



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on November 29, 2018

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After the Elections, What's Next?

Some have dubbed the midterm elections a “split decision,” with the Democrats picking up almost 40 seats, enabling them to regain control of the House of Representatives, while the Republicans not only held onto their slim majority in the Senate, but actually gained seats.

It certainly was not the Blue Wave the Democrats had hoped for. By comparison, in the “red wave” elections of 1994 and 2010, the Republicans gained 52 and 63 seats, respectively, in the House, along with good gains in the Senate. Had the Republicans actually gained seats in the House in the midterm, it would have gone against the history of the past century. Since 1914, the party holding the White House has picked up seats in the midterms only three times.



The Democrats greatly outspent the Republicans. In the Texas Senate contest between incumbent Ted Cruz and Democrat challenger Beto O'Rourke, O'Rourke's campaign had raised \$69 million and spent \$59 million as of October 17. These amounts were significantly above the \$40 million raised and \$34 million spent by the Cruz campaign. All in all, about \$5 billion was spent in the 2018 midterms.

Almost two-thirds of political donations went to the Democrats in this cycle's House contests, with in excess of 90 percent of House Democrats in competitive races outspending their Republican opponents.

Generally, the reason that any political party holding the presidency loses seats in Congress in the midterm is that the supporters of the party having the White House tend to be more satisfied. The party shut out of the White House, on the other hand, tends to be unsatisfied, even angry, and anger is a more powerful motivator than satisfaction.

Each election, however, has its own nuances, and each congressional district has its own issues and demographic changes affecting the outcome. Fox News commentator Tucker Carlson argued that the three biggest issues of the midterms were immigration, the economy, and nationalism — which Carlson defined as placing the interest of one's own country over that of any other nation.

President Donald Trump certainly defined the issues of immigration and nationalism (as opposed to globalism), at least for most voters. Many commentators were curious as to why the good economy did not help the Republicans more than it did. With the unemployment rate the lowest it has been in almost 50 years, it is a good question. The best answer is that the mainstream media, which clearly despise Trump, have chosen to give little coverage to the economy. Had the economic numbers been this good while Barack Obama was residing in the White House, does anyone doubt that the media would have given them much more coverage? The main power of the media is in setting the agenda — telling us



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what is important, in their mind, anyway — and the hard reality is that very little of what helps Trump and the Republicans is going to be on their newsworthy agenda.

Still, the Republicans could have done better implementing the agenda the country voted for in 2016. Despite having a Republican in the White House and controlling both houses of Congress, they failed to deliver on their promises to repeal ObamaCare and control immigration — which no doubt left many Republicans less than enthused about working hard to get them reelected.

Art Thompson, the CEO of the constitutionalist John Birch Society (the parent organization of The New American), said that many of the losing Republicans were those who chose to reject “the American First agenda.” In Oklahoma, for example, Representative Steve Russell “ran against the national message of the party,” according to Oklahoma City Mayor David Holt. Russell opposed much of Trump’s immigration agenda, and lost a seat that has been in Republican hands since 1976. Carlos Curbelo of Miami, the co-founder of the House “climate change caucus” and a “moderate” Republican, also lost.

Thompson placed much of the blame for the losses in the House on the poor leadership of Speaker Paul Ryan and his fellow RINOS. Other than the tax cut, there was not really much for the House Republicans to run on in the way of accomplishments. If anything, Ryan actually fought Trump on issues such as building a wall. And the failure to repeal ObamaCare — other than the ditching of the individual mandate, admittedly a good thing — had to depress Republican enthusiasm.

With many of those who opposed Trump’s “America First” agenda ousted from Congress, Thompson noted, Trump’s agenda might actually get a shot in the arm.

The Kavanaugh Effect

The Senate, however, was a different story, with Republicans adding to their slim majority. The “Brett Kavanaugh Effect” appears to have played a major role, as Democrats in Missouri, Indiana, Florida, and South Dakota who voted against his confirmation to the Supreme Court lost. In stark contrast, Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia was the lone Democrat to vote for Judge Brett Kavanaugh, and he won. According to Fox News’ Britt Hume, Manchin closely examined polling data during the hearings, which convinced him that “he was done” had he opposed Kavanaugh’s confirmation.

Trump spent the last two days of the campaign staging rallies in five states — Georgia, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri — states that had important Senate or gubernatorial contests, or both. In Tennessee, Representative Marsha Blackburn won the open Senate seat over Governor Phil Bredesen, who argued that his problem was the “brand” of the national Democratic Party. In Indiana, Democratic Senator Joe Donnelly lost to businessman Mike Braun, while Republican Josh Hawley ended the tenure of Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill.

Trump also supported incumbent Republicans, such as his 2016 primary foe, Ted Cruz, which demonstrated that he was willing to put aside their past differences to advance his agenda — which, of course includes immigration, healthcare, putting America First, and the like. Interestingly, what was almost totally absent from any of the contests in the Senate or the House was mention of Vladimir Putin and the alleged “Russian collusion” story.

The Democrats evidently decided that bringing up the largely discredited Russia probe was not going to win them any more votes than they already had, but with the Democrats regaining control of the House of Representatives, we can expect them to do all they can to resurrect that as an issue.



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With a compliant media and control of several House committees, it is expected that the Democrats will use their committee investigative powers to attack the Trump administration, probably on a daily basis. As House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, expected to resume the role as speaker of the House that she lost after the 2010 “red wave,” told PBS, the Democrats will “certainly honor responsibility as [providing] oversight of the executive branch.”

During the campaign, Democrats opted to downplay talk of impeachment of Trump (although Representative Maxine Waters was not shy about uttering the “I” word), presumably believing it would be counterproductive to their chances of regaining the House. But a reporter, Mollie Hemingway, traveling on an Amtrak train from New York to Washington on the day after the election, listened as Democratic Representative Jerrold Nadler spoke on his phone about what the Democrats had planned in the next Congress.

According to Hemingway, Nadler, who will chair the House Judiciary Committee (which would initiate any impeachment hearings), said to an unknown person on the other end of the line that the Democrats were “all in” on impeaching both Trump and Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh. Nadler was apparently unaware that a reporter for The Federalist, a conservative blog, was listening to his conversation.

It takes a simple majority of the House of Representatives to impeach the president, and the Democrats are now in the majority. Of course, it is uncertain if all Democrats in the next House would go along with such a plan, and it is doubtful that any Republicans would, unless there was a good reason to do so. And even if the Democrats did impeach Trump or Kavanaugh, it is highly unlikely that the Senate, in Republican control, would produce the two-thirds vote needed for conviction.

According to Hemingway, Nadler assured the person to whom he was talking that the investigation would not be called an impeachment probe at first, so as to not alarm the public. Concerning Kavanaugh, Nadler speculated that he could be charged with perjury — lying under oath — but added that Trump would probably appoint a replacement “just as bad.”

Were the Democrats to actually pull the trigger and impeach Trump, without any good reason other than they just do not like him, the American people could be expected to take note and punish the Democrats at the polls in 2020, especially if they blamed the Democrats for a slow-down in the economy as a result. Nadler even expressed that concern in his phone conversation.

Even a president who actually did do something wrong — Bill Clinton — and got impeached faced no actual prospect of conviction. But it did lead to the Democrats gaining seats in the House of Representatives in the 1998 elections. A groundless impeachment would certainly infuriate the Republican base, driving them into increased political action in 2020.

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