

Charlie Cook's Tour of American Politics

Insights into the 2018 midterm elections

November 2018

Producer

National Journal Presentation Center

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

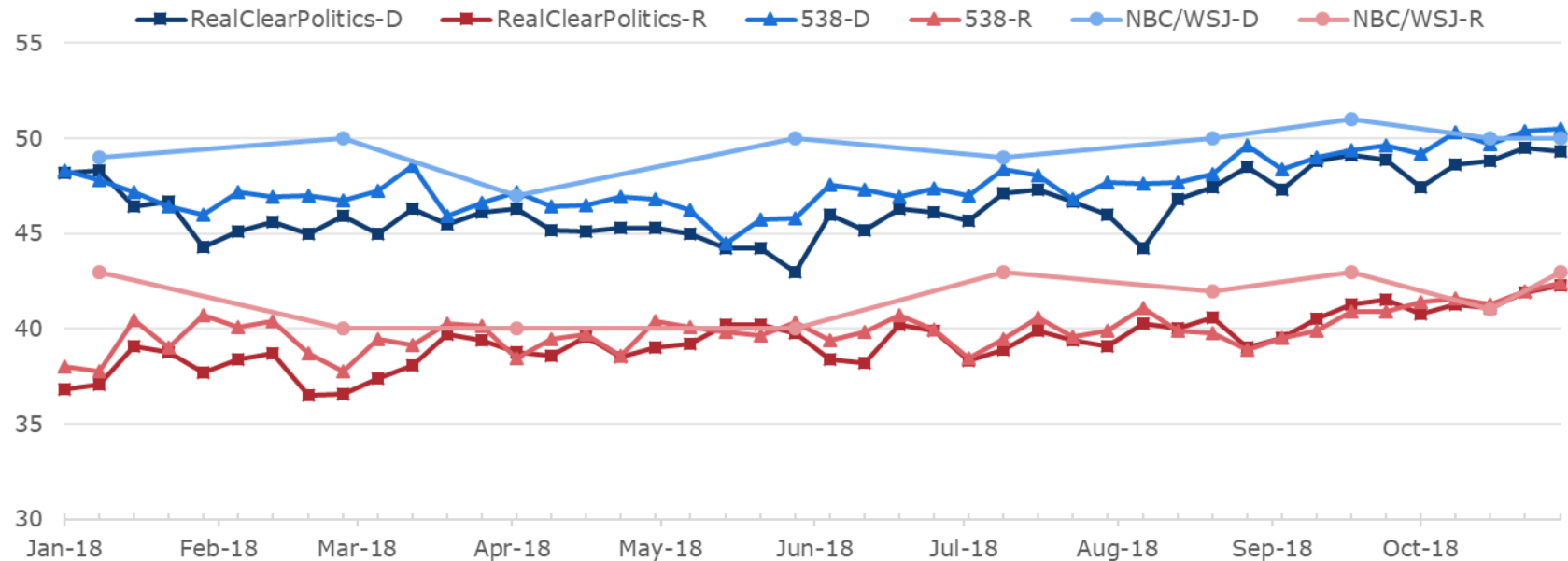
Political trends in the US

1. Previous midterm elections
2. 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+7.0
RealClearPolitics Average
Week of Nov. 4, 2018

D+8.1
FiveThirtyEight Average
Week of Nov. 4, 2018

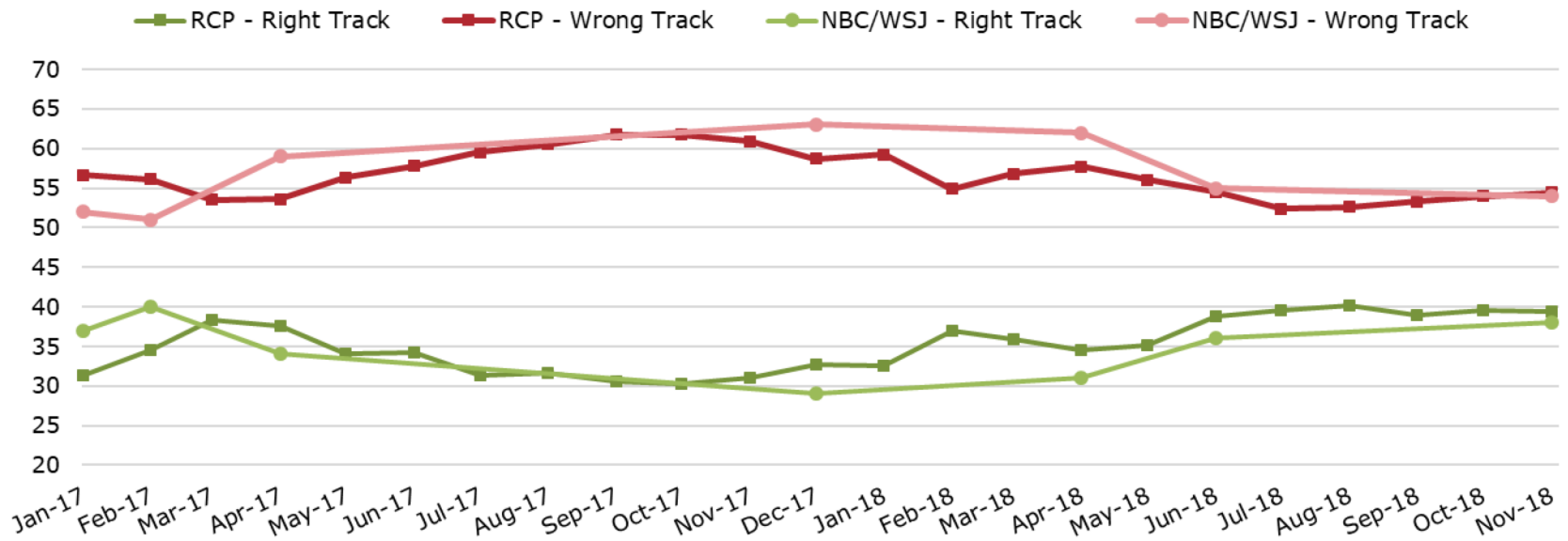
D+7.0
NBC News/WSJ
Last poll: Nov. 4, 2018

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



39.4% **54.4%**
 RealClearPolitics Average
 Week of Nov. 1, 2018

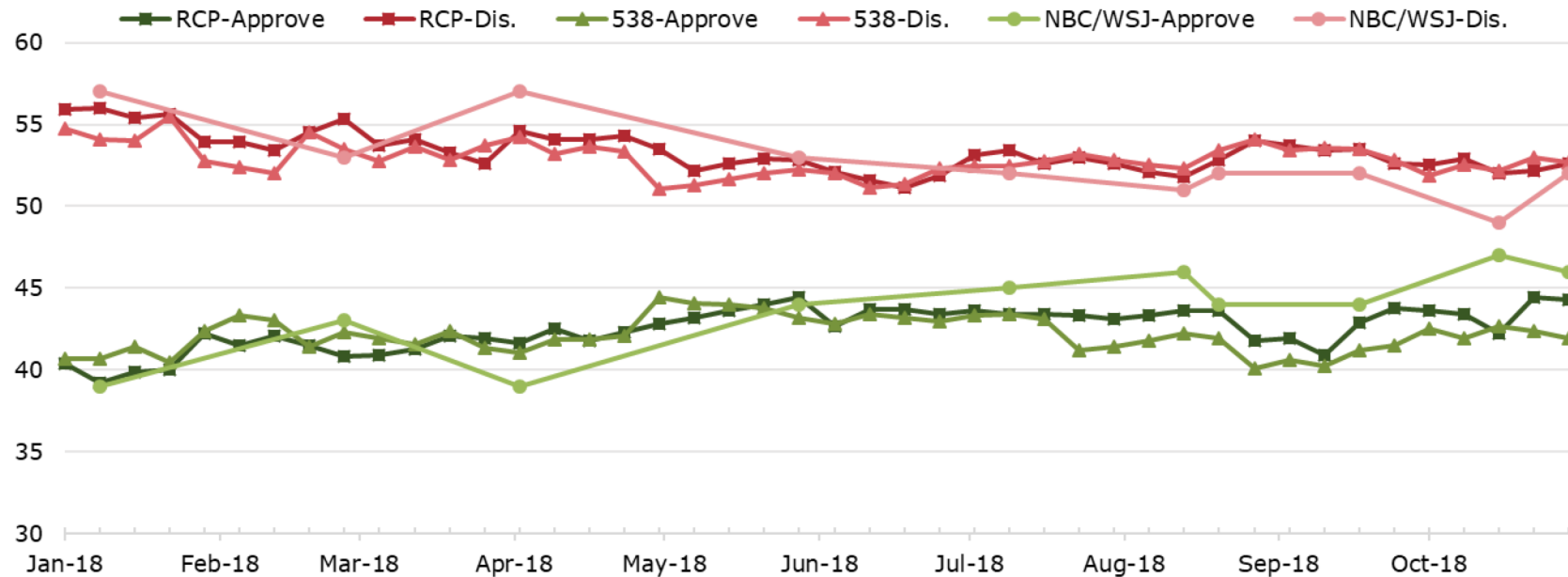
38% **54%**
 NBC News/WSJ
 Last poll: Nov. 1, 2018

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



44.3% **52.6%**
 RealClearPolitics Average
 Week of Nov. 1, 2018

41.9 % **52.7%**
 FiveThirtyEight Average
 Week of Nov. 1, 2018

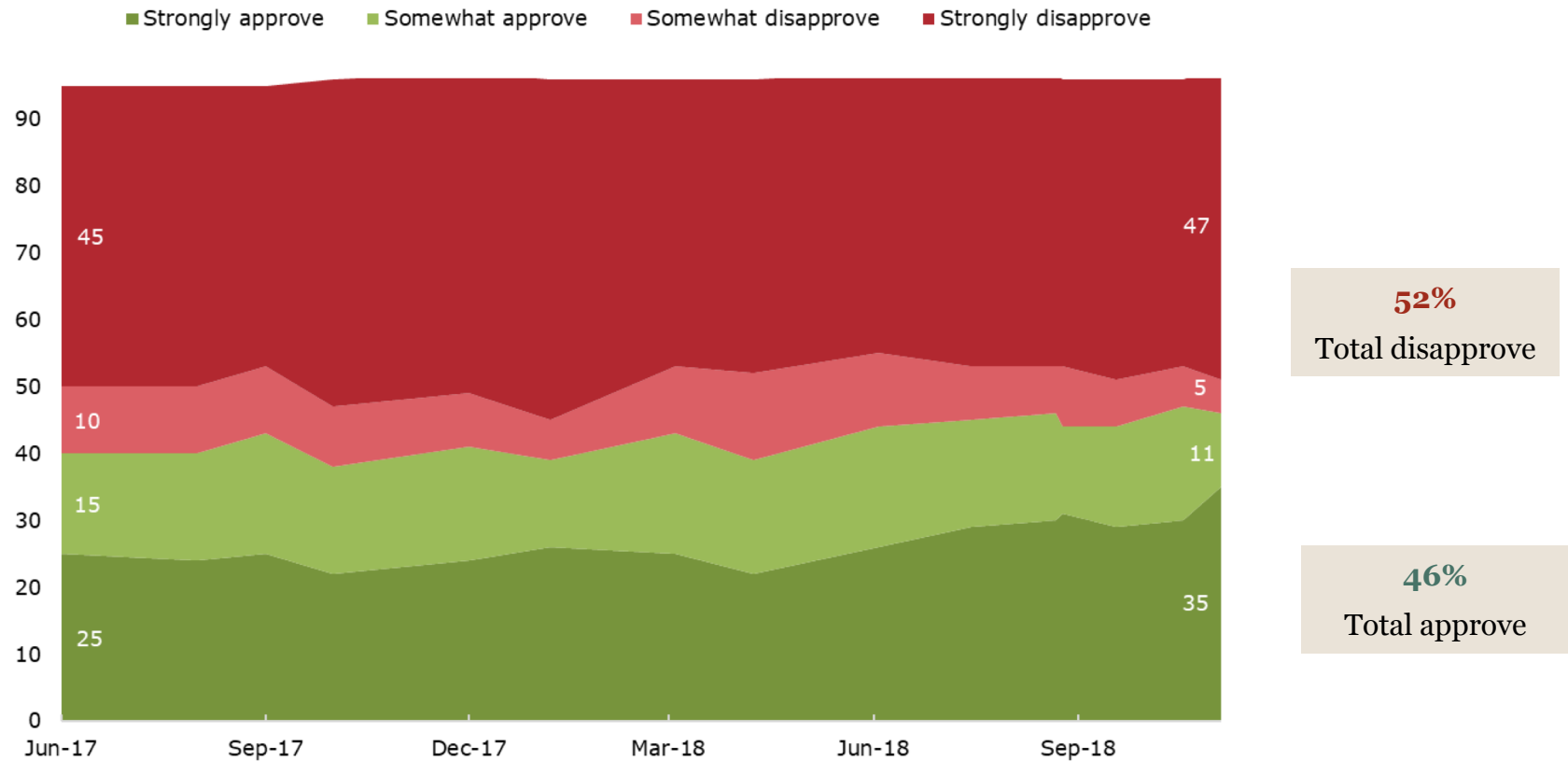
46% **52%**
 NBC News/WSJ
 Last poll: Nov. 1, 2018

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?

AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESPONSES

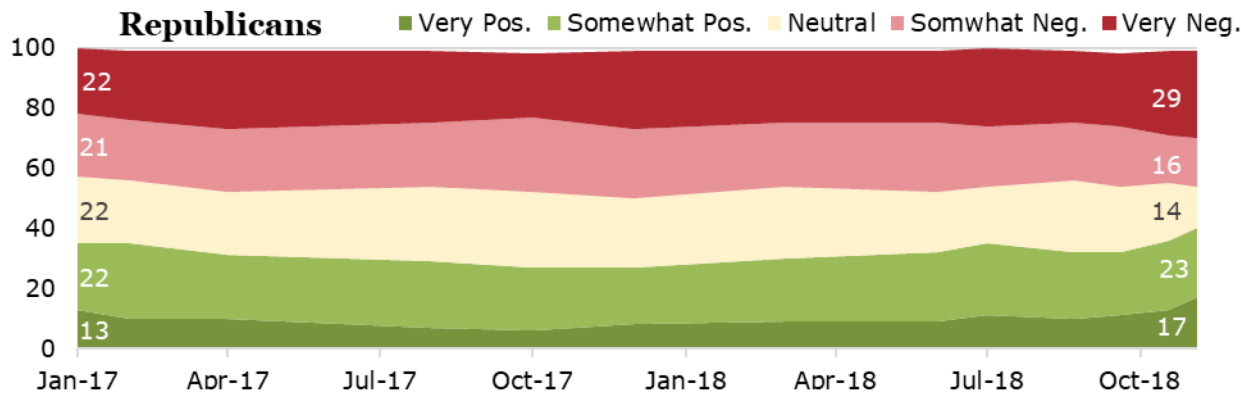


Sources: NBC News/WSJ survey, 2018.

Both parties have the same approval and disapproval ratings

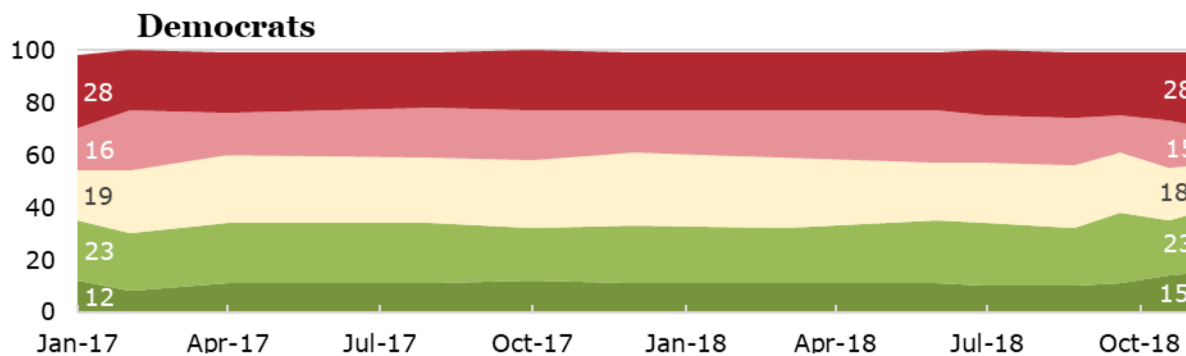
Do you approve or disapprove of the Democratic/Republican party?

AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESPONSES



45%
Total disapprove

40%
Total approve



43%
Total disapprove

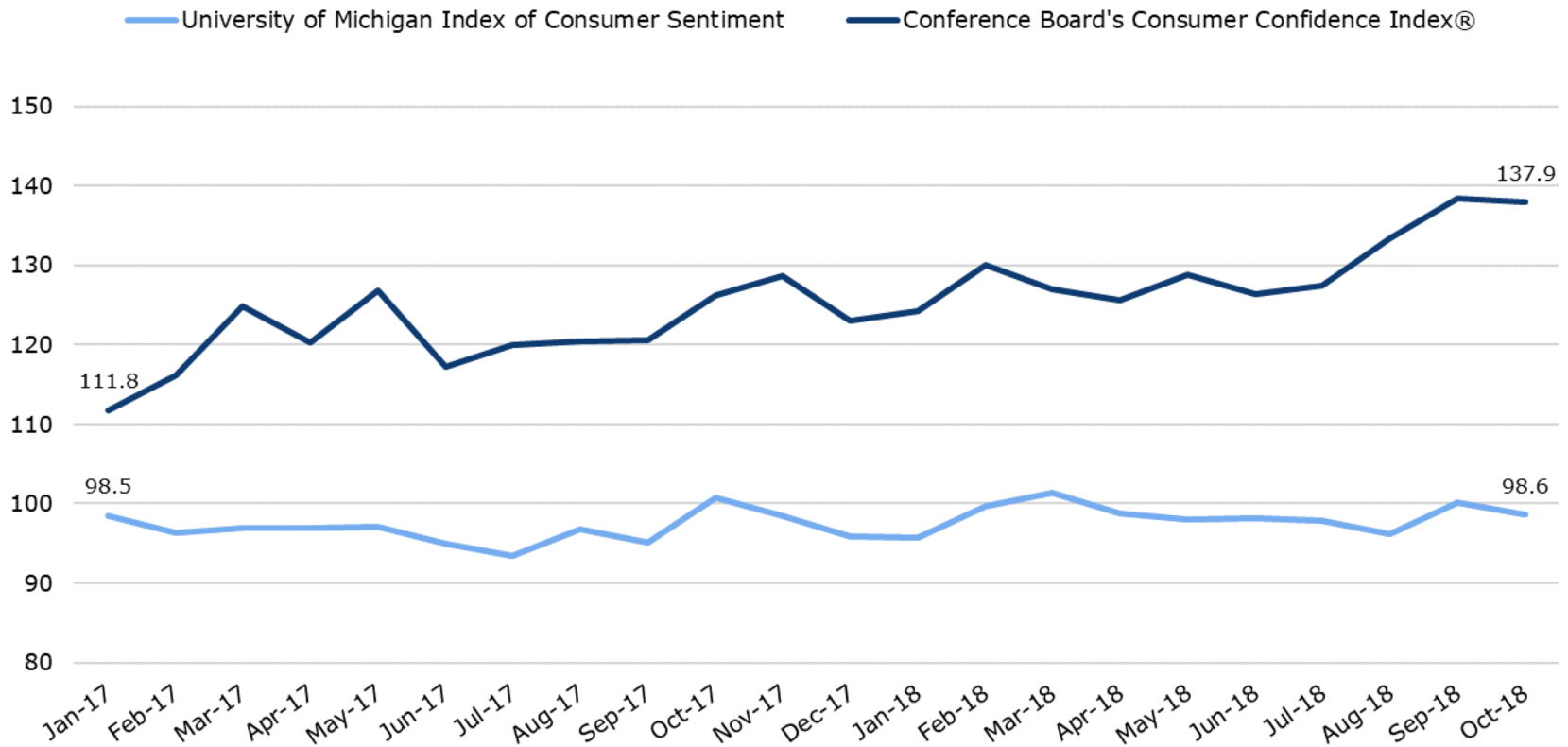
38%
Total approve

Sources: NBC News/WSJ survey, 2018.

Consumer confidence indices have diverged in recent months

Tracking polls of consumers

INDICES CALCULATED BY THE SURVEYING ORGANZATIONS

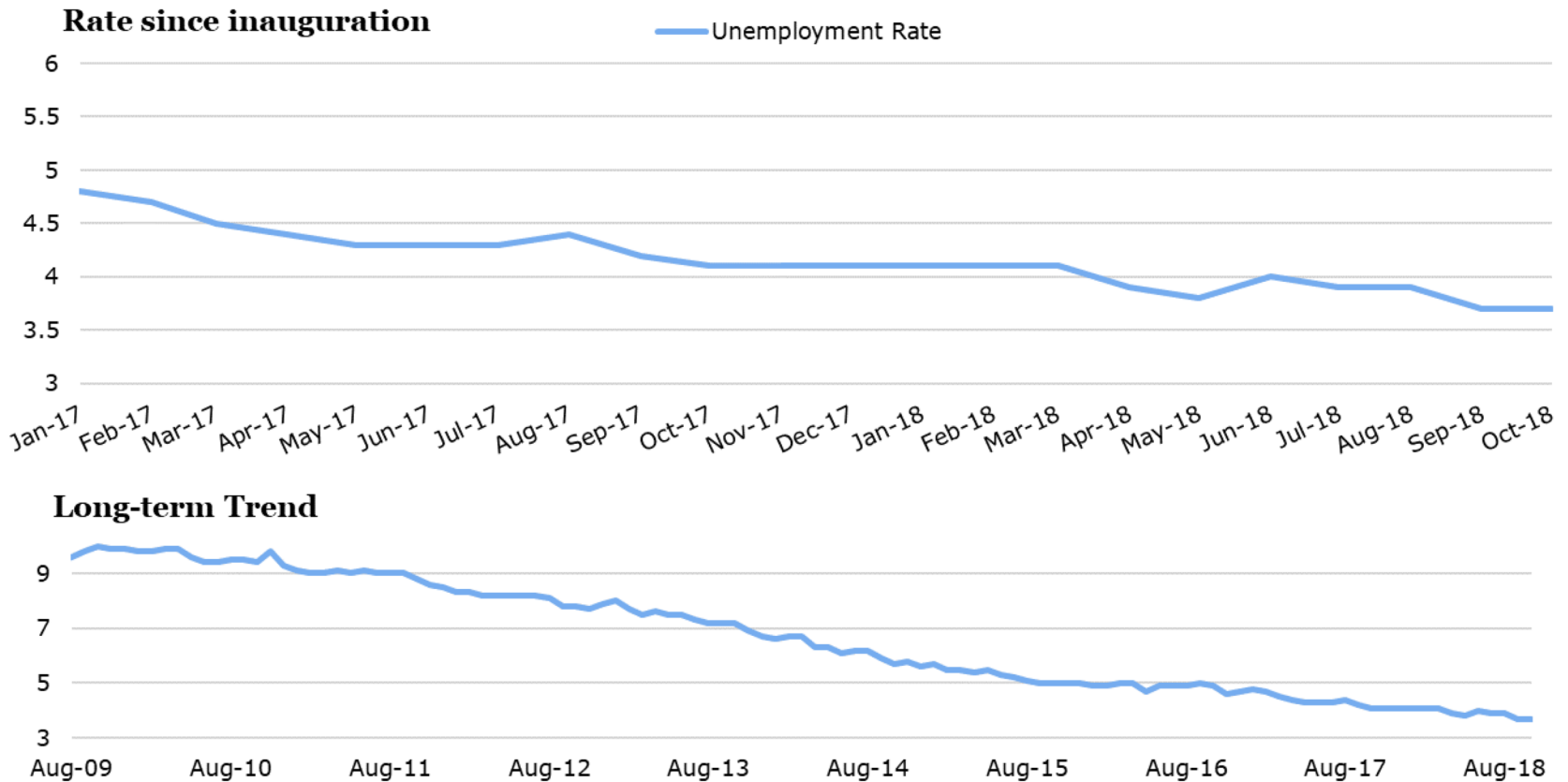


Sources: Conference Board, 2018; University of Michigan Surveys of Consumers, 2018.

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

Monthly civilian unemployment rate

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LABOR FORCE; SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

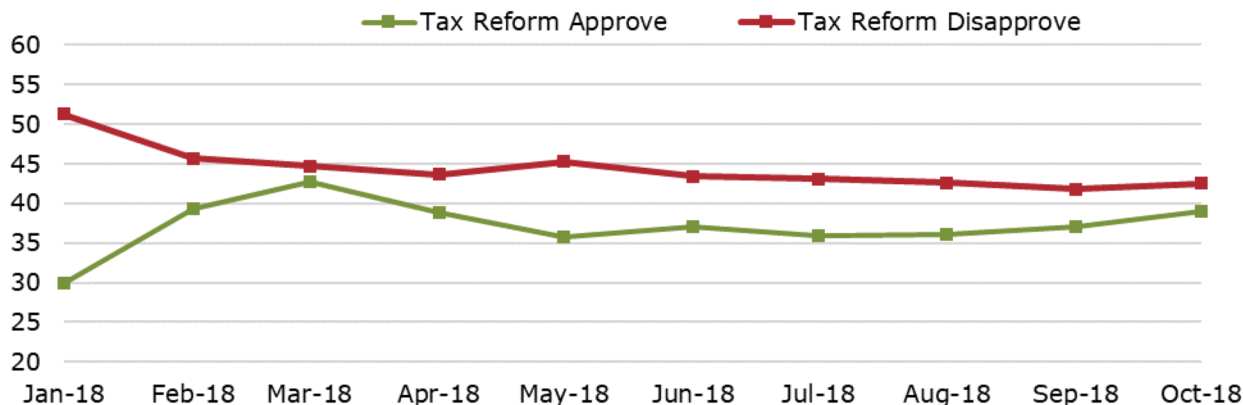


Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018.

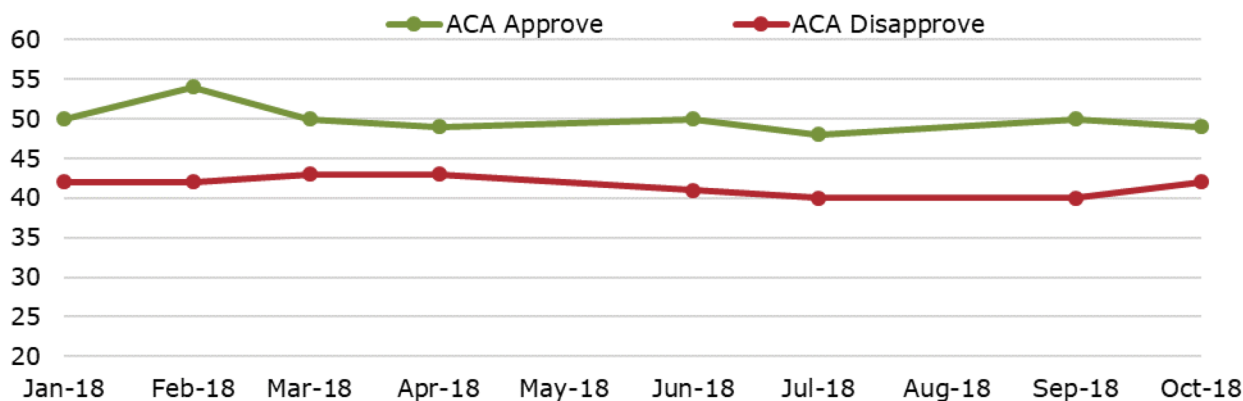
The Affordable Care Act outperforms the Tax Cuts & Jobs Act in opinion polls

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

AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESPONSES



-4.8%
 RealClearPolitics average
 Most recent: Oct. 1, 2018



+10.0%
 Kaiser Family Foundation
 Most recent poll: Oct. 1, 2018

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

Roadmap

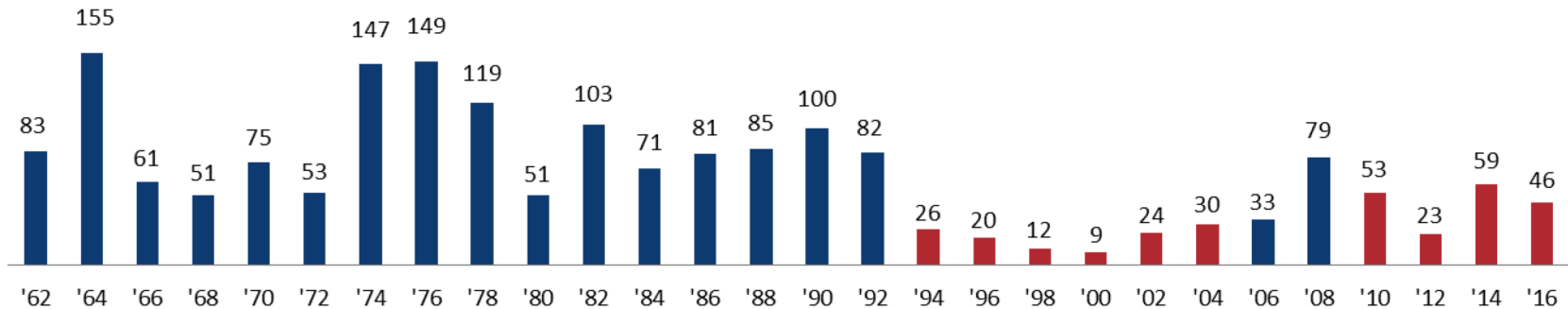
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Historical partisan control of Congress after elections

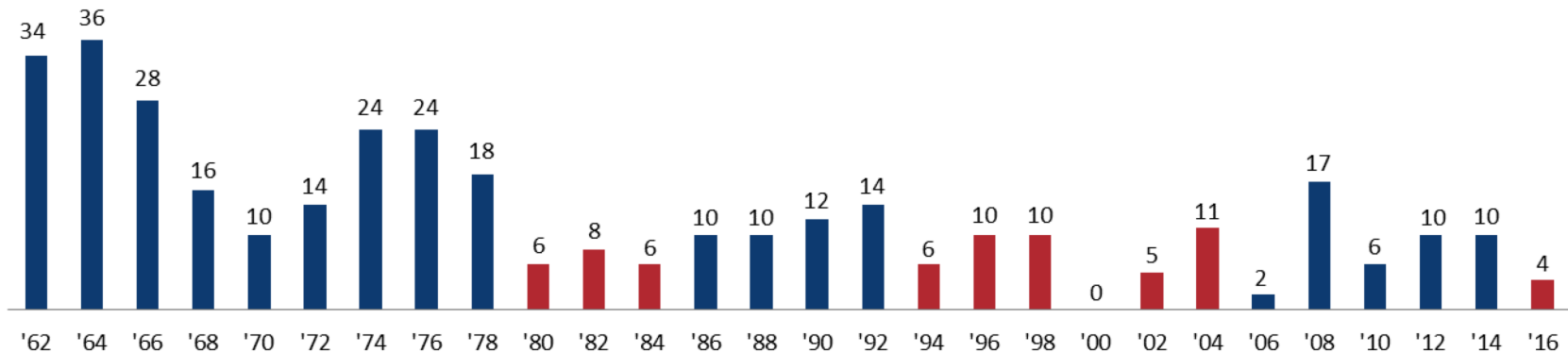
House of Representatives

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:

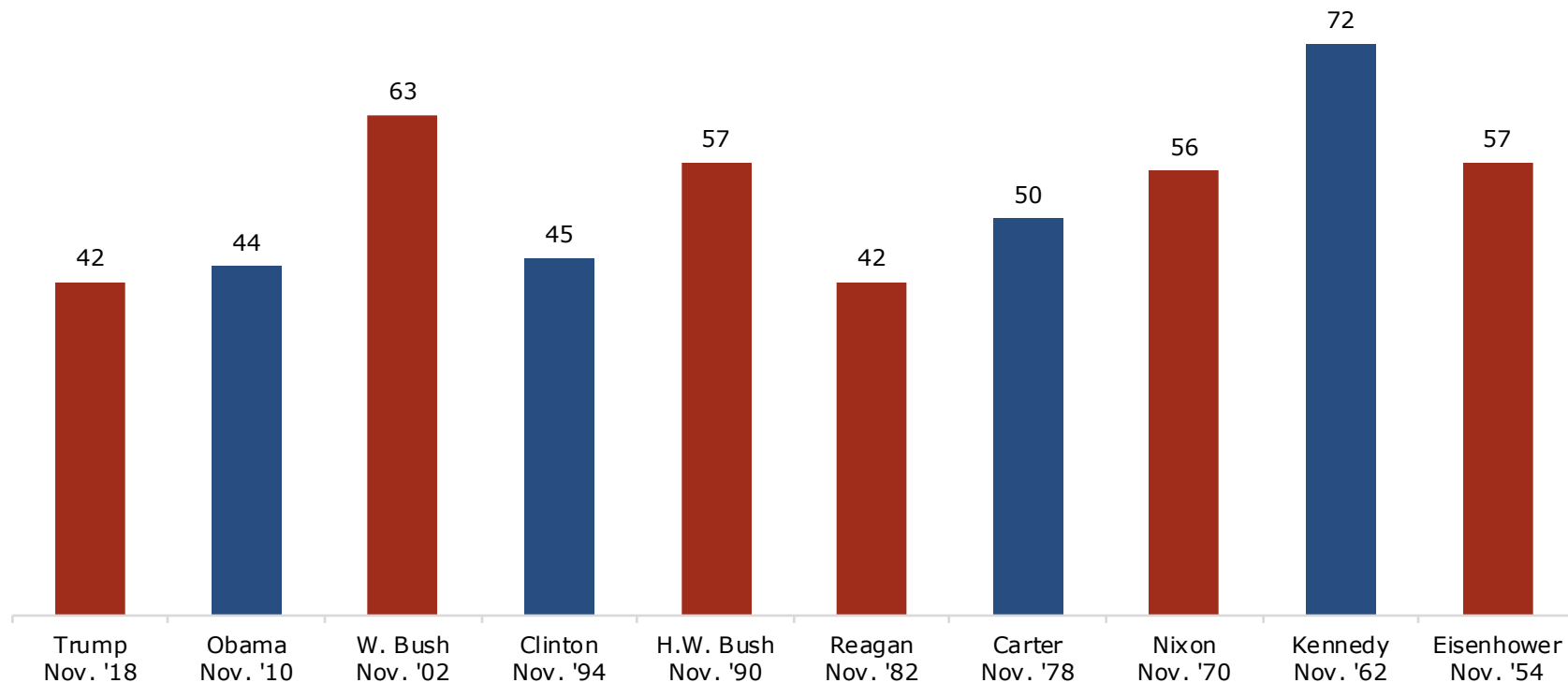
63 seats in the House

6 seats in the Senate

Trump's approval numbers are slightly below those of recent presidents at this point in their presidencies

Gallup comparative presidential approval ratings

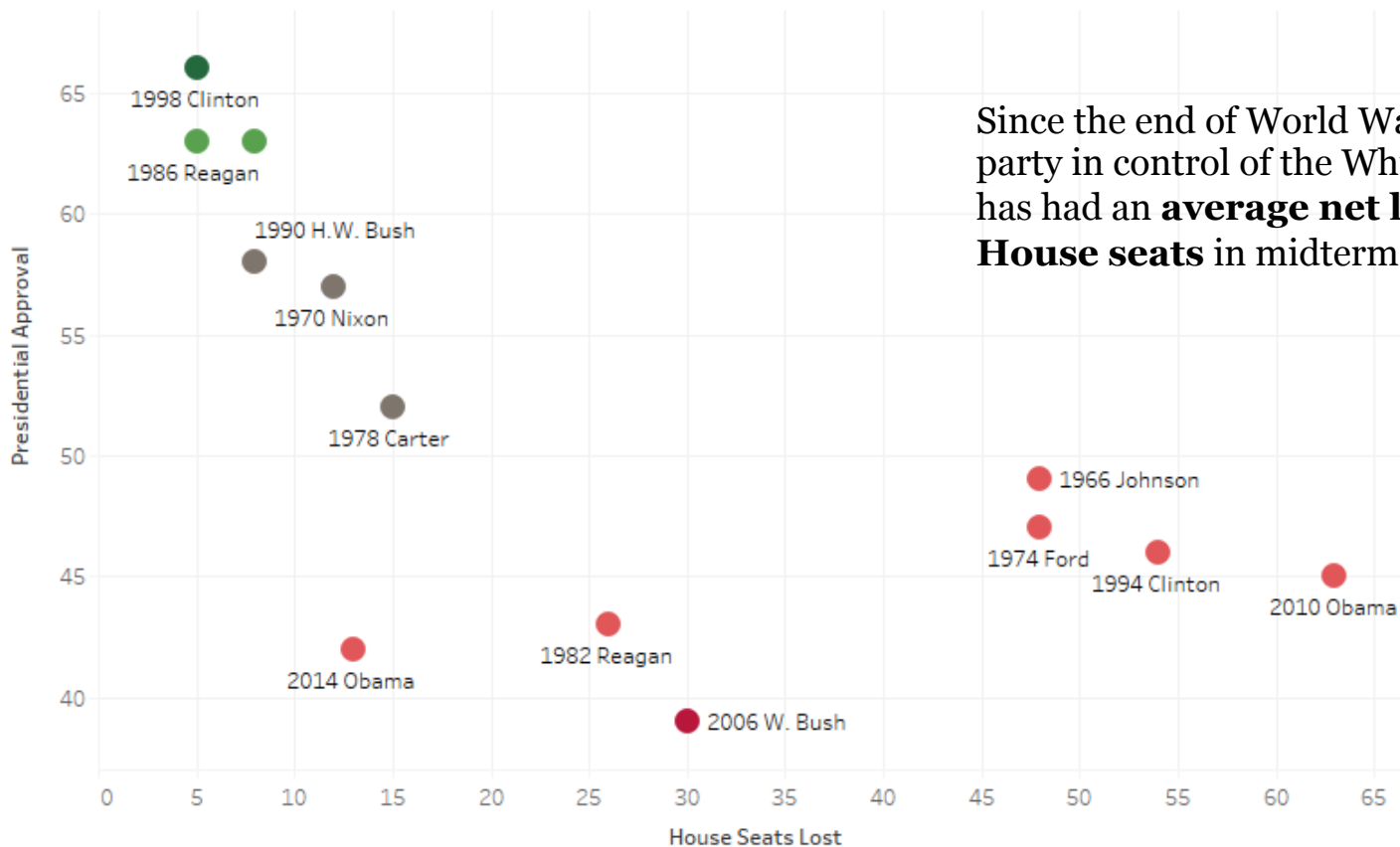
IN NOVEMBER OF EACH PRESIDENT'S SECOND YEAR



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

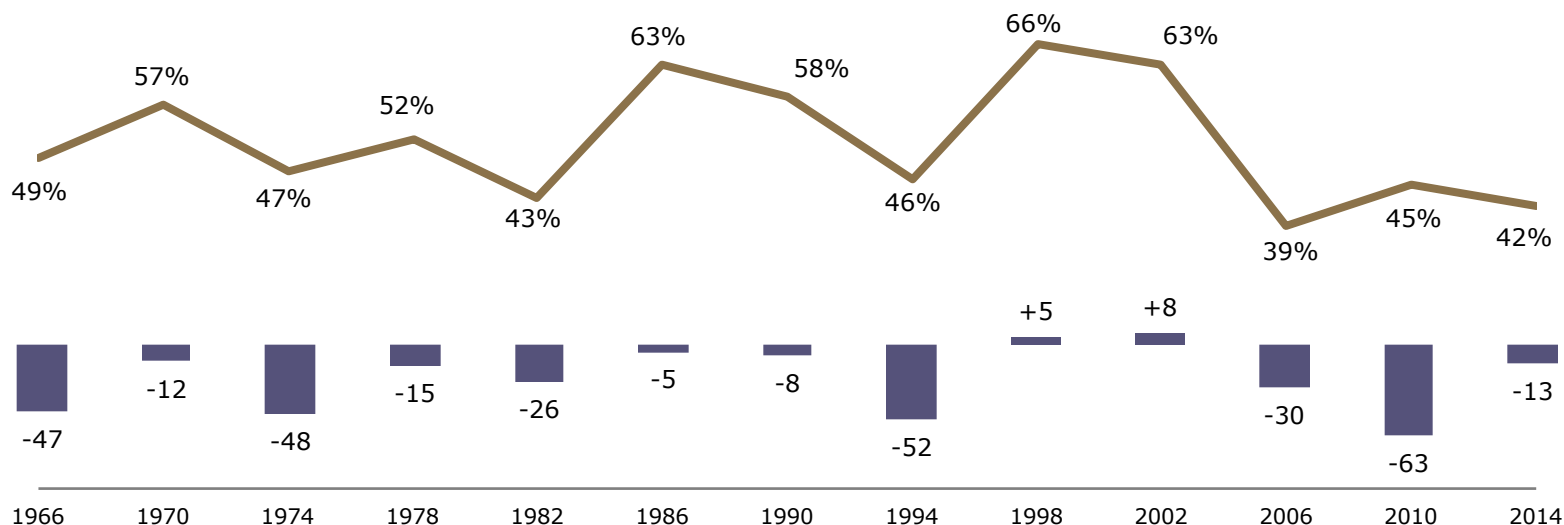


Sources: Ally Flinn, David Wasserman, "Follow 2018 with us," The Cook Political Report, April 10, 2018.

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

Presidential job approval vs. midterm results since 1966

- Gallup presidential approval the week before the midterm
- Seats gained/lost by president's party in the midterm



Trump Job Approval
44.3%
 RCP Average: Nov. 4, 2018

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

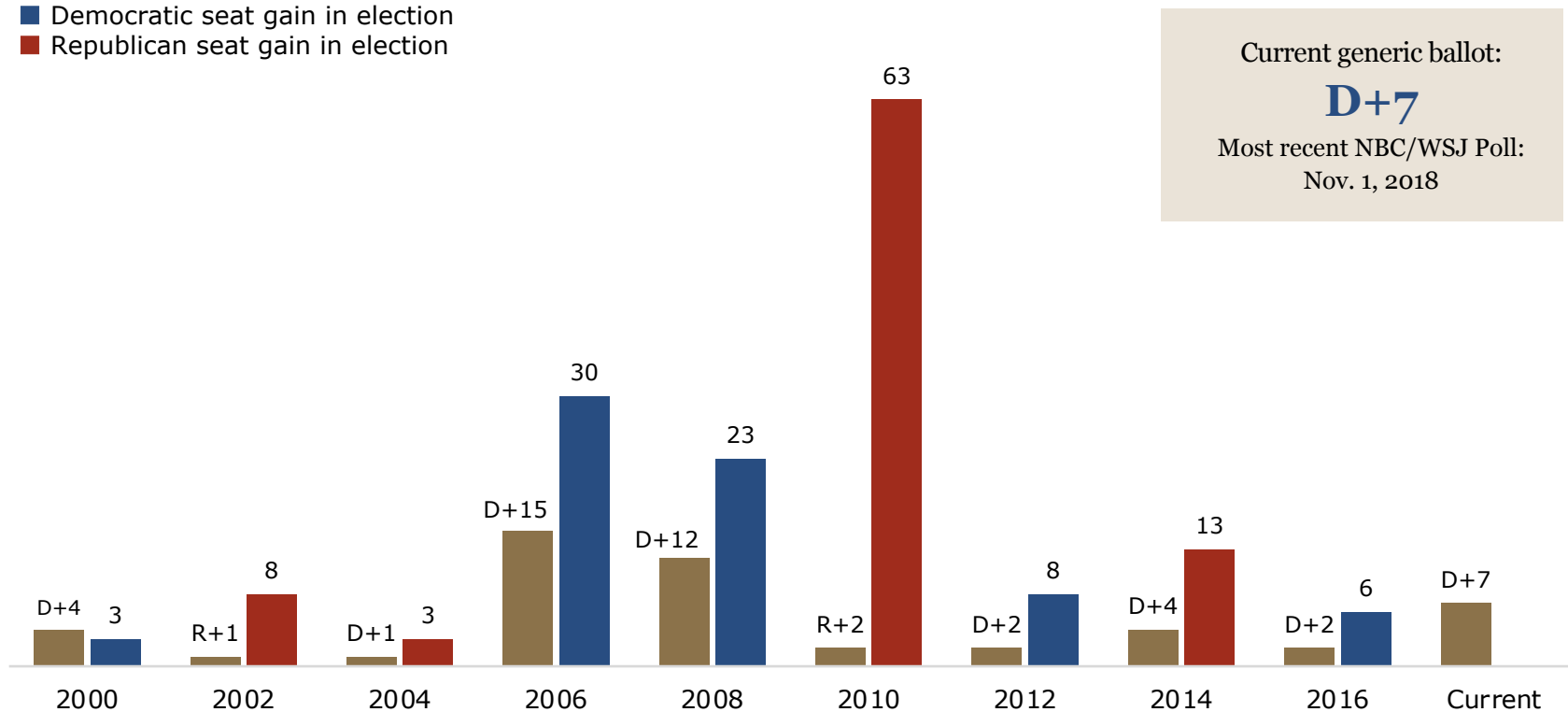
Sources: Gallup presidential approval poll, RealClearPolitics 2018 presidential approval tracking poll

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 election outcomes

NBC/WSJ POLL

- Final NBC/WSJ general ballot poll before election
- Democratic seat gain in election
- Republican seat gain in election



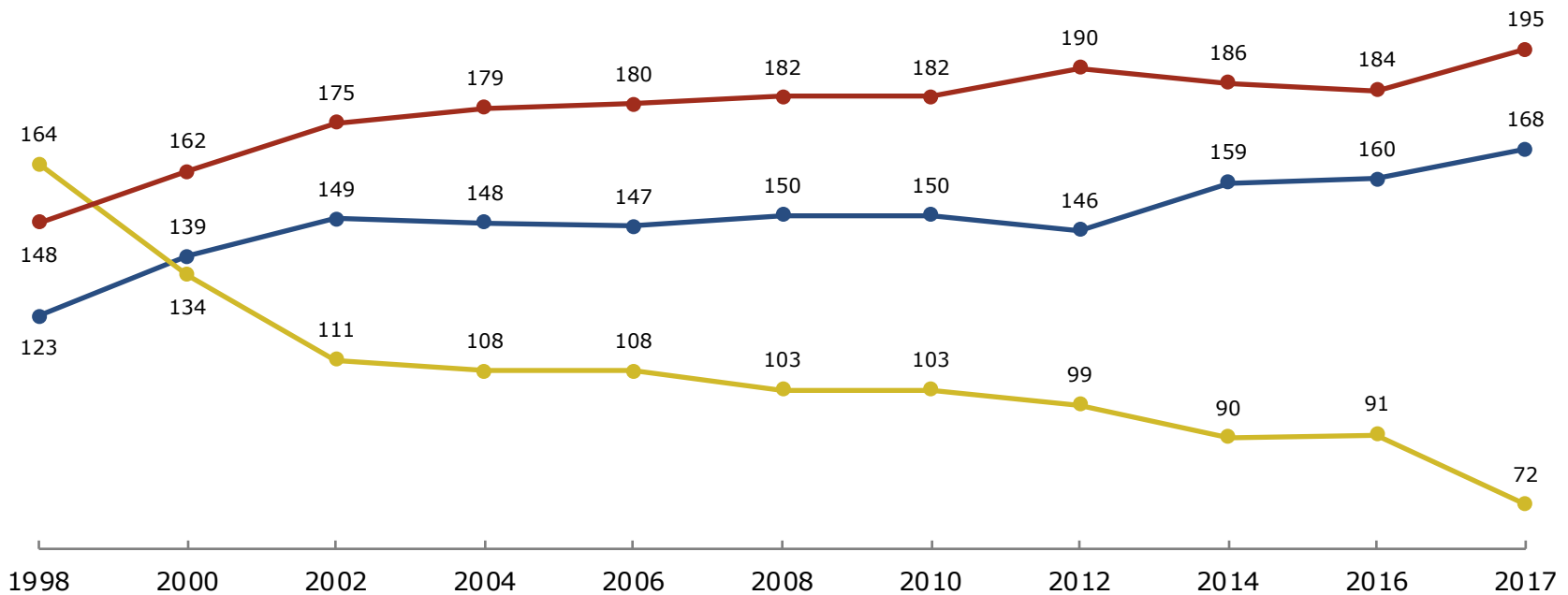
Sources: NBC/WSJ

Slide last updated: November 5, 2018

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

Cook Political Report Partisan Voter Index

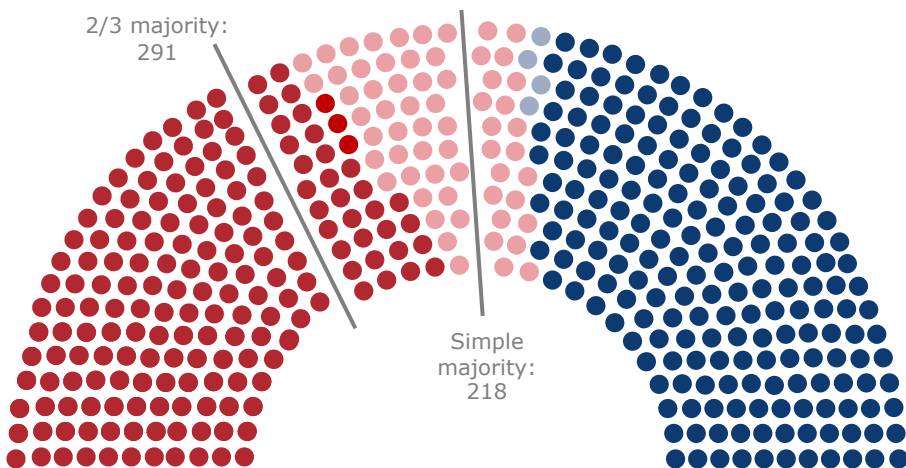
■ Democratic seat (D+5 or greater) ■ Republican seat (R+5 or greater) ■ Swing seat (D+5 to R+5)



Source: Cook Political Report, 2017.

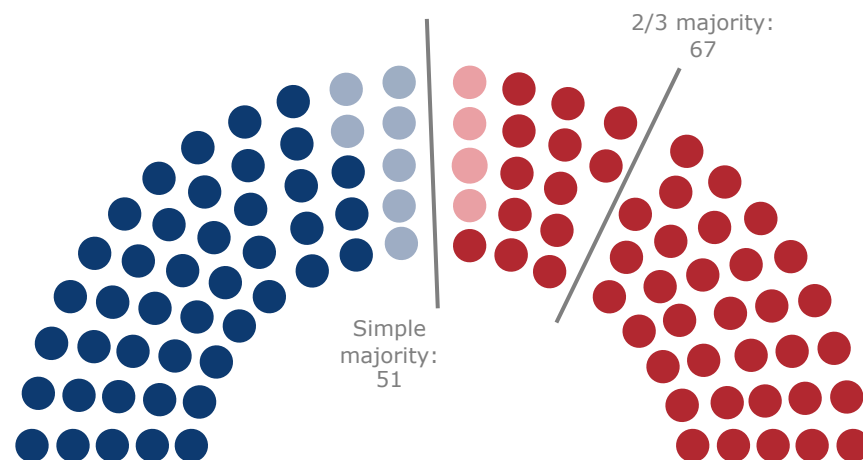
Democrats have no chance of picking up enough seats to remove Trump from office without Republican votes

House of Representatives



Safe Republican seats	●	171
Safe Democratic seats	●	194
Toss Up or Lean R/D	● ●	70

Senate



Safe Republican seats	●	47
Safe Dem./Ind. seats	●	40
Toss Up or Lean R/D	● ●	13

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

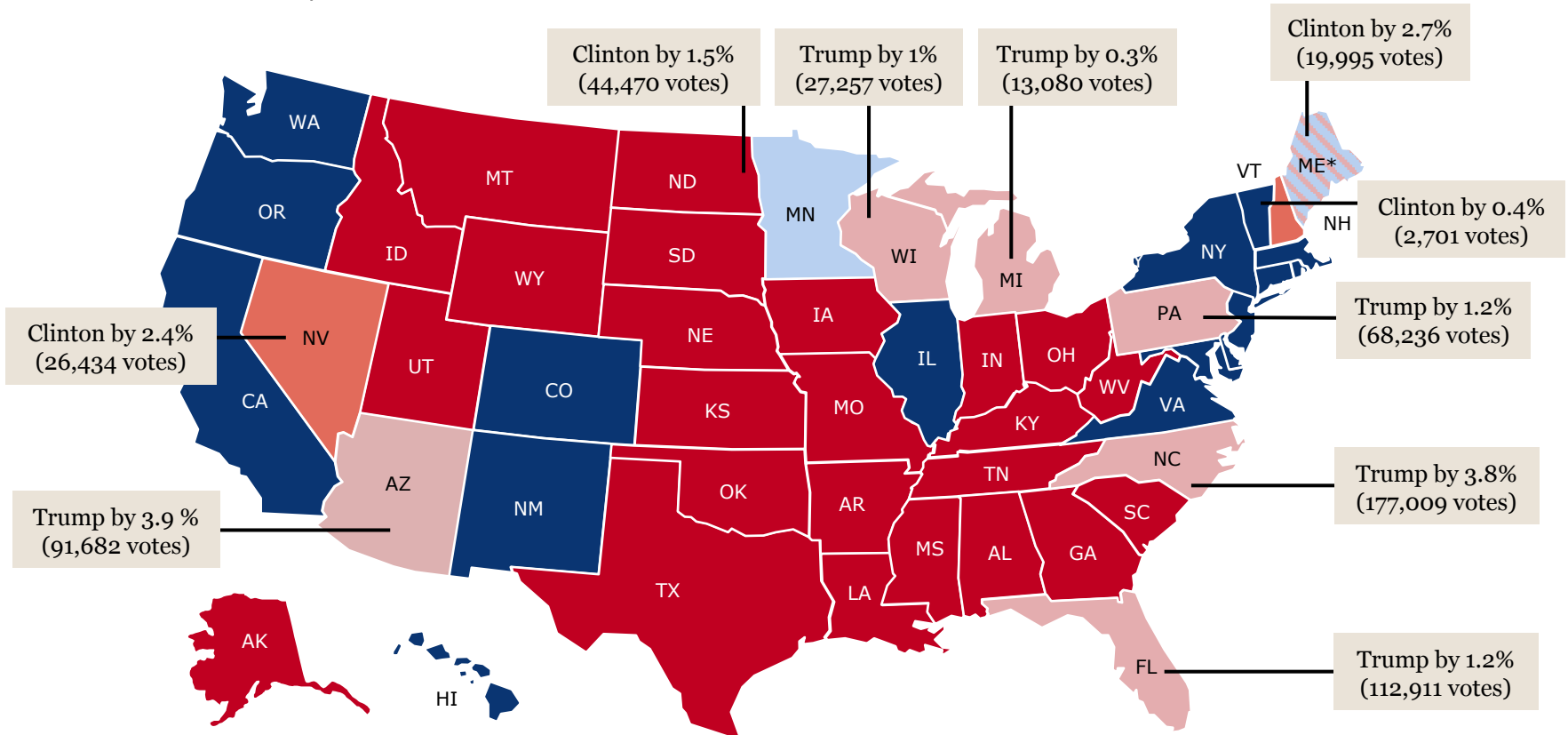
- VP and a majority of the cabinet tell Congress the president is “unable to discharge the powers & duties of his office”
- If the president appeals, 2/3 vote in both House and Senate removes president from office

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.