Charlie Cook's "Day After the Election" key insights

December 13, 2018

Producer
National Journal Presentation Center

Roadmap

- Charlie's take on three key House and Senate races

- Overall House and Senate insights

- Democrats performed well in gubernatorial races

- Democrats won fewer state legislatures than expected

- Looking ahead to 2020

- Q&A

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Charlie's take on three key House and Senate races

Arizona

Rep. Martha McSally (R-AZ) was more moderate and then shifted heavily to the right; meanwhile, her Democratic opponent Rep. Kyrsten Sinema's (D-AZ) platform was liberal and became more moderate.

McSally will probably become a senator, either by winning the midterm election or by replacing Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ) in a few months.

Texas

Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-TX) came up short against Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), in what turned out to be a hard-fought win for Cruz. In the past, incumbents had no trouble out-fundraising their challengers, but O'Rourke received more donations than Cruz did.

If elected, O'Rourke would have helped Democrats turn Texas purple.

Oklahoma

Democrat Kendra Horn's victory came as a surprise.

In 2016, Donald Trump carried Oklahoma's fifth district by 13 points, and in 2012, Mitt Romney carried the district by 18 points. Still, the district has a 41% minority population and includes an urban state capital.

Source: Charlie Cook, National Journal's Day After the Election Event, Nov. 7, 2018

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Overall House and Senate insights

1

Many races fell along predictable party lines

- Unlike in 2016, the 2018 midterm elections saw relatively few surprises and upsets (with OK-05 as an exception).
- Republicans performed well where Trump's approval rating was over 50%, and Democrats performed well where Trump's approval rating was below 50%.

2

Some races were close, but Democrats pulled ahead in the House

- Early on, it seemed like Democrats would pick up 23 seats in the House, but not many more. However, Democratic candidates continued to claim victories through the night.
- House Democrats will end the election with a 35 to 36 seat majority, which is slimmer than the current Republican majority of 45 seats.

3

Meanwhile, Republicans gained ground in the Senate

- Republicans had an advantageous Senate map and scored a solid win by picking up Senators Joe Donnelly (D-IN), Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Claire McCaskill's (D-MO) seats.
- Although they lost Sen. Dean Heller's (R-NV) seat, Republicans will probably pick up Sen. Bill Nelson's (D-FL) seat.

4

Why the divergence between the House and Senate? We see a potential urban-rural divide

- Senate races included rural and conservative states, while many House races encompassed suburban and urban areas. According to Charlie Cook, "it was like we were having two different elections in two different Americas."

Democrats flipped 43 Republican-held House seats

Competitive 2018 House races

Democratic incumbent
Republican incumbent

*Asterisks denote incumbents who did not seek reelection, sought other office, or lost their primary election

Seats that flipped party control are struck through

(?) indicates races not yet called, as of noon on Dec. 13

5 flips R to D

CA-7	Bera
CA-16	Costa
FL-7	Murphy
MN-7	Peterson
NH-1	Shea-Porter*
NJ-5	Gottheimer
PA-8	Cartwright
CA-49	~~Issa*~~
NJ-2	~~LoBiondo*~~
PA-5	~~Vacant-Meehan~~
PA-6	~~Costello*~~
PA-17	~~Rothfus~~

Likely Democrat

13 flips R to D

AZ-1	O'Halleran
NV-3	Rosen*
NV-4	Kihuen*
AZ-2	~~McSally*~~
CO-6	~~Coffman~~
FL-27	~~Ros-Lehtinen*~~
IA-1	~~Blum~~
IL-6	~~Roskam~~
KS-3	~~Yoder~~
MI-11	~~Trott*~~
MN-2	~~Lewis~~
MN-3	~~Paulsen~~
NJ-11	~~Frelinghuysen*~~
PA-7	~~VACANT-Dent~~
VA-10	~~Comstock~~
WA-8	~~Reichert*~~

Lean Democrat

1 flip D to R
21 flips R to D

MN-1	~~Walz*~~
CA-10	~~Denham~~
CA-25	~~Knight~~
CA-39	~~Royce*~~
CA-45	~~Walters~~
CA-48	~~Rohrabacher~~
FL-15	Ross*
FL-26	~~Curbelo~~
GA-6	~~Handel~~
IA-3	~~Young~~
IL-14	~~Hultgren~~
KS-2	Jenkins*
KY-6	Barr
ME-2	~~Poliquin~~
MI-8	~~Bishop~~
NC-9	Pittenger* (?)
NC-13	Budd
NJ-3	~~MacArthur~~
NJ-7	~~Lance~~
NM-2	~~Pearce*~~
NY-19	~~Faso~~
NY-22	Tenney
OH-12	Balderson
PA-1	Fitzpatrick
PA-10	Perry
TX-7	~~Culberson~~
TX-32	~~Sessions~~
UT-4	~~Love~~
VA-2	~~Taylor~~
VA-7	~~Brat~~

Toss Up

1 flip D to R
2 flips R to D

MN-8	~~Nolan*~~
AK-AL	Young
CA-50	Hunter
FL-6	DeSantis*
FL-16	Buchanan
FL-18	Mast
FL-25	Diaz-Balart
GA-7	Woodall
IA-04	King
IL-12	Bost
IL-13	Davis
MI-6	Upton
MO-2	Wagner
MT-AL	Gianforte
NC-2	Holding
NE-2	Bacon
NY-11	~~Donovan~~
NY-24	Katko
NY-27	Collins
OH-1	Chabot
PA-16	Kelly
SC-1	~~Sanford*~~
TX-22	Olson
TX-23	Hurd
VA-5	Garrett*
WA-3	Beutler
WA-5	McMorris Rodgers
WI-1	Ryan*
WV-3	Jenkins*

Lean Republican

1 flip D to R
2 flip R to D

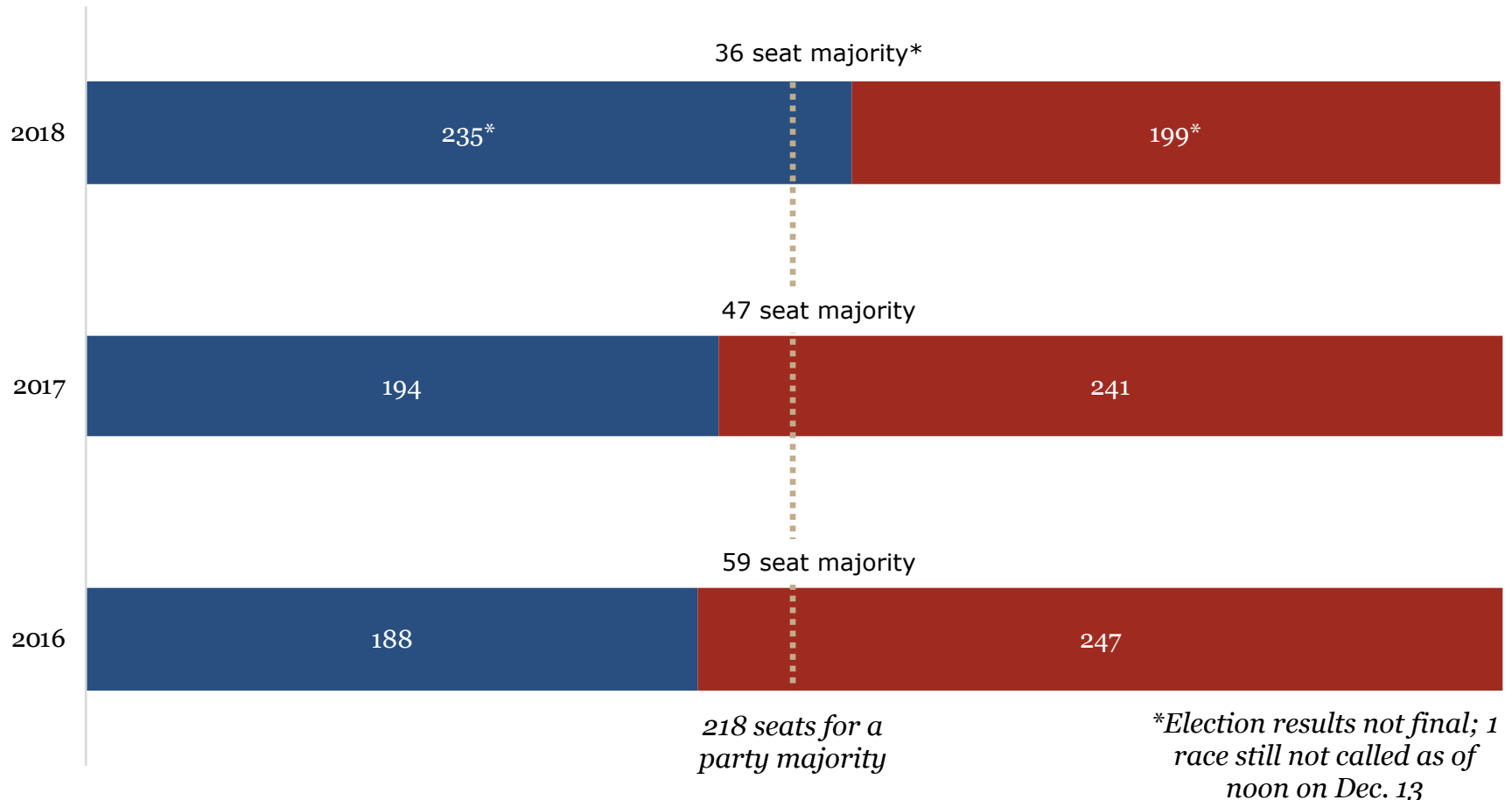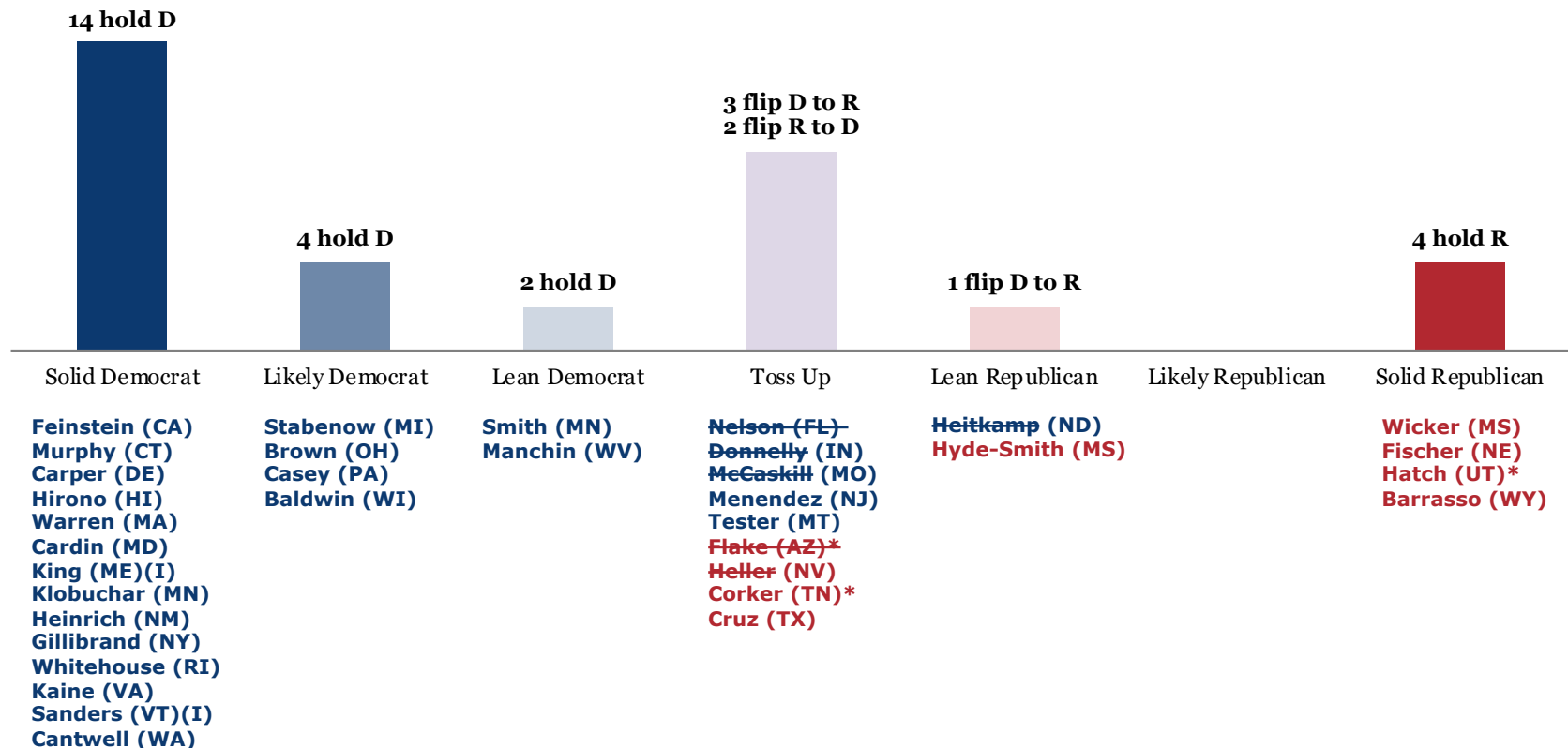|	
PA-14	~~OPEN (Lamb)~~
AR-2	Hill
AZ-6	Schweikert
AZ-8	Lesko
CA-1	LaMalfa
CA-4	McClintock
CA-21	~~Valadao~~
CA-22	Nunes
CO-3	Tipton
IN-2	Walorski
MI-1	Bergman
MI-3	Amash
MI-7	Walberg
NC-8	Hudson
NY-1	Zeldin
NY-2	King
NY-21	Stefanik
NY-23	Reed
OH-10	Turner
OH-14	Joyce
OK-05	~~Russell~~
TX-2	Poe*
TX-6	Barton*
TX-10	McCaul
TX-21	Smith*
TX-24	Marchant
TX-31	Carter
WI-6	Grothman
WV-2	Mooney

Likely Republican

Source: Cook Political Report

The new Democratic House majority will be slimmer than the previous Republican majority

House party breakdown, 2016-2018

36 seat majority*

2018 — 235* | 199*

47 seat majority

2017 — 194 | 241

59 seat majority

2016 — 188 | 247

218 seats for a party majority

Election results not final; 1 race still not called as of noon on Dec. 13

Republicans increased their Senate majority by two seats

Cook Political Report ratings

ALL 2018 SENATE RACES

Democratic incumbent
Republican incumbent

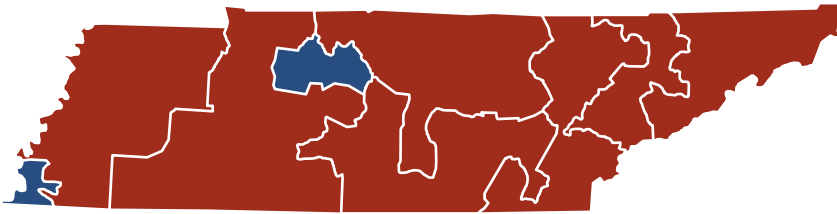*Asterisks denote incumbents who did not seek reelection, sought other office, or lost their primary election

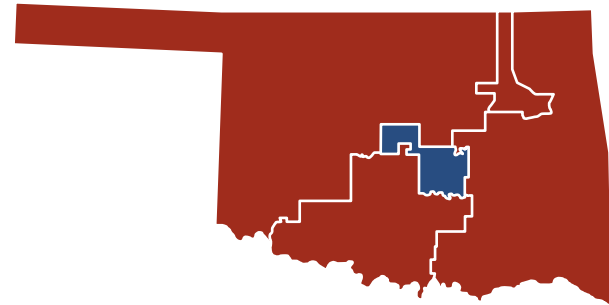Seats that flipped party control are struck through

14 hold D

3 flip D to R
2 flip R to D

4 hold D

2 hold D

4 hold R

1 flip D to R

Solid Democrat	Likely Democrat	Lean Democrat	Toss Up	Lean Republican	Likely Republican	Solid Republican
Feinstein (CA)	Stabenow (MI)	Smith (MN)	~~Nelson (FL)~~	~~Heitkamp~~ (ND)		Wicker (MS)
Murphy (CT)	Brown (OH)	Manchin (WV)	~~Donnelly~~ (IN)	Hyde-Smith (MS)		Fischer (NE)
Carper (DE)	Casey (PA)		~~McCaskill~~ (MO)			Hatch (UT)*
Hirono (HI)	Baldwin (WI)		Menendez (NJ)			Barrasso (WY)
Warren (MA)			Tester (MT)			
Cardin (MD)			~~Flake (AZ)*~~			
King (ME)(I)			~~Heller~~ (NV)			
Klobuchar (MN)			Corker (TN)*			
Heinrich (NM)			Cruz (TX)			
Gillibrand (NY)						
Whitehouse (RI)						
Kaine (VA)						
Sanders (VT)(I)						
Cantwell (WA)						

Source: Cook Political Report

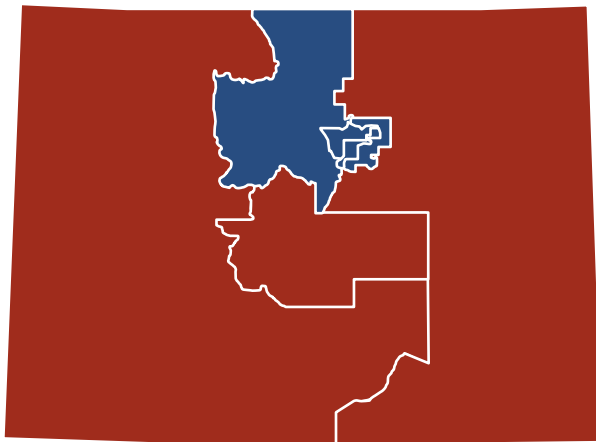# House and Senate results demonstrate a potential urban-rural divide
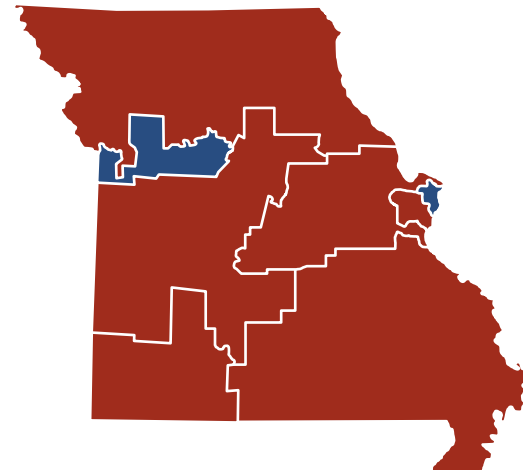
Tennessee

Oklahoma

Colorado

Missouri
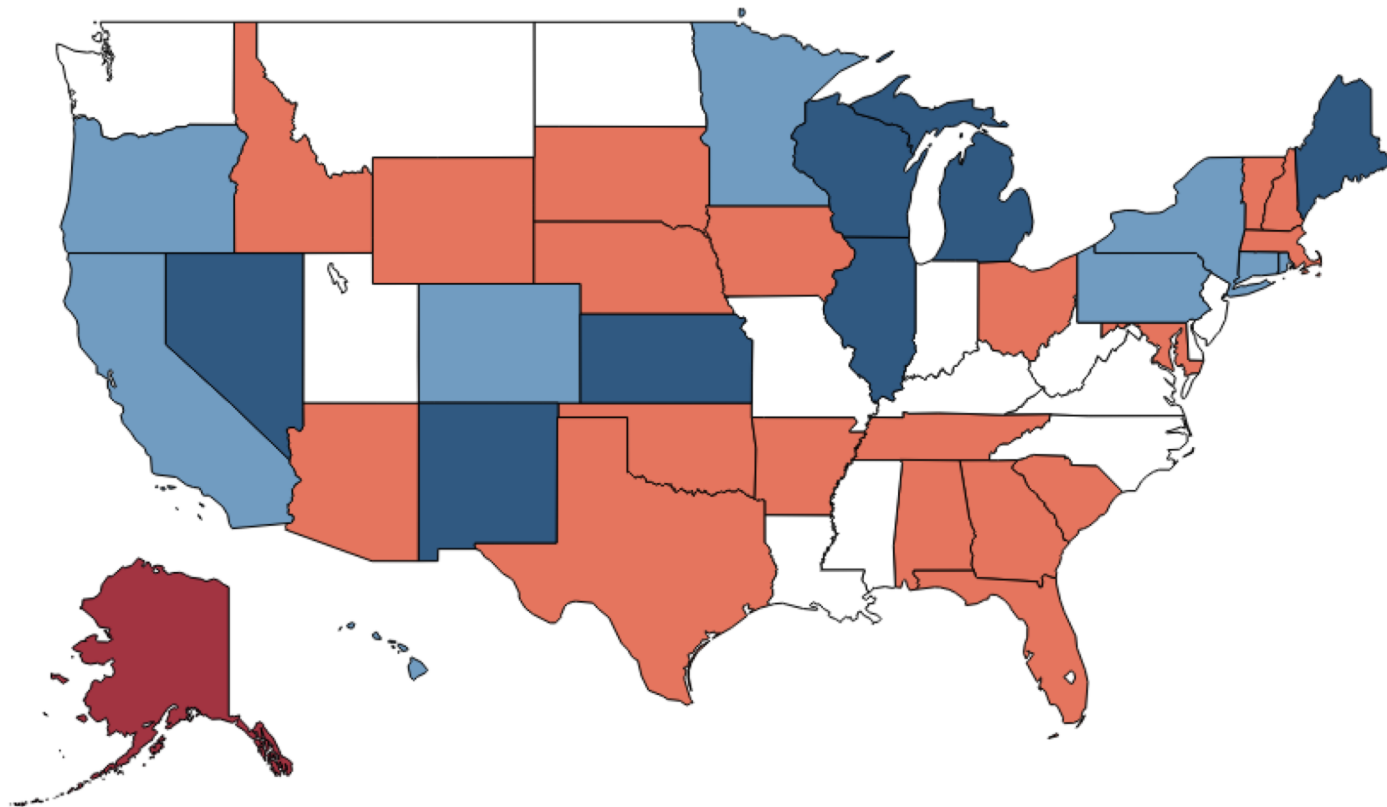

Source: National Journal Research, 2018

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Democrats performed well in gubernatorial races

Democrats won fewer state legislatures than expected

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Q&A

Democrats performed well in gubernatorial races, flipping at least seven governorships

Change of governor seats after the 2018 midterms

■ Democratic gain (7) ■ Democratic hold (9) ■ Republican gain (1) ■ Republican hold (19)
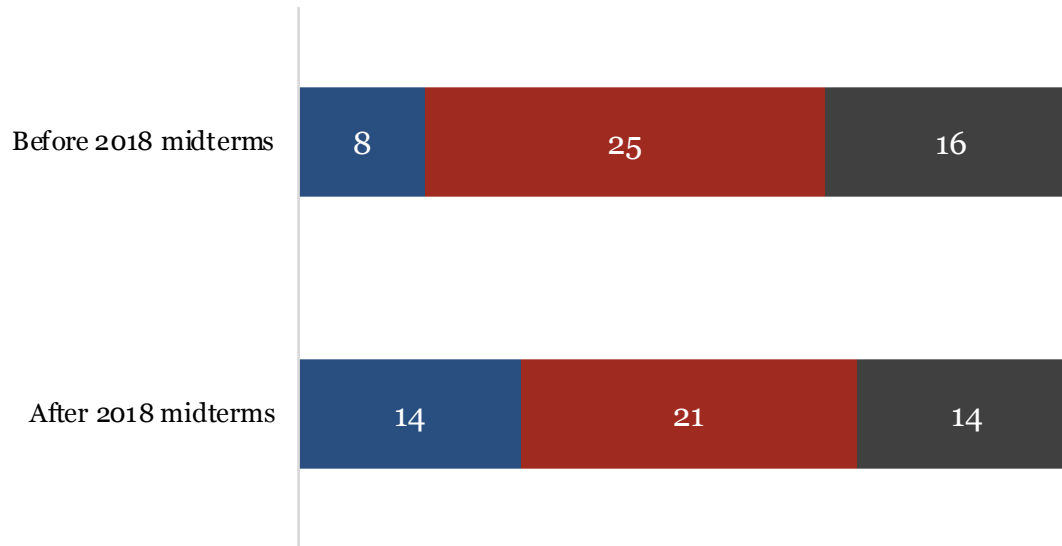
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Democrats won fewer state legislatures than anticipated

Party control over state legislatures

■ Number of states with Democratic control over governorship, House and Senate
■ Number of states with Republican control over governorship, House and Senate
■ Number of states with split party control over governorship, House and Senate

| Before 2018 midterms | 8 | 25 | 16 |
| After 2018 midterms | 14 | 21 | 14 |

Democrats picked up seven state chambers: the Colorado Senate, Maine Senate, Connecticut Senate (previously tied), Minnesota House, New York Senate, New Hampshire Senate and New Hampshire House.

However, the president's party loses an average of 12 state chambers in midterm elections. By only losing seven, Republicans performed better than expected.

Charlie Cook's note: state governments are increasingly important.
If D.C. does not deal with pressing issues, states can step into the vacuum. There is potential for change at the state level.

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The pool of potential Democratic presidential candidates is large, complex and more diverse than ever

Amy Klobuchar

Elizabeth Warren

Michael Bloomberg

Julián Castro

Eric Holder

Cory Booker

Kamala Harris

John Kerry

John Hickenlooper

Kirsten Gillibrand

Deval Patrick

Bernie Sanders

Eric Garcetti

Joe Biden

Source: Charlie Cook, National Journal's Day After the Election Event, Nov. 7, 2018

What should Democrats consider for 2020?

1

Midterms do not predict presidential elections — take a look at Clinton in 1994 and Obama in 2010.

However, it is worth looking at the states Democrats struggled with in 2016:

Michigan: Sen. Debbie Stabenow wins reelection with 52.1% of vote

Ohio: Sen. Sherrod Brown easily wins reelection with 53.2% of vote

Wisconsin: Sen. Tammy Baldwin wins reelection with 55.4% of vote

Florida: Andrew Gillum and Sen. Bill Nelson are competitive

2

Political parties and America are changing, and Democrats must consider the economic consequences of their policy decisions.

For example, in 2016, some believed that Democrats could have made more job training and development opportunities available.

Trade and NAFTA may have negatively impacted American manufacturing workers (although technology and automation are also be to blame).

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Charlie Cook's responses to audience Q&A (1/2)

1

Question: When would the White House and Democratic House have incentive to cooperate (e.g., on drug pricing)?

Cook: Cooperation is not guaranteed. President Trump has trouble staying on script, which could engender a more conflictual relationship with House Democrats and make them averse to sitting down and hammering out a deal.

2

Question: Midterms do not predict presidential elections, but are there significant signals at the county or state level?

Cook: The 2016 election was the largest divergence between the popular vote and Electoral College in history, so meaningful gains in lower-level elections might not be indicators of a changing tide strong enough to impact 2020.

3

Question: What are your thoughts on House leadership?

Cook: The conventional wisdom is that the slimmer the Democratic majority, the tougher it will be for Nancy Pelosi to gain 218 votes. Pelosi likely has a 60% chance of becoming speaker. Other potential candidates are Hakeem Jeffries and Cheri Bustos, but if Pelosi does not win, the reason will likely be calls for a generational change and somebody younger than 55-65 will win.

4

Question: Will there be more waning faith in voting processes in light of Georgia/Kansas, where secretaries of state oversaw their own elections?

Cook: In the past, state secretaries running for governors or state chambers had not been as contentious as this year's Kansas and Georgia races. However, the current environment is more politically charged. Over the past decade, Republicans have invested large amounts of money in state elections. We spend a lot of money on campaigns, but not as much on elections. There is very little overt fraud in this country, although there is lack of faith in the electoral process from both sides.

Charlie Cook's responses to audience Q&A (2/2)

5

Question: What's happening with ticket splitting (e.g., Ohio's Sherrod Brown and Mike DeWine)?

Cook: We're seeing less ticket splitting recently, but there are exceptions. For example, the gap between Brown's victory and Cordray's loss was significant. Also, Texas Governor Abbott won reelection by a large margin but Ted Cruz was very close.

6

Question: Is the nature of the Republican party changing, and will it impact Mitt Romney?

Cook: Romney is a talented addition to the Senate, and probably would not become a thorn in Trump's side because it is not his style. I'm not sure what the Republican party will look like in 2021 or 2025 when Trump is gone, but the party will not be the same.

7

Question: Polling failed in 2016, but do you think that 2018 polling has been more accurate?

Cook: The polls held up well this year, but even the best pollsters are not as accurate as they were ten years ago. There are systematic problems to phone polling. Caller ID, voicemail and telemarketing makes it hard to get a representative sample, and online polling is not yet ready. In the 1960's and 70's, we personally knocked on people's doors.