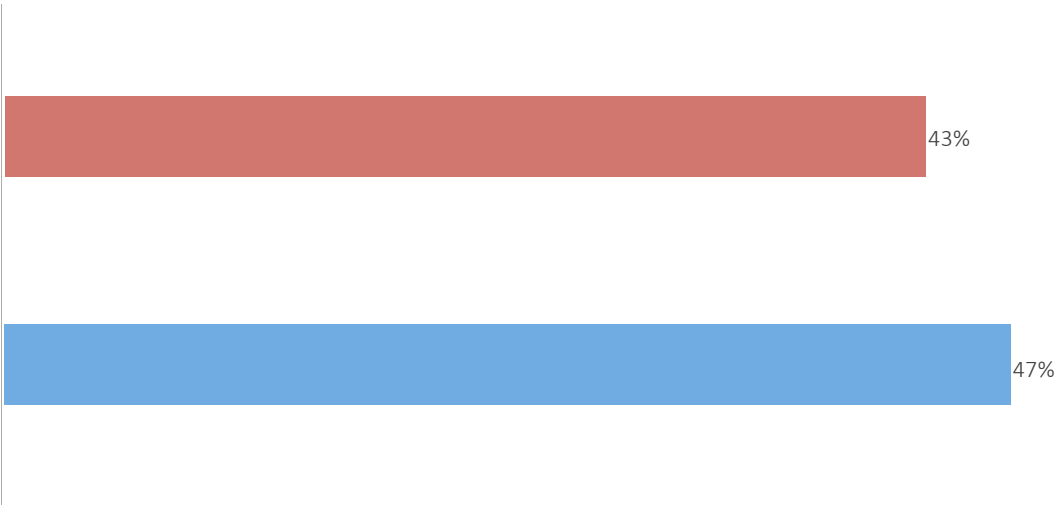


# Democrats Experience Slight Surge in Preferred Party to Control Congress

## Preference for Outcome of 2016 Congressional Elections

Data from Most Recent NBC/WSJ Poll

- Percentage of Respondents who Prefer Republican-Controlled Congress
- Percentage of Respondents who Prefer a Democrat-Controlled Congress



**Analysis**

- Democrats appear to have a 4-point advantage down-ballot following Clinton’s post-convention surge.
- The parties were tied on this question at 46% to 46% in June.
- The current 4-point lead is the same as an October 2014 poll just before Republicans actually picked up 13 seats.
- Therefore this information does not necessarily indicate that Clinton’s surge will actually indicate an impact on down-ballot voting come election day.

Sources: Charlie Cook, “Doubting a Down-Ballot Wave,” National Journal, August 8, 2016; NBC News/WSJ Poll, July 31, 2016 – August 3, 2016.

# Not All Presidential Landslides Were Accompanied by Equally Strong Down-Ballot Gains

## How Other Presidential Landslides Affected Down-Ballot Voting

President	Down-Ballot Effect
Ronald Reagan 1980	President Reagan won the 1980 election against President Carter with a 10-point 51-41 lead and carried 44 states. This resulted in a <b>34-seat gain</b> for Republicans in the House and a <b>12-seat gain</b> in the Senate.
Lyndon B. Johnson 1964	President Johnson beat Barry Goldwater by 22 points, 61-39 percent. He carried 44 states. This resulted in a <b>37-seat gain</b> for Democrats in the House, but only a <b>single-seat gain</b> in the Senate.
Richard Nixon 1972	President Nixon won his campaign against George McGovern by a 23 point lead at 61-38 percent. Nixon carried a whopping 49 states. However, Republicans only <b>gained 12 House seats</b> and suffered a <b>2-seat loss</b> in the Senate.
Ronald Reagan 1984	President Reagan beat Walter Mondale by 18 points, 59-41 percent. Reagan also carried 49 states. However, Republicans only experienced a <b>14-seat gain</b> in the House and a <b>2-seat loss</b> in the Senate.

**Analysis**

- Historically, it appears that a high-margin victory at the top of the ticket does not necessarily indicate high-margin victories throughout.
- However, it is important to note that today people are doing more straight-ticket voting and less ticket-splitting than they were in the past.

Sources: Charlie Cook, “Doubting a Down-Ballot Wave,” National Journal, August 8, 2016; NBC News/WSJ Poll, July 31, 2016 – August 3, 2016.

# Clinton Voters May be Motivated to Make ‘Check and Balance’ Choices Down-Ballot

## Charlie Cook’s 2 Factors for Doubting Clinton’s Down-Ballot Impact

# 1

In the House, there are fewer competitive districts than at any point in our lifetimes. Natural population sorting and gerrymandering have contributed to a phenomenon in which there is not much elasticity in the House these days.

# 2

In the Senate, the GOP majority is definitely at risk, but the dislike for Clinton may also impact the Democrats at this level, when Donald Trump’s unfavorability is not in the mix (assuming voters expect Clinton to win the presidency handily.) The “don’t give Hillary Clinton a blank check” argument might cause Republicans and Independents who are voting against Trump rather than for Clinton to look for a “check and balance” down ballot.

### Additional Points

- Cook expects the Senate to experience an even split give or take a seat or two.
- The primary risk for Republicans is that voters will stay home rather than vote for Hillary Clinton.
- This would result in collateral damage the rest of the Republican ticket.
- In terms of voter turnout, Cook expects it to remain at normal levels because voters are motivated to turn up and vote against one candidate or the other, rather than being apathetic.