

### Major Polling Stories of the 2018 Cycle

- 1) **It is indeed all about President Trump.** Almost seven out of ten (69%) registered voters are either voting to send a signal of support (31%) or opposition (38%) to the president. This ties Obama (69%) as a high water mark since this question was first asked in 1998.
- 2) **Intensity & Interest in the Election.** An all-time midterm high of 70% of registered voters say they are very interested in the upcoming election (percent 9 or 10 on a 10 point interest scale). This exceeds the previous high water mark of 61% in 2006 and 2010. *Perspective:* 72% of registered voters said they were very interested in the election in mid-October of 2016.
- 3) **Early Vote & Turnout.** Thirty-five percent (35%) of likely voters report having already voted. This shatters the previous midterm high of 25% in 2014. Similarly, this exceeds the 32% of early voters in 2016. This represents over 40% of the vote in the 38 states that allow significant early voting.  
Republicans are behind with early voters on congressional preference (+11% Democrat). Caution should be taken interpreting this margin as it mirrors 2014 (+8% Democrat) and 2016 (+11% Democrat). In both cycles Republicans captured a majority of the two party vote cast.
- 4) **Likely Voters.** There is yet another way to express the surge of interest and a likely record of votes cast in a midterm election: looking at our Likely Voter model as a percent of registered voters. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of registered voters qualified as Likely Voters. This is up sharply from 64% in September and 72% in mid-October as self-described interest surged with millennials, Latinos, and other voter groups.  
While the Likely Voter models are different each cycle, this 77% is higher than the wave elections of 2010 (75% Likely Voters) and 2014 (69% Likely Voters). As in mid-October, we are witnessing the first time where congressional preference was stronger for Democrats with Likely Voters than with all registered voters in a midterm election (since 2006 when this scale was first used by NBCWSJ).
- 5) **Congressional Preference.** Democrats clearly enjoyed a sustained advantage on congressional preference this cycle. Republicans have never been ahead on congressional preference at any time this cycle. The Democratic advantage has ranged from a low of six points (July 2018) to a high of 12 points (September 2018). Today, Democrats are ahead 49% to 43% among registered voters. This advantage increases slightly to 50% to 43% among Likely Voters. As Democrats need to win the national vote by roughly seven points to win the House, Tuesday night should witness a number of very close House campaigns.

- 6) **Political Geography is Destiny.** Never was it clearer than this cycle that congressional and senate races are impacted by the national environment, but, these are not national campaigns. Republican margins improved because of stronger numbers since September in Republican held congressional districts. There were two months in August and September where the Republican congressional preference was down to two or one point over Democrats in GOP districts. This is the second track now with stronger Republican margins (50% Republican/41% Democrat) in these districts. This +9 margin at least puts Republicans in a competitive position in these districts from past cycles.
- 7) **Gender.** Last cycle, in the exit poll, men voted Republican for Congress by 12 points, women voted Democratic by 10 points. This is the largest gender gap since exit polls began. The most likely prospect is this record does not last for long and there is an even larger gender difference in 2018 exit polls. In this survey among Likely Voters, men prefer a Republican Congress by 7 points, while women prefer a Democratic Congress by 18 points, a net 25 point difference! A major story is white college educated women moving decisively in the Democratic column, while the margins among non-college white men reached 35 points among Likely Voters in this survey.
- 8) **Gender by CD Type.** Even these significant national trends by gender need to be overlaid by congressional district type. For example, while white college educated men prefer a Democratic Congress by five points nationally, in GOP held CDs, these men prefer a Republican Congress by 13 points. While that is a dramatic example, it holds true across the four gender and education breaks.
- 9) **Putting 2018 in Perspective.** The average midterm right direction/wrong track in a wave election is 29%/59%. Today, due to very high Republican numbers, while a majority say the country is off on the wrong track, it is a much narrower 38% right direction/54% wrong track.
- 10) **The State of the Political Parties.** Here is an unnoticed story, the improvement in perception of the Republican Party over the last few months. And, conversely, the slight slide in the perception of the Democratic Party, most specifically with white voters. With all this focus on President Trump, what is overlooked is Congresswoman Pelosi's weak numbers, especially among Independents.
- 11) **The Economy.** Any understanding of this cycle needs to consider the economy — and the counterfactuals that are different than one typically sees in a wave election. Economic satisfaction is at 68%. Personal economic expectation is even higher at 74%. People believe the Republican party is better able to handle the economy by an all-time polling record of 15 points.

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