

Three Elections: 2016, 2018, 2020

In this PowerPoint Presentation we will try to understand the forces have shaped our most recent general and midterms elections and do our best to analyze the possible outcomes of the fateful 2020 general election.

What Happened in the 2016 General Election?

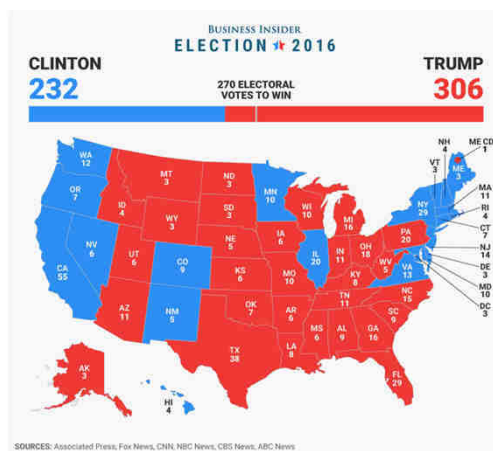
We all remember the shock of that November night three and one-half years ago. (I do not want hours like those ever again.)

I know all using this tool have invested serious time seeking to understand how Trump was elected – and what people of good will can do to prevent that happening again.

I'll try to construct an answer to “what happened” and look forward to your critique of my views.

Elements of Trump Victory

- Clinton won the popular vote by **2,868,686**
- Trump won the Electoral College **306-232**
- Difference: Slim Trump margins in PA, MI & WI
- Why?
 - Russian meddling?
 - Brilliant Trump micro-targeting?
 - Trump's "faux populist" pitch to resentful white workers?
 - Trump exploitation of long GOP dog whistle?
 - Clinton's weak, tone-deaf, deeply flawed campaign?



We all know the math. Clinton won the popular vote by nearly 3 million votes. But Trump won the Electoral College.

Russian meddling was shocking – but consequential? I have not seen the hard case. Nor do I believe that there were secret savants in Trump's campaign. (We'll see about that in 2020.)

As I'll show you in a minute, Trump's EC win was achieved by very narrow margins in three states in the industrial heartland: Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan

Sadly, Trump's faux populist pitch to white working class voters in those states moved enough of them for his win.

Trump also exploited the long-term Republican play to racial resentment among a **fraction** of white working class voters.

Nor should any of us blink the faults of Hillary Clinton as a candidate or the clear failures of her campaign.

Trump Pitch to the “Left Behinds”

- White working class, mostly in manufacturing (OEM & Supply Chain), secondary cities, suburban, some rural
- Rising productivity but stagnant wages, driven by threat of off-shore relocation and out-sourcing
- Incoherent, underfunded, poorly led state & federal workforce retraining regimes
- National failure to anticipate, engage, and manage a huge economic transition
- No national voice until Trump’s false promises
- I lived this from 1984 to 2009, folks



In my view a major element of Trump’s 2016 victory was his support from White Working Class (WWC) voters who worked in manufacturing in the secondary cities, suburbs, and rural reaches of the Midwest.

These folks have taken it hard for more than a generation of eroding real wages, less security, and reduced respect as the global mobility of capital left them behind. And they saw the abject failure of government to do much to recognize and respond to their risks and needs.

They heard no national voice speak to their stress until Trump’s false promises. Little wonder that many of them rose to Trump.

I will say, with discipline: Believe me, friends. **I know.** As readers of my short Political Bio know, I was there, at the coal face, trying, for a quarter century of my life. My circle moved Bubba Clinton some, but way short of enough.

Did White Working Class Voters Elect Trump?

Not Heard



Not Engaged



Clinton lost WWC share in key states and thus the EC.

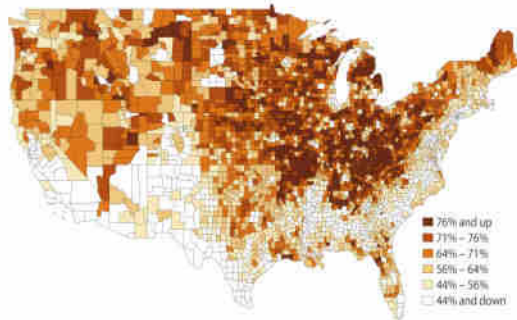
But **lower Black turnout and share** were also a significant factors.

What is clear, beyond any waffle, is that if Democrats want to make America progress again, win the White House and Senate, keep the House, and emerge as a contending voice in a majority of states, we must **build the share** of WWC voters who hear our message because we hear theirs -- and engage those who can be won in 2020.

Hard. Necessary. And not incompatible with extending the Obama coalition.

Where the White Working Class Votes Matters: Distribution Drives the EC, Senate & House

FIGURE 5
White, non-college-educated population concentrations
in Midwest and Appalachia
Percentage of white, non-college-educated voters, 2016 presidential election



- The white working class vote is especially strong in Appalachian and industrial midwestern regions where its weight can drive the Electoral College and Senate elections
- Look at **Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota** – **and the 2nd CD of Maine**

This graphic shows the **weight** and **distribution** of **WWC voters** by **county**.

Modest increases in WWC support for Ds in the **nine states** listed could drive **victory in the EC** and **turn the Senate Blue** – Maine is included because of our **2nd CD**.

We can test this proposition by looking at the three states where Trump won the EC by less than a Standing Room Only crowd at Fenway.

An Electoral College Squeaker

Fenway Park SRO Capacity **39,928**

Trump Margins & Switches to Flip **38,922**



- Pennsylvania (20) **44,392** **22,196**
- Michigan (16) **10,704** **5,353**
- Wisconsin (10) **22,748** **11,375**
- Total Votes to Flip PA MI WI: **38,922**
- 2016 EC: **Trump 306** **Clinton 232**
- EC if PA MI WI Flipped: **Clinton 278** **Trump 260**

As we assess Trump's win in 2016, we must remember just how close it was. Not the 77,844 **cumulative** margins in three states – but just half that if voters had **switched**.

Who has been at Fenway with a big crowd? SRO capacity is just under 40,000. If fewer than that number of Trump voters in **PA**, **MI** and **WI** had **switched** their votes, Hillary Clinton would be president.

Math **Red** > **Blue 38,922** >> EC Clinton **278** Trump **260**

2016 Presidential Vote in Pennsylvania

Trump Margin 44,392 (0.7%)

2016 Voter Turnout Trend from 2012:

- White Working Class **+4.3%**
- White College Educated +3.0%
- Black -0.2%
- Latino +5.5%
- Asian/other +8.3%

Voter Support Margin Shifts from 2012:

- White Working Class **D>R 8.4%**
- White College Educated -2.4%
- Black **D>R 10.2%**
- Latino -4.1%
- Asian/other +3.0%

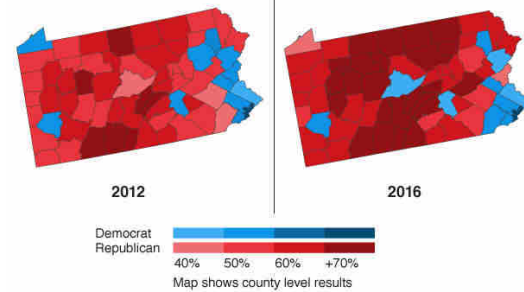
Key states: How Trump won Pennsylvania

Democrat victory in 2012

52%
47%

Republican victory in 2016

49%
48%



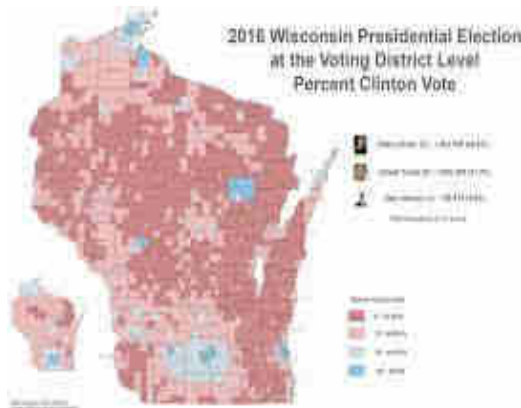
BBC

Bottom Lines:

If Clinton had won **Obama's** 2012 share of White Working Class voters, she would have won PA by **4%**.

Had she retained Barack's share of Black voter **support**, she would have won a **very narrow victory**.

2016 Presidential Vote in Wisconsin



Trump Margin 22,748

2016 Voter Turnout Trend from 2012:

- White Working Class -2.2%
- White College Educated -2.2%
- Black -18.9%
- Latino -5.8%
- Asian/other -5.8%

Voter Support Margin Shifts from 2012:

- White Working Class **Dem** Support -13.1%
- White College Educated +4.1%
- Black **Dem** Support -6.5%
- Latino -7.4%
- Asian/other -4.0%

Bottom Lines:

If Clinton had won **Barack's** 2012 share of the **White** Working Class vote, she would have won WI by **7%!**

Her failure with Blacks was turnout, but even if she had inspired Barack-level turnout it would **not** have closed the gap.

2016 Presidential Vote in Michigan

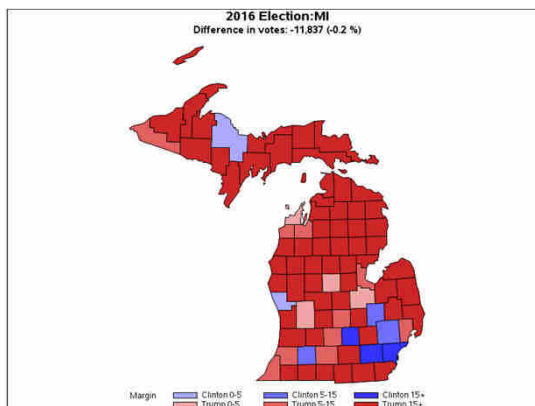
Trump Margin 10,704 (0.2%)

2016 Voter Turnout Trend from 2012:

- White Working Class **+1.2%**
- White College Educated +1.0%
- Black **-1.2%**
- Latino -12.5%
- Asian/other -0.9%

Voter Support Margin Shifts from 2012:

- White Working Class **Dem Support -11.1%**
- White College Educated -6.6%
- Black **Dem Support -9.8%**
- Latino -10.0%
- Asian/other -2.9%



Bottom Lines:

If Black voters had turned out at their 2012 level in Michigan, Clinton would have won.

If White Working Class voters had turned out at their 2012 level in Michigan, Clinton would have won.

If she had won Barack's level of support from Blacks, she would have won MI by **1%**.

If Clinton had won Obama's level of support from the WWC in 2012, she would have won MI by **6%**.

How Have White Working Class Folks Voted Since 1980?

Let's look at these 2016 results in historical perspective.

The lives of white working class folks have become more stressed and less secure over the last two generations.

The life chances of the next generation have not improved as in the historic promise of American life.

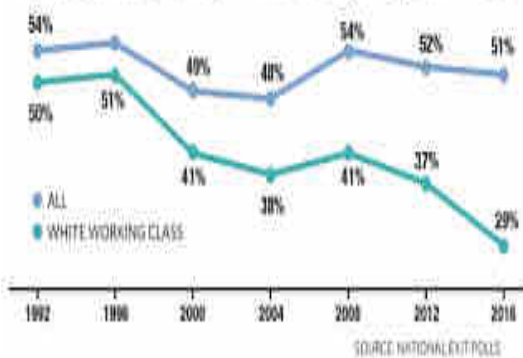
Recognition that white folks will become a minority in two decades has altered white identity.

No political voice has been heard responding full-throat to the experience of the WWC.

How have WWC folks voted since 1980?

Decline in Democratic Support from White Workers, Clinton 1992 to Clinton 2016

Democratic Share of Two-Party Popular Vote



- In 1992 and 1996, Bill Clinton won a majority of the white working class in three-way races
- Big, fatal decline in Gore WWC support in 2000 and further decline for Kerry in 2004
- Obama won a modest rise in white working class support in 2008 which declined in 2012
- Hillary Clinton suffered a disastrous decline in white working class support in 2016

Let's look at the WWC vote at the presidential level from Clinton to Clinton – 1992 to 2016.

In 1992 and 1996, Bill Clinton won a thin majority of the white working class in three-way races.

There was a big and fatal decline in Gore WWC support in 2000 and a further decline for Kerry in 2004.

Obama won a modest rise in white working class support in 2008 -- which then declined some in 2012.

Hillary Clinton suffered a disastrous decline in white working class support in 2016 – 21% less than Bubba in 1992 and 12% lower than Barak in 2008.

Some Union Households Tipped Toward Reagan, Perot and Trump

Union Household Vote in Presidential Elections, 1976-2016

Year	Dem.	Rep.
2016	51%	43%*
2012	58%	40%
2008	59%	39%
2004	59%	40%
2000	59%	37%
1996	60%	30%
1992	55%	24%
1988	57%	43%
1980	48%	45%
1976	62%	38%

*Additionally, in 2016, 6% other/no answer; in 2000, 1% Buchanan, 3% Nader; in 1996, 9% Perot; in 1992, 21% Perot; in 1980, 7% Anderson

Looking at the presidential votes of **all union households** (white, black, Hispanic ...) from 1980 to 2016, we see a fairly steady 60-57% support for Democrats **with three exceptions** when this share declined because of the **faux populist appeals of Reagan, Perot, and Trump**.

What Did White Working Class Voters Express in 2016?

OK. We know a further shift to Rs by WWC voters was an important part of Trump's win.

What do we **think** was expressed in that vote shift?

How do I **"know"** what I will now share?

Books Surveys **Focus Groups**

Especially four robust WWC Focus Groups segregated by age, gender, and region in Spring 2016.

Contempt for ...



- Hillary who dismissed them as deplorables
- Prosperous coastal elites who shape culture
- Purchased and packaged politicians
- Wall Street – especially after 2008-09 bailout
- Government that favors others and ignores them
- Trump validated and expressed their contempt

The shifting WWC vote in 2016 expressed contempt for a variety of targets:

- Hillary, for sure, especially after her aloof dismissal of **them as “deplorables”**
- Coastal elites that craft the culture that arrives electronically from “above” alienating and corrupting their kids
- Politicians who dance to big donors and polling
- The selfish SOBs on Wall Street who screwed them over in the Great Recession and then got bailouts instead of hard time
- Government that ignores them but advantages “others”

Trump the seasoned TV Con Man seemed to validate their anger and express their contempt.

Racism & Xenophobia

- Always there, nationwide, as a *fraction* of WWC
- Demonized “other” necessary to rightwing populism
- Compensation for WWC eroded security & status
- Complications of WWC as emerging *minority*
- Trump harvested half-century of GOP Dog Whistle

A Mantra for Organizers

- People contain bad and good -- and can change
- Communities are complex
- 2020 should affirm the good in WWC culture



Part of the WWC vote in 2016 expressed racism and xenophobia aroused and made more visible by hectoring Trump.

Trump gave this fraction of the WWC the “demonized other” that fuels rightwing populism and balmed WWC lost status and eroded security as he harvested a half-century of the racist GOP Dog Whistle.

Organizers contending for WWC support in 2020 must face this hard sad truth but never lose faith that folks harbor both good and bad, and can change.

Most important is to have the information and skill to target WWC folks who are not driven by racism and are open to a progressive Democratic case for how government can improve their lives.

Patriotism

- My 1960s: Love of country is *not* reactionary
- Service in All Volunteer Military a defining honor
- Racial attitudes evolve in the Military
- Trump flag-waving was shameless but effective



Testimony from and writing about WWC voters also opens windows of hope for earning a revival of support for Democrats.

There is nothing wrong with patriotism – a battle I fought with pride in my New Left 1960s. Patriotism is a foundation of WWC life.

Democrats should learn to honor service in the All Volunteer Military and realize that service in uniform does more to evolve racial attitudes than any other experience.

Bone-spur Donald got a free strut in 2016. We can do better.

Pride



- Making things well – “better than anybody”
- Excelling through teamwork
- Valued role as Good Provider
- But fewer WWC men in manufacturing & marriages

I can tell you based on 25 years of visits to small manufacturing firms that pride in work done well in those firms is powerfully affirmative.

Workers – and owners – who know they do things “better than anybody” and value the regard of their communities as “good providers” are proud people who will respond to respect for their contributions.

Failure to feel and show this respect forfeits any standing to engage WWC folks politically.

Faith



Faith remains an important anchor in WWC life.

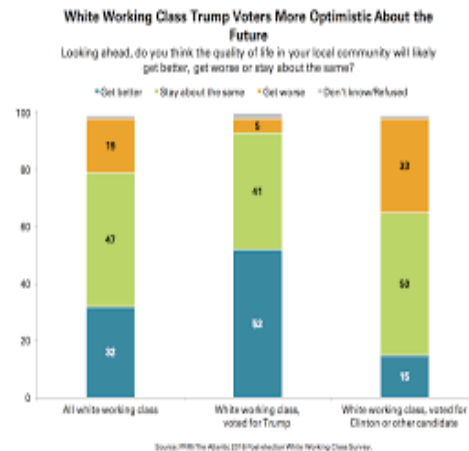
Church provides community and a network of social support.

Some evangelicals are zealots who fight to win culture wars and forgive the sins of those who help their causes, but many are “live and let live” folks without hard cultural agendas.

Democrats must show similar tolerance to win any right to be heard.

Optimism

- Your local community: Better? Worse? Same?
- WWC Trump voters more optimistic **52%** v **15%**
- WWC voters believed Trump's promises
- Will they see them in 2020 as promises kept?



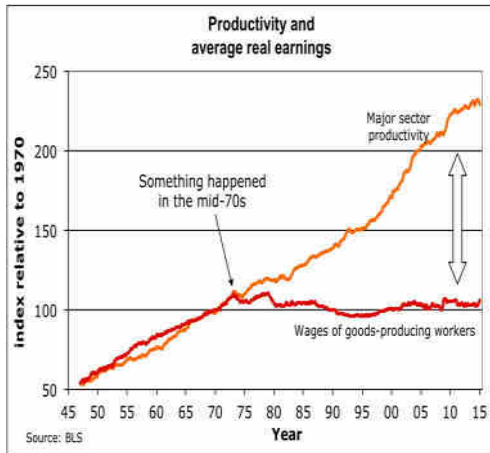
I admit surprise at this exit poll and focus group finding.

When asked if they thought their local community would be better, worse, or about the same, **WWC Trump voters were far and way more optimistic – 52% to 15% for Clinton voters.**

We have to accept that they mostly believed Trump's promises.

Will they find these promises kept in 2020?

Question 2016 > 2020: What Can and Will Democrats Do To Win Back an Essential Fraction of the White Working Class?



- Democrats must recognize and take their share of responsibility for generational decline of WWC life
- Democrats must bust Trump for promises unkept
- Democratic platform and presidential candidate must show how WWC life will be better:
 - Employment
 - Healthcare
 - Education
 - Trade
 - Unions
 - Green New Deal
- Solidarity Across Race & Gender
- A 10-15% Shift Would Move Mountains in 2020

This electoral history and assessment of current white working class views and values distills to a fundamental question:

Can Democrats win back a *fraction* of White Working Class voters who were an anchor of the New Deal coalition?

A 10% shift of WWC support back to Democrats from their 2016 support in key battleground states would be sufficient to send Trump packing.

The fundamental requirements seem clear. Democrats must:

- Recognize the challenges faced by the WWC (and their past failures)
- Bust Trump for “faux populism” and unkept promises
- Show how Dem policies & programs will make WWC life better
- Insist on racial and gender solidarity

We'll see.

What Happened in the 2018 Midterms?

The 2018 mid-term elections were a major step forward in resisting Trump and making America good again.

We must understand what led to this result and read the 2018 election carefully.

January 21st 2017 – Resistance from Day One



Resistance was there from Day One.

The Women's March was the largest demonstration in American history. More than 5 million marched in over 400 cities. Two million more marched across the world in more than 80 countries on **all 7** continents.

I believe I had the representative experience: an exhilarating shock of solidarity and possibility.

And from this pinnacle moment, millions, led by women, have sustained resistance and organized. When the history of our times is written, we will see that this day led to serious, sustained, patient organizing in thousands of places across America. That led to the **Blue Wave** Midterms and the prospect of Redemption in 2020.

Resisting Trumpism 2017-18



The best analyst of this organizing is Theda Skocpol, eminent Harvard chaired professor of political science who is our summer neighbor on the Beech Hill Crossroad.

As Theda has in previous works on Obama and the Tea Party, she goes inside movements to spend time, do interviews and ask the hard questions. It is her work that led the rest of the press to see the scale of the organizing done by 50- and 60-something women engaged by the Women's March. (Her husband Bill logs huge hours working here via the HCDC.)

Theda sees thousand of women taking over moribund DP committees and bringing new energy. Most of them stand for the good that government does generating public goods and assuring a level playing field.

Hopes of Establishment Republicans Dashed by Erosion of Guardrails

- Concept of “Guardrails”
- Senior Cabinet Members Constrain Trump
- Generals with Gravitas Guide Foreign Policy
- Hill-facing Staff Have Credibility with Congress
- Establishment Rs Temper Trumps “Deviations”
- Exits: Priebus Kelly Mattis McMaster Cohn
- Now The Donald Dictates Unchecked



In 2017-18, Republicans devolved as Trump degraded norms and guardrails.

After the shock of Trump’s election, Establishment Republicans hoped to constrain and guide Trump toward policies that would control the damage he might do to nation and party.

They envisioned that respect for the norms of civil politics and sober senior members of the cabinet and staff would become guardrails keeping Trump mostly on track.

Too bad for them, and us all. Trump rejects being managed or even advised in traditional ways. He has ditched all those prospective constrainers. Gone are Priebus Kelly Mattis McMaster and Cohn. By 2018, it was clear that The Donald would dictate unchecked to his party.

Trump Embraced Permanent Campaign Mode



- Trump Seeks Comfort of Charismatic Role
- Rallies Build Base Loyalty
- *The Real Donald Trump* -- Unmediated Persona
- Campaigning, He Is the Focus and in Control
- Press Is Reduced to His Demagogic Object

Trump is a comfort-seeking organism. He always wants to be the focus and feel in safe control. Thus he has turned his presidency into a permanent campaign like none before him.

And let's admit that he does the basic act well. His Rallies Build Base Loyalty. His Twitter handle *The Real Donald Trump* reaches – we are told – some 40 million followers for whom he is an un-mediated persona.

While campaigning, he is the focus and in control. No pesky questions from the press. They are reduced to His Demagogic Object.

This course is consistent with an electoral strategy in which the Trumpsters believe that they can win by expanding the Trump base rather than reaching out beyond it in any direction. The 2018 midterms would be a first test of that view.

Milestone of Trump's First Two Years

- 1/21/2017 Mass Demonstrations
- Flynn Exit 2/17
- Trump Fires Comey, DOJ Charges Mueller 5/17
- ACA Skinny Repeal Fails in Senate 7/17
- Charlottesville 8/17
- Tax Act 12/17
- Quasi-Flips: Flynn, Gates, Cohen
- Midterm Blue Wave in House 11/18
- Trump Government Shutdown 12/18-1/19



Trump did not win the headline wars in 2017-18.

He was quickly underwater by 10% and stayed there with low 50s disapproval and low 40s approval ratings.

Within the Republican political base, however, Trump sustained support in the high 80% – arming him to intimidate any nascent GOP opposition.

The Great Republican Apostacy

- Free Trade? Deficit Discipline? Family Values?
- “Never Trumps” Remain a Republican Fringe
- Electeds Fear Being Primaried by Trump Base
- Historical Failure in Impeachment Trial



Within less than a presidential term, Republicans have fallen into ideological and ethical default.

Their pretense of Deficit Discipline was always BS from Saint Ronnie onward. They wept crocodile tears for our grandkids with their “Tax and Spend” broadside branding of Dems, while practicing “Borrow and Spend” for war and tax breaks.

Their collapse into servile support for Trump may brand this current crop for the duration and might fatally wound their party.

We all understand the math. The Electeds fear being primaried by Trump calling out his base.

But fate has again been kind to Mainers. We are positioned to confront the Apostacy directly, where it matters, at the ballot box.

Failures: Trump Populist Promises Unkept



- Obamacare Repeal & Replace
- Big Beautiful Wall
- Flood of Returning Manufacturing Jobs
- Tax Act for Working Americans

Trump has kept afloat within the Republican Party because:

- Until the corona virus pandemic, the US economy continued to perform well for the comfortable conservatives who own equities and manage corporations
- Evangelicals are getting the judges and policies they want ... and
- A sad fraction of the WWC is fed the racist red meat they crave

But Trump also trafficked in heady “faux populist” promises to the WWC in 2016. His failure to deliver jobs, better healthcare, and fairer taxes cost Republicans in 2018 and could sink Trump in 2020.

We are still assessing the impact of the pandemic.

Pelosi House Strategy for 2018

- Target GOP Districts Won by Clinton
- Enlist National Security/Military Star Candidates
- Embrace Women Rising
- Lead with Healthcare
- Assess Demographic Shifts
- Lever Anti-Gerrymandering Victories

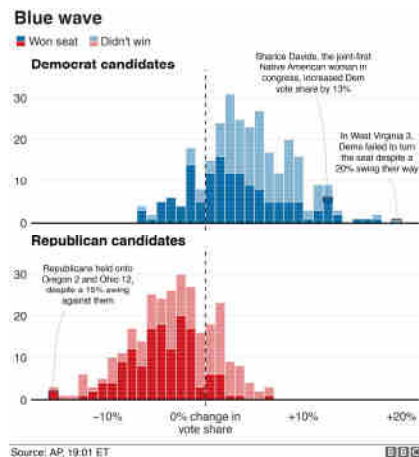


Any assessment of 2018 must give Nancy Pelosi her due. She was the master strategist who saw the path to retake the House. She focused on the CDs represented by Rs that Clinton carried in 2016. She drove her DP team to enlist new candidates with national security and military chops. She knew 2018 would be a year of women rising like none before. She insisted on leading with healthcare. She knew where demographic shifts created possibilities -- e.g. Orange County. She saw the openings created by anti-gerrymandering victories -- e.g. in PA.

And as strategist and then Speaker (again) she cohered and led a House caucus ranging from Connor Lamb to AOC.

And she kicked Trump's butt.

Victory in the 2018 Midterms: 41 Seat Gain



- 41 Seat Gain for **235-200** Majority
- Big Vote Shift to Ds Even in Seats Not Won
- Many Wins in **Purple** Suburban Districts
- Women! 89 Democrats, 35 Newly Elected
- High Profile Progressive Successors to Sitting Bulls
- Huge and Influential Freshman Class
- Predictor of 2020?

The great achievement was planning, recruiting for, funding, and running the campaigns that brought the huge Blue Wave in the 2018 Midterms.

41 Seat Gain for **235-200** Majority, the biggest D shift since Watergate. Importantly, there were usually Big Vote Shifts to Ds even in seats not won. Many of the seats won were in swing **Purple** Suburban Districts. Highest midterm turnout in 50 years. Dems won House popular vote by 8.6%.

2018 was the year of Women like none before. 89 Democrats, 35 Newly Elected to the House. High Profile Progressive Successors to Sitting Bulls – AOC and Ayanna Pressley. Huge and Influential Freshman Class.

But: 2018 > 2020?

What Will Happen in the 2020 General Election?

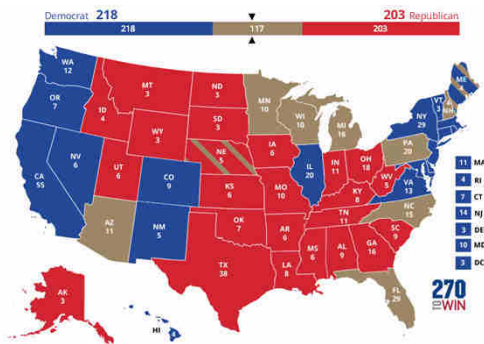
We come now to the **existential question**.

What America will be have in our golden glides?

What will we pass on?

Let's look at party positioning in 2019-2020, ponder the impact of key passages in these months, assess what Democrats have done thus far in their primary process, pay attention again to the Democratic Party prospects with the winnable fraction of the WWC, and then – as I must – offer up my best predictions!

2020 Presidential Contest: The Possibilities



- Most hard-headed realistic map April 9, 2020
- Eight States and 2 CDs in Play
- Best **D 352-186**
- Worst **D 320-218**
- We Matter! ME 2nd CD Saves America **270-268**

Here's a reasonably conservative Electoral College map for 2020 as we currently sit in spring 2020. Every state that's "toss up" tan has voted **both D** and **R** since 2000. **(Minnesota? NH?)**

The best Democratic Electoral College result I can envision is **352-186**. The worst is **320-218**. As of now, either bookend is possible – and many other results within those poles.

And appreciate we here in the Maine 2nd CD could save America, rescue Trump, or send the decision to the House.

And I will give you my best 2020 prediction in a few minutes!

What Are Appropriate Democratic Goals for 2020?

- Defeat Trump – Decisively
- Sustain/Expand House Majority
- Win Senate Majority (50-50 + VP?)
- Grow State Power: Governors, Legislatures
- Elect a President Who Can *Lead* into Future
- Model Big Tent Dialog and Tolerance
- Enhance Democratic Brand & Base



The 2020 goals of that fractious quadrennial electoral coalition known as the Democratic Party are clear:

We must defeat Trump – decisively, if that’s possible ... and it is.

We should sustain and even expand our House majority. Possible

To move America, we must win a Senate majority. I see this as a heavy lift but with a new Dem President a Senate that is 50-50 + VP “works.”

Growing State-level power via Governors & Legislatures – nice (census and 2021 CD lines)

Crucial: Elect a Democratic President Who Can *Lead* into the Future with Vision, and Model Big Tent Dialog and Tolerance, thus enhancing Democratic Brand & Base. **Have we created this possibility with Biden?**

House Agenda in the 116th Congress



Speaker Pelosi:

- Consolidated Authority
- Orchestrated Caucus
- Dealt with The Donald
- Is Leading Democratic Voice until Spring 2020

House is a Workshop for 2020:

- Pass Message Votes Like HR-1 ...
- Wage Politics of Oversight
- Enable & Exemplify **Big Tent**

As many have learned, we are fortunate that our House Caucus is driven with will and skill by Speaker Pelosi. She is what Democrats need now:

- Standing to consolidate and orchestrate the House
- Enjoys facing off with The Donald – and bugs him!
- Wisdom to be the Democratic Voice until 2020 Nominee

She has made the House a Worthy Workshop for 2020:

- Pass Message Votes Like HR-1 ...
- Manage the Unfolding Politics of Oversight
- Enable & Exemplify **Big Tent** Flexibility and Tolerance
- In a Dialectic with the Primaries move toward Platform
- Pilot a strong course through the Pandemic

Mueller Time Falls Flat

Unrealistic Hopes



Low Barr for Exoneration



We should be grateful for the robust detail of the report documenting broad malfeasance in Trump World and indicting many, but progressive Democrats allowed ourselves unrealistic hopes for the political impact of the Mueller report.

To be blunt, Mueller himself was a weak voice for the findings of his team and the execrable Barr was a skilled pimp for the perception of exoneration.

Nevertheless, the ever-resourceful Trump soon served up a subsequent hot mess.

Stitching the Quilt: Course of Democratic Primaries

Presidential Primaries and Caucuses by Month (2020)



• Prospect of a Progressive Vision?:

- 1) Defend & Extend Democracy
- 2) Invest in Health
- 3) Combat Climate Change
- 4) Strengthen Social Security
- 5) Affirm the Dignity of Work
- 6) Reform Immigration
- 7) Expand Education
- 8) Build 21st Century Infrastructure
- 9) Promote Universal National Service
- 10) Make America Respected Again

• Local Dimensions of Vision – Grassroots Discussion?

• Sincere, Sustained Strategic Challenge to GOP?

Six months ago most Democrats were proud of our large field.

Now? We have settled on Biden.

Is he a Trump-beater?

And is there still hope of a coherent, unifying, forward-looking DP Platform ?

How Should Democrats Approach White Working Class Voters in 2020?

As you can tell, I am among those who believe the best path to Democratic victory in 2020 involves winning back a modest but crucial percentage of WWC folks who stayed home in 2016 or plunked for Trump, often with reservations.

Based on my view of WWC experience over the last 40 years, the way they have voted, what we think we hear in those votes, and a belief that there is a **moderate perspective** within this key constituency that is open to progress ...

What should Democrats offer in 2020 – from the presidential nominee to contending Senators to state and local candidates?

Ignore Hardened Rightwing Resentment



- Vision Anchored in Racism & Xenophobia
- True Believers of Fox, Talk Radio, Alt-Right Media
- Rest of Media are “Enemies of the People”
- Free Market Zealots
- True Deplorables – We Must Constrain & Hope
- Rally Faces for Trump – Very High Support

Ignore the hard right. These are most of the faces at Trump rallies.

Their vision of the world is hardened into racism and xenophobia.

They are products of the Fox echo chamber and follow Trump’s lead in branding the fourth estate as “enemies of the people.”

If they have an economic outlook, it’s free market zealotry – especially the small business owners among them.

Sad to say, they **are** deplorable and not a priority target for our political work in the present.

Engage Moderates Open to Progress

- Revealed in Spring 2016 Robust Focus Groups
- “I think for myself” undogmatic middle roaders
- Core Values:
 - Religious Faith
 - Military Service
 - Hard Work
- Tolerance – and Demand for Tolerance
- Contempt for Purchased, Poll-programed Politicians
- Seek Character in & Recognition from Representatives



The other perspective within the WWC could not be more important to our political hopes. They are undogmatic independent folks who “think for themselves.”

Their world is anchored in faith, service, and hard work. They offer tolerance – and demand it. Their lives are far from secure and they will listen to sources of hope – but not to politicians who reveal themselves as purchased and poll-directed.

I believe some of these folks were moved by grassroots activists in 2017-18 and more can be on the way to 2020. This will take everything from state-of-the art micro-targeting to thousands of hours of respectful neighbor-to-neighbor back fence and grocery store talk that brings a progressive Democratic vision to practical impact in local communities. This is now harder to do in the time of the pandemic.

Democratic Objectives with White Working Class Voters in 2020



- Win back Obama-to-Trump voters (mostly WWC)
- Win modest increases in WWC share in key states
WI PA MI IA ME-2 MN NC NH ...
- Seed change in WWC views of Democrats
- Seed change in WWC youth views of future
- ... and also fuel gain in Black turnout and share in
WI PA MI NC ...

Let's be clear about our realistic objectives with WWC voters.

We want to win back the **Obama-to-Trump** voters, most of whom were WWC.

We want to win at least a modest increase in WWC support in states where this could make the difference – the PA MI WI triad and Iowa, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Hampshire, maybe Florida .. **and the 2nd CD of Maine!**

We want to do this in a way that seeds change in WWC voter views of Democrats and WWC youth views of the future.

And we **must** do this while **at the same time** investing major resources to gain **Black voter turnout** and **Black vote shares** in many of those same states.

Tone and Point of View Matter

Comparing Democratic Messages

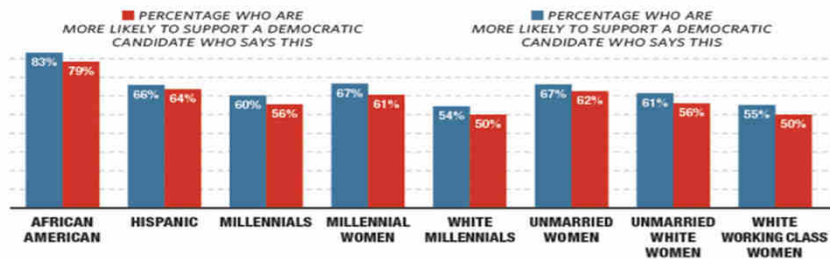
WEB PANEL OF REGISTERED VOTERS IN 12 BATTLEGROUND STATES, CONDUCTED APRIL 4–16, 2018

Short-Term Politics and Tax Cuts for the Rich Threaten Our Future

My state needs a plan for a better future, not more short-term political deals and short-sighted cuts to the things we need. We need to invest in education and infrastructure, not cut them. We need to protect Social Security and Medicare, not threaten your retirement with more tax cuts for the rich and corporations.

Fed Up with Rigged Economy

I'm fed up. Our economy and politics are rigged against hard-working people here in my state. Corporate donors are spending unlimited sums supporting my opponent to get their way. I will say no to big money and trickle-down economics and make sure the rich and corporations pay their fair share of taxes so we can help people with the rising cost of health care, childcare, housing, and student debt, and protect Social Security and Medicare.



Our work in 2020 must be done with appreciation of how much **tone** and **point of view** matter.

This April 2018 graphic got my attention. I was heartened that these progressive statements got clear support from diverse constituencies, including some with a large WWC cohort.

Respect for the Dignity of Their Work



- Working class work contributes & matters
- Working class work is hard, often dangerous & necessary
- Working class work anchors communities

Here are **five messages** I hope our Democratic nominee and our nation-wide slate of candidates can deliver to WWC voters in 2020.

The most fundamental is informed respect for who they are and what they contribute.

People whose hard work and leadership have anchored countless communities across American want to be respected for their contribution.

Understanding of Their Needs

- Desire to do rewarding & rewarded work
- Care for our elders
- Educate & launch our young
- Provide for our families
- Health
- Confidence that we are and will be heard



Some politics is simple

Democratic candidates must show WWC voters that they understand the demands of daily life & their kitchen table concerns.

We must send a credible message of how these needs can be met.

If WWC voters can say “He hears me” we’ll make gains.

Then WWC voters will listen to our destruction of Trump’s “Promises Kept” fraud.

A Future for Their Kids



Millions of WWC voters know that they are no better off than their parents were and worry that their kids will be less secure than they are.

The fundamental promise of American life has not been kept for two generations. WWC voters have some illusions about **who is** being helped by government while they are ignored.

They will not let go of their toxic resentment until they believe their kids have a fair chance because their state and federal governments make an investment in them that works.

The Democratic candidate must deliver that message.

Credible Plan to Invest in their Lives

Credibility

- Party Platforms Matter in Party Building
- Closer to Newt 1994 than Clinton/Bernie 2016
- Clear, Simple, Intimate Messages Win Elections
- Shared by the Trusted:
 - Rare Tribunes (George Mitchell)
 - Fresh Candidates
 - Respected Locals
 - Friends & Neighbors
- Confident champions in politics of daily life

Substance

- 1) Defend & Extend Democracy
- 2) Invest in Health
- 3) Combat Climate Change
- 4) Strengthen Social Security
- 5) Affirm the Dignity of Work
- 6) Reform Immigration
- 7) Expand Education
- 8) Build 21st Century Infrastructure
- 9) Promote Universal National Service
- 10) Make America Respected Again

All 10 Points address WWC needs, especially those in **Blue**.

Achieving a Platform like this matters in Party Building. But campaigns must deliver such substance in clear, simple, often intimate messages.

To win, the message can come from a few Trusted Tribunes (think George Mitchell), please pray our Presidential Nominee ... and respected local voices, friends and neighbors.

During the coming months, hundreds of thousands of us – us – must have the substantive command and advocacy skills to deliver this clear message to open-minded WWC voters. And, yes, especially **here** – where success can really matter.

Challenges



- Black & Brown people are not a problem for you
- Trump is
- WWJD? Show what Christian solidarity can do

Finally, our candidates and campaigns should carry some respectful challenges to WWC voters rethinking Trump.

They should be shown the truth that black and brown Americans are not **favored** recipients of government support and **not** a problem for their own quest for better lives. **Trump is** a problem for them – a con who made false promises and did not keep them.

I hope for a Democratic nominee with the credible voice to ask WWC voters of faith: What Would Jesus Do? How can we manifest what they would consider Christian solidarity?

Republicans Assess Prospects in 2020



OK, what about the opposition?

Republicans seem to suffer from bi-polar disorder as they assess their 2020 prospects.

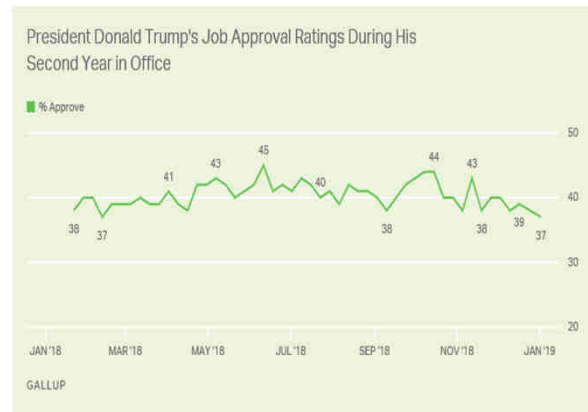
The likes of Hugh Hewitt and Sean Hannity had ebulliently expected an Ass Kicking driven by a continuing strong economy and an energized and expanded Trump base. What impact will the pandemic recession have on their expectations?

Others read the Midterm Tea Leaves, Trump's razor-thin margins in 2016, and struggle to see a path to re-election.

We will all make that history.

How Will the Trump GOP Contend?

- How have smart Republicans read the 2018 midterms?
- No Trump gestures toward Center, Independents
- They think Base Mobilization can win
- Might Trump envision a campaign that loses the office but keeps his base and makes him King of the GOP for life but free from the burdens of office?

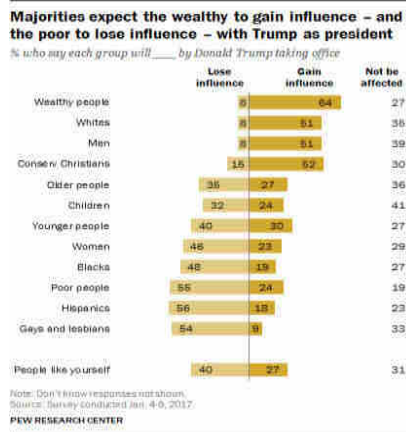


Democrats gained 41 seats in the House in the 2018 midterms, our largest increase since Watergate.

This gain came in **BOTH** suburban districts where carefully moderate Dem candidates won independents and Trump-alienated Rs, especially women, **AND** in some industrial districts where progressive Ds brought back some WWC voters.

Trump remains in full double-down base mobilization mode with no apparent effort to widen his support. Trump and his keepers believe that they can make this work again.

What Trump Tries to Deliver for Whom



- Trump's "Promises Kept" Rhetoric
- Two Supremes for Evangelicals & Hard Right
- Hog Slop Tax Cut (vulnerable at polls)
- High Hurdle of House in 2019-2020
- Persistent low 40s% -- but mid-80s% of GOP
- Remember: On 11-8-2016 Trump was at **37.6%**

We will learn much from what Trump tries to do for whom. This is true of any politician but is especially important for Trump given the radical disjuncture between the needs of his supposed base and the actual beneficiaries of his few major program achievements, especially the tax law.

Given the high hurdle of resistance from the Democratic House, major legislation beyond managing the pandemic recession is unlikely. McConnell has engineered court picks that play for the evangelicals and that will continue. Trump's major deliverables will be through the symbolic action of his speeches, Tweets and "interviews" on the way to Marine One.

In his double-down strategy, Trump will woof hard for his base. Do not dismiss him. He may wallow along at 40% approval, but his marks with the GOP remain high – and the where of his support may be as important as how high. Remember: his approval rating was **37.6%** on 11/8/2016.

Trump Electoral Strategy



- Trump Rejects “Move to Center” Convention
- Commitment to Base Mobilization/Expansion
- Brad Parscale:
 - Trumper Since 2011
 - 2016 Digital Manager – Messages, Bucks
 - Key Move? From VA & OH to MI & WI
 - Disses Cambridge Analytica
 - Named 2020 Campaign Manager 2/17
 - A Micro-targeting Savant?

Trump’s electoral strategy for 2020 is high risk but also high comfort.

Trump rejected the conventional “Move to the Center” to build out your support model before his inaugural. With Bannon in his ear, he committed to a Base Mobilization/Expansion strategy.

Money will be no problem for him this time. He set up his 2020 campaign in the first weeks of his presidency. The key player to watch is:

Brad Parscale:

Trumper Since 2011

2016 Digital Manager – Messages, Bucks

Key Move? From VA & OH to MI & WI (**but OH!**)

Disses Cambridge Analytica

Named 2020 Campaign Manager 2/17

A Micro-targeting Savant? PA MI WI MN ...

Politics in the Time of the Corona Pandemic

Written March 31 – April 3, 2020

No one can yet foresee how the corona virus pandemic will influence the U.S. general election in 2020.

Will Trump's strut as a "wartime president" turn millions of voters toward him to assure his re-election?

Or may Trump's failure to recognize the early stages of the pandemic in America or muster a sustained national strategy of mitigation drive millions of voters to charge him for hundred's of thousands of deaths and a severe recession?

Will Democrats focus on Trump's failures of pandemic leadership or widen the frame of pandemic politics to discuss national healthcare and the generation and investment of public resources on the scale required to address our new world?

In early spring, we can only speculate.

Trump in the Plague Year

His Problems:

- Performs One News Cycle at a Time
- Incapable of Essential Empathy
- A “Wartime President” without Strategic Capability
- Without Competent General Staff or Guardrails

His Assets:

- \$2 Trillion “Only I Can Fix It” Fund
- More on the Way
- GOP in Full Genuflect
- Believing & Ignorant Base
- Electoral College & Micro-targeting



While at 4/3/2020 Trump seems to have a very modest bump of “rally round the flag” support, he has several immutable **liabilities** as a leader in a time of plague:

- 1) His lifelong impulse has been to fight within the limits of a news cycle;
- 2) He is simply unable to project credible empathy;
- 3) He has never led a long-term strategy – or understood the concept;
- 4) He is without a competent general staff; and
- 5) He has no recourse to norms or guardrails, having trashed them.

That stated, Trump does have **assets** in our transformed politics:

- 1) He is claiming credit for and control of the huge CARES Act that will bring direct aid to a majority of Americans;
- 2) His supine Party will defend him at all cost;
- 3) His true base of millions will believe him without reservation; and
- 4) He needs only to replicate his 2016 Electoral College victory and may have the financial resources and micro-targeting capability to do so.

What Could Democrats Do? What Will They Do?



Could:

- Envision the public action and public investment required to end the pandemic and revive the economy
- Mass communicate Trump's lethal failures
- Show the need for and returns to ongoing large public investment in universal healthcare
- Require green commitments from large bailed-out corporations
- Indict growing inequality as a public health risk
- Celebrate solidarity

Will?:

- At 4/3/2020, Who (the F—k) Knows?

As America settles into shelter at home and weeks of pandemic illness and death, the Democratic Party is **suspended**. The primary seems resolved but not concluded. The presumptive nominee is rarely visible and uninspiring when seen. The Party evidences little progress in composing its New Deal and New Democrat wings – a solidarity essential for victory in 2020.

Democrats could and should:

- 1) Envision what Trump and the GOP cannot: the public action and public investment required to end the pandemic and revive the economy;
- 2) Communicate to millions Trump's lethal failures of leadership;
- 3) Teach how the pandemic demonstrates the need for universal affordable healthcare;
- 4) Indict inequality as a public health risk;
- 5) Show that the core elements of the Green New Deal can be a path to economic recovery; and
- 6) Celebrate solidarity.

What will the Democratic Party do? Who the F—k Knows.

Campaigning “Post” Pandemic July-November 2020



Can we even expect that a “post” pandemic psychology will emerge before November?

The pandemic will shape the 2020 elections profoundly in two ways:

- 1) Management of the pandemic and its economic consequences will be the dominant subject on which candidates campaign and are judged; and
- 2) The ongoing social requirements of fighting the pandemic will determine how candidates campaign and we vote;

Trump will strut as the war-president from whom all checks flow. Democrats will indict his failures and offer a stronger, fairer vision of recovery.

Party conventions may be virtual rather than actual. Rallies before Labor Day might be banned. Decentralized prone banking must substitute for “doing doors.” Trump’s task is simpler: protect his 2016 wins in PA MI WI FL and AZ. I worry that in the pandemic environment his Bully Pulpit, CARES goodie bag, and possible Big Data/Micro-targeting advantages will rescue his ass.

Four Questions on the Political Economy of Our Post Pandemic World

- 1) The 2020 elections will have a major impact on America in the early 2020s. Will the result be a Trump catastrophe, continued gridlock and inaction, or a breakthrough toward public planning and investment?;
- 2) Will the economic impact of the pandemic be a deep-but-quick “V” recession or an erosion of enterprise, employment and markets that could deepen into depression;
- 3) The neo-conservative and neo-liberal versions of market globalism seem ideologically and programmatically exhausted. Will populist nationalism now rise further? Or will a revived social democracy seek multinational collaboration?; and
- 4) The corona virus will be contained by unprecedented global scientific collaboration and mass cooperation by citizens. The economic damage of the pandemic will be repaired by massive government investment. Could the lessons of this experience lead militant majorities in many countries toward the grand project of humankind in this century – the resilience revolution that remakes our energy system to constrain climate change?

It is not easy to see to let alone beyond November, but we must try. Here are four Big Questions about the dynamics of our Post Pandemic World – when we get there:

- 1) The 2020 elections will have a major impact on America in the early 2020s. Will the result be a Trump catastrophe, continued gridlock and inaction, or a breakthrough toward public planning and investment?;
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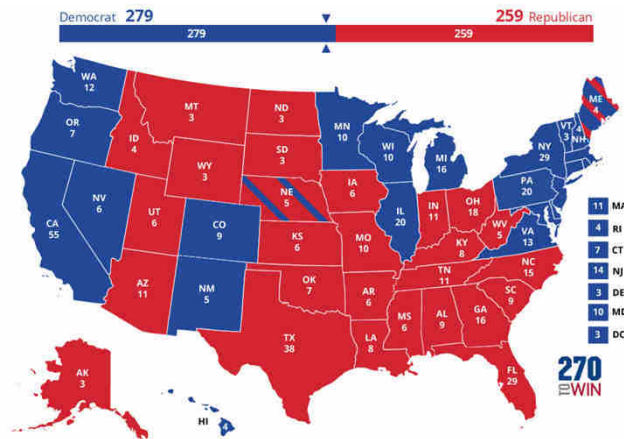
Predictions!

Let's end with the political predictions on which many of us will obsess during our confinement.

What will happen in our Presidential, Senate, and House elections this November?

Here are my quasi-informed guesses!

My 2020 Presidential Prediction!



We will win – but very narrowly! **279-259** in the EC.

Victory is driven by retaking Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin.
(Also NE 2nd CD – but not, alas, ME 2nd CD)

Eight Battleground States: **PA MI WI MN NH IA AZ NC FL**

If Dems lose any of first four, we lose, or it goes to the House, where we lose. (And only if **NE 2ⁿ CD is blue**)

As some of you know, I am occasionally possessed by my Doppelganger Dr. Feelgood. The Good Doctor has been whispering that all the swing states could fall our way for a **340-198** victory, but I do not believe him.

2020 Battle for Control of the Senate

- **Red, Blue** and **Brown** 22 Rs 12 Ds
- Current Senate **53-47**
- GOP Opportunity: Jones AL (likely)
- Dem Opportunities: Collins ME, Gardner CO, McSally AZ, Tillis NC, Daines MT
- Senate Majority is a long reach for Dems in 2020
- Probable Best Hope: **50-50 VP**

Democrats 46

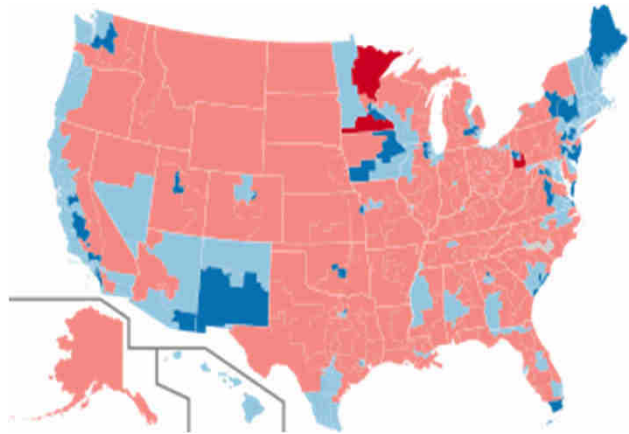
Republicans 49

270 WIN

For Democrats to win control of the Senate, they would have to **nearly** run the table beating at least four of these five R incumbents: Cory Gardner in CO , our own Susan Collins here in Maine, appointee Martha McSally in AZ , Tom Tillis in North Carolina, and Steve Daines in MT -- and then win the Presidency so that a Democratic VP could break 50-50 tie votes.

59

Will the House Stay Blue in 2020?



- 116th Congress **232-197-1-5 (2/3)**
- More than a score of seats Dems gained in 2018 were won by moderates in purple districts
- If comity rules in the House Democratic Caucus and among Democratic presidential candidates so that each Dem Rep can run advocating *their* steps toward our Progressive Vision based on *their* knowledge of their districts ...
- ... the 117th Congress will remain **Blue**

In 2020, holding the Democratic majority in the House will depend on two factors:

- 1) The Democratic Presidential candidate and his reception nationwide; and
- 2) Comity in the Party that supports diverse voices and the smart district-focused runs of 41 freshmen who won previously Red seats in 2016 -- almost all in swing districts. Pelosi seems committed to enforce such comity.

The House should stay Blue. Their caucus might even grow modestly. Dems will pick up two seats in NC via fixes to gerrymandering.

Let's Talk

61 Slides with Notes is more than any good ACSers should endure.

If you want to talk or even argue, you can reach me at **207-244-5304** or jackrussell101@earthlink.net