Sabato’s Crystal Ball

2018

March 20, 2018: National Association of Development Organizations
NCAA March Madness
Will There be a Wave?
U.S. Senate
- 51 Republicans
- 49 Democrats (including 2 independents)

U.S. House
- 238 Republicans (240)
- 194 Democrats (195)
- 3 vacancies (2 in R seats, 1 in D seat)
Midterm elections

Lower turnout, presidential penalty

Source: United States Elections Project
2018 House: President Trump – the #1 issue in November

Trump approval in polling averages (as of March 19):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polling average</th>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Disapproval</th>
<th>Net approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FiveThirtyEight</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>-12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HuffPost Pollster</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>-11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RealClearPolitics</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>-12.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gallup as of March 19:
- 40% approve, 56% disapprove
- -16 point net approval
2018 House: Presidential referendum?

Approval and House elections in 1st midterm, 1946-2014

Source: Approval data from Gallup
Some form of “will you vote for the Democrat or Republican in your House district?”

Common poll question, highly predictive even well before the midterm election.

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<th>Dem</th>
<th>Rep</th>
<th>Margin</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>FiveThirtyEight</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>D +9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HuffPost Pollster</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>D +6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RealClearPolitics</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>D +8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Special Elections Show Biggest-Ever Democratic Wave

Democrats in state legislative districts have beat their predecessors’ margins by 15 percentage points on average. The only larger wave is the 1994 Republican surge.

Source: Daniel Donner, DailyKOS Elections
Democrats need 23-24 net seats to win the House
Yet the Crystal Ball rates only 27 GOP-held seats as Toss-up or worse for Republicans – so Democrats will probably have to win some seats where the GOP remains favored
GOP gerrymandering edge after 2010 election
“Inefficient” distribution of Democratic voters
Democrats may have to win the House popular vote by 8 or more percentage points to win a House majority
On the one hand, the president’s party usually struggles in midterms, losing average of 4 Senate seats since 1946.
On the other hand, Dems are more “exposed” than any non-pres party ever in a midterm
Dems defending 10 seats in Trump states
2018 Senate: #MapsMatter

Notes: Both independents caucus with Democrats. *Minnesota and Mississippi will each hold special elections in Nov. 2018 for their Class II seats along with the regularly-scheduled elections for their Class I seats.
2018 Senate Ratings

Democrats/Independents: 45 (-4)

Republicans: 49 (-2)

Notes: †Angus King (I-ME) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT) caucus with the Democrats in the Senate.
*In Nov. 2018, both Minnesota and Mississippi will hold special elections for their Class II Senate seats concurrently with the regularly-scheduled elections for their Class I seats. Shading on the left side of each state represents the rating for the regular election; shading on the right side represents the rating for the special election.
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SABATO’S CRYSTAL BALL

www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball

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