



Who said that MIDTERM ELECTIONS aren't interesting?



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In an interview in the February issue of the *National Journal*, respected nonpartisan political guru Charlie Cook shocked many inside the Beltway by declaring that he found it “very hard to come up with a scenario where Democrats don’t lose the House” in the coming 2010 election.¹ Earlier this year, Stuart Rothenberg, editor of the esteemed *Rothenberg Political Report*, stated in his weekly column, “With a nearly 80-seat House majority, 60 seats in the Senate for more than eight months, a GOP brand so damaged that the party looked completely incompetent, and a charismatic African-American president taking over from a failed two-term Republican president, you’d have thought that Democrats were set up for a pretty decent two years. But...Democrats are headed for big losses in the House and Senate.”²

These statements illustrate how suddenly the political climate can change, and how volatile it can be for the party in power. In November 2008, the evaporation of Democratic momentum in 15 short months would have been dismissed as an impossibility. The 2006 elections represented what Cook once referred to in a political briefing as a “tsu-

nami,” with Republicans losing 30 seats. With the Obama movement in full force and Bush fatigue a powerful factor, Republicans lost yet another 24 House seats in 2008, handing the Democrats a 79-seat majority. After a long and drawn-out legal battle with incumbent Sen. Norm Coleman (R-MN), Sen. Al Franken (D-MN) was seated in July 2009, giving Democrats a 60-vote majority in the Senate. Democrats were shouting from the rooftops and Republicans were whispering behind closed doors, but they were all saying the same thing: Democrats had been handed a mandate and would be in control for years to come.

Cook and Rothenberg’s assertions serve notice that the political pundits have identified a dramatic nationwide shift, with the election of Sen. Scott Brown (R-MA) as the exclamation point. Just days before the election, even the most respected experts were still doubtful that a Republican could find the votes to take the seat left vacant by the death of Senate stalwart Edward “Ted” Kennedy. Senator Brown’s election made clear to both parties that although the desire for change expressed in the 2008 election is still strong, the winds appear to be blowing in a different direction.

In response, the national party committees of both the Republicans and the Democrats have brought 2010 election activities into high gear.

Republicans rally

At a political briefing in early 2008, the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) Chairman, Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX), expressed frustration with the previous status quo of NRCC dollars being poured into races in which the candidates themselves were not exerting the necessary level of effort, resources, and dedication to run successful and efficient campaigns. In this election cycle, the NRCC has established a more formal system of race-tracking, evaluation, and participation, in order to hold vulnerable incumbents, targeted open seats, and challenger candidates accountable for pulling their own weight.

First, the Patriot Program was created for sitting members of Congress who could be at risk of losing their seats. According to the NRCC, the program provides a “mechanism by which potentially targeted incumbents commit themselves to meet rigorous goals that will strengthen their campaigns to ensure victory. These ‘Patriots,’ who work tirelessly to build winning campaigns, do so with the full support and participation of the NRCC and the entire House Leadership.”³ (See box, this page.)

Similarly, the NRCC has established the “Young Guns” program to promote strong open-seat and challenger candidates. The NRCC describes Young Guns as “not just a political program, but an on-going movement to go on offense and strengthen the GOP....” (See box, this page.) The initiative has several tiers, and a candidate’s status within the Young Guns program is determined by the viability of the race, as well as the level of effort and dedication displayed by the individual candidate. Candidates who show early potential are designated as “On the Radar,” while those who appear to be making progress are “Contenders.” Candidates with the clearly demonstrated strength to win earn “Young Gun” status, and are given the highest level of attention and resources.⁴

Democrats protect turf

Coming off of two consecutive, hugely successful election cycles, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) chairman Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) acknowledged early in 2009

Patriot Program members (by state-district)

Rep. Michelle Bachman (MN-06)
Rep. Judy Biggert (IL-13)
Rep. Brian Bilbray (CA-50)
Rep. Mary Bono-Mack (CA-45)
Rep. Ken Calvert (CA-44)
Rep. Anh Joseph Cao (LA-02)
Rep. Bill Cassidy, MD (LA-06)
Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15)
Rep. John Fleming, MD (LA-04)
Rep. Scott Garrett (NJ-05)
Rep. Dean Heller (NV-02)
Rep. Lynn Jenkins (KS-02)
Rep. Leonard Lance (NJ-07)
Rep. Chris Lee (NY-26)
Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (MO-09)
Rep. Cynthia Lummis (WY-AL)
Rep. Dan Lungren (CA-03)
Rep. Thaddeus McCotter (MI-11)
Rep. Erik Paulsen (MN-03)
Rep. Bill Posey (FL-15)
Rep. Dave Reichert (WA-08)
Rep. Mike Rogers (AL-03)
Rep. Tom Rooney (FL-16)
Rep. Lee Terry (NE-02)
Rep. Pat Tiberi (OH-12)

NRCC Young Guns

Martha Roby (AL-02, challenging Rep. Bobby Bright)
Tim Griffin (AR-02, open—Rep. Vic Snyder, MD retiring)
Dennis Ross (FL-12, open—Rep. Adam Putnam retiring)
Allen West (FL-22, challenging Rep. Ron Kind)
Vaughn Ward (ID-01, challenging Rep. Walt Minnick)
Andy Harris, MD (MD-01, challenging Rep. Frank Kratovil)
Steve Pearce (NM-02, challenging Rep. Harry Teague)
Steve Chabot (OH-01, challenging Rep. Steve Driehaus)
Steve Stivers (OH-15, challenging Rep. Mary Jo Kilroy)
Pat Meehan (PA-07, open—Rep. Joe Sestak running for Senate)

that Democrats would face a steep challenge maintaining their recent gains. To that end, the DCCC has placed particular emphasis on its Frontline program to protect vulnerable incumbents. The Committee describes the Frontline Program as “a partnership between the DCCC and Democratic Members of Congress which lays the groundwork for the 2010 cycle by supporting and expanding their fundraising and outreach operations.”⁵ (See box, this page.)

In the previous election cycle, the DCCC “Red to Blue” program for taking seats held by Republicans was a towering success. Whereas the DCCC appears to be dedicating much of its resources to incumbent retention in this election cycle, it does place emphasis on certain “Races to Watch,” which are promising challenger and open-seat races in which the DCCC will pour the greatest consideration and capital (see box, page 34).

While the DCCC has almost doubled the number of vulnerable House members by its classification, it is important to note that its fundraising is still far more vigorous than its Republican counterpart. To date in the 2010 election cycle, the DCCC has raised more than \$60 million, compared to the NRCC’s total of slightly more than \$40 million.^{6,7} At this time, the DCCC has more money to spend, but more seats to defend, whereas the NRCC has fewer incumbents to defend, and some latitude to go on the offensive and commit revenue toward emerging races.

Physician candidates

With a highly charged electorate and an inordinate number of open seats and at-risk incumbents, 2010 is undeniably a fascinating year in politics. Every day there are breaking news reports concerning retirements, scandals, and resignations. With health care at the forefront of ongoing debates, more than 40 physicians have been spurred to run for Congress in the coming election.

The American College of Surgeons Professional Association’s political action committee (ACSPA-SurgeonsPAC) will play an active role in many of the House and Senate races shaping the makeup of the 112th Congress. The PAC board and staff are always eager to hear from ACSPA members regarding House or Senate races in their districts and states. There are many ways surgeons can get involved and help to elect Members of Congress who understand the critical role that surgeons play in the U.S. health care system, including the following:

- Visit the ACSIPA-SurgeonsPAC Web site at <http://www.facs.org/acspa> for more information on how to get involved with the PAC, and for disbursement lists of candidates the PAC has supported.
- Contact Sara Morse at 202-337-2701 or at smorse@facs.org with your input and analysis regarding the elections in your region.
- Volunteer for, and contribute to, the candidate’s campaign, and be sure to be included on his or her health care advisory board if applicable.

Frontline members (by state-district)

Rep. John Adler (NJ-03)
Rep. Mike Arcuri (NY-24)
Rep. John Boccieri (OH-16)
Rep. Leonard Boswell (IA-03)
Rep. Bobby Bright (AL-02)
Rep. Chris Carney (PA-10)
Rep. Travis W. Childers (MS-01)
Rep. Gerry Connolly (VA-11)
Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper (PA-03)
Rep. Steve Driehaus (OH-01)
Rep. Bill Foster (IL-14)
Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (AZ-08)
Rep. Alan Grayson (FL-08)

Rep. Debbie Halvorson (IL-11)
Rep. Martin Heinrich (NM-01)
Rep. Baron Hill (IN-09)
Rep. Jim Himes (CT-04)
Rep. Steve Kagen (WI-08)
Rep. Mary Jo Kilroy (OH-15)
Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (AZ-01)
Rep. Larry Kissell (NC-08)
Rep. Suzanne Kosmas (FL-24)
Rep. Frank M. Kratovil, Jr. (MD-01)
Rep. Dan Maffei (NY-25)
Rep. Betsy Markey (CO-04)
Rep. Michael McMahon (NY-13)

Rep. Jerry McNerney (CA-11)
Rep. Walt Minnick (ID-01)
Rep. Harry Mitchell (AZ-05)
Rep. Scott Murphy (NY-20)
Rep. Glenn Nye (VA-02)
Rep. Bill Owens (NY-23)
Rep. Tom Perriello (VA-05)
Rep. Gary Peters (MI-09)
Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (TX-23)
Rep. Mark Schauer (MI-07)
Rep. Kurt Schrader (OR-05)
Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (NH-01)
Rep. Zachary Space (OH-18)
Rep. Harry Teague (NM-02)
Rep. Dina Titus (NV-03)



Races to Watch—Top races

John Hulburt (AZ-03, open—Rep. John Shadegg retiring)
Ami Bera, MD (CA-03, challenging Rep. Dan Lungren)
Steve Pougnet (CA-45, challenging Rep. Mary Bono Mack)
John Carney (DE-AL, open—Rep. Mike Castle running for Senate)
Lori Edwards (FL-12, open—Rep. Adam Putnam retiring)
Dan Seals (IL-10, open—Rep. Mark Kirk running for Senate)
Raj Goyle (KS-04, open—Rep. Todd Tiahrt running for Senate)
Tom White (NE-02, challenging Rep. Lee Terry)
Paula Brooks (OH-12, challenging Rep. Pat Tiberi)
Bryan Lentz (PA-07, open—Rep. Joe Sestak running for Senate)
John Callahan (PA-15, challenging Rep. Charlie Dent)
Rob Miller (SC-02, challenging Rep. Joe Wilson)
Roy Herron (TN-08, open—Rep. John Tanner retiring)
Suzan Delbene (WA-08, challenging Rep. Dave Reichert)

LA-02 (challenging Rep. Joseph Cao), MN-06 (challenging Rep. Michelle Bachmann), and PA-06 (challenging Rep. Jim Gerlach) are also listed by the DCCC as “Races to Watch,” where a primary still must be held to determine the candidate.




(Many members of Congress and candidates set up boards or panels composed of physicians and others with medical expertise to help guide policy decisions.)

- Attend the 2010 Joint Surgical Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC, July 25–27, where political pundit Charlie Cook will be the featured keynote speaker. (Visit <http://www.facs.org/grassroots/index.html> for more information and to register for the 2010 Joint Surgical Advocacy Conference.)

You can also work with ACSPA-SurgeonsPAC staff to do the following:

- Set up in-district delivery of ACSPA-SurgeonsPAC checks (a great way for physicians to get to know their member of Congress or candidate and/or to help cultivate the existing relationship).
- Schedule a time for the member of Congress or candidate to tour the physician’s office and learn more about issues facing surgery, and how Congress directly affects the physician’s practice and patients.
- Host an in-district fundraiser for fellow surgeons and the greater physician community, benefiting the candidate in the physician’s district.

Individual relationships with members of Congress and staff are critical to the success of surgery’s advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill. There is no better time to cultivate these vital

contacts than when a member or candidate needs your help. 

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