

Hotline Congressional and Gubernatorial Updates

Top Down-Ballot Hotline
Stories of the Month

April XX, 2016

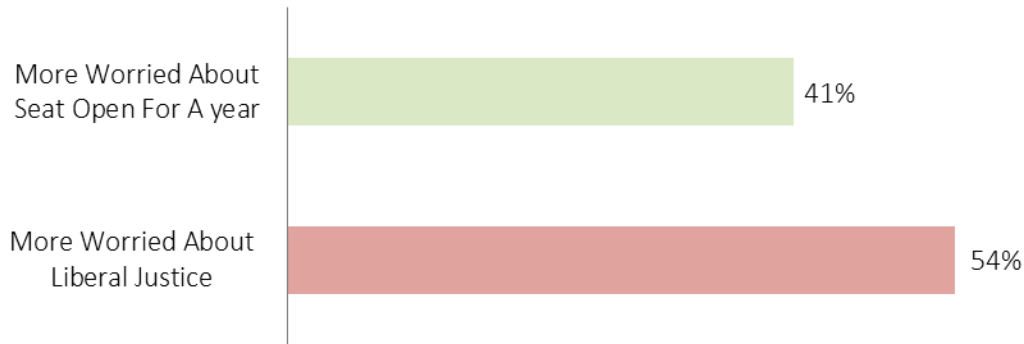
Producer: Owen Minott
Edited by: Katharine Conlon
Director: Afzal Bari

GOP Senators Find SCOTUS Block to Be Good Politics

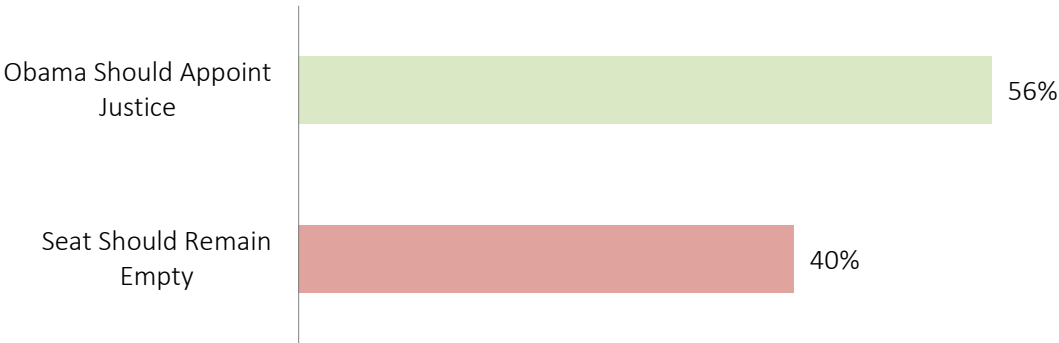
Public Opinion on SCOTUS Nomination

Based on Headlines From
National Journal's Hotline

GOP Pollster



Public Policy Polling (PPP)



Republican Pollster Greg Stimple wrote a memo saying a majority of US voters support the GOP strategy to block any nomination, although a PPP poll and a Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll contradicted these findings

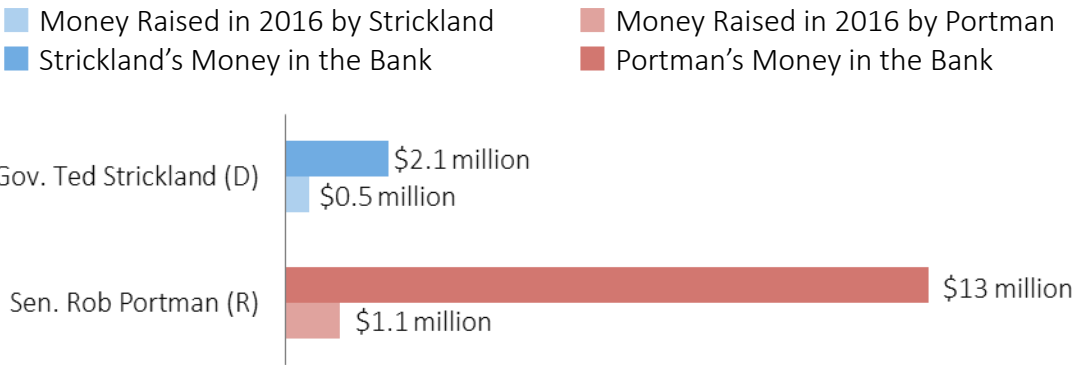
Sources: Andrea Drusch, "GOP Poll: SCOTUS Block is Good Politics," National Journal, March 10, 2016; Seung Min Kim, "Senate GOP Polling Shows Upside to SCOTUS Blockade," Politico, March 10, 2016.

Ohio Senate Race Intensifies Between Incumbent and Governor

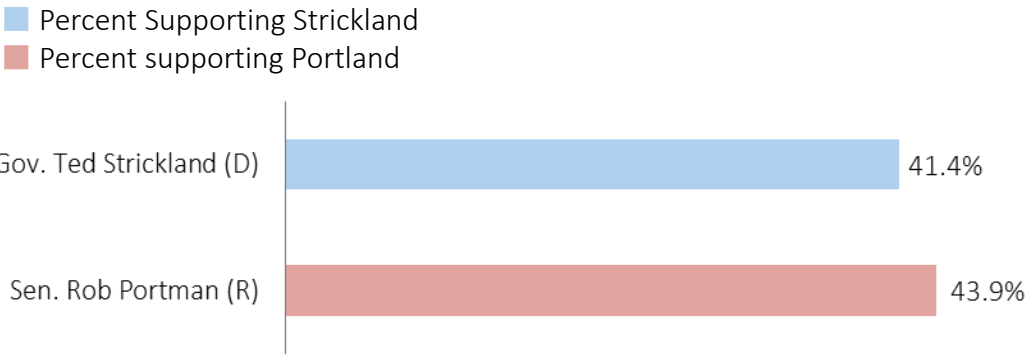
Updates From the 2016 Ohio Senate Race

Based on Headlines From
National Journal's Hotline

Money raised in Ohio Senate race



Ohio Senate race polling



Campaign Updates:

- Senator Rob Portman denounced Trump after declining multiple questions about him: “Hate groups like the KKK have no place in our country or our party, and I don’t think anyone should hesitate to disavow them and I think Donald Trump’s hesitancy to do so is wrong.”
- President Obama and VP Biden have endorsed Governor Ted Strickland, and Biden has traveled to Ohio to help Strickland fundraise.
- Portman released a series of attack ads criticizing Strickland and his primary opponent for “acting like children.”
- The gun control group Americans for Responsible Solutions, founded by former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords endorsed Ted Strickland.

Sources: HuffPost Pollster, March, 2016; Andrea Drusch, “Strickland Raised \$500,000 in 2015, has \$2M,” National Journal, March 4, 2016.

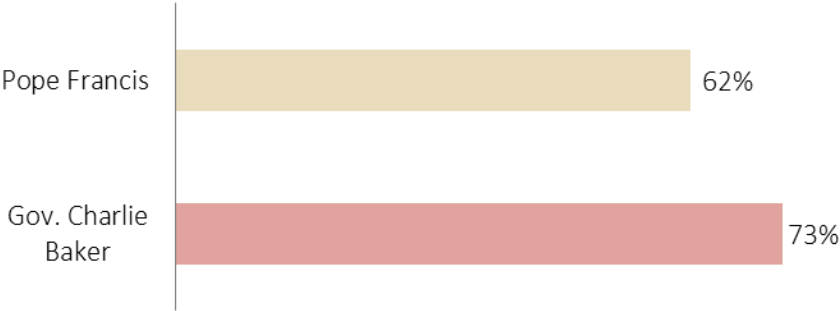
MA GOP Governor Popular in the Blue State, Says He Won't Support Trump

Governor Charlie Baker (R) Hotline Updates

Based on Headlines From
National Journal's Hotline



Governor has higher approval rating than the Pope



Baker Speaks Out Against Trump:

- Baker said that **he will not be voting for Trump in November**, making him one of the most prominent GOP figures to do so.
- Baker **was praised for this declaration by the Boston Globe**; the Globe endorsed Baker in his gubernatorial bid despite nearly always endorsing Democrats.
- This is not the first time Baker has spoken out of step with his party: **he is a strong advocate of gay marriage, and supports abortion rights.**
- Baker already **has fundraised \$2.8 million**, despite the fact that he doesn't face an election until 2018.



Baker writes op-ed against cannabis legalization

- Baker joined Attorney General Maura Healey (D), and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh (D) to write an op-ed vehemently opposing cannabis legalization, which is often proposed in the liberal state.
- "Decades of research have now debunked the myth that marijuana is harmless. The science also shows that regular marijuana users — especially those who start at a young age — are more likely to try more dangerous drugs," he wrote.

Sources: The Noun Project, Cole M. Johnstone; Milky, Digital Innovation, The Noun Project; Zach Montellaro, "Baker, Healey Write Joint Op-Ed Opposing Marijuana Legalization," National Journal, March 7, 2016; Zach Montellaro, "Boston Globe Editorial Praises Baker for Disavowing Trump," National Journal, March 4, 2016.

Democrats Have Recruited a Deep Bench of Senate Candidates

Senate Race Hotline Updates

*Based on Headlines From
National Journal's Hotline*



Iowa

- Democrats landed a former state officeholder, Lt. Governor Patty Judge (D), to challenge entrenched Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley (R).



Missouri

- Decorated Iraq war veteran and Secretary of State Jason Kander (D) is a formidable challenger to Sen. Roy Blunt (R).



Arizona

- Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (D) is challenging Sen. John McCain (R), and is already utilizing Trump in her campaign messaging.



Indiana

- Former Rep. Baron Hill (D) is trying to pull a Joe Donnelly (R) and pull off an upset to win in Republican-friendly Indiana.



Arkansas

- Accomplished U.S. Attorney Connor Eldridge (D) is challenging underfunded Sen. John Boozman (R).



North Carolina

- North Carolina is the only targeted state where Senate Democrats have come up empty-handed.

How Damaging Would a Trump Nomination Be For GOP Senators?

- Under normal circumstances, the healthy Republican advantage in these conservative states would make it very difficult for any Democrat to win. Former Sen. Mark Pryor, hot-shot recruit Alison Lundergan Grimes and name-brand Democrat Robin Carnahan all failed to persuade crossover voters in tough territories in recent years.
- Since declining to immediately condemn David Duke, lashing out at recent debates, and viciously smearing anyone who criticizes him, Trump has become toxic beyond the battleground states. Party officials are already urging their members to specifically target suburban areas, where Trump's favorability numbers are brutal.

Source: Josh Kraushaar, "Senate Democrats Are Well-Prepared for a Wave," National Journal, March 4, 2016.

Primary Season Heats Up Nationwide

House of Representatives Hotline Primary Updates

Based on Headlines From
National Journal's Hotline



- Arizona, 5th District:** Former Mesa Mayor Scott Smith (R) said he was considering a run for Rep. Matt Salmon's (R) seat after a poll showed him defeating state Sen. President Andy Biggs (R) in a head-to-head race. Smith leads Biggs 33% to 26% in the poll.
- California, 46th District:** The State Bar of California released a report concluding that former State Sen. and House candidate Joe Dunn (D) engaged in deception and influence peddling during his tenure as the bar's leader; Dunn has sued claiming he was improperly fired.
- Florida, 5th District:** Federal prosecutors Friday charged the head of an organization with conspiracy to commit wire fraud that may include Rep. Corrine Brown (D), outlining a years-long scheme to defraud donors out of about \$800,000 by using the influence of a public official.
- Georgia, 3rd District:** St. Smyrna Baptist Church pastor Tamarkus T. Cook (D) will run in the Democratic primary for retiring Rep. Lynn Westmoreland's (R) seat. Republicans are heavily favored in the district, which Mitt Romney won with 66% of the vote.
- Illinois, 8th District:** Democrats "are clashing over a mailer sent by" former state deputy treasurer Raja Krishnamoorthi's (D) "campaign criticizing ... State Sen. Mike Noland (D) for his vote last April against funding for autism, HIV/AIDS and epilepsy treatment."

- Kansas, 1st District:** Renew Kansas, "the state's official advocacy group for Kansas ethanol producers, farmers, and those who provide services to the ethanol production industry in Kansas," is backing physician Roger Marshall (R).
- Maryland, 8th District:** The "raucous nine-candidate race for the Democratic nomination to replace" Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D) is "likely to become the costliest House primary in the nation."
- New York, 13th District:** Rep. Charlie Rangel (D), who's made his support for Assemblyman Keith Wright (D) known, told voters that the district's 'tranquility' would be upset if he is succeeded by someone 'not respected in all parts of this congressional district.'
- Pennsylvania, 2nd District:** Rep. Chaka Fattah (D) "will head to federal court Monday in an attempt to get some counts dismissed in his racketeering case. ... Fattah faces 22 of the 29 counts, said prosecutors."
- Pennsylvania, 7th District:** As Rep. Pat Meehan (R) faces a primary challenge from businessman Stan Casacio (R), mainstream "Democratic fundraisers are joining GOP leaders Vito Canuso and Pat Deon in raising piles of cash for ... Meehan."

Sources: Kimberly Railey, "McCall Enters Race in NC-13," National Journal, March 7, 2016.

Court-Ordered Redistricting Sends House Members Scrambling to Run in New Districts

States Where Redistricting Shapes House Races

Based on Headlines From
National Journal's Hotline

Florida (2nd, 5th, 10th, 11th)



- **Rep. Daniel Webster (R)**, who twice ran for House Speaker last year, became very vulnerable under the new map.
- Webster announced that he's leaving behind the heavily Democratic 10th District to run in the 11th, where **Rep. Richard Nugent (R)** is retiring.
- Webster will face **Justin Grabelle (R)**, Nugent's former Chief of Staff.
- **Rep. Gwen Graham (D)** has been dealt a far more challenging 2nd district.
- Graham could sit out the election and prepare for a state-wide election in 2018, but she is still awaiting word from **Rep. Corrine Brown (D)**; if Brown opts to run in the 10th than Graham could run in Brown's current 5th district.

Virginia (2nd, 4th)



- In Virginia, **Rep. Scott Rigell's (R)** retirement from the Virginia Beach-based 2nd District provided a cushiony landing spot for fellow Republican **Rep. Randy Forbes (R)**, whose neighboring 4th District was redrawn as Richmond-based and heavily Democratic.
- Rigell has endorsed Forbes, who lives just outside the far more GOP-friendly district and faces a primary against state Delegate **Scott Taylor (R)**.

North Carolina (2nd, 13th)



- Under new lines in North Carolina, **Rep. George Holding's (R)** 13th district jumped across the state, so he announced Friday he'll run in the new 2nd District against fellow Republican **Rep. Renee Ellmers (R)**.
- The third-term congresswoman was already facing a primary challenge; now she has a colleague to deal with instead. One of them will join the ranks of former members of Congress ousted by a delegation mate — though that usually happens at the start of a decade, not in the middle of one.

Sources: Kyle Trysgstad, "Survivor: Redistricting Island," National Journal, February 23, 2016.

DCCC Names House Republicans That Would Be Most Damaged By Trump or Cruz Nomination

GOP House Members Targeted by Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee



Rod Blum (R-IA):
1st District
Toss Up



Mike Coffman (R-CO):
6th District
Toss Up



Bob Dold (R-IL):
10th District
Toss Up



Scott Garrett (R-NJ):
5th District
Leans GOP



Crescent Hardy (R-NV):
4th District
Leans Dem



Steve Knight (R-CA):
25th District
Leans GOP



John Mica (R-FL):
9th District
Leans GOP



Bruce Poliquin (R-ME):
2nd District
Toss Up



Tim Walberg (R-MI):
7th District
Leans GOP



Lee Zeldin (R-NY):
1st District
Leans GOP

Headline from National Journal's Hotline
House Ratings from Cook Political Report

The Memo:

- In a late January, the DCC named 13 House Republicans in swing districts that would be most damaged by the Trump brand, with Democrats potentially turning out in droves to vote against Trump.
- The memo argues that Trump's and Cruz' focus on social issues like gay marriage and Planned Parenthood could put Republicans in swing districts in the uncomfortable position of defending their presidential nominee.
- "Donald Trump will be our best turnout mechanism," said Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY), chairman of the House Democrats' messaging arm.
- Despite the chance to pick up seats, the DCC concedes that retaking the House is unlikely even with a Trump nomination.
- The memo also included Reps. Mike Bishop (R-MI), Barbara Comstock (R-IL) and Patrick Meehan (R-PA), races that aren't as close
- The memo did not include Rep. Frank Guinta (R-NH) or Rep. Will Hurd (R-TX), both races that are toss ups.

Sources: Kimberly Rayley, "Democrats Expect to Benefit From Cruz, Trump Nomination," National Journal, January 27, 2016; Lauren French, "House Democrats Say Trump Could Be a Real Boon for Them," Politico, December 8, 2015; Cook Political Report, February 2016.

Key Senate Races: NH Fight Over Guantanamo, IL TV Spending and FL GOP Expect New Candidate

Hotline Senate Updates

*Based on Headlines From
National Journal's Hotline*

Illinois



- **Sen. Mark Kirk (R)** launched his second TV ad Tuesday, attacking **Rep. Tammy Duckworth (D-08)** over **Syrian refugees**. The ad is backed by an \$800,000 buy, according to his campaign.
- A narrator says in the ad: "ISIS used fake Syrian passports to commit the horrific Paris attacks. Now we know they're printing thousands more. Still, Tammy Duckworth supports bringing 200,000 Syrian refugees to America."
- **Recent polls found that Duckworth and Kirk safely led their primary challengers.**

New Hampshire



- **Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R)** attacked challenger **Gov. Maggie Hassan (D)** recently over Guantanamo, saying Hassan "has been inconsistent" on the issue, and was once "open to closing Guantanamo Bay" before now saying she's "skeptical." **Ayotte opposes closing Guantanamo.**
- Ayotte has stood by **GOP Senators declaration to not consider any Obama SCOTUS nominee.**
- After Ayotte proposed to limit outside spending in the race, **Hassan proposed an additional limit of \$15 million by the campaigns themselves, which Ayotte rejected.**

Florida



- Republican strategists following the race said wealthy homebuilder **Carlos Beruff (R), a close ally of Gov. Rick Scott (R), could breathe life back into a race** that has slowly been sliding through the party's fingers in recent months. **Beruff is expected to announce his candidacy in the race to replace Sen. Marco Rubio (R)** on Feb. 29 at his company's headquarters.
- Allies said he also has an appealing personal narrative that could play well in an election cycle that has so far favored outsiders. As the **son of Cuban immigrants**, Beruff never finished college but managed to become a **successful businessman.**

Sources: Andrea Drusch, "Republicans Put Hopes on Beruff," National Journal, February 24, 2016; Andrea Drusch, "Hassan, Ayotte Spar Over Guantanamo Plans," National Journal, February 24, 2016; Andrea Drusch, "Kirk Goes on TV with \$800,000 Buy," National Journal, February 24, 2016.

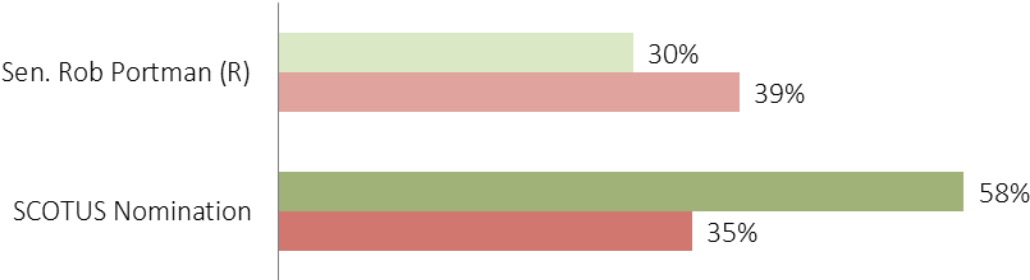
Senators Portman and Toomey Approval Sagging; Their Constituents Want SCOTUS Vacancy Filled

Republican Incumbent Senators' Approval Rating, Public Opinion on Supreme Court Nomination in their State

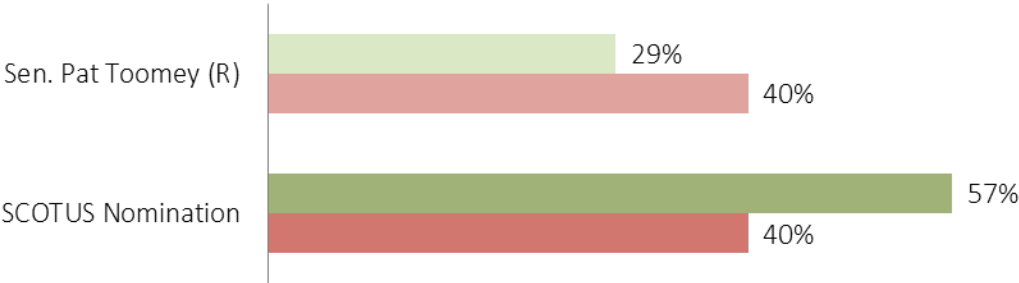
■ Approve ■ Want Vacancy Filled
■ Disapprove ■ Wants Nominee Blocked

*Based on Headlines From
National Journal's Hotline*

Ohio



Pennsylvania



Analysis:

- Incumbent GOP Senators Rob Portman (OH) and Pat Toomey (PA) face tight races in swing states this year.
- Despite their constituents preference for seeing the Supreme Court vacancy filled within the year, both Portman and Toomey have taken a firm stance against considering any Supreme Court nomination by the Obama administration.
- 70% of independent voters in Ohio want to see the nomination filled this year, as do 60% of independents in Pennsylvania.

Sources: Andrea Drusch, "PPP: Toomey, Portman Approval Sagging," National Journal, February 23, 2016.