the White House, while they maintained their lead in 2006 when Republicans held the White House. (With a similar set of data, I used the generic ballot to forecast Democratic problems early on in the 2010 cycle.) Indeed, recent election outcomes show that Republicans should be worried about what the generic ballot is showing. The results in Tuesday’s gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey were called perfectly by the generic ballot once we control for the partisan lean of each state. The special election results this year have also been in line with a big Democratic lead on the generic ballot. Still, we are a year from the midterms. The generic ballot estimate at this point, while good, has not been a perfect predictor of the following year’s House results even after controlling for which party holds the presidency. Given these occasional past errors, it is certainly plausible that Republicans could keep the actual deficit in their national House margin down to just a few percentage points instead of the 8 or 9 points they’re down now. Losing by only a few points nationally would likely be enough for them to hold onto the House. On the other hand, there’s no reason to think that Republicans will be in any better shape nationally a year from now. The Democratic lead on the generic ballot has about doubled since April, which is as far back as the FiveThirtyEight generic ballot tracker goes. That’s in line with both historical trends of support for the president’s party declining the closer we get to a midterm and a president whose low job approval rating is wearing on his party. The bottom line is that although Republicans may see the national environment improve, there’s no reason to think it will. That’s bad news for them heading into 2018.

#### 9 is impeachment illegal – cross-apply the Mueller (7) answers

#### 10 is GOP blocks – (a) cross-apply the Nixon effect (b) Shelbourne ev indicates GOP boots Trump if they lose the house since Pence becomes a more viable candidate in 2020

#### 11 is Dem lead shrinking – (a) shrinking lead doesn’t indicate GOP maintains control (b) Dems have a 6-seat margin – that’s what gets tossed out after the plan (c) Dems just won another special election; empirics outweigh polls – they’re better predictors for future results. Cameron 2/14

Joseph, Cameron. “Dems Keep Special Election Hot Streak Alive, Winning GOP-Leaning Florida Seat.” Talking Points Memo, 14 Feb. 2018, talkingpointsmemo.com/dc/dems-keep-special-election-hot-streak-alive-winning-gop-leaning-florida-seat. Cameron Joseph is Talking Points Memo's senior political correspondent based in Washington, D.C. He covers Capitol Hill, the White House and the permanent campaign. Previous publications include the New York Daily News, Mashable, The Hill and National Journal. //nhs-VA

Democrats won another hotly contested statehouse seat on Tuesday night, capturing a district on Florida’s Gulf Coast for their 36th state legislative seat flip of the Trump era. Democrat Margaret Good defeated James Buchanan, the son of wealthy Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-FL), by a seven-point margin in a suburban Sarasota-based district President Trump carried by almost five points. The win is the latest for Democrats, who’ve captured Trump-leaning territory across the country, from Wisconsin to New Hampshire to Missouri to Virginia to Washington. And the 12-point shift towards Democrats in this contest is right in line with the average shift that’s occurred in statehouse races across the country towards Democrats since the 2016 elections. Democrats took another victory lap. “Representative-elect Margaret Good’s campaign was dedicated to the people of Sarasota County who are tired of Florida Republicans peddling a Trump agenda counter to their values,” Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee head Jessica Good said in a statement. These wins show how committed Democrats are to turning out against Trump right now across the country, a factor that’s unlikely to change before this November’s midterm elections and a sign that at least one of the factors for a large wave election is firmly in place. And while this suburban seat isn’t as deep red as some others — a Democrat won it in 2006 and President Obama nearly won the county in 2008 — it’s a sign that Democrats can expand the map to areas they haven’t been able to compete in since those wave elections. This race was highly targeted by both parties, with heavy spending on both sides, an endorsement from Vice President Biden and a visit from former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski in the election’s closing days.

#### 12 is popularity doesn’t matter – the warrant in this card is government shutdown; we’ll shut this argument down: no long-term impact; if anything, it makes the GOP more dire for results. Enten 1/20

Enten, Harry. “The Government Shutdown Effect: Big In The Short Term, Small After That.” FiveThirtyEight, FiveThirtyEight, 20 Jan. 2018, fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-government-shutdown-effect-big-in-the-short-term-small-after-that/. Harry Enten is a senior political writer and analyst for FiveThirtyEight. //nhs-VA

Indeed, prior shutdowns haven’t had long-term electoral implications. Republicans recovered on the generic ballot by February 1996, just a month after the final shutdown of that period ended. And in the elections later that year, they held onto their majorities in both the House and Senate. Clinton, meanwhile, recovered his lost support by March 1996. He would go on to easily win reelection later in 1996. Basically, America put the same people who shut the government down back in office. The 2013 shutdown tells the same story. Despite losing the blame game, Republicans jumped to a lead on the generic ballot by late November 2013 — their first of the year. In the 2014 midterms, they expanded their majority in the House and won back the Senate. Meanwhile, Obama continued a long-term decline in his approval ratings in the months following the 2013 shutdown, but recovered to his pre-shutdown approval level by April 2014. Obviously, we’re dealing with a very small sample size in terms of historical examples. We don’t have a ton of polling with which to examine the political effects of prior shutdowns. So, perhaps this shutdown will prove different. Americans list dissatisfaction with government as the most important problem facing the country. In such an environment, the government shutdown could, for example, be held up by Democrats during the midterm campaign as the ultimate demonstration of the inability of Republicans to get things done on an issue (DACA) that most Americans support. But your safest bet right now — at least until we get more polling as this story unfolds (or ends) — is that the long-term electoral effects of the shutdown will be minimal.

## Impacts

### AT: Civil War

#### No civil war – extremist groups don’t represent the majority. Walker 8/20

Walker, Jesse. “Are We Headed for a Second Civil War? – LA Times.” Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles Times, 20 Aug. 2017, www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-walker-second-civil-war-20170820-story.html. Jesse Walker (born September 4, 1970) is books editor of Reason magazine.[1] The University of Michigan alumnus has written the books The United States of Paranoia: A Conspiracy Theory (HarperCollins, 2013) and Rebels on the Air: An Alternative History of Radio in America (NYU Press, 2001), and he maintains a blog called The Perpetual Three-Dot Column. //nhs-VA

But that’s an optical illusion. The polarization between alt-right fascists and antifa leftists is not the same as the polarization between Republicans and Democrats. It isn’t even the same, though there is more overlap, as the polarization between the people at a Trump rally and the protesters outside. (For all the much-publicized moments of violence in last year’s presidential campaign, the vast majority of both the pro- and anti-Trump crowds were peaceful.) The division between ordinary Republicans and Democrats has itself been overstated. Stanford political scientist Morris Fiorina has argued compellingly that the rise in red/blue polarization is mostly limited to the political class: politicians, activists, donors and the like. In those cases, he wrote in a paper published last year by the Hoover Institution, surveys and other data “capture our intuitive understanding of the concept of polarization: the middle loses to the extremes.” But the political class is pretty small — about 15% of the country, Fiorina estimates. Outside that world, people tend to hold a patchwork of beliefs that don’t always fit easily into categories like “conservative” and “liberal.” It is not at all unusual for public opinion to simultaneously shift leftward on one issue (say, health insurance) and rightward on another (guns). Those red/blue maps may seem to show a nation divided against itself, but by using just two colors, they obscure an enormous variety of opinion. And while the country is filled with reliable Republican and Democratic voters, much of that reliability reflects what political scientists call “negative partisanship.” Put simply, that means their votes are driven less by love for one party than by fear and hatred of the other one. In the last election, a large share of Donald Trump’s support came from people who did not like him but found the prospect of a President Hillary Clinton more terrifying; much of Clinton’s support came from people whose position was the exact opposite. The atmosphere that produces negative partisanship can fuel a paranoid loathing of the other party’s members. In its most concentrated form, it can drive people to aggressive violence. This is the sort of ill feeling that pundits invoke when they talk about a new civil war. But that atmosphere also means that the two purportedly warring sides don’t command as much loyalty as those red/blue maps imply. Think back to last year’s election again. Both of the big parties were shaken by insurgent candidates, and one was unable to block the insurgent from winning. With both major parties picking their least popular nominees in recent memory, third-party and independent candidates had their strongest showings since Ross Perot’s campaigns. And this time, unlike in Perot’s day, the third-party vote wasn’t dominated by one popular personality.

### AT: Zenko

#### Non-unique: Syria strikes literally yesterday

#### No diversionary war – only external crises generate the impetus for war.

Clarke-Wellsmore 7/21/17 (Declan Clarke-Wellsmore, Australian National University, “Will Trump Start a War to Distract Away From The Russia Scandal?”, https://www.tremr.com/deccw/will-trump-start-a-war-to-distract-away-from-the-russia-scandal)

Key proponents of the Diversionary War Theory have gone as far as to say World War One was an effort of European Statesmen to stave-off their domestic social and political problems. Some even suggest that German foreign policy after 1987 must be understood as a response to the internal threat of socialism and democracy. Others claim that political conflicts once initiated, were escalated to war largely for domestic considerations. Jack levy, in his Critique of Diversionary War Theory, argues that the Theory fails to distinguish the difference between two key processes: “(1) the externalization of internal conflict, in which internal conflicts having causal impact on external conflicts…” – the prediction of the Diversionary War Theory. “(2) the internalization of external conflict, in which independently generated external conflict has a causal impact on internal conflict.” In more simple terms, Diversionary War Theory cannot reconcile how war may cause domestic strife rather than vice-versa. This is best exemplified in the long championed purported as evidence in support of Diversionary War Theory: The Falkland Conflict. Prior to the war in April of 1982, Argentina and the UK negotiated over the Falklands for more than a decade and in 1982, the 150th anniversary of the British seizure of the Islands fast approached. Professor of Political Science David A. Welch argues that this created a powerful but artificial deadline in the psyche of the Argentine leaders. The military Junta of Leopoldo Galtieri, Admiral Jorge Anaya, and Brigadier Basilio Lami Dozo came to power in March 1976. A condition of Admiral Jorge Anaya’s support for Galtieri’s presidential bid was the seizure of the Falklands. Due to a high level of interpersonal cohesion within the Junta, the three key power brokers shared the sentiment for the reclamation of the Falklands. The artificial deadline along with political sentiment created a crisis for the Junta, arbitrarily limiting the available time for a diplomatic solution. The Junta further undermined a diplomatic solution as it perceived the recent ‘South Georgia Incident’ as British aggression. Galtieri later argued that the decision to invade the Falklands “has to be put in the larger context of Britain pushing Argentina up against a wall,” referring to the diplomatic conundrum of appeasement versus demonstrating resolve. Welch argues that as diplomacy was eroded and tensions rose, the Junta began to rationalise military action and concluded that a UK military response to an invasion was unlikely. They believed that: the international community would side with Argentina, the physical distance created considerable logistical obstacle, Margaret Thatcher was politically unwilling, and if Thatcher considered a military response they believed the United States would restrain her. The final key actor t0 influence the Junta’s decision to invade was Costa Mendez. Mendez cited the Suez and Rhodesian crises as historical precedents of the UK’s aversion to military intervention. Some scholars assert that the motivation to invade was indeed rational, citing the domestic situation in Argentina and arguing the case for the Diversionary Theory. Inability to Reconcile Internalization of External Conflict - the Framework: The external conflict -Britain’s 1840 colonisation of the Falklands. The internationalisation of the external conflict - Leopoldo Galtieri, Admiral Jorge Anaya, and Brigadier Basilio shared a sentiment to retake the islands. Furthermore, given Galtieri’s sentiment about ‘being up against a wall’, a self-imposed deadline, and the chronology of diplomatic decay, the Diversionary War Theory has little explanatory power. The Junta’s original invasion plan further challenges Diversionary War theory. The plan for the Falklands was to carry out a bloodless occupation and then place the islands under international control until and an agreement could be made with the UK. After the invasion was carried out, news of the occupation broke causing public celebration in support of Galtieri. However, this also caused Galtieri to deviate from the plan and refuse to withdraw, as the occupation had turned Galtieri’s critics into his supporters. The self-imposed deadline was an attempt to avoid the shame of 150 years of British occupation, and the public celebrations of the initial invasion reaffirmed this. The causal mechanism for Galtieri to hold onto the Islands – a move that led to war – was not domestic political disillusionment with the Junta, it was satisfaction and support for the Junta. The British reason for joining the war is a topic for another article, suffice to say there is significant evidence to demonstrate that Britain did not engage in a diversionary war either. A Trump War? The Diversionary War Theory is flawed and in a contemporary setting it has little utility. The theory seldom withstands nuanced case study analysis. While a war may achieve diversionary goals, these goals are a symptom or a secondary consideration, not the cause of a war. In predicting whether a leader will take a country to war, the primary consideration is external influences. Internal domestic politics may be a secondary consideration or an after though but are not the causal mechanism for war. Trump may start a war…. However, Trump will not start a diversionary war because contemporary wars are not caused by a will to divert public attention away from domestic issues.

#### Already perceived credible impeachment threats but he just reacts by being a dumbass and tweeting----not diversionary war

Sherman 11/1 (Gabriel, special correspondent for Vanity Fair. Most recently, Sherman served as national-affairs editor at New York magazine, and he is a regular contributor to NBC News and MSNBC. ““YOU CAN’T GO ANY LOWER”: INSIDE THE WEST WING, TRUMP IS APOPLECTIC AS ALLIES FEAR IMPEACHMENT” https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2017/11/the-west-wing-trump-is-apoplectic-as-allies-fear-impeachment )

Until now, Robert Mueller has haunted Donald Trump’s White House as a hovering, mostly unseen menace. But by securing indictments of Paul Manafort and Rick Gates, and a surprise guilty plea from foreign policy adviser George Papadopoulos, Mueller announced loudly that the Russia investigation poses an existential threat to the president. “Here’s what Manafort’s indictment tells me: Mueller is going to go over every financial dealing of Jared Kushner and the Trump Organization,” said former Trump campaign aide Sam Nunberg. “Trump is at 33 percent in Gallup. You can’t go any lower. He’s fucked.” The first charges in the Mueller probe have kindled talk of what the endgame for Trump looks like, according to conversations with a half-dozen advisers and friends of the president. For the first time since the investigation began, the prospect of impeachment is being considered as a realistic outcome and not just a liberal fever dream. According to a source, advisers in the West Wing are on edge and doing whatever they can not to be ensnared. One person close to Dina Powell and Gary Cohn said they’re making sure to leave rooms if the subject of Russia comes up. The consensus among the advisers I spoke to is that Trump faces few good options to thwart Mueller. For one, firing Mueller would cross a red line, analogous to Nixon’s firing of Archibald Cox during Watergate, pushing establishment Republicans to entertain the possibility of impeachment. “His options are limited, and his instinct is to come out swinging, which won’t help things,” said a prominent Republican close to the White House. Trump, meanwhile, has reacted to the deteriorating situation by lashing out on Twitter and venting in private to friends. He’s frustrated that the investigation seems to have no end in sight. “Trump wants to be critical of Mueller,” one person who’s been briefed on Trump’s thinking says. “He thinks it’s unfair criticism. Clinton hasn’t gotten anything like this. And what about Tony Podesta? Trump is like, When is that going to end?” According to two sources, Trump has complained to advisers about his legal team for letting the Mueller probe progress this far. Speaking to Steve Bannon on Tuesday, Trump blamed Jared Kushner for his role in decisions, specifically the firings of Mike Flynn and James Comey, that led to Mueller’s appointment, according to a source briefed on the call. When Roger Stone recently told Trump that Kushner was giving him bad political advice, Trump agreed, according to someone familiar with the conversation. “Jared is the worst political adviser in the White House in modern history,” Nunberg said. “I’m only saying publicly what everyone says behind the scenes at Fox News, in conservative media, and the Senate and Congress.” (The White House didn’t respond to a request for comment by deadline.) As Mueller moves to interview West Wing aides in the coming days, advisers are lobbying for Trump to consider a range of stratagems to neutralize Mueller, from conciliation to a declaration of all-out war. One Republican explained Trump’s best chance for survival is to get his poll numbers up. Trump’s lawyer Ty Cobb has been advocating the view that playing ball will lead to a quick resolution (Cobb did not respond to a request for comment). But these soft-power approaches are being criticized by Trump allies including Steve Bannon and Roger Stone, who both believe establishment Republicans are waiting for a chance to impeach Trump. “The establishment has proven time and time again they will fuck Trump over,” a Bannon ally told me. In a series of phone calls with Trump on Monday and Tuesday, Bannon told the president to shake up the legal team by installing an aggressive lawyer above Cobb, according to two sources briefed on the call. Bannon has also discussed ways to pressure Congress to defund Mueller’s investigation or limit its scope. “Mueller shouldn’t be allowed to be a clean shot on goal,” a Bannon confidant told me. “He must be contested and checked. Right now he has unchecked power.” Bannon’s sense of urgency is being fueled by his belief that Trump’s hold on power is slipping. The collapse of Obamacare repeal, and the dimming chances that tax reform will pass soon—many Trump allies are deeply pessimistic about its prospects—have created the political climate for establishment Republicans to turn on Trump. Two weeks ago, according to a source, Bannon did a spitball analysis of the Cabinet to see which members would remain loyal to Trump in the event the 25th Amendment were invoked, thereby triggering a vote to remove the president from office. Bannon recently told people he’s not sure if Trump would survive such a vote. “One thing Steve wants Trump to do is take this more seriously,” the Bannon confidant told me. “Stop joking around. Stop tweeting.” Roger Stone believes defunding Mueller isn’t enough. Instead, Stone wants Trump to call for a special prosecutor to investigate Hillary Clinton’s role in approving the controversial Uranium One deal that’s been a locus of rightwing hysteria (the transaction involved a Russian state-owned energy firm acquiring a Canadian mining company that controlled a large subset of the uranium in the United States). It’s a bit of a bank shot, but as Stone described it, a special prosecutor looking into Uranium One would also have to investigate the F.B.I.’s role in approving the deal, thereby making Mueller—who was in charge of the bureau at the time—a target. Stone’s choice for a special prosecutor: Rudy Giuliani law colleague Marc Mukasey or Fox News pundit Andrew Napolitano. “You would immediately have to inform Mueller, Comey, and [Deputy Attorney General] Rod Rosenstein that they are under federal investigation,” Stone said. “Trump can’t afford to fire Mueller politically. But this pushes him aside.”

#### Zenko ev proves our argument---it says academic findings can’t confirm the impact turn and its just as likely that some shit like scandals or low polls trigger lashout which means impeachment is the only option

Micah Zenko 17, senior fellow with the Center for Preventive Action at the Council on Foreign Relations, 6/6/17, “Trump’s Russia Scandal Is Already Swallowing His Foreign Policy,” http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/06/trumps-russia-scandal-is-already-swallowing-his-foreign-policy/

Which brings us to Donald Trump. America, and much of the world, is understandably fascinated with the circus of leaks, self-sabotage, and scandal currently emanating from the White House. The past 24 hours has brought a number of explosive revelations about the Russian interference in the election, and Washington is eagerly awaiting former FBI Director James Comey’s Thursday testimony. But Trump is likely to remain in the Oval Office at least until the various investigations into allegations of his presidential campaign’s cooperation with Russia are completed; if history is any indication, together these should take two or three years to finish. That’s long enough for important foreign policies to be devised and implemented (or not) and unforeseen crises to force Trump to respond (or not). If you follow international relations and are interested in America’s role in the world, you’d be wise to divert your gaze from the daily headlines and reckon more seriously with Trump’s foreign-policy agenda. But you should also note that agenda won’t be static relative to the scandals that are engulfing his administration. In 1973, Anthony Lake and Leslie H. Gelb wrote a fascinating essay for this magazine titled “Watergate and Foreign Policy,” which outlined all the ways that scandal would influence Nixon’s foreign policy. Much of what they warned about happened, and all of it applies today. Because Trump will have less time to focus on pursuing his foreign-policy agenda, the foreign-policy bureaucracy will have incentive to be more resistant than usual to dictates from Trump-appointed leaders, while bureaucratic entrepreneurs will have an invitation to expand their power and influence (as Henry Kissinger did under Nixon). Meanwhile, congressional Republicans, sensing the White House’s weakness, will be less likely to approve funding for Trump’s pet foreign-policy projects, like a 350-ship Navy or a border wall with Mexico. And foreign allies and partners, if they believe Trump is unlikely to serve out his entire term, will be less willing to support Trump’s specific diplomatic goals Consider an issue at the center of Trump’s present diplomatic agenda: North Korea. The most alarming and potentially consequential foreign-policy change since Jan. 20 has been the Trump administration’s rhetorical approach to North Korea. After promising that the administration would “have no further comment,” senior officials made a series of escalatory demands on Kim Jong Un’s nuclear and missile programs and imposed a timeline for action on the United States by declaring “the clock has now run out” and “this problem is coming to a head.” While telegraphing its desire to instigate a crisis with North Korea, the Trump administration has publicly articulated no plan or theory of success for how the “denuclearization” of the Korean Peninsula actually happens. And in conversations with White House, Pentagon, and State Department officials and staffers about North Korea, I have heard nothing that indicates such a plan exists. The default course of action — tried unsuccessfully by the last two presidents — is to further lean on Beijing to further lean on Pyongyang. This will not work. Two weeks ago, I was fortunate to attend a workshop in Beijing, where a well-connected Chinese foreign-policy scholar stated bluntly: “You have to understand, China is more afraid of the United States than it is of North Korea.” He further indicated that China’s leaders prefer the status quo of a nuclear-armed North Korea over working with the United States to further destabilize, or even topple, the Kim regime. When China inevitably refuses to coerce North Korea as strongly, or on the timeline, that the Trump administration demands, then what? If the White House believes that North Korea has even a 10 or 20 percent probability of being able to successfully launch an intercontinental ballistic missile mated with a nuclear warhead onto the United States, I believe that Trump would authorize a preemptive attack against the missile-launch site (assuming it is an easily observable, liquid-fueled missile) and perhaps against known nuclear weapons-related facilities. Military officials, including Adm. Harry Harris, commander of the U.S. forces in the Pacific, have acknowledged that Kim would not simply absorb such an attack but would immediately retaliate against South Korea. This would trigger America’s mutual defense treaty commitments to defend South Korea and spark a series of classified, pre-planned U.S.-South Korean military operations. When the Pentagon reviewed some version of this scenario in 1994 (before North Korea had a nuclear arsenal of at least a dozen bombs), it was estimated that such a retaliation could “cause hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of casualties.” But a President Trump facing ever-expanding scandals, continually low polling numbers, and even potential impeachment proceedings may decide that a preemptive attack on North Korea is worth the costs and consequences. The academic findings are mixed on whether heads of government facing domestic vulnerability engage in such diversionary wars — uses of force to divert public attention and rally support for their leadership. Some analysts and scholars have examined whether George H.W. Bush’s 1989 invasion of Panama or Bill Clinton’s attacks on al Qaeda targets and Iraq in 1998 were examples of such diversionary tactics. What seems clear, however, is that presidents are more likely to engage in such diversions when they are inherently distrustful and perceive the world in simplistic black-and-white terms — a perfect characterization of Trump.

### AT: Pence Worse

#### Pence resolves foreign policy crises—he’s sane.

McManus 5-21 Doyle. Reporter for the LA Times. "Should We Wish for a President Pence?" Los Angeles Times. Los Angeles Times, 21 May 2017. Web. 16 Oct. 2017. DLuo

And the answer should be straightforward. Pence would be an improvement on grounds of simple competence. He would make the country safer. Under a President Pence, Americans would have less cause to fear that a blundering president might lead us into war with North Korea or Iran. Progressives would find almost nothing to like in Pence’s domestic policies. There’s no sugarcoating that. He would be the most conservative president of modern times — easily more conservative than Trump, more even than Ronald Reagan, the right’s patron saint. His economic views are in line with orthodox Republicanism: lower taxes, smaller government, fewer regulations. Pence’s positions on social issues spring from Christian conservatism: He’s fiercely opposed to abortion, gay marriage and almost any expansion of rights for gays, lesbians and transgender people. Despite all that, unlike the president, he has read the Constitution and understands its meaning. He would be less likely than Trump to try to pressure the FBI to drop an investigation, to take one example. He has even defended freedom of the press. He was coauthor of a bill to protect journalists from being compelled to identify their sources, and he founded a bipartisan press freedom caucus — along with, of all people, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Glendale), now one of the top congressional investigators pursuing Trump. “He’s a person of real integrity,” said Rick Boucher, a former House member from Virginia who was the Democratic coauthor of the bill to shield journalists. “He’s very conservative, especially on social issues. But he does have respect on the other side of the aisle. He’s very serious about public policy, and willing to work with Democrats where there’s common purpose.” (That doesn’t mean Boucher is ready to endorse his old colleague for president. “I was a strong Obama supporter,” he said. “I won’t sleep easy until there’s a Democrat in the White House.”) To be sure, Pence already has questions to answer about his short tenure as vice president. After Trump fired FBI Director James B. Comey, Pence vigorously parroted the White House’s initial explanation that Comey was cashiered based on a recommendation from the Justice Department. That wasn’t true — and Pence may have known it wasn’t true at the time. Pence has also maintained that he didn’t know Trump’s first national security advisor, Michael T. Flynn, was under investigation by the FBI when he was appointed. That denial may turn out to be true. Even though Pence was formally the chairman of Trump’s transition, he wasn’t in the president-elect’s inner circle when the initial staffing decisions were made. There’s plenty of evidence that even now, Trump aides spend much of their time hiding important facts from each other. In any case, the FBI’s investigation of Flynn is likely to bring any discrepancies to light. (In which case: President Paul Ryan? That’s a matter for another column.) As a matter of pure politics, it’s impossible to predict whether a President Pence could improve GOP prospects in the 2018 congressional election or win reelection himself in 2020. But Pence represents a slice of his own party, the social conservative right, which has never won a presidential nomination, let alone a general election. (George W. Bush ran with their support, as did Mitt Romney, but neither was as rooted among social conservatives as Pence.) He’d have a lot of work to expand his appeal beyond the GOP base, to attract independent Trump loyalists who might blame him for their man’s downfall, or spurn him as the kind of establishment politician they abhor. And, if he were to become president, he’d come under immediate pressure from those Trump loyalists to pardon his predecessor for any crimes committed in office or during the campaign. The last time that happened, when Gerald Ford pardoned Richard M. Nixon in 1974, it left the new president vulnerable to a Democratic challenger. It’s tempting, of course, for partisan Democrats to say: Let Republicans continue to struggle in the mess Trump makes. Why give them a chance to right their ship? The worse the better. But that ignores the risks that would come from allowing Trump to continue exercising the powers of the presidency in both law enforcement and foreign policy. For the next three years, given the limited alternatives, I’d opt for President Pence — the sooner the better.

#### Trump’s implementing his agenda through XOs- same or worse than Pence.

Wright 10-13 Jennifer. Contributor at bazaar, author of “Get Well Soon: History's Worst Plagues and the Heroes That Fought Them “ "No, Pence Will Not Be Worse than Trump." Harper's BAZAAR. Harper's BAZAAR, 13 Oct. 2017. Web. 16 Oct. 2017. DLuo

Every so often I tell someone that, in light of the catastrophic events surrounding the White House, I am very tentatively optimistic that Trump might resign a year or so down the road. This might happen, at least, if a great deal of forces come together to work towards that end. This person always replies, “Yeah, but Pence will be worse. At least Trump is ineffective” I have heard this so often that it’s become the new “I can’t vote for the lesser of two evils.” Which is to say, it is the reply of people who are comfortable letting the world burn if they can’t get precisely what they want. Because the world is already burning. If you think Trump isn’t getting stuff done, you’re not paying attention. At all. If you look at the small things—and not just at Trump’s outlandish claims like building a wildly impractical transparent wall—every day this administration is making nightmares happen. If you fear Mike Pence because he might take away women’s rights, well, Trump’s global gag rule is destroying healthcare for women around the world. If you fear Pence because he seems anti-science, as of June 30 the science division of the White House is no longer staffed. If you fear Pence because he believes that climate change is somehow a partisan issue, well, we’ve already pulled out of the Paris Accord. If you fear Pence because he has a zero percent rating from the Human Rights Campaign on supporting LGBTQ issues, the Trump administration has already rescinded Obama’s executive order mandating federal contractors comply with anti-discrimination laws. If you fear Pence because you think he’ll make us all wear those Handmaid’s Taleoutfits, women in the White House are already having to adjust their attire. Everything terrible you can imagine happening under Pence is already happening. If Trump seems ineffective, that’s just because he spends his days tweeting stupid, misogynistic statements. That is, when he’s not retweeting sentiments from outright racists. Certainly it is not ideal to have a President who is merely polite, as Pence seems to be. Politeness should hardly be a quality worth remarking upon at all in a public official, except when the alternative is having a President who is almost gleefully offensive. Because the alternative is very bad. America isn’t a nation like England. We don’t have a moral figurehead that stands for the values of the country regardless of the government in power—the way Queen Elizabeth did when she vowed in June to defend the rights of the LGBTQ community in England and declined to meet with Trump. We have the President. When we teach our children how to behave—when we tell them that one day they could grow up to be President—we tell them to look at the President as a role model. Each day that passes where Donald Trump retweets a racist comment or says something retrograde to a foreign leader’s wife is a day when more Americans grow up feeling those are permissible behaviors. Being Able To Say Offensive Stuff Again might as well have been Trump’s campaign slogan. He promised a certain kind of privileged person that they could go through life saying whatever they wanted—however offensive—with no repercussions or apologies. Trump’s not going to be a killjoy who tells you that, no, you can’t just yell “I wanna grab your tits” at a woman, or that you can’t say “I don’t like black people,” or any of the other things that these PC snowflakes who refuse to understand that you’re just kidding around might say. And doesn’t that seem fun, to be able to be offensive whenever you want? Doesn’t that seem like an enticing promise? Or an enticing promise so long as you’re white and male (or at least a conventionally attractive female) and straight and cisgender and able-bodied and want to be able to make fun of everyone who isn’t, without someone criticizing you? Without anyone pointing out that perhaps, just perhaps, you are punching down in the manner of a very bad person? That perhaps you are behaving, say, deplorably? Yes. It does. Finally. A President who will make no demands on Americans to be polite, moral, upstanding people whatsoever. This ignores the fact that the people this most appeals to are the very Americans who need a leader to push them to be polite, moral, upstanding people. If the President is supposed to act as the Father of the American people, well, Trump is the kind of “fun dad” who would let his ten-year-old drink beer. Which is to say, a shitty father. Every day, the Overton window that dictates what is acceptable to say gets pushed a little more to the right. If we continue down this path, it’s going to get worse. It’s going to become acceptable once again for men to dictate how women are supposed to appear (as when Trump declared that he wanted women at the White House to “dress like women”). We’re going to see more people in power discriminate openly against those of other religions, like the Michigan official who called for the killing of “every last Muslim” last week and who, in typical Trump-ian fashion, refused to apologize for doing so. We’ll see white men consider it a violation of free speech if they can’t make hundreds of thousands of dollars by saying hateful things about those who are not white men. "Using a position of power to diminish the quality of life of private individuals who have opposed you is what dictators do." ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW Hell, not so long ago, the President’s son confused two black congresswomen while trying to compare one of them to a stripper. That’s the same President whose son seems to have colluded with Russia. That’s a reminder that these aren’t merely people who have social capital. Trump and his cohorts have bona fide power. Trump is a man whose attitudes have begun to undermine the institutions that make for a free country. When the President is on Twitter yelling at private citizens—from Mika Brzezinski to Chelsea Clinton—he is seemingly unaware that it is the President’s duty to try to insure the wellbeing of all Americans. That includes those who dislike him. It definitely would not be appropriate for him to turn his hoards of enthusiastic followers on a private individual by shouting at them in public. That’s terrifying. Yet Trump tweets at these people because he, the most powerful man in the world, wants to make life worse for a private woman who hosts a morning talk show in his country. Using a position of power to diminish the quality of life of private individuals who have opposed you is what dictators do. That’s not just distasteful behavior, that’s terrifying. Individual citizens shouldn’t live in fear of speaking out against the government in power. But instead of noticing that this is just flat out the behavior of a dictator, people have begun making excuses about how he has to fight back against those “bullying” him. What Trump seems to spend most of his time “fighting” against is the free press. The press about whom Thomas Jefferson wrote to George Washington in 1792, “No Government ought to be without censors, and, where the press is free, no one ever will. If [the government is] virtuous, it need not fear the fair operation of attack and defense… I think it is as honorable to the government neither to know nor notice its sycophants or censors, as it would be undignified and criminal to pamper the former and persecute the latter.” When Trump yells about how everything that is not favorable news is “Fake News” and tweets out videos of himself beating up a man wearing a CNN logo, alongside the hashtags #FraudNewsCNN and #FNN, he is attempting to damage the network’s reputation. So, that would fall under the category of a person in government attempting to persecute the latter. Though of course, that pales in comparison to Trump standing with Putin, a man who Trump previously said he condemned for “killing journalists” and laughing about journalists hurting him. Just in case you missed it, at a Press Conference, Putin pointed to journalists and asked Trump “are these the ones hurting you?” and Trump replied, “these are the ones.” He’s saying that about the free press to a man he thinks kills journalists. That is menacing in a way that seems almost surreal. This is not how someone who wants to be the leader of the “free world” behaves. It’s how dictators in countries who have extremely limited press behave. To ignore this stuff, you have to be really, really stupid. No wonder Trump said, “I love the poorly educated.” Which may be why organizations and people associated with the GOP, like NRA leader Wayne La Pierre, are claiming that “Academic, political, media elites are ‘America’s greatest domestic threats.'" You know who “academic elites” are? Students getting a PhD in French poetry. Intellectuals are not threatening to anyone who does not want to enact a terrifying, authoritarian regime in a country. Historically, they are very threatening to those people. In most of those regimes, intellectuals are the first to go. One of Lenin’s first acts was to deport 200 prominent intellectuals on “Philosopher’s Ships.” The Khmer Rouge killed individuals who even looked smart insofar as they wore glasses, as well as those who could speak a foreign language. “The Night of the Long Batons” kicked off the dictator General Juan Carlos Onganía’s regime in Argentina in 1966. The batons were used to beat academics as they were thrown out of facilities, and had their libraries and laboratories destroyed. When people in power start saying they don’t like well-read people, you should be terrified. "I don’t believe Mike Pence will behave like a dictator. That doesn’t mean I like him." The only regimes that are interested in keeping their populace uneducated are very bad regimes. They are regimes that want a gullible populace. They want them gullible so they can rule them and exploit them absolutely. And it’s working. Today, the majority of Republicans believe that college is bad for America. In 2015, 54 percent of Republicans thought higher education was good for the country. Today, 58 percent believe they are bad. It’s been two years. That much of a shift shouldn’t have happened in two years. Those Trump fans who love quoting the founding Fathers seem to have missed George Washington’s statement that America ought to, “Promote then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.” This current shift may have something to do with Trump’s personal Pravda, Fox News, deriding “elite universities” for being “bastions of political correctness.” “Political correctness” is becoming a term invoked to shut down anyone who expresses disagreement with Trump’s strong-man attitudes. On CBS last Sunday, Stephen Miller declared that “our opponents, the media and the whole world will soon see as we begin to take further actions, that the powers of our President to protect our country are very substantial and will not be questioned.” Right. “Will not be questioned.” You want to keep Trump around to find out what the “further actions” are? Because every day under Trump is a day when Kellyanne Conway seems more likely to shout “Ignorance is Strength.” Worries about Trump becoming an autocrat aren’t far fetched when he’s already behaving like one and palling around with them. And he hasn’t even been President a year. So that’s what we have to look forward to under Trump. I don’t believe Mike Pence will behave like a dictator. That doesn’t mean I like him. I think he has a host of views that range from horrifying—like his record on LBGTQ rights and reproductive rights—to hilariously weird, like claiming that the Disney film Mulan was a liberal conspiracy to get more women in the military . However, he’s also a man who seems able to respond to his opponents like a conventional American politician. When people began making fun of Pence on Twitter for touching NASA hardware clearly labeled “do not touch” he jokingly tweeted back “Marco Rubio dared me to do it.” That is a nice little joke. You know who could never make that nice little joke? Donald Trump, who has claimed, “We don’t make mistakes.” That kind of insane pronouncement means that, when Donald Trump presumably accidentally typed “covfefe” into Twitter, his supporters had to go around claiming he was talking in code. Getting back to a point where a President can admit his own fallibility—where he can laugh about messing up—is at least a step in the normal direction. Everything seems to indicate that Mike Pence has a tolerance for dissent that is vastly greater than Trump’s. When Mike Pence went to Hamilton the audience booed him. The cast read a message to him that stated, “We, sir, we are the diverse America who are alarmed and anxious that your new administration will not protect us, our planet, our children, our parents, or defend us and uphold our inalienable rights, sir. But we truly hope this show has inspired you to uphold our American values and work on behalf of all of us.” Donald Trump responded by tweeting about what a bad show Hamilton was four times, and referred to the audience’s behavior as “harassment," claiming that “The cast and producers of Hamilton, which I hear is highly overrated, should immediately apologize to Mike Pence for their terrible behavior.” Meanwhile, Mike Pence, who was attending the show with his children, respondedby saying that, when the booing started, “I nudged my kids and reminded them that’s what freedom sounds like.” On FOX he also said, “Hamilton is just an incredible production, incredibly talented people. And it was a real joy to be there.” In today’s climate, that kind of conventional response feels shocking. That is because it’s not the response of someone who seems to want to throw their political opponents into the gulag. Would I prefer to have a President who supports legislation I believe in? Yes. Desperately. But that ship has sailed. It sailed on November 8. What we should be concerned with now is keeping America as we know it recognizable, so that one day we can have an election where there will be a President who supports liberal policies. "I don’t think Pence is going to try to shut down the free press. I don’t think he will publicly deride American citizens on Twitter." It breaks my heart that a desirable outcome now seems to be “having a president who does not overtly behave like a dictator.” Do I think Pence will try to overturn Roe. v. Wade? Yup! Do I think he will probably try to overturn gay marriage? Yes, I do. I also think that Trump would give away Roe v. Wade or LGBT rights in exchange for a wink from a Russian Pop Star and yell at the press for mentioning it. I think Mike Pence will support legislation I despise. I will protest all of it. And I do not think he will ever try to dismiss my right to protest. I don’t think he’s going to try to shut down the free press. I don’t think he will publicly deride American citizens on Twitter. I think he respects the institutions that make America—if not great—at least recognizably America. I also think it’s insane that we’re in a position where this is a quality we have to hope for from the leader of the country. I do not like Mike Pence’s values. I think they are wicked. They are not mine. But, to borrow from Alexander Hamilton, I think he has values. And it has become clear that the only thing Donald Trump values is Donald Trump. This is already leading to an America that, day by day, is growing unrecognizable. Having Mike Pence as President will feel like we lost an election. Having Donald Trump as President feels, every day, like we’re losing America.

### \*Turns Case\*

### ---mass incarceration

#### Turns case – incarceration rates are up for the first time in 40 years under Trump and Sessions; this also circumvents the aff. Clark 5/19

Clark, Bianca. “Trump Administration Is Clueless on Criminal Justice.” USA Today, Gannett Satellite Information Network, 19 May 2017, www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2017/05/19/trump-administration-clueless-criminal-justice/101648606/. Opinion Contributor. //nhs-VA

After President Trump's surprise firing of FBI Director James Comey, the flurry of comparisons to President Nixon started to fly. But the comparison could just as easily have been made to Trump's intentions toward criminal justice. Trump campaigned on law and order, stating that under his watch "safety would be restored." He was echoing the campaign promises made by Nixon during his 1968 run, where he announced, "We are to restore order and respect for law in this country." The Nixon administration was decisive, setting the trend for the enactment of a series of law-and-order regulations. Now, it appears the Trump administration is following suit. Last week, Attorney General Jeff Sessions ordered stricter federal criminal sentencing guidance. Prosecutors should "charge and pursue the most serious, readily provable offense," he wrote, a move that will increase incarceration rates. The United States has 2.2 million people in prisons and jails — a 500% increase over the past four decades. It has dubiously earned America the most-incarcerated-country-in-the-world award. However, between 2010 and 2015, the national imprisonment rate actually declined 8.4%. For the first time in 40 years, the number of prisoners started to decrease instead of increasing yearly. Notably, the nation's crime rate remained at a 20-year low. Criminal justice finally appeared to be going in the right direction. Then Trump took office. Trump says one thing, proposes another In February, barely a month into his administration, the Department of Justice made the most pronounced change. It decided to reinstate the use of private prisons for federal incarceration, rescinding a key order made by the Obama administration just months earlier to "phase out" their use. In the memo, Sessions said private prisons were necessary "to meet the future needs of the federal correctional system." In other words, the law-and-order mantra of Trump's campaign was about to be realized — incarceration rates are about to ramp up. But after the fact, the administration released its 2018 budget, indicating an overall reduction in correctional spending. With an announced decrease in Department of Justice spending to the tune of $1.1 billion, his proposed budget actually forecasted a move toward less incarceration — affecting the Crime Victims Fund and the Asset Forfeiture Fund, both designed to reimburse state prisons and county jails for incarcerating undocumented immigrants. Furthering that notion, other crucial funds contributing to mass incarceration were also on the chopping block. So which is it: a galvanizing of Nixon-sparked mass incarceration or continuing the Obama trend of chipping away at it? The sentencing guidance formally rescinds the prior administration's policies that successfully lowered federal incarceration rates. Perhaps the biggest clue to the direction of this administration came when the president instituted new executive actions, including the Restoring Community Safety Act, which pledges increased funding for programs that train and assist police. The act was backed up in the proposed budget by a $175 million increase in law enforcement spending. But historically, this is the kind of action that has led to the types of aggressive policing practices that Trump promised on the campaign trail — the sort that heavily contributes to higher incarceration rates. States, rather than federal government, control most U.S. correctional policy. However, president-enforced spending on increased policing and reactive bolstering of policies surrounding it are what got us into the mass incarceration situation our country is in now. From Nixon through Bill Clinton, this was precisely the way law-and-order promises by presidents have gotten done. Trump and Sessions want to continue this tradition. For now, the progress of national criminal justice reform seems to have merely stalled. After just a few short months, we have reason to believe we're on the path backwards in history. For those fighting for reforms, it's safest to assume that this is just the calm before the storm. The writing is on the wall.

### ---race (immigration)

#### **Turns case – Trump’s policies target marginalized groups and uniquely harm immigrants. Gonzalez-Rojas 4/24**

Gonzalez-Rojas 17 (Jessica, Executive Director at the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, April 24, 2017 9:55 am, “Trump’s First 100 Days: A Blueprint To Hurt People of Color, Rewire, https://rewire.news/article/2017/04/24/trumps-first-100-days-blueprint-hurt-people-color/) KVA

Every day, as I work alongside community leaders to secure health and justice for Latinas, I am stunned by th is White House’s ever-growing hostility toward communities of color. The Trump administration sees the country’s changing demographics—the rising number of nonwhite and foreign-born people—as the chief internal threat. In this administration’s first 100 days, the document that most reflects that prejudice is its budget blueprint. It outlines President Trump’s spending priorities and program cuts that make clear his utter contempt for communities of color, and it edges this country and its moral compass closer to the nativist vision espoused by the likes of White House advisers Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions. People of color would be disproportionately affected by Trump’s proposed elimination of critical programs that help pregnant women, children, and the poor. They would be hurt by disastrous cuts to economic programs that help workers and families. Latinas face the largest wage disparities among all racial and ethnic groups, with a recent study showing that Latinas must work 22 months to make what white men earn in 12 months. And because women of color and immigrant women disproportionately work in physically demanding and low-wage jobs that offer little flexibility, they are most affected by regressive wage legislation. The racist subtext of Trump’s budget is seen in his spending priorities: a $2 billion down payment to begin construction of a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border and funding for 100 new government lawyers to handle the expedited removal of undocumented immigrants, 500 new Border Patrol agents and 1,000 new Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel. The price tag to pay for the building of detention facilities designed to hold undocumented immigrants and fund their removal is a whopping $1.5 billion. These proposals align with such Trump strategies as publishing crimes committed by undocumented immigrants, though these reports were recently suspended after protests by civil rights advocates. The racial implications of such strategies are clear, as most crimes are not committed by immigrants. The budget is just another prong in a racist agenda that posits nonwhite people as a drain on public resources and a threat to the national racial order. None of this is a surprise; Trump’s racism has been well-documented. On the first day of his campaign, Trump said of Mexican immigrants, “They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists.” Upon taking office, he issued multiple executive orders regarding immigration, threatened to defund so-called “sanctuary cities,” and called for the creation of detention centers to hold Central American refugees—mostly women, children, and LGBTQ people seeking to escape violence in their homelands. Trump’s budget amounts to an obscene redistribution of money and resources from the working poor—of whom a disproportionate amount are people of color, including immigrants—to the wealthiest. In order to fund the criminalization and persecution of immigrants, Trump proposes stripping those very communities of the support they rely on to thrive. As we approach the end of Trump’s first 100 days in office on April 30, I ask that we center around the perspectives and needs of the courageous women I encounter in my work every day. They toil and struggle against sizable odds to provide for their families in low wage, demanding jobs that pay them little; they jump through hurdles to find child care, obtain routine health services, and ensure their family’s safety. They are the backbone of their families and community, and they want to contribute to a better and more just society. In this era of Trump, these women are fighting the threat of having their families torn apart through needless deportations and are working through the pain of having to explain to their children their family’s plan in case they are separated. These courageous women are speaking truth to power, even in the face of sexism, racism, and xenophobia. Reproductive justice cannot be attained without racial equality, without quality affordable health care, without humane and just immigration reform, and without LGBTQ liberation. The Trump agenda requires us to focus on the role race and immigration status play in injustice, even legalized injustice. We owe it to our communities to help lead the way in calling out this administration’s actions for what they are: part of a racist agenda that seeks to exclude communities of color while using immigrants as scapegoats to score political points with the vocal minority of nativists in our country. Trump’s proposed budget is an attack on all of us, and we will not sit idly by.

### ---sexual assault

#### Turns case – Trump gave permission for people to be more sexist and is a symbol for the patriarchy – support for Roy Moore proves. Gilchrist quoting Clinton 9/15

Gilchrist, Tracy E. “Clinton Says Trump 'Gave Permission for People to Be More Sexist'.”ADVOCATE, Advocate.com, 15 Sept. 2017, www.advocate.com/politics/2017/9/15/clinton-says-trump-gave-permission-people-be-more-sexist. Gilchrist quotes Hillary Clinton. //nhs-VA

As has been widely documented and deconstructed across news platforms and social media in general, Hillary Clinton has published her book *What Happened* and is now doing the requisite promotional tour. And despite the cries on the right and the far left for her to “shut up” and “go away,” in a thoughtful interview with Rachel Maddow on her show Thursday, Clinton addressed issues the country faces under Donald Trump, including Vladimir Putin and Russian interference in the election, the very real threat from North Korea, and the misogyny that occurred that Clinton says in no uncertain terms happened primarily because Trump “gave permission for people to be much more sexist.” “I was taken aback by some of what he would say and the fact that people would vote for him even after the Access Hollywood tape,” Clinton replied to Maddow's question about whether or not she thought sexism was worse in 2016 as compared to in 2008. “It just had a different feel to it. I think he was in large measure the determinative factor that made it so much worse in 2016.” Clinton acknowledged that, of course, sexism existed when she ran for the Democratic nomination in 2008, but said Trump’s abhorrent behavior was the catalyst for the deeply misogynistic treatment of women since he announced he was running for office. “I ran against someone who demeaned women, degraded them, attacked them,” Clinton said. “And again, not just me, but Miss Universe contestants and Republican women who dared to run against him and interviewers who questioned him. It was so rhetorically vile, what he said about so many women. And that lifted the top off of what had been much more restrained.”

### ---civil rights

#### Turns case – Trump decks civil rights and rolls back federal enforcements. Huseman and Waldman 6/15

Huseman, Jessica, and Annie Waldman. “Trump Administration Quietly Rolls Back Civil Rights Efforts Across Federal Government.” ProPublica, 15 June 2017, 8 AM ET, www.propublica.org/article/trump-administration-rolls-back-civil-rights-efforts-federal-government. Jessica Huseman is a reporter at ProPublica covering national politics and civil rights. Annie Waldman is a reporter at ProPublica covering education. //nhs-VA

Now, under Attorney General Jeff Sessions, the DOJ appears to be turning away from this storied tool, called consent decrees. Top officials in the DOJ civil rights division have issued verbal instructions through the ranks to seek settlements without consent decrees — which would result in no continuing court oversight. The move is just one part of a move by the Trump administration to limit federal civil rights enforcement. Other departments have scaled back the power of their internal divisions that monitor such abuses. In a previously unreported development, the Education Department last week reversed an Obama-era reform that broadened the agency’s approach to protecting rights of students. The Labor Department and the Environmental Protection Agency have also announced sweeping cuts to their enforcement. “At best, this administration believes that civil rights enforcement is superfluous and can be easily cut. At worst, it really is part of a systematic agenda to roll back civil rights,” said Vanita Gupta, the former acting head of the DOJ’s civil rights division under President Barack Obama. Consent decrees have not been abandoned entirely by the DOJ, a person with knowledge of the instructions said. Instead, there is a presumption against their use — attorneys should default to using settlements without court oversight unless there is an unavoidable reason for a consent decree. The instructions came from the civil rights division’s office of acting Assistant Attorney General Tom Wheeler and Deputy Assistant Attorney General John Gore. There is no written policy guidance. Devin O’Malley, a spokesperson for the DOJ, declined to comment for this story. Consent decrees can be a powerful tool, and spell out specific steps that must be taken to remedy the harm. These are agreed to by both parties and signed off on by a judge, whom the parties can appear before again if the terms are not being met. Though critics say the DOJ sometimes does not enforce consent decrees well enough, they are more powerful than settlements that aren’t overseen by a judge and have no built-in enforcement mechanism. Such settlements have “far fewer teeth to ensure adequate enforcement,” Gupta said. Consent decrees often require agencies or municipalities to take expensive steps toward reform. Local leaders and agency heads then can point to the binding court authority when requesting budget increases to ensure reforms. Without consent decrees, many localities or government departments would simply never make such comprehensive changes, said William Yeomans, who spent 26 years at the DOJ, mostly in the civil rights division. “They are key to civil rights enforcement,” he said. “That’s why Sessions and his ilk don’t like them.” Some, however, believe the Obama administration relied on consent decrees too often and sometimes took advantage of vulnerable cities unable to effectively defend themselves against a well-resourced DOJ. “I think a recalibration would be welcome,” said Richard Epstein, a professor at New York University School of Law and a fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford, adding that consent decrees should be used in cases where clear, systemic issues of discrimination exist. Though it’s too early to see how widespread the effect of the changes will be, the Justice Department appears to be adhering to the directive already. On May 30, the DOJ announced Bernards Township in New Jersey had agreed to pay $3.25 million to settle an accusation it denied zoning approval for a local Islamic group to build a mosque. Staff attorneys at the U.S. attorney’s office in New Jersey initially sought to resolve the case with a consent decree, according to a spokesperson for Bernards Township. But because of the DOJ’s new stance, the terms were changed after the township protested, according to a person familiar with the matter. A spokesperson for the New Jersey U.S. attorney’s office declined comment. Sessions has long been a public critic of consent decrees. As a senator, he wrote they “constitute an end run around the democratic process.” He lambasted local agencies that seek them out as a way to inflate their budgets, a “particularly offensive” use of consent decrees that took decision-making power from legislatures. On March 31, Sessions ordered a sweeping review of all consent decrees with troubled police departments nationwide to ensure they were in line with the Trump administration’s law-and-order goals. Days before, the DOJ had asked a judge to postpone a hearing on a consent decree with the Baltimore Police Department that had been arranged during the last days of the Obama administration. The judge denied that request, and the consent decree has moved forward. The DOJ has already come under fire from critics for altering its approach to voting rights cases. After nearly six years of litigation over Texas’ voter ID law — which Obama DOJ attorneys said was written to intentionally discriminate against minority voters and had such a discriminatory effect — the Trump DOJ abruptly withdrew its intent claims in late February. Attorneys who worked on the case for years were barely consulted about the change — many weren’t consulted at all, according to two former DOJ officials with knowledge of the matter. Gore wrote the filing changing the DOJ’s position largely by himself and asked the attorneys who’d been involved in the case for years to sign it to show continuity. Not all of the attorneys fell in line. Avner Shapiro — who has been a prosecutor in the civil rights division for more than 20 years — left his name off the filings written by Gore. Shapiro was particularly involved in developing the DOJ’s argument that Texas had intentionally discriminated against minorities in crafting its voter ID legislation. “That’s the ultimate act of rebellion,” Yeomans, the former civil rights division prosecutor, said. A rare act, removing one’s name from a legal filing is one of the few ways career attorneys can express public disagreement with an administration. Gore has no history of bringing civil rights cases. A former partner at the law firm Jones Day, he has instead defended states against claims of racial gerrymandering and represented North Carolina when the state was sued over its controversial “bathroom bill,” which requires transgender people to use the facility that matched their birth gender. All of the internal changes at the DOJ have left attorneys and staff with “a great deal of fear and uncertainty,” said Yeomans. While he says the lawyers there would like to stay at the department, they fear Sessions’ priorities will have devastating impact on their work. The DOJ’s civil rights office is not alone in fearing rollbacks in enforcement. Across federal departments, the Trump administration has made moves to diminish the power of civil rights divisions. The Department of Education has laid out plans to loosen requirements on investigations into civil rights complaints, according to an internal memo sent to staff on June 8 and obtained by ProPublica. Under the Obama administration, the department’s office for civil rights applied an expansive approach to investigations. Individual complaints related to complex issues such as school discipline, sexual violence and harassment, equal access to educational resources, or racism at a single school might have prompted broader probes to determine whether the allegations were part of a pattern of discrimination or harassment. The new memo, sent by Candice Jackson, the acting assistant secretary for civil rights, to regional directors at the department’s civil rights office, trims this approach. Jackson was appointed deputy assistant secretary for the office in April and will remain as the acting head of the office until the Senate confirms a full-time assistant secretary. Trump has not publicly nominated anyone for the role yet. The office will apply the broader approach “only” if the original allegations raise systemic concerns or the investigative team argues for it, Jackson wrote in the memo. As part of the new approach, the Education Department will no longer require civil rights investigators to obtain three years of complaint data from a specific school or district to assess compliance with civil rights law. Critics contend the Obama administration’s probes were onerous. The office “did such a thorough review of everything that the investigations were demanding and very expensive” for schools, said Boston College American politics professor R. Shep Melnick, adding that the new approach could take some regulatory pressure off schools and districts. But some civil rights leaders believe the change could undermine the office’s mission. This narrowing of the department’s investigations “is stunning to me and dangerous,” said Catherine Lhamon, who led the Education Department’s civil rights office from August 2013 until January 2017 and currently chairs the United States Commission on Civil Rights. “It’s important to take an expansive view of the potential for harm because if you look only at the most recent year, you won’t necessarily see the pattern,” said Lhamon. The department’s new directive also gives more autonomy to regional offices, no longer requiring oversight or review of some cases by department headquarters, according to the memo. The Education Department did not respond to ProPublica’s request for comment. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has also proposed cutting over 40 positions from the civil rights office. With reduced staff, the office will have to “make difficult choices, including cutting back on initiating proactive investigations,” according to the department’s proposed budget. Elsewhere, Trump administration appointees have launched similar initiatives. In its 2018 fiscal plan, the Labor Department has proposed dissolving the office that handles discrimination complaints. Similarly, new leadership at the Environmental Protection Agency has proposed entirely eliminating the environmental justice program, which addresses concerns that almost exclusively impact minority communities. The Washington Post reports the plan transfers all environmental justice work to the Office of Policy, which provides policy and regulatory guidance across the agency.

### **Animals**

#### Turns case – Trump’s policies are resulting in a loss of worldwide biodiversity and kills wildlife. Funk 17

[William H. Funk, 11-4-2017, "Environmentalists Against War," Environmentalists Against War, http://www.envirosagainstwar.org/know/read.php?itemid=20014] nhs-GA

(October 31, 2017) -- President Donald Trump's proposed 2018 budget would make extensive cuts to already underfunded programs to combat wildlife trafficking and to aid African and Asian nations in protecting elephants, rhinos, tigers, pangolins and other endangered wildlife. \* Trump's budget proposes a 32 percent across-the-board cut in US foreign assistance, affecting hundreds of sustainability, health and environmental programs. \* Major cuts would come to the Department of State, USAID, and US Fish and Wildlife Service programs. \* Congress needs to approve a 2018 budget by December, and no one knows if it will approve the president's desired deep cuts. However, hostility from the administration and many in the GOP to wildlife programs is unlikely to go away any time soon, with more and larger reductions in years to come. Proposed funding cuts to environmental programs in President Trump's proposed 2018 budget have drawn anxious attention from around the world. But while the biggest numbers deal with rolling back the Obama administration's climate change initiatives, more subtle withdrawals of federal support from lesser known international programs threaten the continued existence of some of the planet's most iconic animals. President Trump's 2018 budget proposes a 32 percent across-the-board shrinkage of US foreign assistance, affecting hundreds of sustainability, health and environmental programs. As comparatively paltry as a few million dollars retracted here and there from a $1.15 trillion federal budget may seem, for those desperately striving through underfunded programs to preserve the world's wildlife, the loss of monetary and moral support from the US could be devastating.

### ---at: checks

#### Dem wave key to constrain Trump’s foreign policy—GOP gains remove all checks

Kounalakis 17 11/9/17 – Ph.D., senior fellow at Central European University and visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution (Markos, “2018 could lock-in Trump privilege, power in foreign policy.” http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/article183516126.html) \*modified for ableist language

The last line of defense in checking President Donald Trump’s foreign-policy power is the old guard of the Republican Party, and those watchmen are about to go quietly into the night. A 2018 Republican sweep would ~~cripple~~ undermine two key Senate committees, moving them from painfully ineffective to plainly inconsequential. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee are supposed to oversee the foreign-policy and the national-security apparatus. Trump has brought them to heel. He has belittled the outspoken Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, who became a lame duck by giving up a 2018 reelection bid (Disclosure: Corker held my presidential appointment from Senate confirmation in 2016). Sitting out alongside him is another committee member, Trump-critic Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona, leaving a handful of cowed Republicans and the minority Democrats to try to counter Trump policy tweets and fight for a systematically well-formulated foreign agenda. Chairing the Armed Services Committee is Sen. John McCain of Arizona. A hale McCain is a formidable leader, whether in military conflict or D.C. turf wars, but he is publicly disrespected and humiliated by Trump, who once said the former P.O.W. was “not a war hero.” The once-powerful McCain is suffering a grave illness that may take him off the policy battlefield sooner than he deserves. Without the present and vibrant check Corker and McCain provide on Trump’s instincts and inclinations, the man is granted full reign over global affairs. Indeed, there are almost no judicial checks on a president’s foreign policy, and the checks within the administration are minimal. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is all but sidelined and his State Department is going through a convulsing reorganization that makes diplomats cogs, not wheels, of diplomacy. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis has been given both full authority and responsibility for military matters, but the decision to militarily deploy remains with the commander-in-chief. That leaves legislative instruments available to congressional committees — the power of subpoena, confirmation, and budget. But a 2018 rout by Republicans riding Trump coattails and parroting his messaging would further diminish the majority party’s resistance and dwindle the number of critical senators keeping the administration from usurping all power to decide matters of war and peace. Already, Congress’s check on presidential power in foreign affairs and security is weak. The Constitution says only Congress can “declare war.” The reality, however, is that every American military engagement fought since World War II was an undeclared war. It’s been a police action, a response, kinetic military action, extended military engagement, but never a war. Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and likely any fight picked by the current administration will find its legal justification in the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), which is in desperate need of an overhaul. Presidents end run Congress on war powers, but what about legislation? Congress recently tried to tie the president’s hands on Russia and force him to up the sanctions regime and punishment for Moscow’s multiple sins. He signed the bill, but undermined the legislative maneuver by sitting on his hands. Few Republicans today have the fortitude or ability to debate, criticize or resist Trump’s foreign policy. The House has a foreign affairs committee, chaired by Ed Royce (R-CA) who has so far voted with Donald Trump 96.1 percent of the time. In Royce, Trump has a reliable ally and a rubber stamp. Presidential power is not absolute, however. A president needs to sell his policies to the people and maintain democratic support for those policies every two years so that elected representatives can return the citizens’ electoral verdict to Washington. This week’s results favoring Democrats in Virginia and elsewhere could indicate a brewing midterm backlash against Trump next year. 2018 will determine whether Americans have faith in Trump’s conduct and character. If that faith translates into Republican majorities, those representatives are likely to grant the president the unbridled foreign policy power he sought when he declared, “I alone can fix it.” Trump could deservedly achieve more power before next year’s election with a positive North Korea outcome, whether negotiated or otherwise. A North Korean success would prove to lawmakers and the American people that his tough talk and confrontational style works. That would reinforce and strengthen the time-tested notion of executive privilege in foreign affairs. Ironically, failure in North Korea could also favor Trump politically as an America threatened or under attack would likely rally citizens behind its president. A 2018 Republican House and Senate would allow Trump to test Mel Brooks’s theory that “it’s good to be the king.” Then again, if this week portends a Democratic sweep next year, Congress will make sure administration bad actors are investigated, foreign follies go unfunded, military actions are constrained, and partisan appointments languish. Instead of king, Trump could become an emperor with no clothes.

#### No checks on Trump – doesn’t listen to advisors and can unilaterally order strikes: Syria proves

Rosenthal 16 John Rosenthal, President, Meredith Management, HuffPo, 8/6/2016, “Trump Is A Real Nuclear Threat”, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-rosenthal/trump-is-a-real-nuclear-threat\_b\_11366304.html

August 6th, 2016 marks the 71st anniversary of the day the United States became the first and only nation in history to use an atomic bomb in Hiroshima, Japan. Three days later, a second nuclear weapon — this time a more powerful plutonium fission bomb — was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan. Hundreds of thousands of people were extinguished within minutes. Seventy one years later we find ourselves in the midst of a presidential election and political crossroads that will have serious consequences — not the least of which is nuclear. The Republican candidate, Donald Trump, has repeatedly said, using nuclear weapons is a real option for solving difficult political situations. In fact, he has asked military Generals why they have not been used more often. This election is a litmus test for Americans and nothing could be more important than how our next president reacts under pressure with respect to nuclear weapons. As commander in chief, the president has ultimate and unbounded authority over the use of nuclear weapons. There is no veto power, no second opinion and there’s no turning back once the nuclear option is executed. Since 1945, when president Truman dropped two nuclear weapons on Japan in order to shorten the war, no other world leader has used these ultimate weapons of mass destruction. The president has the ultimate power to employ nuclear weapons, kill mass numbers of people and destroy life as we know it. We are now faced with our real nuclear option. Unless we make the right choice in November, a narcissistic and irrational, Donald Trump could be making the nuclear decision alone and on our behalf. So let us consider the nuclear know-how of the Republican presidential nominee. It seems Mr. Trump has known everything there is to know about nuclear weapons for years. In 1984 as a 38-year-old real estate developer he said, “It would take an hour and a half to learn everything there is to learn about missiles. I think I know most of it anyway” 1 Thirty-two years should have been more than enough time to polish his expertise in the field. Trump has said he would seriously consider using “nukes”. Given Trump’s, history of shooting from the hip, pun intended, he is not qualified, rational or responsible enough to be “the decider” when it comes to the nuclear option. There is an abundance of material that should convince Americans that Mr. Trump cannot be trusted with nuclear weapons or our future. In an interview with MSNBC in March of this year, when Chris Matthews referred to Trump not taking nukes off the table, Mr. Trump questioned, “somebody hits us within ISIS, you wouldn’t fight back with a nuke?”2 In the same interview, Trump refused to say he would never use a nuclear weapon in Europe2. In a separate interview, he was quoted saying, “Europe is a big place, I’m not going to take my cards off the table3” in reference to using nuclear weapons in a continent that is home to some our closest allies. It was recently reported that Mr. Trump met with a foreign policy adviser and asked on three different instances why if we have nuclear weapons, why we cannot use them?4 Other foreign policy experts who have discussed nuclear strategy with Trump have said he lacks knowledge of the history of deterrence, and seems more interested in whether the US should ever use its nuclear arsenal5. Trump has also said that he has no problem with the proliferation of nuclear weapons to Japan, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia5. Equally alarming is the fact that Mr. Trump has said he wants to be unpredictable with his use of nuclear weapons6. Mr. Trump’s remarks are almost as disturbing as his uncontrolled impulses and that’s a scary combination for a leader with access to the largest nuclear arsenal in the world. Trump’s aggressive and retaliatory tendencies, demonstrated throughout his pursuit of power, are enough proof that he is unfit to have access to the nuclear codes. His recent public criticism of the Gold Star parents of Humayun Khan epitomizes his lack of reason and predisposition to retaliate against anyone who may disparage his oversensitive ego. The author of his biography went so far as to say, “I genuinely believe that if Trump wins and gets nuclear codes, there is an excellent chance it will lead to the end of civilization,” and a former director of the CIA said he is very, very concerned because of how erratic Mr. Trump is7. Perhaps no one said it better than Hillary Clinton who contended, “a man you can bait with a tweet is not a man we can trust with nuclear weapons”1. So herein lies the real nuclear threat for Americans. If we elect Donald Trump the likelihood of nuclear war will be dramatically increased and it will be on us. So make your choice with your eyes wide open to the nuclear threat posed by Donald Trump. Mark your ballots accordingly, because similar to the president’s power to use them, the effects of nuclear weapons are complete and unforgiving.

#### Compressed timeframes decimate institutional checks

Schwartz ’16 Zane Schwartz is a journalist at Maclean's, Macleans, 8/3/2016, “Could Trump launch nuclear war?”, http://www.macleans.ca/news/world/could-trump-launch-nuclear-war/

But just how worried should the world be about a President Trump with his finger on the nuclear trigger? Surely in the United States, with its many checks and balances on the levers of power, there would be some safety checks in place? In fact, control of deployed nuclear warheads—all 1,538 of them—are entirely at the whim of the president, with nothing standing in the way of an order from the commander in chief to fire away. The reason has to do with timing. Nuclear weapons launched from China or Russia take about 30 minutes to reach the White House; those coming from submarines in the Atlantic Ocean can take as little as 12 minutes. If a nuclear strike against the U.S. is detected, the president identifies him or herself using a code on a small plastic card that’s with him at all times—nicknamed “the biscuit”—and can order bomber pilots and rocket crews to launch the warheads, each with 10 to 20 times more power than the Hiroshima bomb. Even if the U.S. isn’t under attack, the president can act if they feel there is a threat of “imminent” attack—practically, this means the president can deploy whenever they want. In an interview on the Today show on April 28, Trump said: “I will be the last to use nuclear weapons. It’s a horror to use nuclear weapons. The power of weaponry today is the single greatest problem that our world has.” But in that same interview, he also said he wouldn’t rule out using nuclear weapons against Islamic State because he wants to maintain “unpredictability”. This week, MSNBC anchor Joe Scarborough said that Trump asked a foreign policy adviser three times in the span of an hour why the U.S. can’t use nuclear weapons. (Trump’s campaign denied the report.) Trump’s unpredictability is what scares so many experts, especially considering the only mechanisms in place to countermand a presidential order to deploy nuclear weapons veer close to a coup d’état—generals can refuse to carry out the president’s orders or the Cabinet can declare the President unfit in a letter to Congress and hand authority to the vice president. Neither of these options are realistic when a president has minutes to decide whether to deploy in response to incoming missiles. At a debate during the Republican primaries on Dec. 15, Trump said: “The biggest problem we have is nuclear—nuclear proliferation and having some maniac, having some madman go out and get a nuclear weapon.” Trump does not, of course, see himself as that madman. But plenty of others do. Nuclear security expert Bruce Blair wrote a 6,600-word piece for Politico arguing that Trump’s tendency towards hardball negotiation tactics relying on bombast and threats could lead to disaster. Dozens of military and foreign policy heavyweights, including President Barack Obama, have blasted Trump’s nuclear statements as dangerous and flying in the face of 70 years of policy based on limiting the number of countries that have nuclear weapons.

#### Commanders won’t disobey

Arrowood 16 Emily Arrowood, Assistant Editor, US News, 8/3/2016, “Trump's Nuclear Football”, http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2016-08-03/if-he-becomes-president-how-soon-would-donald-trump-launch-nuclear-weapons

Our nuclear command security sequence isn't really equipped with checks and balances to stop a president who wants to set off nuclear weapons. As a nuclear security expert explained to Politico, "There are no restraints that can prevent a willful president from unleashing this hell. If he gave the command, his executing commanders would have no legal or procedural grounds to defy it no matter how inappropriate it might seem." In other words, if we elect Trump in November, he basically has free-range to nuke the first person or country to tweet an insult in his direction.