## 2016 Senate Ratings

### Pure Toss-Up
- Ayotte (R-NH)
- Toomey (R-PA)
- NV Open (Reid, D)

### Toss-Up/Tilt Democrat
- Johnson (R-WI)
- IN Open (Coats, R)

### Toss-Up/Tilt Republican
- Burr (R-NC)
- Rubio (R-FL)

### Lean Democrat
- Kirk (R-IL)

### Lean Republican
- Blunt (R-MO)
- McCain (R-AZ)
- Portman (R-OH)

### Democrat Favored
- Barrasso (R-WY)
- Sasse (R-NE)
- Perry (R-TX)

### Republican Favored
- Bennet (D-CO)
- Blumenthal (D-CT)
- Leahy (D-VT)
- Murray (D-WA)
- Schatz (D-HI)
- Schumer (D-NY)
- Wyden (D-OR)
- CA Open (Boxer, D)
- MD Open (Mikulski, D)

### Safe Democrat
- Bennet (D-CO)
- Blumenthal (D-CT)
- Leahy (D-VT)
- Murray (D-WA)
- Schatz (D-HI)
- Schumer (D-NY)
- Wyden (D-OR)
- CA Open (Boxer, D)
- MD Open (Mikulski, D)

### Safe Republican
- Boozman (R-AR)
- Crapo (R-ID)
- Grassley (R-IA)
- Hoeven (R-ND)
- Isakson (R-GA)
- Lankford (R-OK)
- Lee (R-UT)
- Moran (R-KS)
- Murkowski (R-AK)

### Currently Safe
- 14
- 9
- 10
- 1

### Competitive
- 30
- 36
- 30
- 36

### Not up this cycle
- 54
- 46
- 54
- 46

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### Takeovers in italics
- # moved benefiting Democrats,
  * moved benefiting Republicans

### Fight for the Senate Intensifies

By Nathan L. Gonzales

Hillary Clinton’s shrinking lead in the presidential race could help Republicans keep control of the Senate. Even if Donald Trump doesn’t win the race for the White House, losing competitive states by a close margin will improve vulnerable GOP senators’ chances of survival.

The map continues to be a problem for Republicans, particularly in Illinois and Wisconsin, but the party still has a fighting chance everywhere else. Republicans are emboldened by the negative attacks against former Sen. Evan Bayh in Indiana, encouraged by Sen. Rob Portman’s continuous improvement in Ohio, and hoping Joe Heck can hold steady in Nevada, the GOP’s only takeover opportunity.

The fight for the Senate looks to be narrowing to Indiana, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Nevada, and North Carolina. Missouri could still develop into a GOP problem, but it’s hard to see Blunt underperforming Trump, who looks like he’ll win the Show Me State. And Florida isn’t a done deal, but Marco Rubio could benefit from a diversion of Democratic resources elsewhere.

Democrats are still poised to gain between 3-6 Senate seats in November, which means the party could fall just short of what they need or win control narrowly.

GOP Sen. Lisa Murkowski didn’t have any problems in her late-August primary in Alaska, but that hasn’t tamped down interest in her race. Joe Miller, the 2010 GOP nominee who lost in the 2014 primary for the state’s other seat, is running as the Libertarian candidate. And former Democratic Sen. Mark Begich, who lost re-election in 2014, told the local media that he is considering a write-in campaign.

A write-in candidacy isn’t crazy considering Murkowski was re-elected as a write-in candidate in 2010 after she lost the primary to Miller, and Begich has nearly universal name identification because of his own service and his late-father being a congressman and former mayor of Anchorage. But the race would get awkward considering Begich ran a television ad last cycle touting how he voted with Murkowski nearly 80 percent of the time. There is a lot of activity here but it doesn’t look like a GOP problem yet. Rating: Safe for Republicans.

Moore Information (R) for Murkowski, Aug. 27-29 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Murkowski over Ray Matalin 56%-12%. Murkowski ID: 61% favorable/31% unfavorable.

We recently moved the Arizona Senate race from Republican Favored to Lean Republican, but subsequent public and private data put GOP Sen. John McCain in a strong position as the general election begins against Democratic Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick. McCain can’t feel completely

Continued on page 6
Presidential Race Tightens

By Nathan L. Gonzales

This can’t be what Democrats imagined when Republicans nominated Donald J. Trump as their presidential nominee.

Hillary Clinton’s high-single-digit lead in the national polls coming out of the conventions has all but evaporated, and even her grip on the Electoral College looks less certain than it did just a few weeks ago.

The cycle started with four toss-up states including Ohio, Florida, Virginia and Colorado. Based on the most likely allocation of the other states, Clinton could top 270 electoral votes by winning just one of the toss-up states, while Trump would need to win all four.

As long as Clinton maintains her advantage in Colorado and Virginia (which is not a certainty in light of the recent national polls), Trump would need to make up those electoral votes elsewhere, most likely from some combination of Pennsylvania, Nevada, Iowa and New Hampshire — all states President Barack Obama carried in the last two presidential elections. That also assumes Trump wins North Carolina, which is not a guarantee yet.

Recent polling shows Trump running ahead of, or at least even with, Clinton in Iowa and Nevada, and some Democratic strategists have been privately concerned about both states. We’re changing the rating of both states from Lean Democratic to Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic, with the traditional Democratic-lean of the states keeping them out of Pure Toss-Up for now.

We’re also changing our rating of Florida and Ohio back to Pure Toss-Up. We moved both states to Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic after the conventions when Clinton opened up a significant advantage. But that advantage is gone, particularly in the Buckeye State. The Clinton campaign sent Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren to Ohio in recent days, with events specifically geared toward millennials, as evidence of a growing problem.

The lack of support among millennials is one of Clinton’s challenges. Earlier this year, I was at an event with GOP pollster Kristen Soltis Anderson, who has done extensive research on young voters. She talked about how young women believe a woman will be president in their lifetime, they just aren’t convinced it has to be Hillary Clinton in 2016.

This race seems destined for a few more twists and turns, including the first presidential debate on Sept. 26. And of course turnout is a glaring question mark. It’s just not clear how the disappointed Republicans who don’t like Trump or the minority and younger voters who aren’t enamored with Clinton will act on Election Day.
Maine 2: The Land of Second Chances?

By Simone Pathé

Republicans hold just two House seats in New England: New Hampshire’s 1st District, which Frank Guinta’s Tuesday primary victory imperils for the GOP, and Maine’s 2nd District, a rural, blue-collar area long represented by a Blue Dog Democrat.

GOP Rep. Bruce Poliquin narrowly won Maine’s northern district in 2014 in what was a strong year for Republicans. Representing a district President Barack Obama carried twice, Poliquin is one of the most vulnerable incumbents this year. Democrats are banking on presidential-year turnout helping Emily Cain knock off Poliquin in a rematch. And it’s a must-win seat for the party to get back to the majority.

Lay of the Land

Geographically, this is the largest district east of the Mississippi River. It stretches from the New Hampshire border, all the way up to Canada and runs along much of the state’s coastline. Forestry, potato farming and lobstering are all big industries here.

The 2nd is the more conservative of the state’s two districts. Maine’s 1st District, which includes Portland and the southern coast, is a safe Democratic district represented by Chellie Pingree.

Poliquin defeated Cain by 5 points in 2014, while independent Blaine Richardson took 11 percent. Richardson has endorsed Poliquin this year.

Less than a month after Cain’s loss, Democrats were recruiting her to run again. To net the 30 seats required to secure control of the House, Democrats have to win this seat. It’s currently a Tossup, with most polling showing the two candidates tied or with a lead close to the margin of error.

But there is no guarantee the presidential race will break in Democrats’ favor in rural Maine. Donald Trump is more popular here than in other areas of the country, and he is not expected to have as negative an impact on Poliquin as he is on down-ballot candidates in districts with younger, more diverse populations.

The Incumbent

Poliquin, who will turn 63 a week before Election Day, couldn’t be more different from former Democratic Rep. Mike Michaud, a millworker who held this seat for 12 years. One of the last Blue Dogs in the House, Michaud gave up the seat for an unsuccessful gubernatorial bid in 2014.

Born and raised in Maine, Poliquin is a third-generation Mainer. A scholarship brought him to the prestigious Phillips Andover Academy. He went on to study economics at Harvard and then worked in investment banking in Chicago and New York City for 10 years before returning to Maine to start a family. After his wife died in an accident, he raised his son as a single dad.

He lost the 2010 gubernatorial primary for governor, but Gov. Paul LePage ended up appointing him Treasurer, a position he held until 2012, when he lost the GOP nomination for Senate.

Poliquin nearly set a fundraising record for a freshman member of Congress when he raised $700,000 in the first quarter of 2015. His position on the Financial Services Committee helped him rake in money, which has become a central focus of Democratic attacks — that he represents Wall Street, rather than Maine.

On paper, Poliquin wouldn’t seem a good fit for this working class district considering his net worth was about $5.2 million in 2014. But in Washington, D.C., he impressed early as an energetic lawmaker who fights for what he has called “the real Maine” in Financial Services Committee hearings.

The Challenger

Cain, 36, moved to Maine later in life. She graduated from high school in New Jersey, then moved to Maine with her family when her father — a shoe salesman — got a new job. She attended the University of Maine, where she later worked. She received a Master’s in higher education from Harvard in 2004.

That same year, she was elected to the state house. Six years later,
Maine: Candidates Balance Presidential Tightrope

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at age 30, Cain became the youngest woman to serve as state House minority leader. She held that position for two years before being elected to the state Senate. She gave up her seat to run for Congress in 2014.

In her first television ad of the 2016 cycle, Cain touts her work with LePage when she was in the legislature. It’s a nod to the bipartisan appeal it’ll take to win in this moderate district.

Cain insists her campaign is stronger than it was two years ago and that she has a better ground operation (including more field staff from Maine).

In the last election, Cain was the one with the 10-year legislative record, but now that Poliquin has a voting record, Cain and the Democrats have been attacking him, specifically for his Financial Services position and for not taking a stronger stance in support of the Export-Import Bank.

Cain has outraised Poliquin every quarter this year. But she is up against a well-funded and wealthy incumbent with a French-Canadian last name in a district that is proud of its Franco heritage. And thanks in large part to that impressive first fundraising quarter, Poliquin had more than a $1 million cash on hand advantage at the end of June.

The Numbers

Public and internal polling has consistently showed this to be a close race, often within the margin of error. The wild card is the presidential race. Trump is doing better here than in many districts that typically trend blue in presidential years.

This district twice voted for LePage, whose brash personality and antagonism toward immigrants has been compared to Trump’s style.

Most polls have showed Hillary Clinton carrying Maine, but the race has been tightening. Because Maine splits its electoral votes by congressional districts, Trump has been making a play for this more conservative district.

She’s consistently run slightly behind in the 2nd district. But an automated SurveyUSA poll conducted for Colby College/Boston Globe released earlier this week gave Trump a 10-point edge in the 2nd District.

Neither candidate wants to be too close to either party’s unpopular presidential nominee. Cain endorsed Clinton over a year ago. Poliquin won’t answer questions about the presidential election, at times painfully dodging reporters who’ve tried to ask him about Trump.

The Bottom Line

This is one of Democrats’ top targets. House Majority PAC has run more TV ads here than in any other district. Democrats worry that if they don’t retake this traditionally blue seat, they won’t be able to in the next midterm cycle, when turnout will likely be more favorable for Republicans.

But party strategists are cognizant of that fact that voters in this district don’t respond to typical partisan messaging. Maine voters are infamous ticket splitters, with the same voters backing Sen. Susan Collins, LePage and Obama.

HMP and End Citizens United are painting Cain as the best fit for this district’s middle class values, while attacking Poliquin as a Wall Street millionaire ill-suited to Maine. The National Republican Congressional Committee is on the air, too, with an ad that accuses Cain of standing in lockstep with Clinton.

This race will likely come down to who is able to better connect with voters in the last couple weeks of the campaign and to overperform the top of their respective tickets.
### 2016 House Open Seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>Incumbent</th>
<th>Presidential Winner 2012</th>
<th>Presidential Winner 2008</th>
<th>Likely Winner</th>
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<tr>
<td>AZ-1</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick (D)</td>
<td>Romney 50.4%</td>
<td>McCain 51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>AZ-5</td>
<td>Salmon (R)</td>
<td>Romney 64%</td>
<td>McCain 63%</td>
<td>Biggs (R)</td>
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<td>CA-20</td>
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<td>Panetta (D)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sanchez (D)</td>
<td>Obama 61.4%</td>
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<td>DE At-Large</td>
<td>Carney (D)</td>
<td>Obama 58.6%</td>
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<td>Rochester (D)</td>
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<td>McCain 66.8%</td>
<td>Gaetz (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FL-2</td>
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<td>Dunn (R)</td>
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<td>FL-19</td>
<td>Clawson (R)</td>
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<td>GA-3</td>
<td>Westmoreland (R)</td>
<td>Romney 65.9%</td>
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<td>IL-8</td>
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<td>Obama 57.4%</td>
<td>Obama 61.5%</td>
<td>Krishnamoorthi (D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IN-3</td>
<td>Stutzman (R)</td>
<td>Romney 62.5%</td>
<td>McCain 56%</td>
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<td>IN-9</td>
<td>Young (R)</td>
<td>Romney 57.2%</td>
<td>McCain 52.6%</td>
<td>Hollingsworth (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KY-1</td>
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<td>Boustany (R)</td>
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<td>McCain 65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA-4</td>
<td>Fleming (R)</td>
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<td>McCain 59.5%</td>
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<td>Brown (D)</td>
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<td>MD-8</td>
<td>Van Hollen (D)</td>
<td>Obama 62.0%</td>
<td>Obama 63.1%</td>
<td>Raskin (D)</td>
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<td>NY-19</td>
<td>Gibbon (R)</td>
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<td>NC-13</td>
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<td>McCain 51.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA-2</td>
<td>Fattah (D)</td>
<td>Obama 50%</td>
<td>Obama 91%</td>
<td>Evans (D)</td>
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<td>Obama 53.2%</td>
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<td>PA-16</td>
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<td>Romney 52.4%</td>
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<td>Smucker (R)</td>
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<td>TN-8</td>
<td>Fincher (R)</td>
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<td>McCain 64.2%</td>
<td>Kustoff (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TX-15</td>
<td>Hinojosa (D)</td>
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<td>TX-19</td>
<td>Neugebauer (R)</td>
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<td>McCain 71.2%</td>
<td>Arrington (R)</td>
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<td>Rigell (R)</td>
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<td>McCain 51%</td>
<td>Taylor (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>VA-4</td>
<td>Forbes (R)</td>
<td>Obama 60.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>VA-5</td>
<td>Hurt (R)</td>
<td>Romney 53.8%</td>
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<td>Garrett (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>VA-7</td>
<td>McDermott (D)</td>
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<td>WI-8</td>
<td>Ribble (R)</td>
<td>Romney 51.3%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>WY At-Large</td>
<td>Lummis (R)</td>
<td>Romney 68.6%</td>
<td>McCain 64.8%</td>
<td>Cheney (R)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Compete Seats Shaded in Gray**
Senate: Republicans Turn Up Heat on Bayh in Indiana

Continued from page 1

comfortable considering Trump is having a hard time putting some distance between himself and Hillary Clinton in the presidential race. But even as Democrats look to expand the national map beyond the initial takeover targets, they are investing more money in North Carolina and Missouri, and not Arizona, at least not yet. Rating: Lean Republican.

Marist for NBC News/Wall Street Journal, Sept. 6-8 (LVs)—General Election ballot: McCain over Kirkpatrick 57%-38%.

Trump has shown some resilience in Florida, even leading Clinton in this week’s CNN poll, which is great news for Republicans focused on re-electing Sen. Marco Rubio. Rubio’s decision to reconsider his retirement boosted GOP chances of holding the seat and he continues to hold a narrow advantage against Democratic Rep. Patrick Murphy. Democrats have been shifting their television ad reservations, which usually isn’t a sign of optimism. Party strategists must be considering whether to get into a spending war with Republicans in an expensive state or divert that money into a pair of seats, including North Carolina and Missouri. Rating: Toss-Up/Tilt Republican, but could be improving for Rubio.

Opinion Research Center for CNN, Sept. 7-12 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Rubio over Murphy 54%-43%. IDs: Rubio 54% favorable/40% unfavorable, Murphy 38% favorable/26% unfavorable.

JMC Analytics (IVR), Sept. 7-8 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Rubio over Murphy 43%-38%. Support Rubio re-elect 40% disapprove 42%.

Quinnipiac Univ., Aug. 29-Sept. 7 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Rubio over Murphy 50%-43%.

Public Policy Polling (D)(IVR), Sept. 4-6 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Rubio over Murphy 40%-37%, Paul Stanton (Libertarian) 10%. Murphy ID: 29% favorable/24% unfavorable. Rubio job rating: 35% approve/45% disapprove.

Former Democratic Sen. Evan Bayh started the general election sprint in Indiana with a large financial advantage and significant double-digit lead in the polls. But in an effort to boost GOP Rep. Todd Young, Republicans have been relentless in attacking Bayh for not spending time in Indiana since he left office in 2011 and for his work for lobbying firms. It wasn’t reasonable to expect Bayh to blow out Young in a state that Trump is likely to carry in November. We still have the race rated Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic, but the contest is getting tighter.

POS (R) for WTHR/Howey Poll, Sept. 6-8 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Bayh over Young 44%-40%.

Garin Hart Yang (D) for Bayh, Aug. 15-18 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Bayh over Young 55%-39%.

Nevada wasn’t supposed to be this difficult for Democrats with a growing Hispanic population and strong showings by President Barack Obama in the recent presidential elections. But Trump is hanging close with Clinton in this year’s presidential race and GOP Rep. Joe Heck is in strong position to takeover retiring Sen. Harry Reid’s seat against former state attorney general Catherine Cortez Masto. We still have the race rated as a Pure Toss-Up, as it has been for months, but it’s looking like Heck has a narrow advantage.

Monmouth Univ., Sept. 11-13 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Heck over Cortez Masto 46%-43%, Tom Jones 4%. IDs: Heck 36% favorable/32% unfavorable, Cortez Masto 34% favorable/29% unfavorable.

Marist for NBC News/Wall Street Journal, Sept. 6-8 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Heck over Cortez Masto 47%-45%.

Public Policy Polling (D)(IVR) for Project New America, Sept. 6-7 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Cortez Masto over Heck 42%-41%. IDs: Heck 39% favorable/45% unfavorable, Cortez Masto 37% favorable/41% unfavorable.

The New Hampshire race between GOP Sen. Kelly Ayotte and Democratic Gov. Maggie Hassan continues to be one of the most competitive in the country and well within the states that will decide who controls the Senate next year. Ayotte didn’t have any trouble defeating state Sen. Jim Rubens in Tuesday’s primary (she won with nearly 80 percent), concluding a cycle that saw every GOP senator win his or her primary with an average of over 80 percent.

Ayotte’s re-election chances appeared to take a hit when Trump’s numbers took a sharp dive after the conventions, but he appears to have regained his footing. The recent NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist poll, which showed Ayotte with an 8-point lead, looks like an outlier, but if it’s the sign of a trend back toward Ayotte, Republican chances of holding the Senate would improve significantly. Rating: Pure Toss-Up.

Marist for NBC News/Wall Street Journal, Sept. 6-8 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Ayotte over Hassan 52%-44%.

Public Policy Polling (D)(IVR), Aug. 25-29 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Hassan over Ayotte 47%-45%.

As Democrats shift away from winning Ohio, and potentially away from Florida down the line, North Carolina is getting more and more attention. Some GOP strategists are concerned that Sen. Richard Burr is not prepared for the volatile weeks ahead with Trump at the top of the ticket. The senator keeps his often unconventional strategy close to the vest, fueling anxiety that he is relying on the same strategy that helped him win in 2010, a great Republican year.

Republicans have been talking about their boxes of opposition research against former Democratic legislator Deborah Ross, who led the state ACLU chapter, but she continues to gain the positive press As Democrats shift away from winning Ohio, and potentially away from Florida down the line, North Carolina is getting more and more attention. Some GOP strategists are concerned that Sen. Richard Burr is not prepared for the volatile weeks ahead with Trump at the top of the ticket. The senator keeps his often unconventional strategy close to the vest, fueling anxiety that he is relying on the same strategy that helped him win in 2010, a great Republican year.

Republicans have been talking about their boxes of opposition research against former Democratic legislator Deborah Ross, who led the state ACLU chapter, but she continues to gain the positive press...
Democrats Believe House Prospects Will Dramatically Improve

By Nathan L. Gonzales

In spite of Donald Trump closing the gap with Hillary Clinton and GOP prospects for holding the Senate improving, House Democrats believe we are on the eve of the fight for the House turning dramatically in their favor.

Democratic strategists don’t believe Republican incumbents and challengers are strong enough to withstand Trump’s slumping numbers in suburban districts after Democrats air television ads tying them to their presidential nominee.

On Thursday, the DCCC released a one-day poll that is either an outlier or the initial sign of a massive electoral wave.

The survey showed Democrat Terri Bonoff with a 40-38 percent advantage over GOP Rep. Erik Paulsen after one week of television ads which tied the congressman to Trump. That is a dramatic drop for Paulsen who was in the low- to mid-50s in public and private polling.

If one week of ads caused Paulsen to drop 15 or more points, then Democrats will experience a wave in November that makes their 30-seat gain in 2006 look like a ripple. But that poll was met with private skepticism among strategists on both sides of the aisle.

There is still time for the House to become more competitive. House races engage late and can be lagging indicators of the national trend. But the current national trend is getting slightly worse for Clinton, not better, which could narrow her margin of victory in competitive House races and decrease the number of ticket-splitters Republicans need to survive.

Democrats are still likely to gain between 10-15 seats of the 30 they need to control the House. But polling at the end of the month, after a few weeks of television ads, will be important and instructive as to which direction a majority of the competitive House races are headed.

California’s 10th District. Democrats and Republicans have very different perspectives on this Northern California district. Democrats released a mid-August poll which showed beekeeper Michael Eggman within 3 points, 46-43 percent, of GOP Rep. Jeff Denham. Denham defeated Eggman 56-44 percent in 2014 and finished ahead of Eggman 48-28 percent in the primary. The Denham campaign released a late August poll that showed the congressman with an 18-point lead and a favorability rating over 50 percent. Democrats are counting on Denham being dragged down by his connections to Trump, and Eggman getting a boost from an uptick in Democratic voter registration. But the congressman has plenty of money to defend himself and has proven an ability to outperform the top tier takeover opportunity, as Democratic groups incrementally decrease their involvement in the race. Recent polling shows GOP Sen. Rob Portman with a significant advantage and Trump doing well (and sometimes winning the Buckeye State), all but wiping away Strickland’s chances of riding to Washington on Clinton’s coattails. We already moved the race to Lean Republican, but it might be worse than that for Democrats. Strickland’s caught in a vicious cycle of expectations that will be hard to dig out of.

Suffolk Univ., Sept. 12-14 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Portman over Strickland 39%-31%. IDs: Portman 40% favorable/26% unfavorable, Strickland 31% favorable/43% unfavorable.

Selzer & Co. for Bloomberg, Sept. 9-12 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Portman over Strickland 53%-36%.

Opinion Research Center for CNN, Sept. 7-12 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Portman over Strickland 58%-37%.

Pennsylvania remains poised to be a critical state in the presidential race and the fight for the Senate. It’s a must-win state for Trump to win the White House if he can’t change the dynamic in Colorado and Virginia, and re-electing Sen. Pat Toomey is looking like a must if Republicans want to keep control of the Senate. Clinton is maintaining a narrow advantage over Trump in the presidential race, while Toomey and Democrat Katie McGinty each led in some recent surveys. Keep your eye on the Keystone State. Rating: Pure Toss-Up.

Quinnipiac Univ., Aug. 29-Sept. 7 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Toomey over McGinty 46%-45%.

GBA Strategies (D) for End Citizens United, Aug. 21-28 (LVs)--General Election ballot: McGinty over Toomey 47%-42%, Clifford 8%.

Senators

Candidate Conversation

Brady Walkinshaw (D)
Candidate for Washington’s 7th District
Interview Date: Sept. 12, 2016
Date of Birth: April 26, 1984; Minneapolis, Minn.
Political Office: State Representative

Current Outlook: Walkinshaw is locked in a competitive race for retiring-Rep. Jim McDermott’s liberal seat in Seattle. Because of Washington’s Top Two primary system, Walkinshaw faces a fellow Democrat, state Sen. Pamala Jayapal, in November. Jayapal finished first in the August all-party primary with 42 percent while Walkinshaw took 21 percent. Third place finisher Joe McDermott (no relation to the congressman) finished third with 19 percent and has endorsed Walkinshaw for the general election.

Evaluation: Walkinshaw was easy to talk to and comfortable in his own skin without being too casual. He clearly wants to be known as the candidate focused on local issues against Jayapal, who has received some national attention and financial support from Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. Jayapal is trying to make history by becoming the first Indian-American woman in Congress while Walkinshaw would be the first openly gay Latino. This is the first time two Democrats have faced off in a general election in a congressional race in Washington, and it’s unclear if the small number of Republicans in the district might make a difference. Walkinshaw is a likable and credible candidate but has to keep pace in fundraising in order to compete.
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of the ticket. We’re watching the race, but still Safe for now.

POS for Denham, Aug. 28-30 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Eggman over Denham 57%-35%. Denham job approval 58%. IDs: Denham 53% favorable/23% unfavorable, Eggman 23% favorable/12% unfavorable.

Latinos Decisions (D), Aug. 18-22 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Denham over Eggman 46%-43%.

California’s 49th District. Democrats are determined to defeat GOP Rep. Darrell Issa in this Southern California district. Interest in the race began when the congressman finished narrowly ahead of Democrat Doug Applegate, 51-46 percent, in the June primary. Democrats released a mid-August poll that showed Issa with a 3-point advantage, and Issa’s campaign countered with an early September poll, which showed the congressman with a 14-point edge.

Democrats are confident in the demographic and registration trends of the district, but it’s still unclear whether the party will commit the resources necessary to defeat the richest member of Congress. One party strategist estimated it would take $3.5 million to do it. At the end of June, Applegate had $136,000 in the bank compared to $3.8 million for Issa, who has an estimated net worth of over $250 million.

It also remains to be seen whether Applegate, a retired Marine colonel, is a credible alternative for a potentially vulnerable Issa. He’ll need to capitalize on the attention to boost his own fundraising and convince potential donors that the recent story about allegations that he stalked and harassed his ex-wife and two restraining orders were taken out of context from a messy divorce and child custody battle.

We’re watching the race but still rating it as Safe until there is more polling data to show Issa is actually vulnerable and that Democrats will commit the resources necessary to win the race.

Public Opinion Strategies (R) for Issa, Sept. 6-8 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Issa over Applegate 52%-38%. Issa job rating: 52% approve/30% disapprove. Applegate ID: 12% favorable/2% unfavorable.

Strategies 360 (D), Aug. 8-11 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Issa over Applegate 45%-42%.

Delaware’s At-Large District. Lisa Blunt Rochester won the Sept. 13 Democratic primary and is the prohibitive favorite in November. She will be the first woman and African American to go to Congress from Delaware. The seat is open because Democratic Rep. John Carney is running for governor.

Florida’s 18th District. Wealthy disaster relief company CEO Randy Perkins (D) and wounded veteran Brian Mast (R) are facing off in one of Democrats’ only vulnerable House seats. Rep. Patrick Murphy is leaving the seat to run for Senate. The district has a slight GOP lean to it, but Perkins has personal money to invest in the race (he spent millions in the primary). Republicans just released a poll that showed the two men essentially tied as the general election starts to heat up. Rating: Pure Toss-Up.

McLaughlin & Assoc. (R) for Mast, Sept. 12-14 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Perkins over Mast 41%-40%, Spalding 6%.

Indiana’s 2nd District. GOP Rep. Jackie Walorski made the news when she appeared in a recent Politico article about Donald Trump tanking Republicans down the ballot. It’s not clear where that information came from as the NRCC is not particularly concerned about the race and the congresswoman doesn’t appear to be in imminent danger. She has a reputation for underperforming, but she went on television this week with a 60-second spot from Marine Corp veteran Erik Olsen talking about Walorski saving his life by getting him proper care for his cancer.

Democrats are not talking up the race. Rating: Safe GOP.

Indiana’s 9th District. There is some concern in GOP circles that businessman Trey Hollingsworth, who moved to the area from Tennessee, is having a tougher time than expected against Democrat Shelli Yoder, a professor and former Miss Indiana. GOP Rep. Todd Young is leaving the seat to run for the Senate. Hollingsworth, who used his considerable personal money to overwhelm his primary opponents, should be able to spend his way out of any potential problems in a district that Trump is likely to win. But this race isn’t over. Rating: Republican Favored.

Kansas’ 3rd District. Both parties agree that Clinton is doing well in this district, but that’s about where the similarities end. GOP Rep. Kevin Yoder released a poll that showed him with a 53-36 percent advantage over Democrat Jay Sidie and Clinton winning the district 44-38 percent. Sidie released a poll with similar findings. But there are two different explanations about the results. Democrats equate Trump and GOP Gov. Sam Brownback struggling to Yoder struggling. But the election will likely be more complicated, and Sidie hasn’t proven that he is a top-tier challenger to knock off an incumbent. He had just $73,000 in his campaign account on July 13, but has some personal money he could spend. Yoder had $2.2 million at the same point. This still feels like a scenario for Democrats, but we’re watching it.

GBA Strategies (D) for Sidie, Aug. 28-30 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Yoder over Sidie 49%-37%, Steve Hohe 8%. IDs: Yoder 32% favorable/39% unfavorable, Sidie 10% favorable/14% unfavorable.

POS for Yoder, August 6-8 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Yoder of Sidie 53%-36%.

Minnesota’s 3rd District. As we noted in the introduction, this suburban Twin Cities district is ground zero for the fight over the narrative about whether the House is in play. Democrats believe Trump is dragging down GOP Rep. Erik Paulsen while Republicans believe the congressman’s profile is independent enough to withstand a drag from the top of the ticket. Even some Democrats who want state Sen. Terri Bonoff to win don’t believe she’s closed the gap with Paulsen and is now winning. That doesn’t mean she can’t or won’t prevail, but subsequent polling data will determine whether the DCCC poll was an outlier. Rating: Republican Favored.

DCCC poll, Sept. 12 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Bonoff over Paulsen 40%-38%.

Tarrance Group (R) for Newton Heath/AAN (R), Aug. 9-11 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Paulsen over Bonoff 57%-31%. IDs: Paulsen 48% favorable/19% unfavorable, Bonoff 13% favorable/11% unfavorable.

Utah’s 4th District. GOP Rep. Mia Love is on television with a negative ad against Democrat Doug Owens for work he did as an attorney. Democrats are portraying the ad as an act of desperation, but it’s probably a smart move for the congresswoman. In 2014, she didn’t attack Owens (in part because she was trying to recover her own ratings from a bitter 2012 race) and beat Owens just 51-46 percent. Republicans won’t let the Democratic go unscathed this time around. Donald Trump’s favorability numbers are miserably in Utah, but Clinton’s are just as bad or worse in some surveys. Rating: Republican Favored.

Lighthouse Research for Utah Debate Commission, Aug. 2-Sept. 3 (LVs)—General Election ballot: Love over Owens 49%-30%.