

## 2018 Mid-Term Election Summary

by

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With the conclusion of the mid-term elections, we are providing a summary of House and Senate standings and what to look for in the next congress.

In a snapshot, here is the change in composition for the next congress:

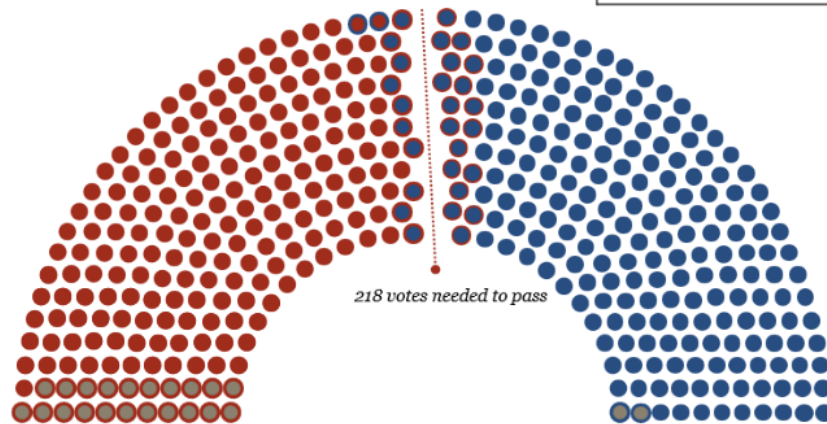
U.S. SENATE		U.S. HOUSE		GOVERNORS	
Democrats	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans
45*(-3)	52(+3)	219(+26)	195(-26)	22(+7)	25(-7)

### Composition of the 116th Congress: House

Partisan makeup of the House compared to the previous Congress

- Seats flipped R to D (Total: 28)
- Seats flipped D to R (Total: 2)
- Not yet called (color outline is incumbent's party)

	115 <sup>th</sup>	116 <sup>th</sup>
Republican	237	193
Democrat	193	219
Not yet called	7	23



### A Divided Congress

When the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress convenes in January of 2019, Democrats will control the House speaker's gavel, the legislative schedule, and every committee in the chamber. Republicans, who were able to increase their majority in the Senate, will continue to support of the president's foreign policy initiatives and their ability to confirm his judicial appointments - all by simple majority vote. Although Democrats were able to flip the House, they did not gain the 30- 40 seats anticipated in a "blue wave." Typically, the party of the president loses an average of 29 seats in their first midterm - this mid-term was very much in line with those averages. The House will need 270 votes to pass legislation, requiring some level of compromise within its own chamber and also with the Senate, where the opposing party is in the majority.

### 116<sup>th</sup> Congress House Leadership

House Democrats would normally hold their leadership elections the week after Thanksgiving, giving current Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) about three weeks to corral enough votes to win back the speaker's gavel. A handful of incumbent Democrats are ready to oppose Pelosi's bid for Speaker and a number of incoming freshman had also promised to do the same during their campaigns. Leadership elections will take place before incoming freshmen are

seated; however, it does expose a potential divide within the Democratic party that may have ripple effects when the session begins in January.

Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD), currently the minority whip, plans to run for majority leader, the number two spot. Rep. James Clyburn (D-SC), currently assistant leader, wants to step into the majority whip spot. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) could be a new addition to the leadership team, as current chairman of the Democrats' campaign arm he has thrown his hat in the ring for assistant leader. Leadership elections could be postponed to quell rumblings calling for fresh leadership faces and also to weigh the desires made by Reps. Cheri Bustos (D-IL) and David Cicilline (D-R.I.) to be considered.

Within the Republican Conference, current House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA) was supporting House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) for Speaker of the House, replacing the retiring Paul Ryan. However, Rep. Scalise has not ruled out challenging McCarthy for minority leader and both men have been campaigning across the country for the past month trying to save the Republican majority.

Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) will retain leadership of the Senate although next year he will still have to rely on a largely uncooperative Democratic minority and a president whose volatility has made it hard for congressional Republicans to stay on message. However, with the retirements of two critics of President Trump, Sens. Jeff Flake (R-AZ) and Bob Corker (R-TN), the Republican Senate will likely have more ideological unity and a shared sense of purpose as it prepares for 2020.

Senate Republicans have set their leadership elections for November 14th and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is the only member of the leadership not facing a conference-imposed term limit on his role. Sen. John Cornyn's (R-TX) term as the Majority Whip expires at the end of this congress, leaving him out of the leadership picture. Sen. John Thune (R-SD) the current chairman of the Senate Republican Conference as well as the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, is expected to take over for Cornyn and take an even more prominent role in both the messaging and policy operations. Also expected to move up is Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY), the current chairman of the Republican Policy Committee and of the Environment and Public Works Committee.

### **Lame Duck Session**

High on the agenda is completing the appropriations process for fiscal year (FY) 2019. While 75 percent of the federal government was funded on time, several agencies are operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR) including the Departments of Commerce, State, Homeland Security, and Justice, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Institute of Standards and Technology, and Environmental Protection Agency. The CR expires in early December and could very likely end up being similarly extended into 2019. In speaking with an Appropriations' chair two days ago, they asserted that the bills were "basically complete" and that there would be a push to get them across the finish line shortly after returning from recess.

The biggest fight expected during the lame duck session will be over funding President Trump's wall along the southern border. There will be an urgency at the White House to get funding in place for the wall before the end of 2018. With Democrats taking over the House of Representatives in January, there may be an effort to defer a final agreement on any spending bill until the next Congress. We will have to see how things play out when Congress returns next week. This scenario would be a significant roadblock to Congress approving significant funds for President Trump's wall along the southern border.

The Farm Bill also awaits congressional action, and current ranking member Rep. Collin Peterson (D-MN) has stated that he would like to see an agreement on reauthorization by the end of the year. Republicans may need to cede some ground on SNAP employment requirements to get the bill over the finish line, but there is a path to passage before the end of the legislative session.

### **Science Committees**

The election outcomes for individual seats had consequences for committee of interest to Space Grant. Most notably, Rep. John Culberson (R-TX), current chair of a House appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) subcommittee, lost his race by 4.6%. Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY) is expected to take over a chair of that subcommittee and it is yet unclear who will be posted as ranking member. Serrano has in the past been critical of proposals to cut NASA education and Earth science programs. Rep. Kay Granger (R-TX) has asserted that she wants to be ranking member of the full committee, and she has a strong path to that post.

On Senate Appropriations, Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) should continue as ranking member of the science portfolio. Sen. Shaheen has been a supporter of Space Grant so we will continue to work with her on funding concerns. Likewise, Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) will slide into the chair role and our relationships will continue.

On the Senate authorizing side, Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL), the ranking member of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, is embroiled in a recount in a race that was razor thin. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), who chairs the committee's Space, Science, and Competitiveness Subcommittee won his race against Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-TX).

On the House authorizing side, three prominent Republican members of the House Science Committee — Reps. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Barbara Comstock (R-VA), and Randy Hultgren (R-IL), all lost their elections. Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), ranking member of the House Science Committee, announced her intent to seek the chairmanship of the committee. Johnson, in her statement, cited three priorities she planned to pursue as chair of the committee: ensuring that the country “remains the global leader in innovation,” addressing climate change and seeking to “restore the credibility of the Science Committee as a place where science is respected.” Given that the current Chair, Lamar Smith (R-TX) is retiring, it is unclear who will take over as ranking member of the full committee. Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK) is in line by seniority, but he may seek a different committee position. Rep. Randy Weber (R-TX) announced earlier in the summer that he intends to throw his hat in the ring for the top position on the committee.