

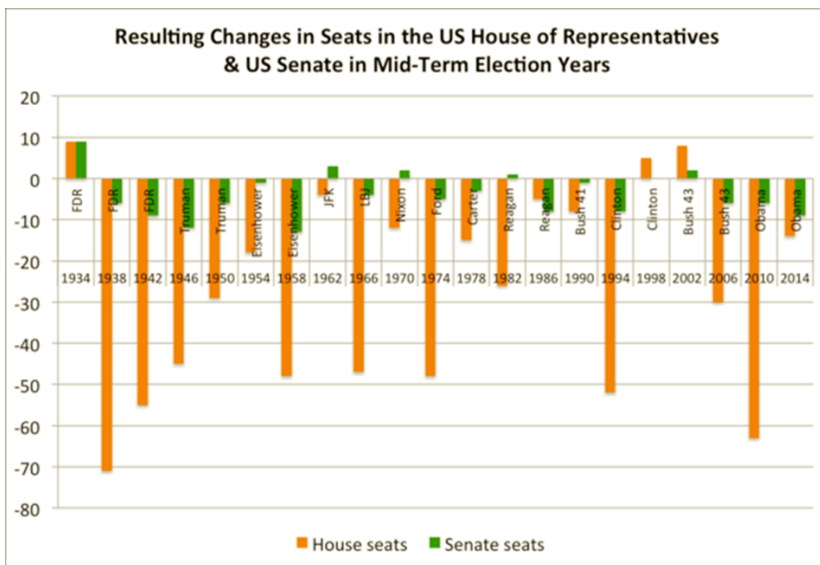
## Wisconsin Politics Today: Focus on the 2018 Midterm Elections

David Canon  
Univ. Wisconsin-Madison  
October 25, 2018



### Historic Context of Midterms

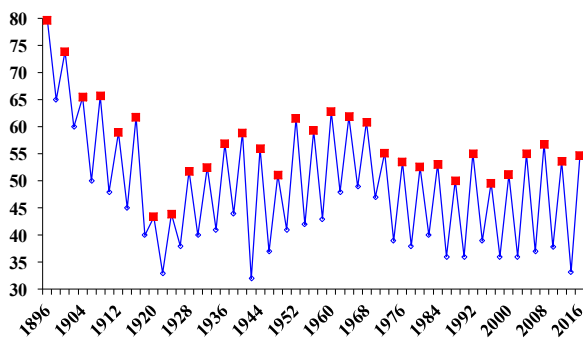
- Midterm elections are almost always bad for the incumbent president's party.
- House: 38 midterm elections since 1862
  - Presidents party lost seats in 35 (92%): not in 1934, 1998, 2002
  - Average seat loss since 1906, when House size set at 435: 32 seats. Democrats need 23 seats to regain majority control.
- Senate: results depend on which states are up, but similar pattern:
  - 25 midterm elections since 1914
  - Presidents party lost Senate seats in 18 (72%)
  - Average change: just under 4 seats
  - Range: 10 seat gain (1934) to 12 seat loss (1946, 1958)



### Why does the president's party almost always lose seats?

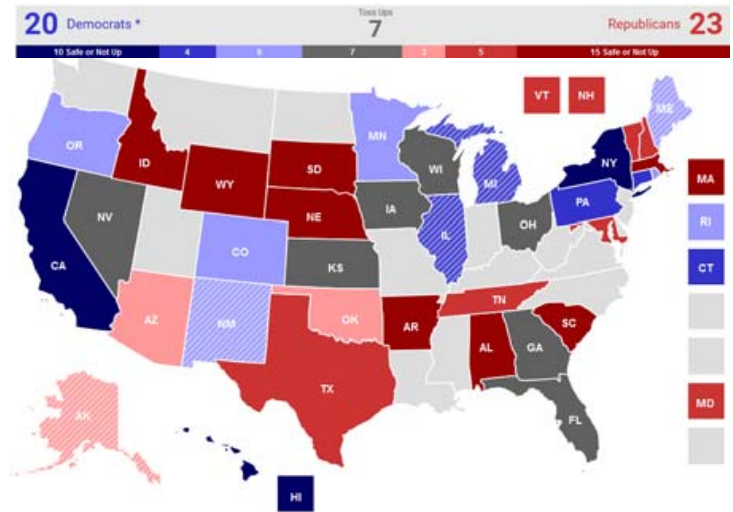
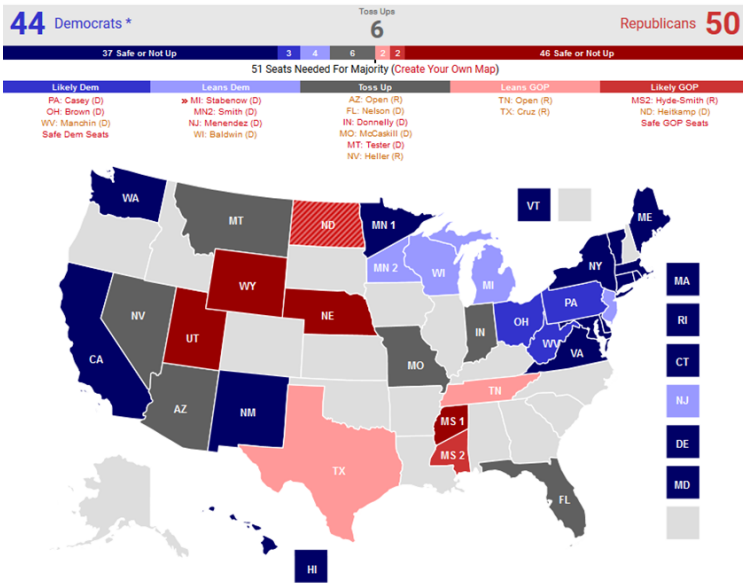
- Multiple explanations, each of which captures a piece of the story:
  - Surge and decline/presidential coattails
  - Referendum on incumbent
  - Negative voting
  - Institutional and partisan balancing

### Turnout in Presidential and Congressional Elections, 1896-2016



### The 2018 midterms

- Overview of the gov. and Senate races, focus on WI.
- Campaign finance: HUGE Dem. Advantage.
- Generic House polls – predictive power?
  - The retirement wave helps Democrats.
  - Partisan redistricting help Republicans.
- Forecasting midterm elections with presidential popularity and real income change.
- Year of the Woman v.2? (v.1 was in 1992).
- An enthusiasm gap? Evidence from special elections.



Current governorships: 33 R, 16 D, 1 Ind.

4 battleground states are held by Dems, 2 by Rs

Democrats' fundraising advantage is widespread

**Candidates**

**Nate Silver of 538 gives Baldwin a 98% chance of winning, with a 13.6% margin**

Tammy Baldwin (D)\* Bio | Campaign Site      Leah Vukmir (R) Bio | Campaign Site

Pol	Date	Sample	MoE	Baldwin (D)	Vukmir (R)	Spread
RCP Average	8/18 - 10/7	--	--	52.3	41.7	Baldwin +10.6
Marquette	10/3 - 10/7	799 LV	3.9	53	43	Baldwin +10.0
NBC News/Marist	9/30 - 10/3	571 LV	4.8	54	40	Baldwin +14
Suffolk	8/18 - 8/24	500 LV	4.4	50	42	Baldwin +8

**Candidates**

**Nate Silver of 538 gives Evers a 59% chance of winning, with a 1.6% margin**

Tony Evers (D)      Scott Walker (R)\*

Pol	Date	Sample	MoE	Evers (D)	Walker (R)	Spread
RCP Average	8/18 - 10/7	--	--	48.3	44.7	Evers +3.6
Marquette*	10/3 - 10/7	799 LV	3.9	46	47	Walker +1
NBC News/Marist	9/30 - 10/3	571 LV	4.8	53	43	Evers +10
Marquette*	9/12 - 9/16	614 LV	4.4	49	44	Evers +5
Suffolk	8/18 - 8/24	500 LV	4.4	46	44	Evers +2

NUMBER OF CANDIDATES ON NOV. HOUSE BALLOTS RAISING ...

YEAR	AT LEAST \$500K BY 20 DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION		AT LEAST \$1M BY 20 DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION		AT LEAST \$2M BY 20 DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION	
	DEM.	GOP	DEM.	GOP	DEM.	GOP
1998	93	128	22	37	3	4
2000	123	153	48	61	4	9
2002	108	151	38	37	8	6
2004	134	178	48	66	8	10
2006	156	172	62	65	13	13
2008	190	168	84	60	18	10
2010	200	220	95	87	20	15
2012	170	227	80	105	18	2
2014	153	197	65	76	23	9
2016	212	249	142	171	80	64
2018*	232	179	144	84	73	17

\*2018 totals are extrapolated based on fundraising through Sept. 30.  
All figures are adjusted for inflation.  
SOURCE: FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

Democrats' fundraising dominance has no recent precedent

YEAR	DEMOCRATS' SHARE OF TWO-PARTY CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS			
	ALL HOUSE DISTRICTS		COMPETITIVE HOUSE DISTRICTS	
	AVERAGE	MEDIAN	AVERAGE	MEDIAN
1998	47%	42%	51%	49%
2000	50	49	49	50
2002	49	41	46	44
2004	47	44	49	50
2006	54	54	51	50
2008	60	66	49	49
2010	47	49	54	53
2012	46	43	48	48
2014	48	46	56	55
2016	49	46	52	54
2018*	64	71	65	68

\*Based on data available as of Oct. 18, 2018. For other years, totals are based on data available as of Election Day. The data covers individual campaign contributions only, and not candidate self-funding or donations from PACs or outside groups.

SOURCE: FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

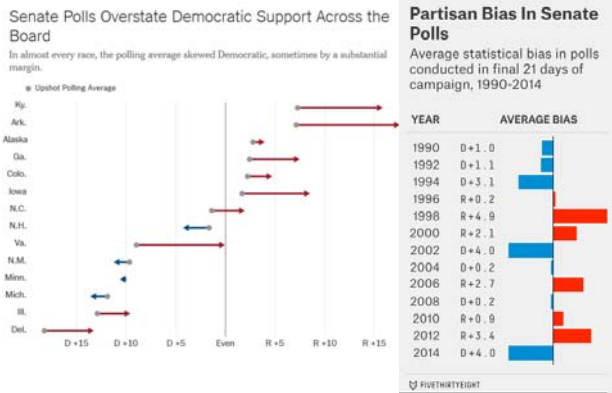
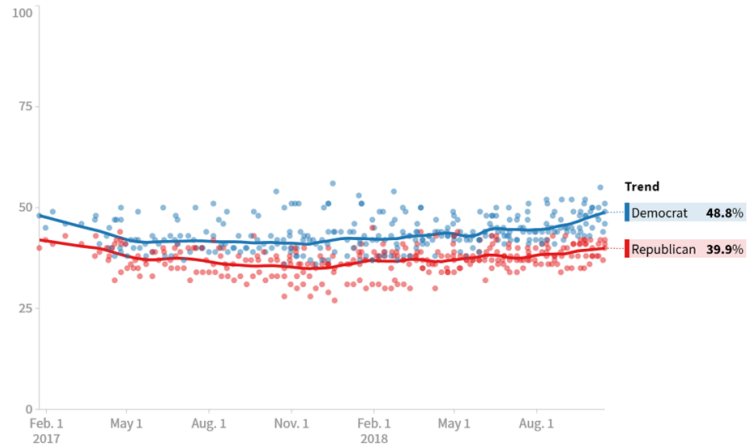
Forecasts based on polls?

- Can we trust the polls?
  - 2016 - national presidential polls actually were within the margin of error: Clinton did win the national popular vote and that is what they predicted. State polls were off.
- Polling in the midterm elections - the national "generic" poll.

POLL CHART

2018 National House Race

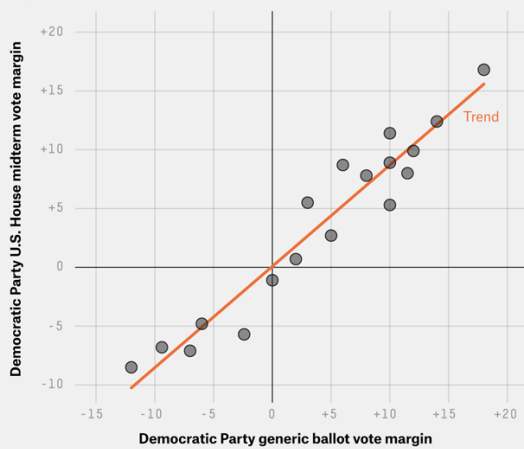
Currently tracking 189 polls from 17 pollsters Updated 4 days ago Election on November 6, 2018



No pattern – 4 midterms since 1990 favored the out party and 3 favored the president’s party. Average bias less than 3%.

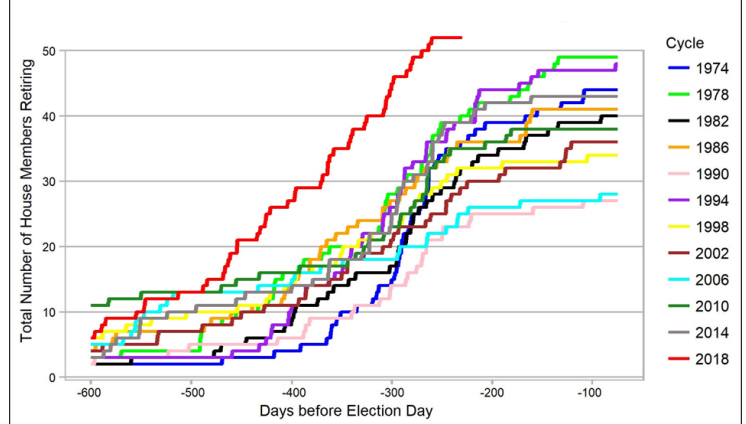
Final generic ballot results are very predictive

Democratic U.S. House midterm vote margin vs. lead on final generic ballot polls, since 1946



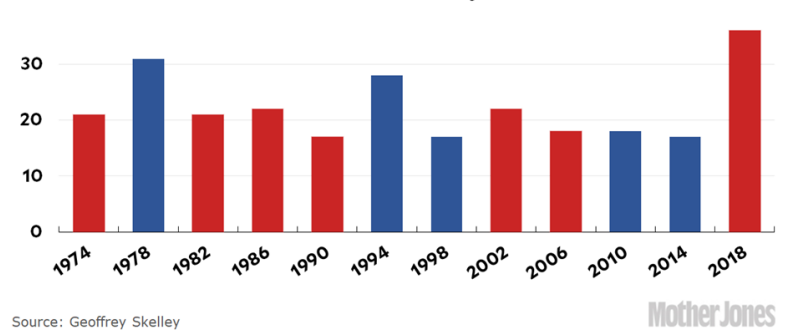
But, votes have to be translated into seats: Incumbent advantage for the Republicans. But, huge number of open seats and R. retirements help Ds.

Retirements Over Time in Midterm Cycles 1974-2018



The final figure is 59 retirements.

Retirements in House of Representatives President’s Party



There were 41 Republican retirements in 2018, with 37 open seats (4 replaced by special election).

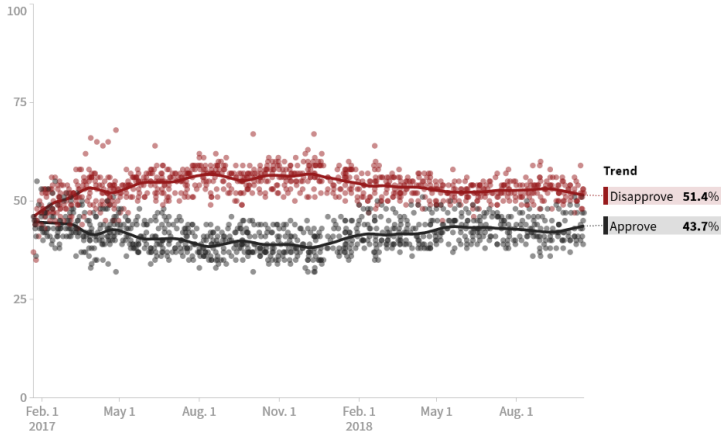
But, partisan redistricting

- However, in translating national votes into seats, extreme Republican gerrymandering means that the Democrats would have to win more votes than normal to win a majority of the seats. The Brennan Center estimated they would need an 11-point national vote win to get a majority in the House, which they haven't done since 1982.
- Supreme Court declined to intervene in the Gill v. Whitford case – sent the case back to lower court to be relitigated.

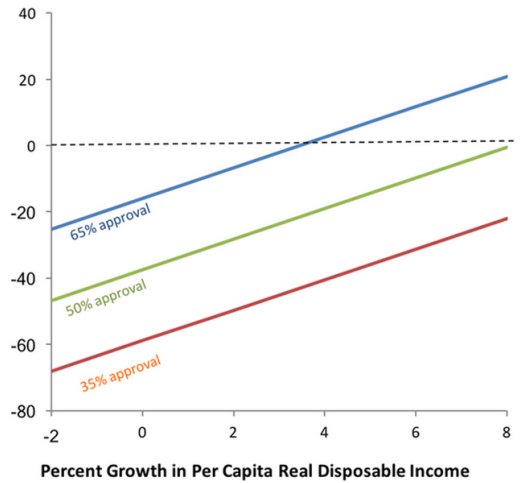
POLL CHART

### Trump Job Approval

Currently tracking 704 polls from 36 pollsters Updated 4 days ago



### House Seats Gained by President's Party

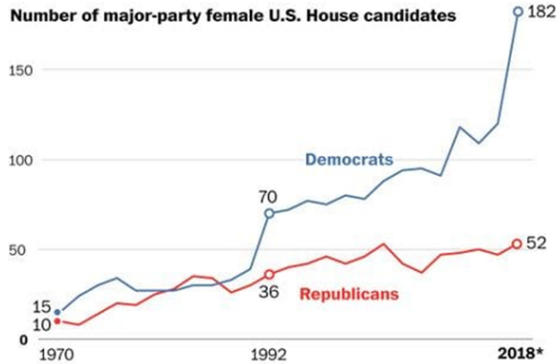


Forecast for US House seat gains by president's party by economic growth and approval. | Seth Maskot/data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis

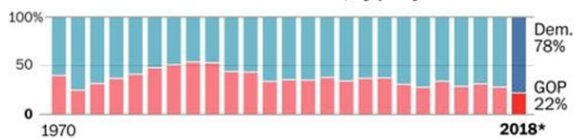
### Democrats outpace GOP 3 to 1 in female House nods

Major-party female candidates have advanced from primaries in more than 40 percent of U.S. House districts. Fewer than one-quarter are Republicans.

#### Number of major-party female U.S. House candidates



#### Breakdown of female House candidates, by party

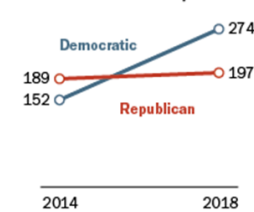


\*As of Sept. 12

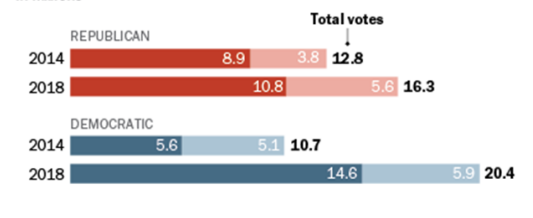
Source: Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University THE WASHINGTON POST

### More contested House races are driving higher turnout, particularly among Democrats

#### Number of contested primaries



#### Number of votes in contested and uncontested primaries

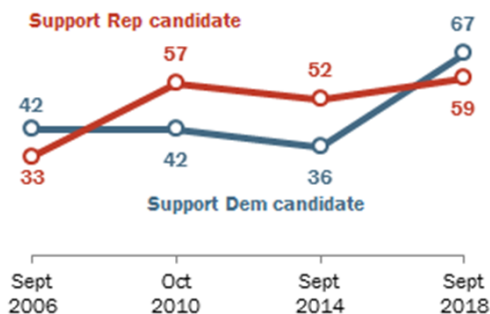


Note: Contested races defined as those with at least two candidates' names on the ballot. Votes for third-party and independent candidates not shown. Subgroups may not add to totals due to rounding. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of state election data.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

### Democratic supporters more enthusiastic than in previous midterms

% of registered voters who say they are more enthusiastic than usual about voting ...



Note: Based on registered voters. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 18-24, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

### Predictions

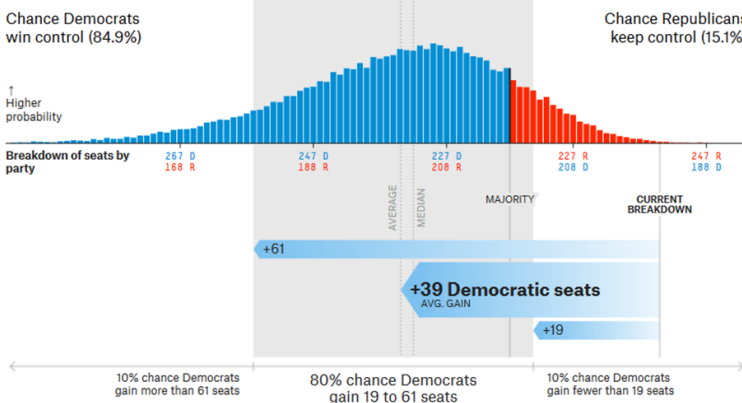
- This is always a hazardous business, but I think the Democrats will retake the House and the Republicans will hang on to the Senate.
- Democrats are likely to pick up six or seven governorships.

## Forecasting the race for the House

Updated Oct. 26, 2018, at 10:26 AM

**6 in 7**  
Chance Democrats win control (84.9%)

**1 in 7**  
Chance Republicans keep control (15.1%)



If this prediction comes true, this means a return to divided government, which means:

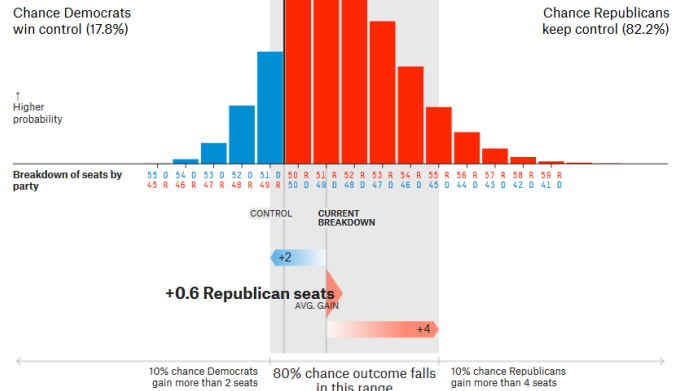


## Forecasting the race for the Senate

Updated Oct. 26, 2018, at 10:26 AM

**1 in 6**  
Chance Democrats win control (17.8%)

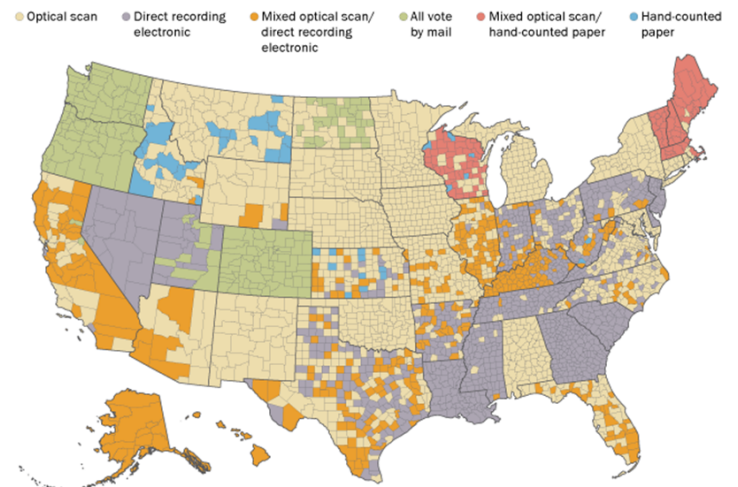
**5 in 6**  
Chance Republicans keep control (82.2%)



If the Senate is split 50-50, Republicans maintain majority control because Vice President Mike Pence has the tiebreaking vote. This analysis treats independent Sens. Bernie Sanders and Angus King as Democrats because they caucus with that party.

## Across the U.S., a patchwork of voting methods

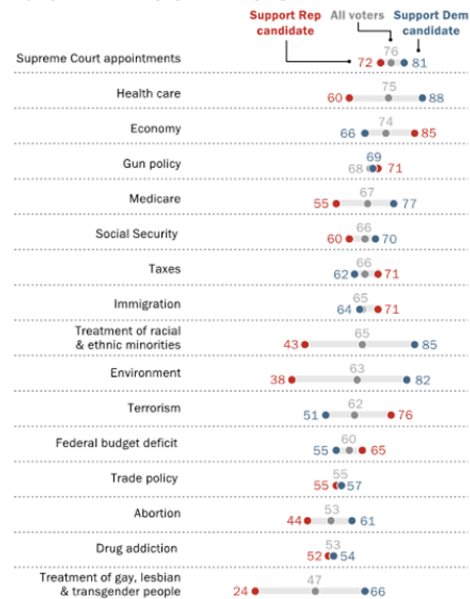
Principal voting system, by county



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of data from Verified Voting Foundation.  
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Views of 2018 issue importance among Republican and Democratic supporters

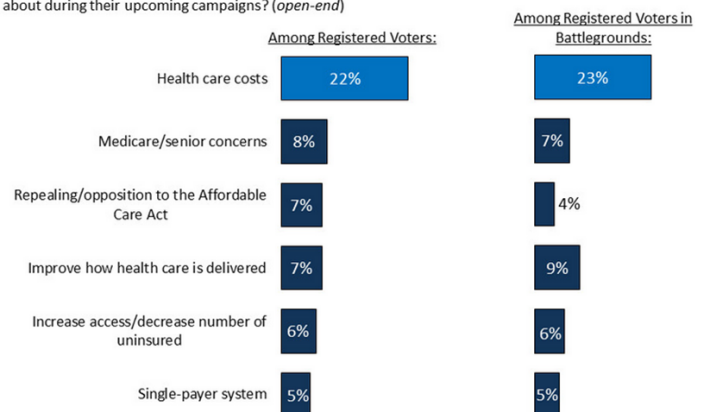
% of registered voters saying each is "very important" to their vote in 2018 ...



Note: Based on registered voters. 0%  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 18-24, 2018.  
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Health Care Costs Are Top Health Care Issue Voters Want 2018 Candidates to Talk About During Their Campaigns

While this year's election is still a long way off, what health care issue do you most want to hear candidates talk about during their upcoming campaigns? (open-end)

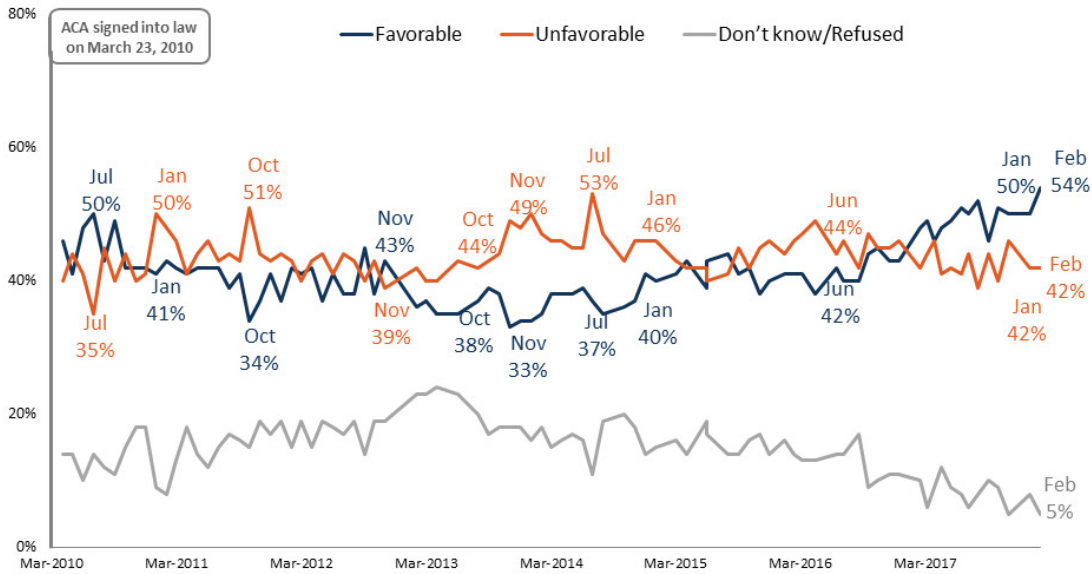


NOTE: Only top six responses listed.  
SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Poll (conducted February 15-20, 2018)

Figure 2

## More of the Public Hold a Favorable View of the ACA

As you may know a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010, known commonly as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?

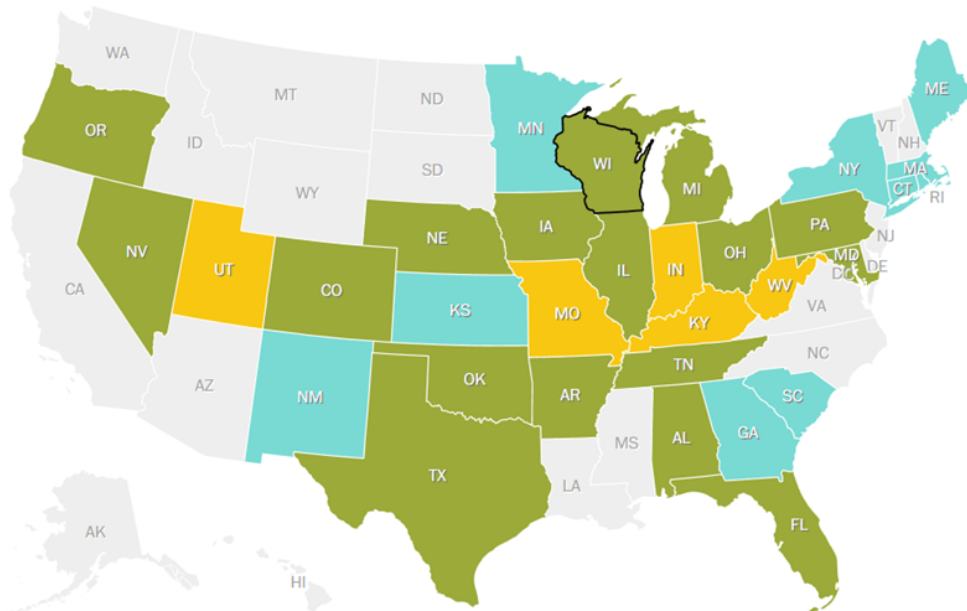


SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation Health Tracking Polls



### WHICH 2018 ELECTIONS COULD AFFECT REDISTRICTING

■ Governor race 
 ■ Legislative race 
 ■ Both governor and legislative races 
 ■ No relevant race



Use the map or the dropdown to explore other states

In **Wisconsin**, the competitive race for governor and state legislative elections will affect the redrawing of district maps. The districts are drawn by the state legislature and approved by the governor.