

Charlie Cook's Tour of American Politics

Insights into the 2018 midterm elections

August 2018

Producer

National Journal Presentation Center

Director

Alistair Taylor

Roadmap

● Eight things to watch in 2018

1. Generic ballot polling
2. Direction of country polling
3. Trump approval ratings
4. Trump approval by intensity
5. Political party approval ratings
6. Consumer confidence/consumer sentiment
7. Unemployment rate
8. Policy polling: tax reform vs. ACA

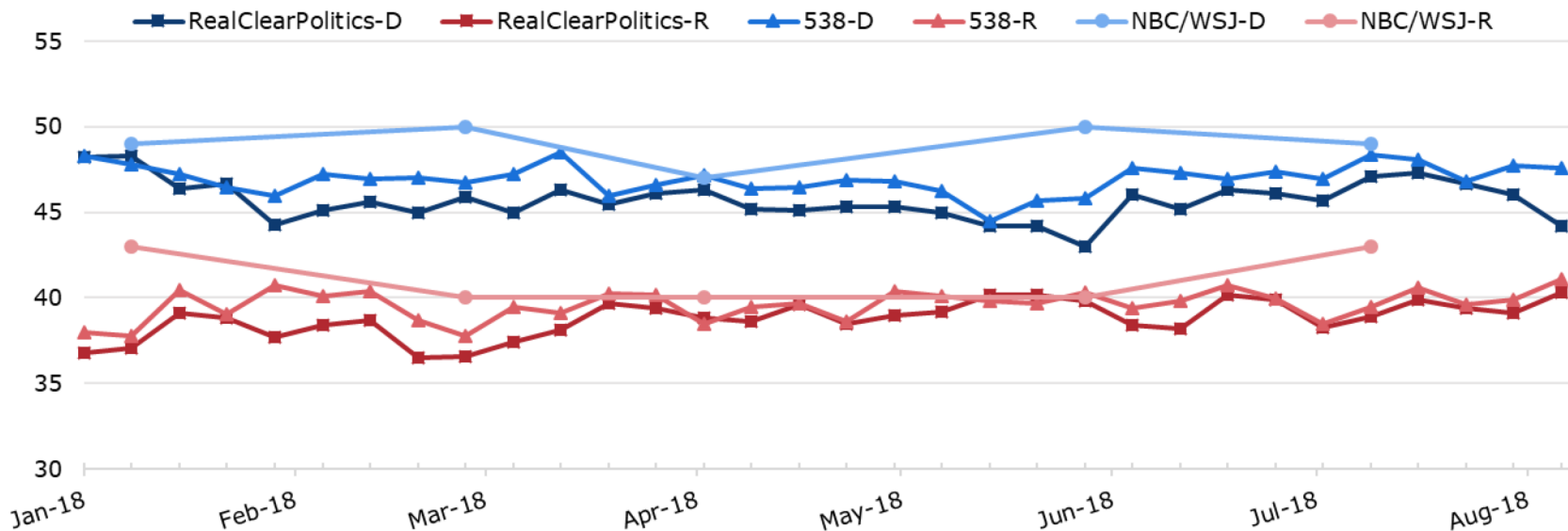
○ Political trends in the US

- Previous wave elections
- Insights on 2020

Democrats hold about a 7-point lead in generic ballot polling

Do you prefer a Congress controlled by Republicans or Democrats?

AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESPONSES



D+3.9

RealClearPolitics Average
Week of August 12, 2018

D+6.5

FiveThirtyEight Average
Week of August 12, 2018

D+6.0

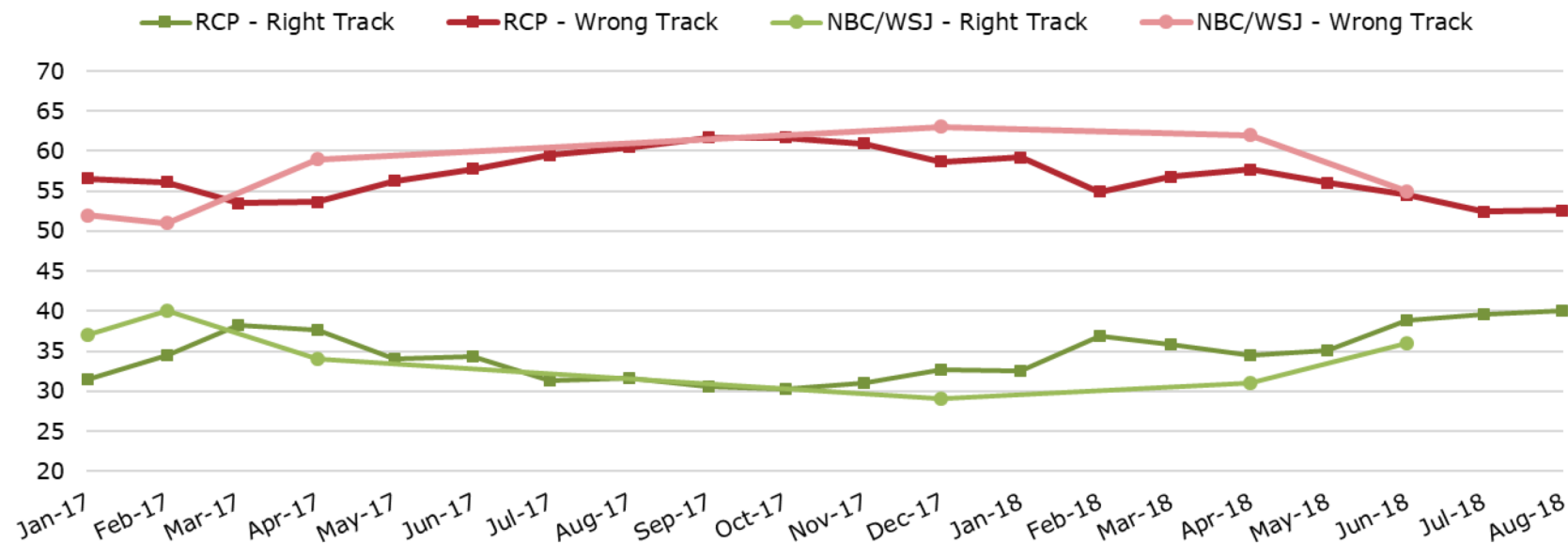
NBC News/WSJ
Last poll: July 15, 2018:

Sources: RealClearPolitics.com, FiveThirtyEight.com, NBC News/WSJ survey, 2018.

Americans hold a pessimistic view of the country's future

In what direction is the country headed?

AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESPONSES



40.1% **52.6%**
 RealClearPolitics Average
 Week of August 1, 2018

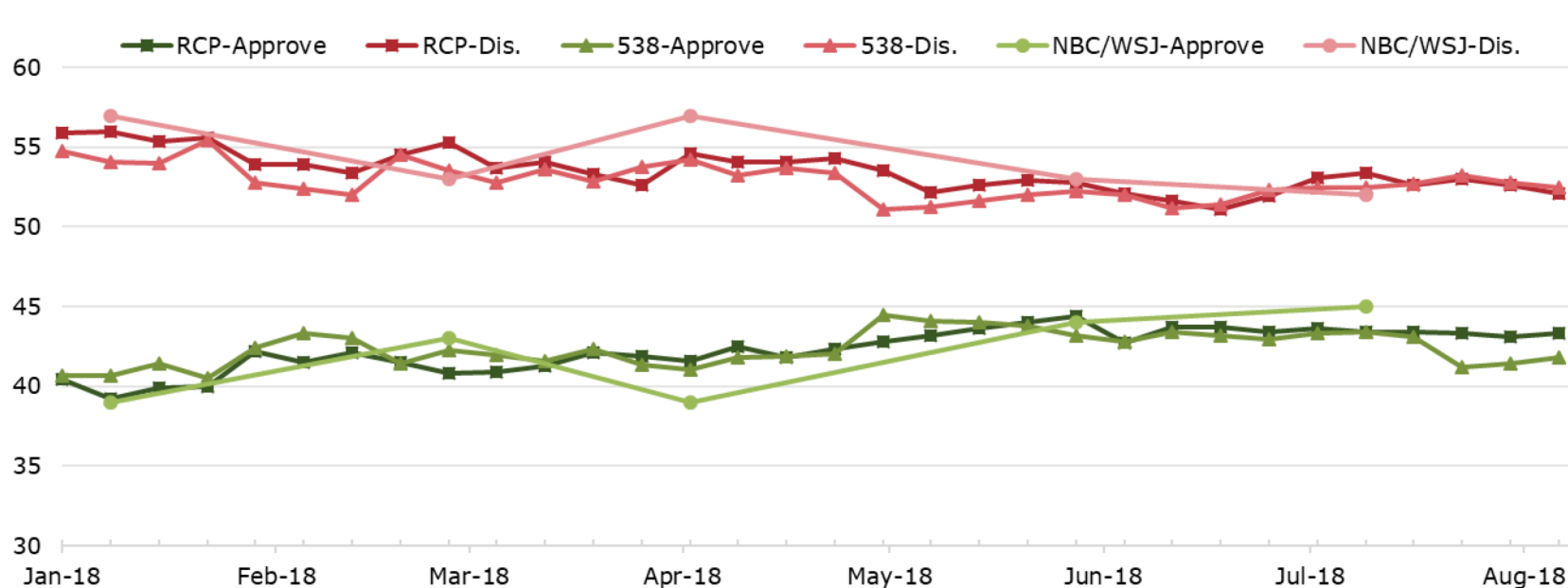
36% **55%**
 NBC News/WSJ
 Last poll: June 4, 2018:

Sources: RealClearPolitics.com, NBC News/WSJ survey, 2018.

Trump's approval rating has hovered in the low 40% range

Do you approve or disapprove of President Trump's job performance?

AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESPONSES



43.3% **52.1%**
 RealClearPolitics Average
 Week of August 12, 2018

41.8% **52.5%**
 FiveThirtyEight Average
 Week of August 12, 2018

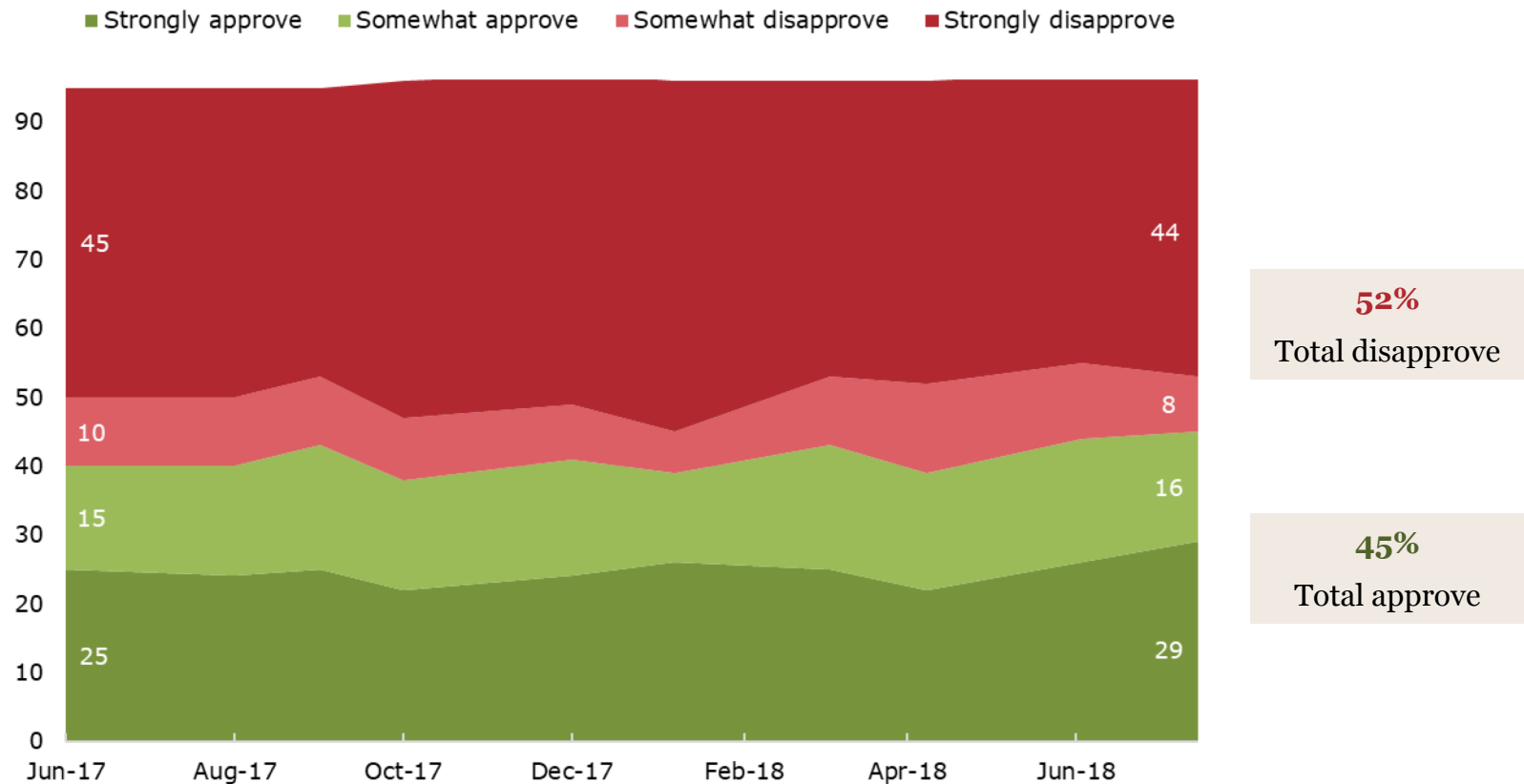
45% **52%**
 NBC News/WSJ
 Last poll: July 15, 2018:

Sources: RealClearPolitics.com, FiveThirtyEight.com, NBC News/WSJ, 2018.

More people strongly disapprove of President Trump's job performance than strongly approve

How much do you approve or disapprove of President Trump's job performance?

NBC/WSJ; AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESPONSES

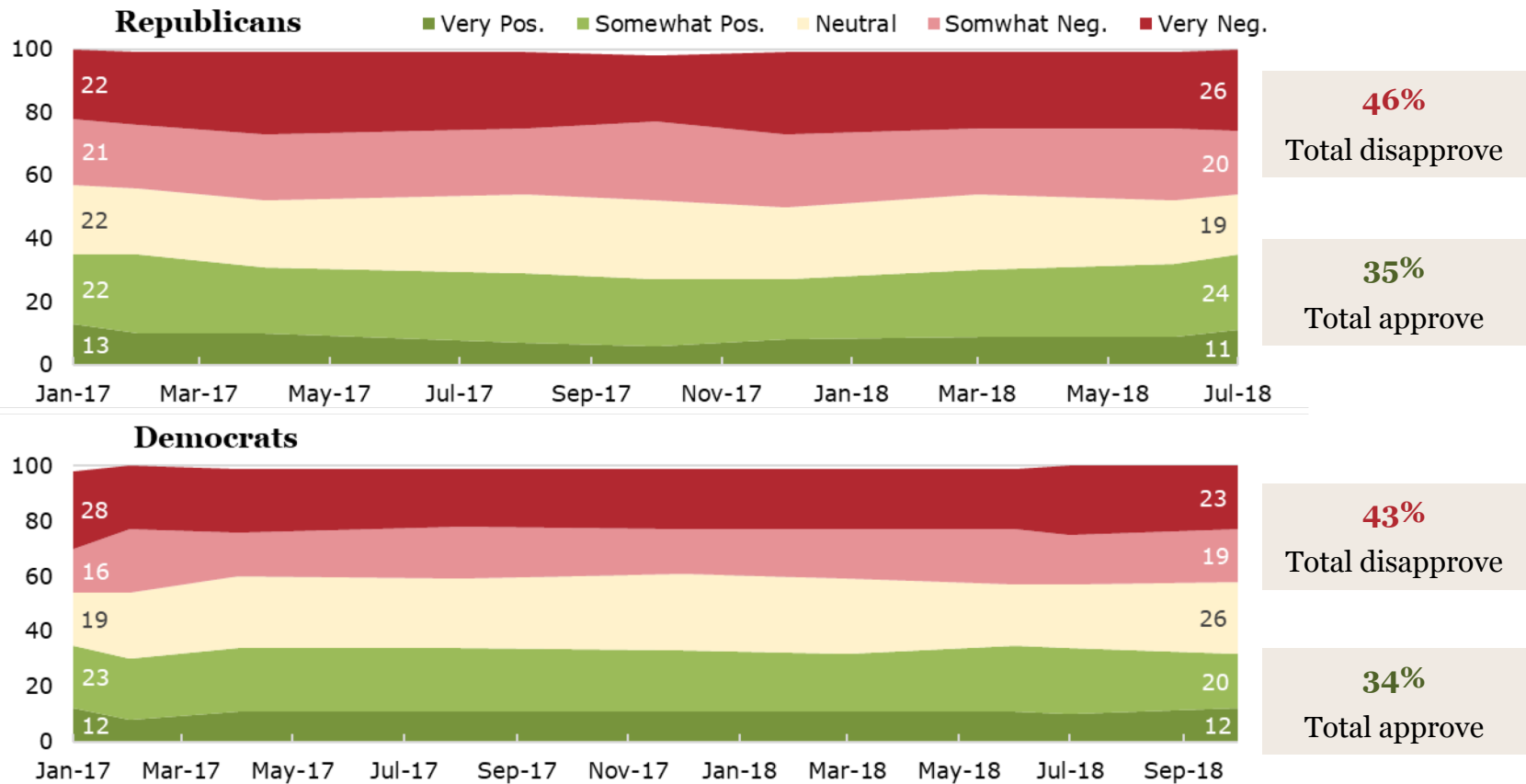


Sources: NBC News/WSJ survey, 2018.

Americans hold a generally negative view towards both parties

Do you approve or disapprove of the Democratic/Republican party?

AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESPONSES

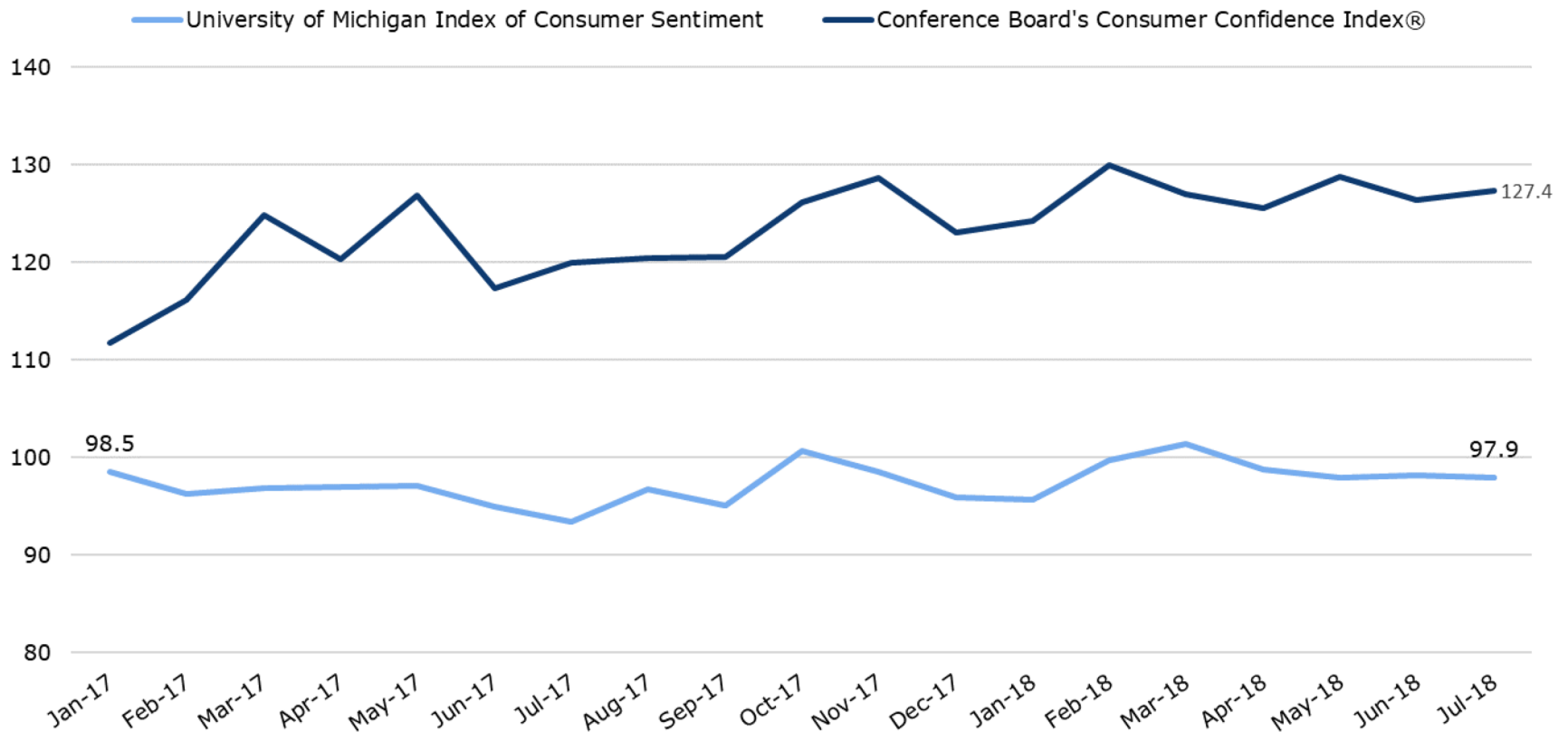


Sources: NBC News/WSJ survey, 2018.

Consumer confidence has declined slightly in recent months

Tracking polls of consumers

INDICES CALCULATED BY THE SURVEYING ORGANIZATIONS

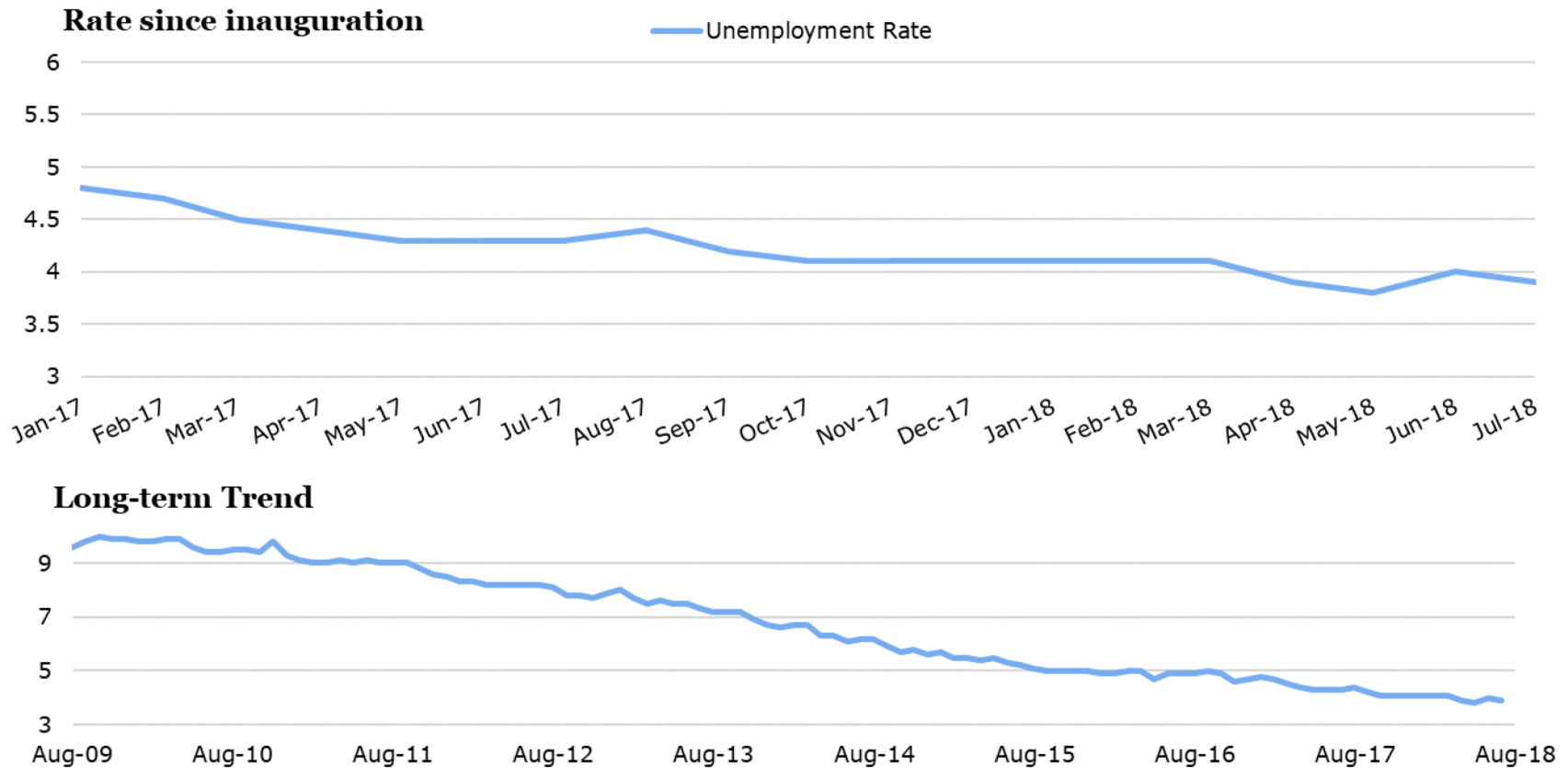


Sources: Conference Board, 2018; University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers, 2018.

The unemployment rate is at an almost historic low of 4%

Monthly civilian unemployment rate

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LABOR FORCE; SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

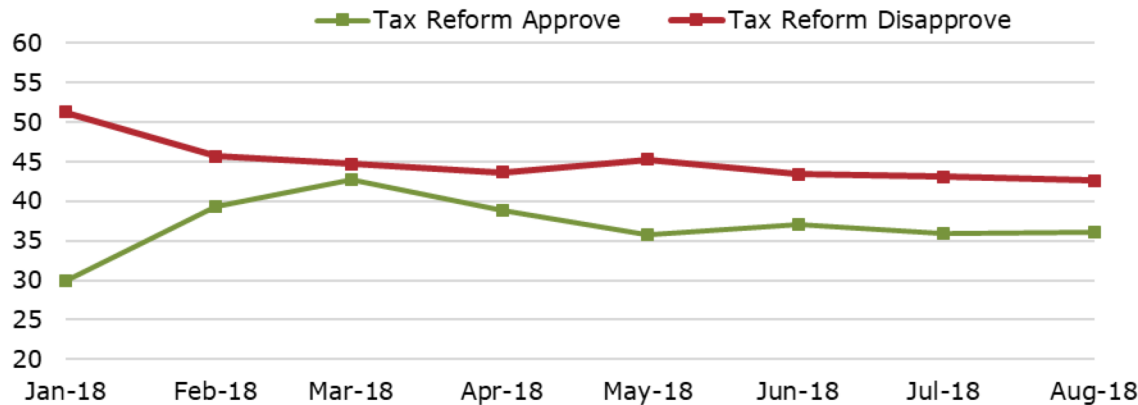


Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018.

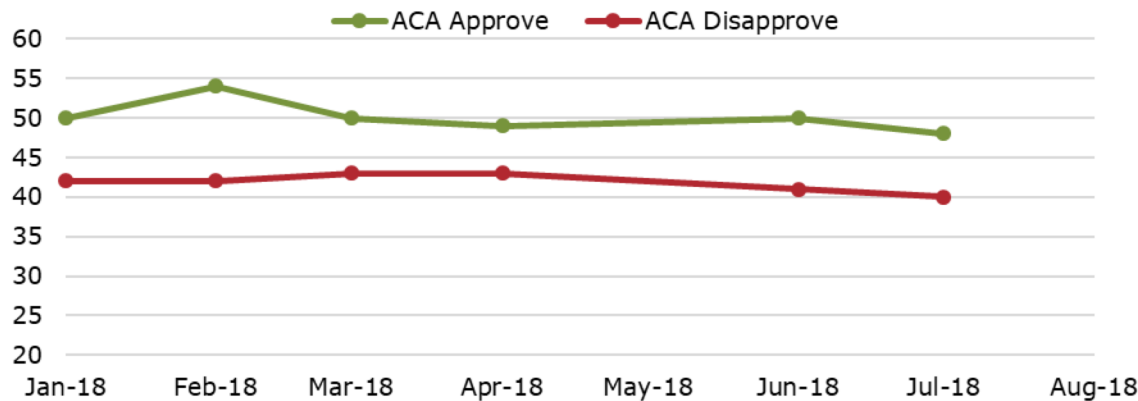
The Affordable Care Act outperforms the Tax Cuts & Jobs Act in opinion polls

Do you approve or disapprove of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act/Affordable Care Act?

AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESPONSES



-6.5%
 RealClearPolitics average
 Most recent: Aug. 1, 2018



+8.0%
 Kaiser Family Foundation
 Most recent poll: July 25, 2018

Sources: RealClearPolitics.com, 2018; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2018.

Roadmap

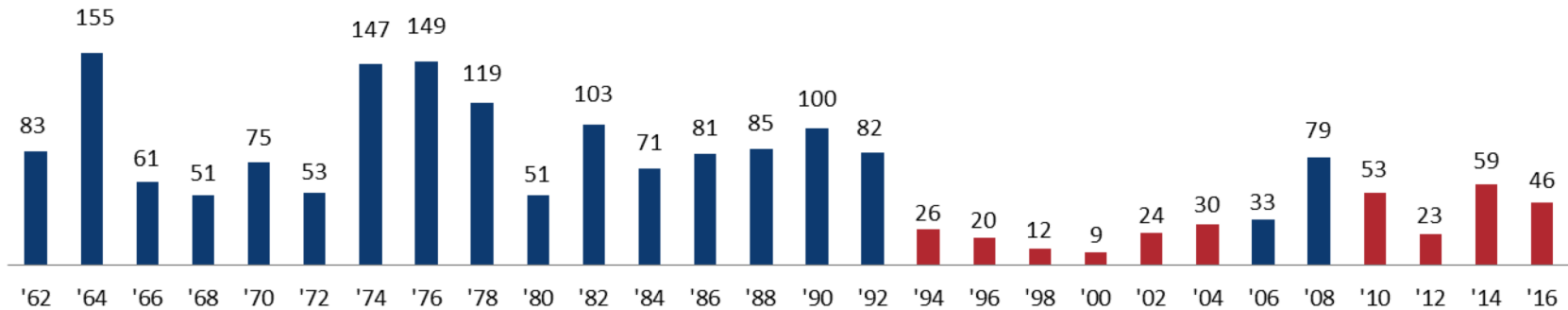
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Historical partisan control of Congress after elections

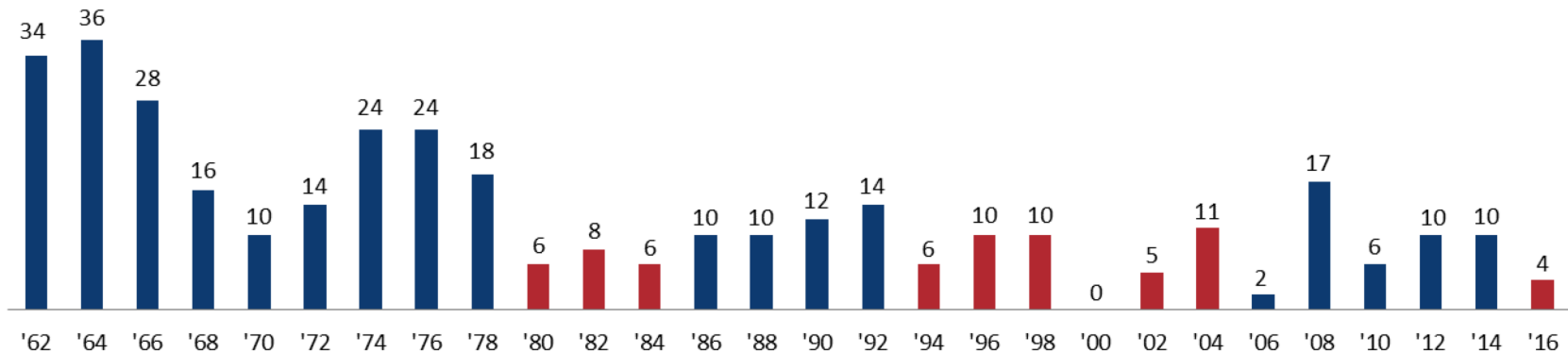
House of Representatives

88TH-115TH CONGRESS



Senate

88TH-115TH CONGRESS



Source: Senate.gov, 2017; Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives, 2017.

Recent midterm wave elections



1994 elections

President: Bill Clinton (D)

Republican gains:

54 seats in the House

8 seats in the Senate



2006 elections

President: George W. Bush (R)

Democratic gains:

31 seats in the House

6 seats in the Senate



2010 elections

President: Barack Obama (D)

Republican gains:

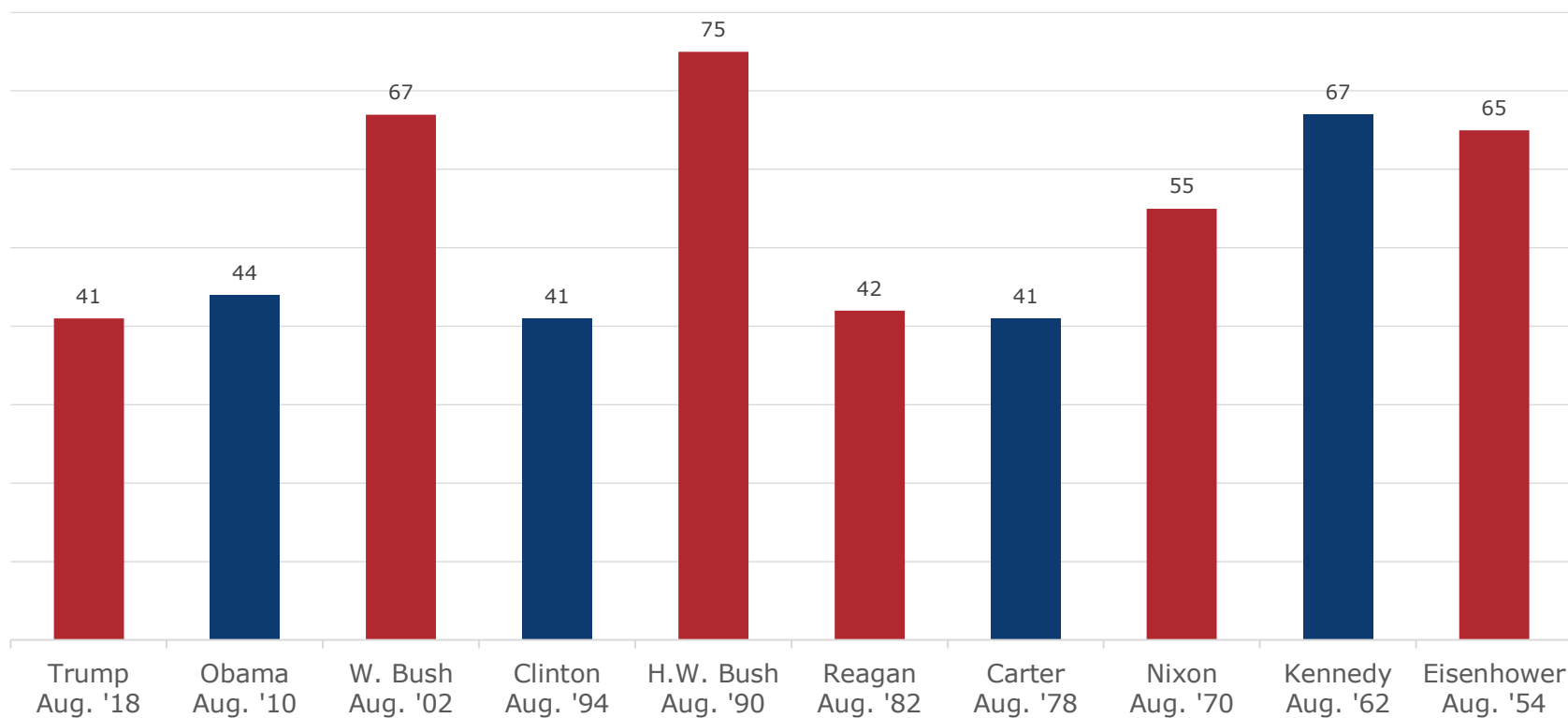
63 seats in the House

6 seats in the Senate

Trump's approval numbers are near or slightly below recent presidents who experienced a wave election

Gallup comparative presidential approval ratings

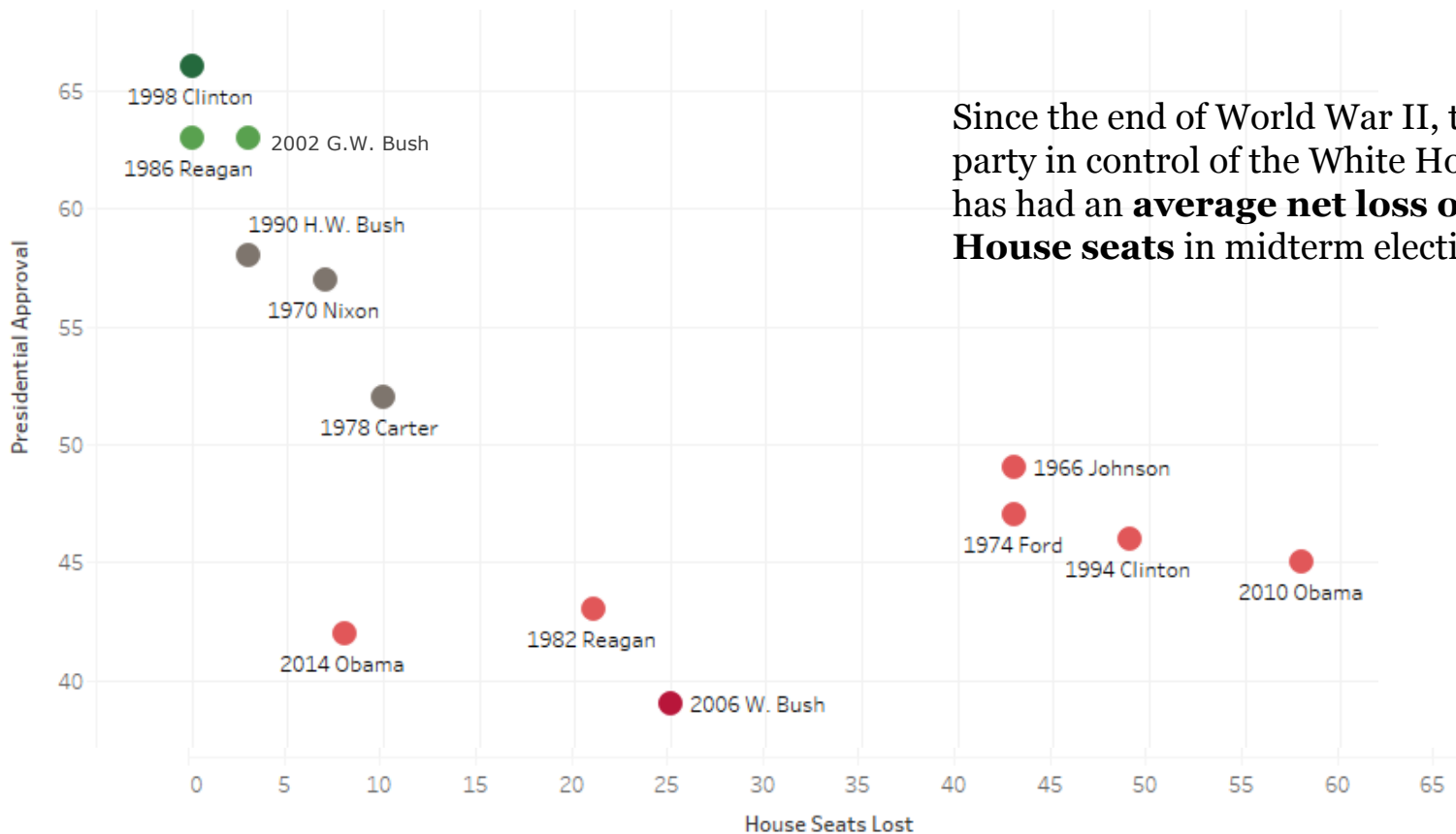
IN AUGUST OF EACH PRESIDENT'S SECOND YEAR



Source: Gallup, 2018.

History suggests that the president's party will lose seats in midterm elections

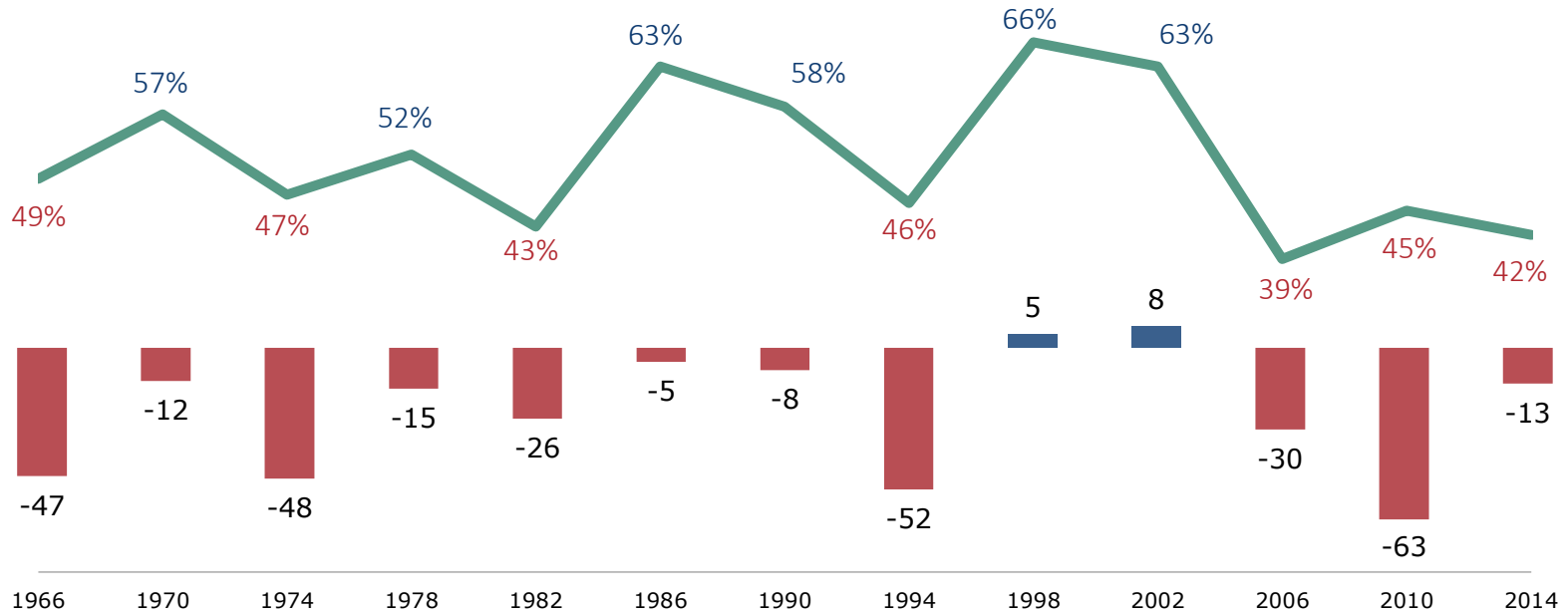
Presidential approval ratings vs. House seats lost, 1966-2014



Sources: Ally Flinn, David Wasserman, "Follow 2018 with us," The Cook Political Report, April 10, 2018.

Presidents with a sub-50% approval rating lose an average of 40 seats in the midterms

Presidential job approval vs. midterm results since 1966



Trump Job Approval
43.3%
 RCP Average: August 13, 2018

Job Approval	Average Change
Over 60%	+3 seats
50%-60%	-12 seats
Under 50%	-40 seats

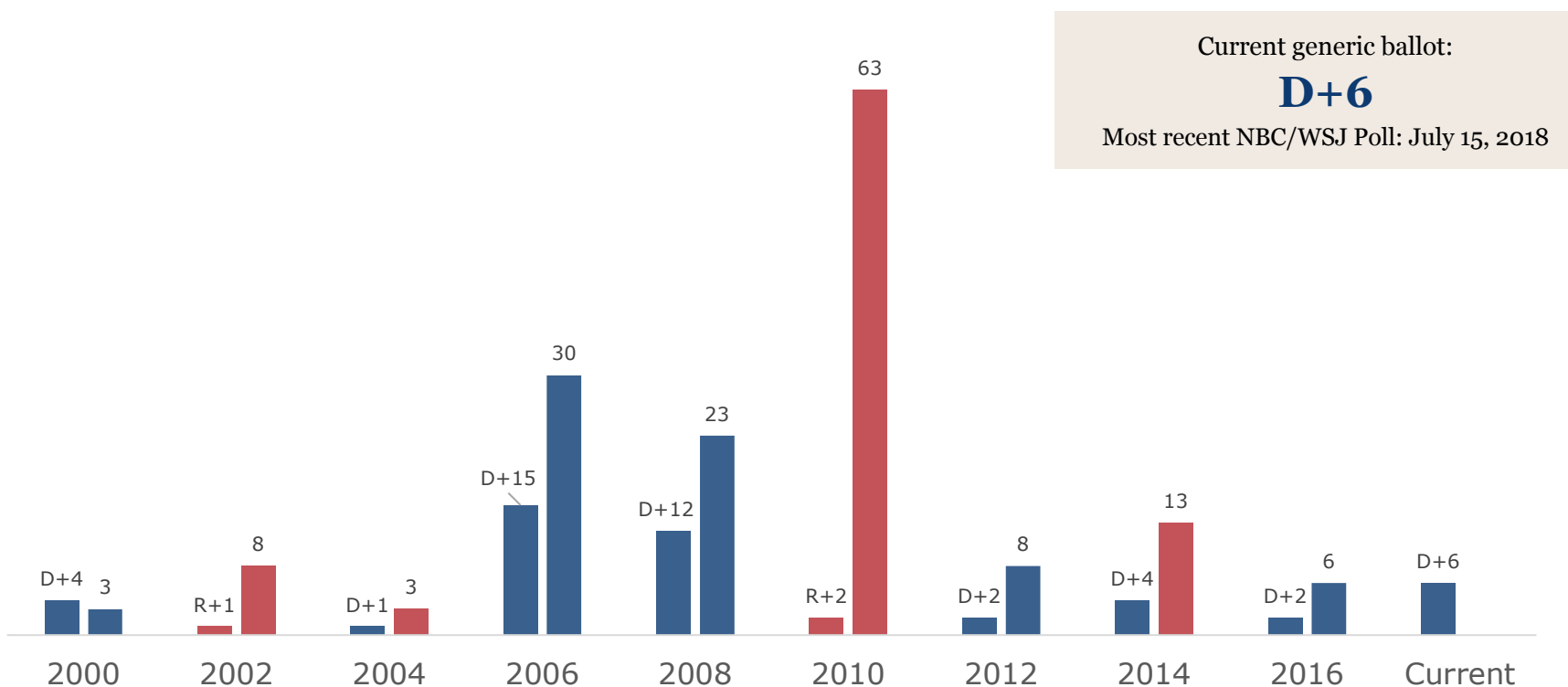
Sources: Gallup, The Cook Political Report, National Journal, RealClearPolitics.com, 2018.

Historic polling of generic ballots suggests Democrats will gain seats in 2018, but will it be enough to flip the House?

Comparison between generic ballot polling and House outcomes

NBC/WSJ POLL

■ Democratic seat gain ■ Republican seat gain

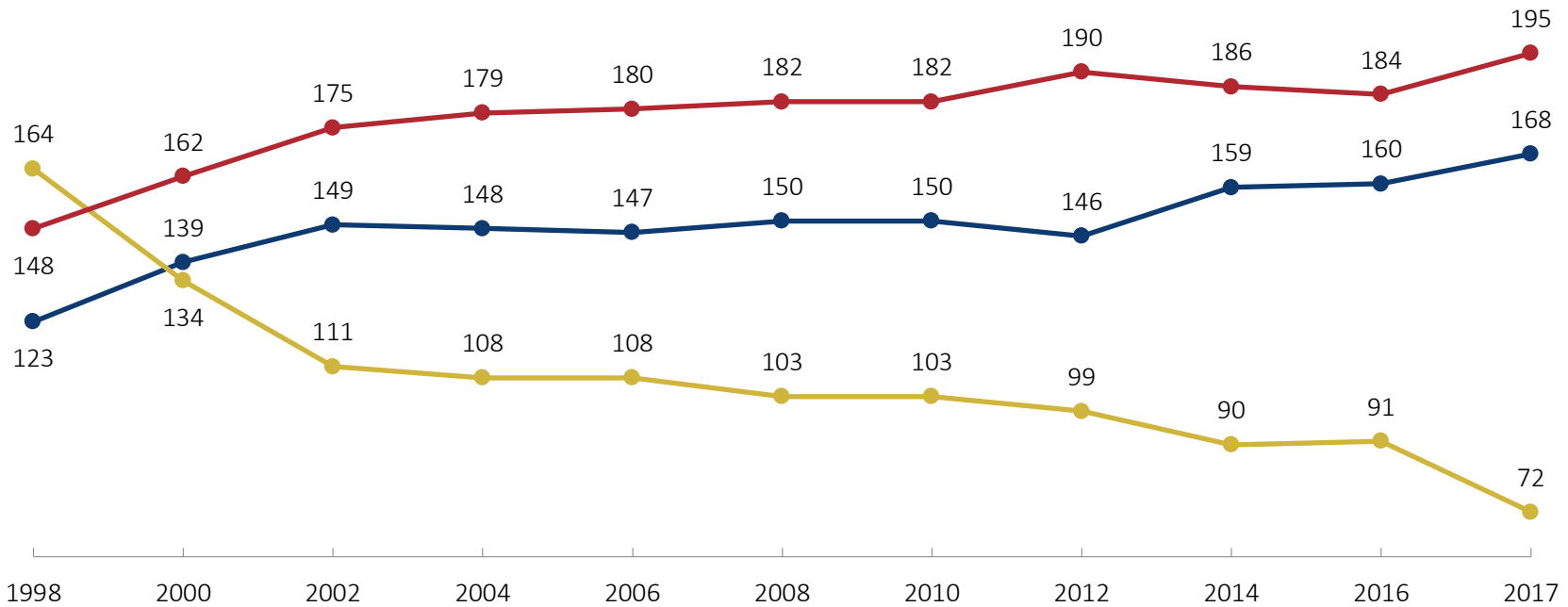


Sources: NBC/WSJ survey, 2018.

House districts have become increasingly partisan with only one-sixth considered “swing” districts

Cook Political Report Partisan Voter Index

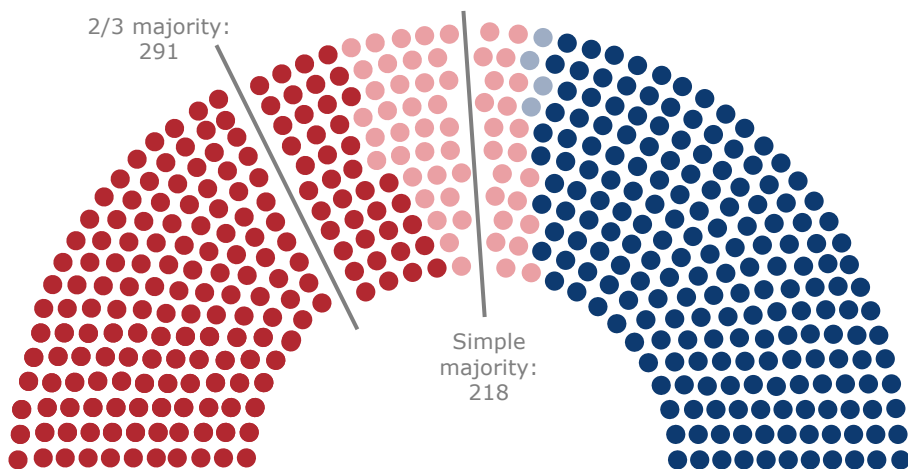
■ Democratic seat (D+5 or greater) ■ Republican seat (R+5 or greater) ■ Swing seat (D+5 to R+5)



Source: Cook Political Report, 2017.

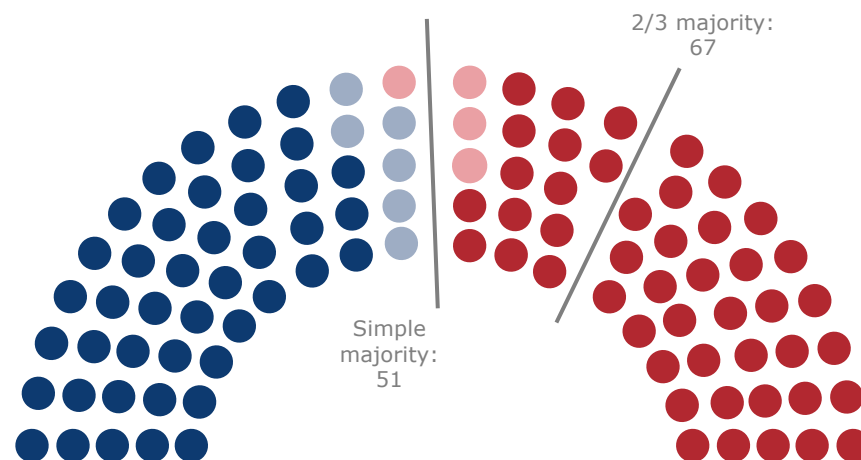
Democrats have no chance of picking up enough seats to remove Trump from office without Republican votes

House of Representatives



Safe Republican seats	●	181
Safe Democratic seats	●	193
Toss Up or Lean R/D	● ●	61

Senate



Safe Republican seats	●	48
Safe Dem./Ind. seats	●	43
Toss Up or Lean R/D	● ●	10

Impeachment process

- Simple majority vote in House to indict president for “treason, bribery, or other high crimes & misdemeanors”
- 2/3 vote in the Senate to convict president and remove from office

25th Amendment process

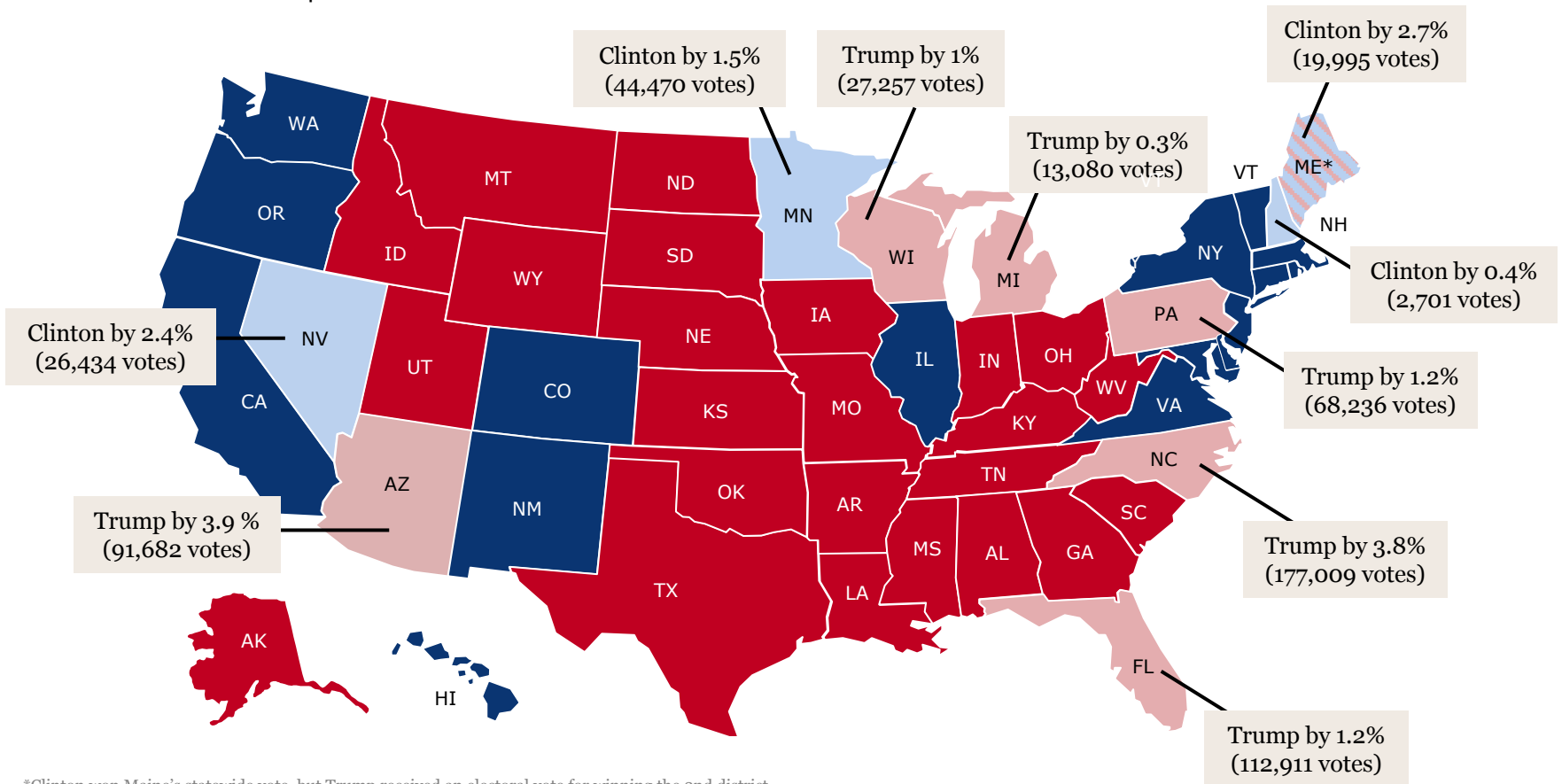
- VP and a majority of the cabinet tell Congress the president is “unable to discharge the powers & duties of his office”
- If the president appeals, 2/3 vote in both House and Senate removes president from office

Sources: Charlie Savage, “How the Impeachment Process Works,” *The New York Times*, May 17, 2017; Rating from Cook Political Report, 2018.

Trump's narrow victories in key states leave him vulnerable to even a small swing in 2020

10 states were decided by less than 5%

■ Clinton win ■ Trump win



*Clinton won Maine's statewide vote, but Trump received an electoral vote for winning the 2nd district
Source: National Journal research, 2018.