

WASHINGTON POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

MJA@WASHINGTONPAC.COM (202) 347-6613 WWW.WASHINGTONPAC.COM

444 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.W.

SUITE 203

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

(Please note our new suite and phone numbers)

2018 cycle, Number 2

Winter 2018

FOUNDER AND TREASURER

MORRIS J. AMITAY

ADVISORY BOARD

STEPHEN AMITAY
PETER BARASH
MAX BERRY
RUDY BOSCHWITZ
NINA COHEN
N.J. "SKY" COOPER
LANNY DAVIS
TED DINERSTEIN
ROGER DREEBEN
ROBERT EDER
FRED EHRLMAN
GARY ERLBAUM
HALLEY FAUST
SIG FEIGER
MICHAEL FRANZBLAU
ED GOLDENBERG
EUGENE GRANT
JERRY GREEN
MARSHAL GREENBLATT
MARVIN HAAS
IRWIN HOCHBERG
PERRY HOOKMAN
DAVID JUSTMAN
LAWRENCE KADISH
MIRIAM KARASH
JOSHUA KATZEN
ROBERT KEATS
JAY KISLAK
JONATHAN KISLAK
MARVIN KLEMMOW
JOSHUA LANDES
GREG LEISCH
RANDALL LEVITT
ZVIE LIBERMAN
MARCEL LINDENBAUM
JON LOEW
MARTIN MENDELSON
LARRY MIZEL
MICHAEL NACHMAN
FRANK PAULSON
STEVE PERLES
MARK POSIN
LIEF ROSENBLATT
HOWARD ROSENBLUM
NINA ROSENWALD
JOSEPH SAKA
DAN SCHAEFER
SAUL SCHWEBER
MAURY SELDIN
LARRY SIEDLICK
STUART SLOAME
PHILLIP L. SPECTOR
SHELDON STEIN
DAVID STEINMANN
MARTIN STERENBUCH
GEORGE STERN
STEVEN D. STONE
ELLIOT R. WOLFF

Overview – U.S. Senate 2018 Elections

The lineup for the 2018 Senate cycle is 26 Dem (two independents caucus with the Dems) and 8 GOP. Events of the last few months have slightly shifted the electoral map—Doug Jones's victory over Roy Moore in the Alabama special election reduced the GOP majority to 51-49, and Al Franken's resignation has set up a special election in Minnesota later this year, a state which Trump lost by under two points. Of the 26 Dem seats up, 10 are in states Trump won in 2016.

President Trump's approval ratings have fluctuated between the mid-30s to low-40s as he maintains strong support from his base. Nationally, the GOP is grasping the electoral consequences of the first year of Trump's presidency—three GOP Senators have announced their retirement, including vocally anti-Trump Sen. Flake in vulnerable Arizona. Many big names in swing states have decided against running, leaving the GOP without star power in several key would-be pickup opportunities as fears of a blue wave build.

National polling has favored the Dems—in line with the consistent historical trend of the party in the White House losing seats in Congress during the midterms. The Dems have split on strategy—moderates have attempted to work with the President on issues of agreement and common interest, while leftists have pursued tactics akin with the "resistance". Turnout among both the Dem and Trump bases will be key to determining which party will control the U.S. Congress in 2019.

As President Trump begins his second year in office, we can look back on a phenomenal year in U.S.-Israel relations with both Congress and the White House, rebuilding much of the trust and credibility lost under the previous administration. Trump announced in December a long-overdue U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and a plan to move the U.S. Embassy there in the coming years. Fears of violence and regional upheaval were unfounded. The President also announced he was withholding \$65m of a budgeted \$125m of funds to UNRWA, the Palestinian refugee agency which inflames anti-Israel sentiment in its schools and textbooks and perpetuates the conflict by uniquely including actual refugees and all descendants as eligible.

UN Amb. Nikki Haley has unapologetically fought back against long-entrenched anti-Israel forces in New York, using a U.S. veto against a Security Council resolution condemning the Jerusalem move. The U.S. has announced a withdrawal from UNESCO after multiple resolutions denying Jewish ties to Jerusalem and is considering a similar move at the UN Human Rights Council.

Current political conditions on the ground, not to mention Abbas's wildly anti-Semitic speech in early January decrying the existence of the Jewish state and announcing that the Oslo Accords are dead, do not portend well for a comprehensive deal with the Palestinians. And Trump has tied the resumption of U.S. UNRWA aid to the PA coming to the negotiating table. Trump also decertified the disastrous Iran deal and has given Congress until May to provide necessary fixes to its sunset and (lack of) ballistic missile provisions, or he will scrap it. The House passed the Taylor Force Act, which would withhold PA funding until it ends "martyrs payments" to families of terrorists.

Congress must continue to play its vital role in shaping U.S. policy in the Middle East. It is therefore essential that reliable pro-Israel incumbents, especially those with seniority on key committees, are re-elected this year. This update lists all 34 Senate races in the cycle and the early prospects. Certainly much will change in the next ten months and we will keep you informed. We also indicate where a candidate generally stands on our issues if he/she has a record in Congress.

During our PAC's 37 years here on Capitol Hill, we have been able to establish close relationships with key legislators of both parties who share our view that a secure Israel is in the best interests of the United States. As always, we welcome your own insights and suggestions.

Morrie Amitay
Alex Dubin, Editor
February 2018

ARIZONA JEFF FLAKE (R)—RETIRING

A looming tough primary challenge, combined with being a vocal anti-Trump voice in the Senate, forced Flake into retirement. The GOP primary to replace him has three contenders—Rep. Martha McSally (perfect record), the first female Air Force pilot to fly in combat, and a pair of far-right wingers: former AZ State Sen. Kelli Ward, who lost to McCain in his 2016 primary, and Sheriff Joe Arpaio, 85, known nationally for his hardline stance on immigration and Trump’s pardon of his contempt of court conviction. Blue Dog Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (excellent record) jumped in the race in September for the Dems. This seat is a critical pickup opportunity for the Dems—especially if Ward or Arpaio captures the GOP nom on Aug. 28. A McSally-Sinema general election could be closer to a toss-up.

CALIFORNIA DIANNE FEINSTEIN (D) 2012 Election, 63%. Defense Approps, *Chairwoman*

Fair to disappointing record—endorsed by J Street

Feinstein, 84, will face no serious GOP opposition in the now solid-blue Golden State, but could face a challenge in her quest for a fifth term from the left in November from upstart Kevin de León, President pro tempore of the CA Senate (CA has a top-two jungle primary).

CONNECTICUT CHRIS MURPHY (D) 2012 Election, 55%. Foreign Relations

Fair record—endorsed by J Street

Given his increasing national profile, Murphy should cruise to re-election in the Nutmeg State.

DELAWARE TOM CARPER (D) 2012 Election, 66%. Homeland Security

Fair record

Carper (endorsed by J Street) will easily secure a fourth term in November representing the First State.

FLORIDA BILL NELSON (D) 2012 Election, 55%. Armed Services

Excellent record—save for the Iran deal

We can expect a high-profile, expensive clash between Nelson, seeking his fourth term representing the Sunshine State, and term-limited Gov. Rick Scott, a vocal supporter of President Trump—if Scott makes his long-expected entrance into the race. The power of the incumbency, combined with expected Dem enthusiasm, makes this Trump state lean slightly Dem—but Scott has closed the polling gap with Nelson in a few recent surveys and could make it interesting.

HAWAII MAZIE HIRONO (D) 2012 Election, 63%. Armed Services

Good record

Hirono will easily win a second term in the Aloha State.

INDIANA JOE DONNELLY (D) 2012 Election, 50%. Armed Services

Good record

Donnelly’s seat is vulnerable—the Hoosier State voted for Trump by nearly 20 points in 2016. Two House Republicans—Luke Messer (excellent record) and Todd Rokita (good record) have been joined by IN State Rep. Mike Braun, who has put \$800k of his own cash into what has been a nasty, personal, and expensive primary battle for the GOP nod. Donnelly, without a serious primary challenger, will face a nail-biting general election. The fate of the seat, a prime GOP pickup opportunity, will depend heavily on the turnout of Trump’s base and the strength of a blue wave in a state trending decisively red.

MAINE ANGUS KING (I) 2012 Election, 53%. Armed Services

Fair to good—endorsed by J Street

The independent King will cruise to victory for a second term representing the Pine Tree State—with the only caveat a potential campaign by Gov. Paul LePage, who has been personally lobbied to run by Trump. King would likely still win against the unpopular governor, but a competitive race would siphon key Dem dollars from other target states.

MARYLAND BEN CARDIN (D) 2012 Election, 55%. Foreign Relations, *Ranking Member*

An outstanding and vocal supporter on all issues, including Iran

Cardin, the Ranking Member of the Foreign Relations Committee, should secure a third term in the Senate after 20 years in the House representing the Free State. His race has attracted national attention from Chelsea Manning, convicted in 2013 of Espionage Act violations (sentence commuted by Obama), who entered the race in January. Cardin’s re-election is a top priority.

MASSACHUSETTS ELIZABETH WARREN (D) 2012 Election, 54%. Armed Services

Fair to good record

Warren’s national profile has skyrocketed since she first took office in 2012, but she still faces challenges from entrepreneur Shiva Ayyadurai, who left the GOP to go independent, and former Romney aide Beth Lindstrom, State Rep. Geoff Diehl, and attorney John Kingston all angling for the GOP nom. Warren should win a second term, but this race will be one to watch as she muses higher office.

MICHIGAN DEBBIE STABENOW (D) 2012 Election, 59%.

Very good record—save the Iran deal vote

Stabenow is seeking her fourth term. Michigan went for Trump in 2016—but GOP star power is lacking in this race as Rep. Fred Upton (very good record) passed and musician Kid Rock (born Robert Ritchie) briefly flirted with a run before declining. Lena Epstein, former Trump campaign co-chair, rerouted a Senate bid to a House contest. With momentum for a blue wave building, Stabenow seems much more secure in holding her Wolverine State seat.

MINNESOTA AMY KLOBUCHAR (D) 2012 Election, 65%.

Excellent record—except for the Iran deal

Klobuchar will seek a third term representing the Land of 10,000 Lakes and there is even some speculation about her in 2020. Klobuchar’s path is clear; so far she only faces GOP State Rep. Jim Newberger. While Trump lost to Clinton here by under 2 points in a state that’s gone blue since 1976, Klobuchar’s popularity and lack of high-level GOP talent should send her back in the Senate.

MINNESOTA (SPECIAL) TINA SMITH (D) Appointed January 2018

No record

The resignation of Sen. Al Franken following allegations of sexual misconduct has added an unexpected and intriguing special election to the 2018 lineup. Dem Lt. Gov. Tina Smith was appointed to finish out the session and will likely compete this November as the Dem nominee. The GOP field is still unfolding—Gov. Tim Pawlenty, Rep. Tom Emmer (excellent record) and former Rep. Michele Bachmann (very good record) declined bids, but State Sen. Karin Housley is in. This seat will likely stay blue, but it could be a closer race than Klobuchar's and could force Dems to spend money defending a seat not even on the map this cycle until last month.

MISSISSIPPI ROGER WICKER (R) 2012 Election, 57%. Armed Services

Good record

Deep-red Mississippi will certainly send a Republican back to DC. But Wicker could face Tea Party State Sen. Chris McDaniel, who nearly knocked off Sen. Thad Cochran in 2014, in a potentially expensive GOP primary. McDaniel has still not declared, but polling suggests Wicker's lead over McDaniel in a hypothetical race is increasing.

MISSOURI CLAIRE MCCASKILL (D) 2012 Election, 55%. Armed Services, Homeland Security

Fair record

McCaskill should get past Obamacare marketplace specialist Angelica Earl for the Dem nom, where she will face a very difficult general election fight against MO Atty. Gen. Josh Hawley. Hawley, 37, will likely clear the GOP field as a pair of GOP Reps, Ann Wagner (excellent record) and Vicki Hartzler (excellent record) passed on a Senate bid. The Show Me State seat is a prime pickup opportunity for the GOP as Missouri went 19 points for Trump in 2016—polling indicates a slight lead for Hawley, but the race is a toss-up.

MONTANA JON TESTER (D) 2012 Election, 49%. Homeland Security

Good record

Another Dem running in a Trump state, Tester is vulnerable heading into 2018 in deep-red Montana, but has benefited from several big-name GOP potentials passing on the race, including Interior Secretary (and former Rep.) Ryan Zinke (excellent record). So far, State Auditor Matt Rosendale, businessman Troy Downing, and fmr. Judge Russell Fagg are in for the GOP. This is another example of a Dem incumbent up in a Trump state benefitting from the lack of big-name GOP talent, which tilts this would-be GOP pickup blue. Perhaps as a sign of his confidence—Tester voted against the stopgap measure to end the government shutdown, the only red-state Dem to do so.

NEBRASKA DEB FISCHER (R) 2012 Election, 58%. Armed Services

Excellent record

Fischer will have little trouble securing her second term representing the Cornhusker State.

NEVADA DEAN HELLER (R) 2012 Election, 46%.

Good record

Heller is by far the most vulnerable GOP up for re-election as he is the only Republican running in a state Hillary won. He faces businessman Danny Tarkanian, who has lost five elections in Nevada dating to 2004, in a June 12 primary. His likely opponent in the general is freshman Rep. Jacky Rosen (perfect record), who has consolidated Dem support for her bid in a state increasingly tilting blue in recent years. Aside from Arizona, the Silver State is a prime Dem pickup opportunity.

NEW JERSEY BOB MENENDEZ (D) 2012 Election, 59%. Foreign Relations

Outstanding advocate on our issues with an excellent record

A mistrial was declared in Menendez's corruption case, clearing the way for him to win a third term—the Garden State has not elected a GOP Senator since 1972. A consistent and reliable supporter on all issues of concern, his re-election is one of our highest priorities.

NEW MEXICO MARTIN HEINRICH (D) 2012 Election, 51%. Armed Services

Only fair to good record—endorsed by J Street

Heinrich still has no opponents yet in his quest for a second term, and should be re-elected easily.

NEW YORK KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND (D) 2012 Election, 72%.

Very good record of support, marred by backing the Iran deal

Gillibrand's national star is rising as speculation about 2020 mounts. She should easily win a second term representing the Empire State.

NORTH DAKOTA HEIDI HEITKAMP (D) 2012 Election, 50%. Homeland Security

Usually supportive

Heitkamp has a tough race. Running in deep-red North Dakota, she's been vocal about supporting Trump on some issues where they share common views, frustrating progressive Dems, but no serious primary challenger from the left has emerged. The GOP was dealt a blow when Rep. Kevin Cramer (excellent record) declined a run, so the GOP will likely settle on State Sen. Tom Campbell. Lack of GOP star talent, combined with Heitkamp's unique political branding and deft handling of Trump, tilts this race just slightly blue.

OHIO SHERROD BROWN (D) 2012 Election, 51%.

Fair to good record—endorsed by J Street

The Ohio race, expected to be a repeat of 2012, was upended when OH State Treasurer Josh Mandel abruptly left the race in early Jan., citing his wife's health. Rep. Jim Renacci (good record) switched over from the Governor race and will likely be the GOP nom. Brown will not face a serious primary challenger, and he will use his Midwestern populist appeal to attempt to turn the Buckeye State, which voted for Trump by 8 points, back over to the Dems. The race was a tossup until Mandel's sudden exit shifted this race slightly blue.

PENNSYLVANIA BOB CASEY (D) 2012 Election, 54%.

Excellent record, aside from Iran deal

Casey faces re-election in the traditionally blue Keystone State. GOP Rep. Mike Kelly (excellent record) declined to run, so it is very likely fourth-term Rep. Lou Barletta (excellent record) will take on Casey in an expensive race expected to cost north of \$100 million. Barletta, an immigration hawk, is betting on Trumpism to ride to victory in a state that Trump turned red in 2016 for the first time since 1988; he's pledged to serve only two terms if elected. The race leans blue and is a second-tier GOP pickup opportunity.

RHODE ISLAND SHELDON WHITEHOUSE (D) 2012 Election, 65%.

Good record—endorsed by J Street

Whitehouse will have no trouble dispatching either of two little-known opponents (or any other Republican) to win a third term.

TENNESSEE BOB CORKER (R)—RETIRING

Corker, who has had several public spat with President Trump, announced his retirement last fall. Rep. Marsha Blackburn (very good record) promptly entered the open GOP primary and should beat former Rep. Stephen Fincher (perfect record)—Gov. Bill Haslam took a pass on the race. Blackburn will face former Dem Gov. Phil Bredesen, who gave the Dem response to the State of the Union in 2017.

The race is a bit of a reach for Dems in a state that went for Trump by 26 points, but a massive blue wave in November, combined with a more traditional Southern Dem candidate with some GOP appeal in Bredesen, could push the Dems over the top.

TEXAS TED CRUZ (R) 2012 Election, 57%. Armed Services

Excellent record of support

The outspoken Cruz has all but locked-down the GOP nom. On the Dem side, Rep. Beto O'Rourke (very poor record) has consolidated support after both Castro brothers and former TX State Sen. Wendy Davis declined to run. Only in a national Dem tidal wave tsunami would O'Rourke have a shot against Cruz—the Lone Star State is still not purple, and no Dem has been elected Senator here since 1988.

UTAH ORRIN HATCH (R)—RETIRING

Hatch, the longest-serving GOP senator in history, announced his retirement last month. Mitt Romney, 2012 GOP presidential nominee, will announce his candidacy on Feb. 15 and will easily clear the GOP field, dispatch any Dem, and be elected Senator.

VERMONT BERNIE SANDERS (I) 2012 Election, 71%.

The worst Israel-related record in the Senate!

The far-left runner-up in the 2016 Dem presidential primary will win a third term, barring divine intervention.

VIRGINIA TIM KAINE (D) 2012 Election, 53%. Foreign Relations, Armed Services

Only a fair record of support—endorsed by J Street

Kaine's national celebrity from his 2016 VP bid, the changing demography of Virginia, the complete GOP meltdown in 2017 state races, and momentum for a blue wave, make his re-election to a second term a solid bet—barring a late entry by a high-profile Republican.

WASHINGTON MARIA CANTWELL (D) 2012 Election, 61%.

Very good record—endorsed by J Street

Cantwell faces no obstacles on her way to winning a fourth term representing the Evergreen State.

WEST VIRGINIA JOE MANCHIN (D) 2012 Election, 61%. Armed Services

Outstanding record

Manchin having to run in a state that voted for Trump by 42 points should make him the most vulnerable Dem in the nation. But he's also been the most willing Dem to cooperate with Trump on specific issues. An angry Dem grassroots has an environmental activist running against Manchin, but he should clear the field. For the GOP, Rep. Evan Jenkins (excellent record) will face off against WV Atty. Gen. Patrick Morrisey. Manchin looks like an easy GOP flip, but this race is a tossup with either Jenkins or Morrisey. A staunch supporter of our issues, Manchin's re-election is one of the highest priorities in maintaining crucial bipartisan support in Congress.

WISCONSIN TAMMY BALDWIN (D) 2012 Election, 51%. Defense Approps

Very poor record—endorsed by J Street

Baldwin's prospects are improving as fears of a Dem wave build. She will face either State Sen. Leah Vukmir or Kevin Nicholson, a businessman and Iraq combat veteran. Though the Badger state went red in 2016 for the first time since 1984, it will likely revert to its traditional blue in 2018. Last month a Dem won a WI statehouse seat's special election in a district that went big for Trump in 2016.

WYOMING JOHN BARRASSO (R) 2012 Election, 76%. Foreign Relations

Very good record

Barrasso won his last race with over three-quarters of the vote, and barring an act of God, should be back for a third term.

This newsletter is paid for and authorized by Washington Political Action Committee, Morris J. Amity, Treasurer

**2018 SENATE ELECTIONS NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2018**

**WASHINGTON POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE
444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 203, Washington, D.C. 20001**