

TO: Interested Parties

FR: DCCC Chairman Ben Ray Luján

DT: November 9, 2017

RE: One Year Out: Offensive Battlefield Brimming With Opportunity

Bottom Line: In 2017, the DCCC successfully outlined and built an 80-district battlefield by landing highly qualified recruits with records of service and authentic messages that connect with voters in their districts.

Following our early success, the DCCC is **today adding 11 additional Republican-held districts to our offensive battlefield, which now totals 91 districts.** This memo also includes **new polling data.**

The DCCC has successfully built the largest battlefield in over a decade, with strong campaigns ready to win tough races across the map in 2018.

BREAKING NEWS: Rep. Frank LoBiondo (NJ-02) just announced his retirement, in addition to Reps. Ted Poe & Bob Goodlatte this week alone. Rep. Martha McSally's (AZ-02) is expected to soon run for Senate.

BUILDING & FILLING BIGGEST BATTLEFIELD IN A DECADE

At the beginning of the year, we committed to building the largest battlefield in a decade. Surely, many cynics viewed this as rhetoric. But we have delivered on this commitment, because to take back the House, it's a necessity.

- **Seventy-five out of our eighty initial battlefield districts have viable candidates.** Many races are already highly competitive with robust, well-financed campaigns, while others have clear paths to competitiveness pending the right political environment. We will continue to recruit until the last filing deadline.
- Beyond that, an analysis by the [*Campaign Finance Institute*](#) shows **391 Democratic challengers raised at least \$5,000 by Sept. 30**, while only 71 Republican challengers nationwide had done so.

GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY IN BATTLEFIELD

In order to build the largest battlefield in a decade, we need to compete across a hugely diverse set of districts. There is a high priority on the **23 districts that Hillary Clinton carried in 2016**, but that's not enough. With today's battlefield expansion, **we are now challenging 68 districts where President Trump won** by large and small margins. We have top pick-up opportunities on both coasts, and from the Rust Belt to the South and Southwest.

RAPID PACE OF RETIREMENTS, CREATING OPEN SEATS

As of early November 2017, **23 House Republicans have announced their retirements, the highest number at this stage since 2004** and well ahead of this point in 2008, according to the most recent analysis by *Daily Kos*. It's likely that this trend will continue as Speaker Ryan and establishment Republicans continue to fail to govern on behalf of middle class Americans, despite unified Republican control of Washington. In general, eliminating the power of incumbency creates a great deal of advantage for House Democratic challengers.

- According to a *Sabato's Crystal Ball* [analysis](#), **"On average over the last three midterms (2006, 2010, and 2014, all wave years for one party or the other), the president's party lost a whopping 22 points in margin in open seats they were defending in the midterm."**

In 2016, Reps. Dave Reichert and Charlie Dent won by 20 points, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen by 10 points, Rep. Dave Trott by 13 points, and Rep. Frank Lobiondo by 22 points. Clearly these retirements easily put these open seats in play.

STELLAR CANDIDATE FUNDRAISING

As of the third fundraising quarter, Democratic candidates continue to post historic fundraising totals – outpacing their Republican challengers *and* candidates in previous cycles.

- In the third quarter of 2017, **35 Democratic challengers outraised Republican incumbents**, while only 2 Republican challengers outraised the Democratic incumbent.
- There are **144 House Democratic candidates who have raised over \$100K** in our targeted battlefield, at this point in the cycle.
- For perspective:
 - At this point in the 2016 cycle, **41 Democratic candidates had more than \$100K**, when House Democrats gained 6 seats. This was 3.5 times fewer candidates.
 - At this point in the 2010 cycle, **77 Republicans had more than \$100K**. This was nearly 2 times fewer candidates.
 - At this point in the 2006 cycle, **38 Democratic candidates had more than \$100K**, when Democrats won the House. This was 4 times fewer candidates.

DCCC CONTINUES TO RAPIDLY OUTPACE NRCC FUNDRAISING

The huge enthusiasm gap between Democrats and Republicans is apparent in committee level fundraising as well as candidates. **The DCCC has achieved record-breaking fundraising this cycle, raising a total of \$81M compared to the NRCC's \$72.6M as of the third quarter.** Most encouragingly, our grassroots donor base is using small dollar, online donations to voice their opposition to Republican-controlled Washington. Through the third quarter, a full **\$33.9M of our \$81M total raised came online**, and when donations on the phones and in the mail are accounted for, over **60% of our total raised is from grassroots donations.**

NEW BATTLEFIELD DISTRICTS

OH-12 – Open
WI-01 – Paul Ryan
UT-04 – Mia Love
PA-11 – Open
PA-15 – Open
TX-21 – Open

NY-02 – Pete King
IN-09 – Trey Hollingsworth
CA-04 – Tom McClintock
WA-05 – Cathy McMorris Rodgers
WI-06 – Glenn Grothman

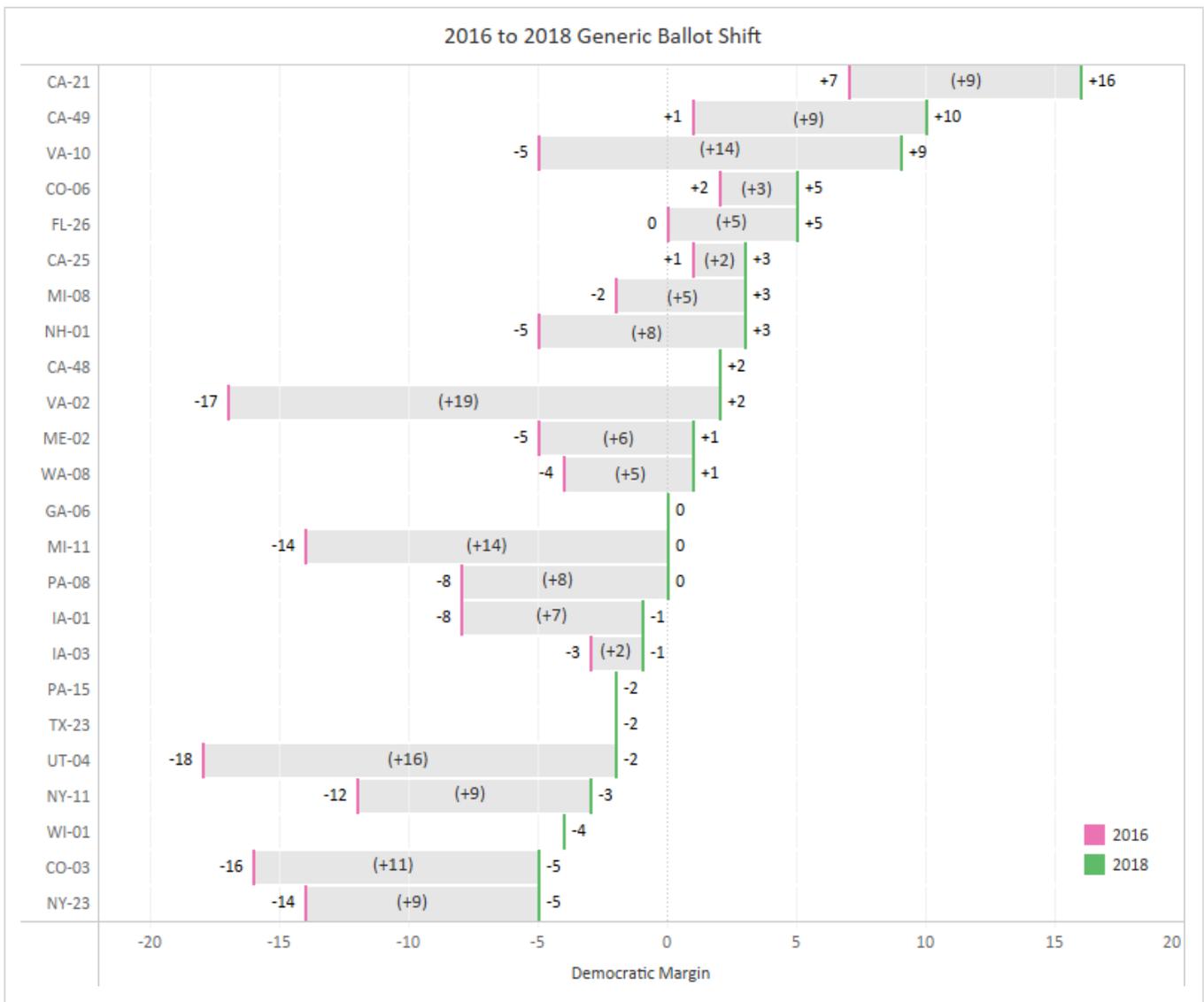
FULL 91 DISTRICT BATTLEFIELD LISTED AT END OF MEMO

POLLING SHOWS DEMOCRATS WITH IMPRESSIVE ADVANTAGES

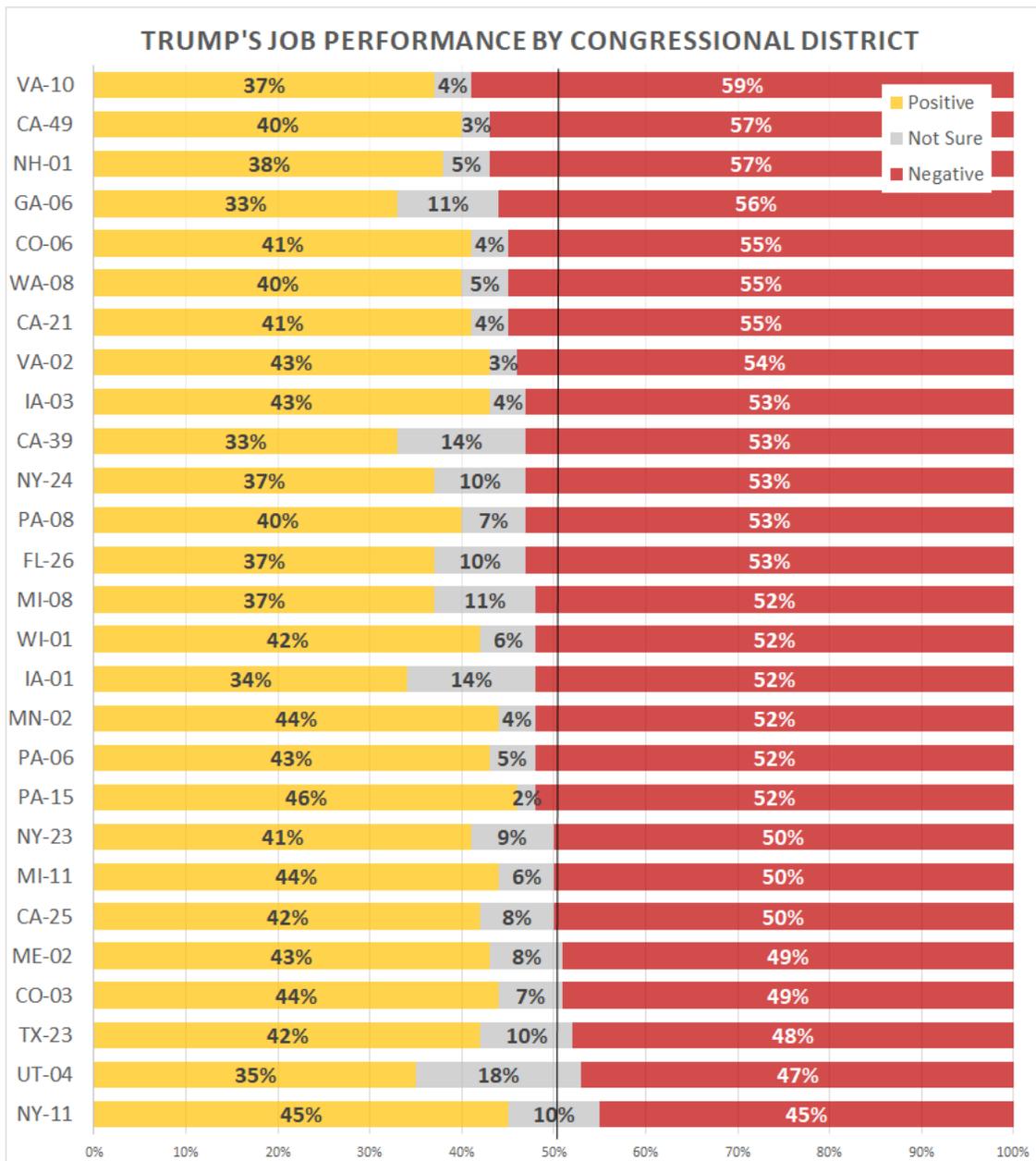
Public polls have shown Democrats with a solid and consistent lead in the generic House vote, and DCCC internal polling confirms those findings. **A DCCC poll of 2000 registered voters fielded October 3-10, 2017 showed Democrats with an eleven-point lead in the generic ballot, 48% to 37%.** That's a major improvement over all of the generic ballot polling we saw at the DCCC during the 2016 cycle.

Indeed, we see these advantages in our district-level polling as well. In June, we released a batch of internal polls showing the vast improvement in the Democratic margin in the generic ballot. We have continued to field polls since, and the margins continue to shift in our favor. The chart below shows our 2016 cycle generic margin in pink, and our 2018 margin in green from NEW polling. The gray shaded bar represents the amount the margin has shifted between the two cycles.

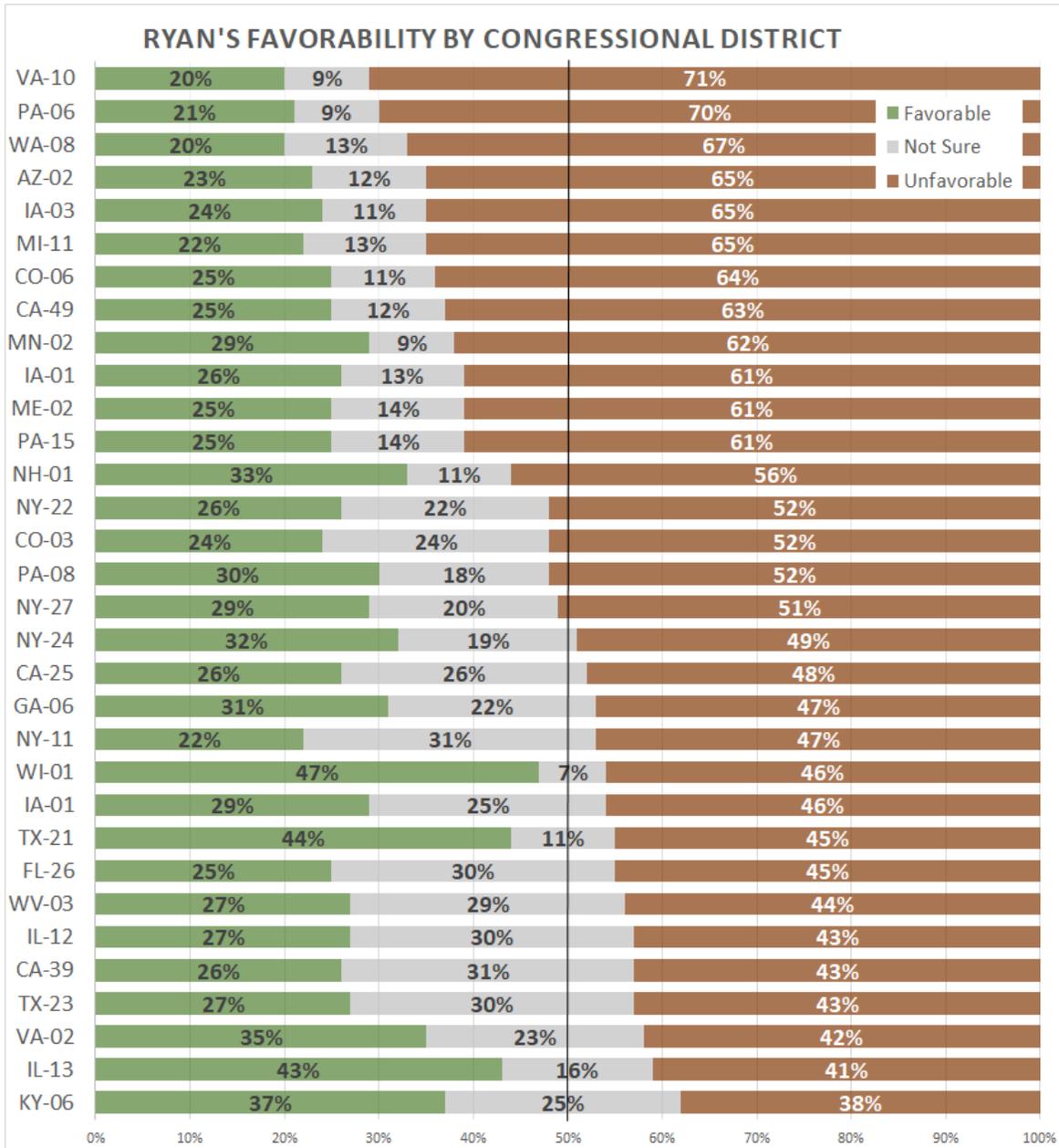
This is in addition to extensive generic polling that we released in June, available [HERE](#).



Trump Job Approval: President Trump remains unpopular in many of our key districts, and he will continue to be a factor in the 2018 elections. The chart below shows how deeply unfavorably Trump is viewed in a sample of our key races.



Speaker Ryan Job Approval: Being an establishment Republican isn't any better in the eyes of voters. In fact, Speaker Paul Ryan is even more viscerally disliked than Trump in many districts. The chart below offers some important proof points.



Competitive Head-to-Heads: The DCCC has an impressive group of candidates this cycle, who are giving Republicans a run for their money in the named ballots. Meanwhile other Republican incumbents can't even beat a generic Democrat. Here is a sample of some of those head-to-heads.

VA-10: Rep. Barbara Comstock trails a generic Democrat by 9 points, 39% to 48%

NY-22: Anthony Brindisi leads Rep. Claudia Tenney by 2 points, 45% to 43%

IA-01: Abby Finkenauer leads Rep. Rod Blum by 2 points, 43% to 41%

CA-49: Rep. Darrell Issa trails a generic Democrat by 10 points, 41% to 51%

DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT...

NATHAN GONZALES: I INTERVIEWED 16 HOUSE CANDIDATES IN TWO DAYS AND SURVIVED

Democrats have an impressive group of challengers... These are serious individuals mounting credible campaigns.

...The prospective challengers, many of whom are competing in districts that Trump carried, were more focused on litigating the GOP incumbent's record, including votes on health care legislation.

Republicans dismiss these candidates at their own peril... a new crop of Democratic candidates who bring substance to the House playing field and Republican incumbents need to be taking their races seriously if they aren't already.

AMY WALTER: ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL, WITH A TWIST

Recently, I wrote that national Democrats were turning their attention away from Trump and onto Speaker Paul Ryan. With Congress exceptionally unpopular (and unproductive), and Trump helping to fuel the anti-establishment fervor, the GOP leadership in Washington had become an easier and more effective target than the unorthodox president.

At the end of last week, I saw this dynamic in action. The Democrats we met with are all running in districts held by Republicans. Hillary Clinton won some of these districts. Some were narrowly carried by Trump. Yet, all the candidates were more focused more on Congress and its lack of progress than on Trump and his lack of composure.

DAVE WASSERMAN'S COOK POLITICAL REPORT: 50 RATINGS CHANGES FOR DEMS

Since February, the Cook Political Report has re-evaluated that status of competitive seats 50 times in Democrats' favor. This happened in April, April, May, May, June, July, August, September, September, September and October. Nathan Gonzales with Inside Elections has made similar moves.

USA TODAY: DEMS' FIRST WAVE OF RECRUITS 'OUTSIDERS' IN 2017 VERSION OF TEA PARTY

If there is a Democratic wave election in 2018, the tide will probably bring in individuals like Brendan Kelly, a state's attorney in St. Clair County and former Navy officer who's never run for the state legislature or Congress.

... Unlike the Tea Party, many of these Democrats have a long record of public service. They are former public prosecutors, doctors, CIA operatives and veterans, and they are concentrated in "heartland" states like Kansas, Iowa, Indiana and Minnesota.

... the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee that works to elect House members was outpacing its Republican counterpart for the third month in a row in July. Democrats hope top tier recruits like Kelly will give them a shot at contesting so-called "Obama-Trump" districts to win back the House. The Democratic primary is next March.

WASHINGTON EXAMINER: THREE 'R'S' BOOST DEMOCRATS' HOUSE CHANCES: RETIREMENTS, RECRUITMENT, AND RYAN

The Democratic Party's chance of capturing the House is rising, thanks to the "best" group of candidates the party says it has ever recruited and mounting Republican retirements.

[...] But earlier this month, the ratings of 11 districts shifted in the Democrats' favor, and Republican retirements jumped after the August recess. Even those abandoning ship on the other side of the Capitol have the people running the Democrats' House campaign arm buzzing.

NYT: 'NO DISTRICT IS OFF THE TABLE': HEALTH VOTE COULD PUT HOUSE IN PLAY

It is far too early to determine whether 2018 will bring a political wave, but the House's approval of a deeply unpopular health care bill on Thursday has handed Democrats a potent line of attack for the midterm elections. While Republicans believe that fulfilling a seven-year promise on health care will energize their base next year, Democrats are anticipating a backlash that may put in jeopardy a Republican House majority that once seemed unshakable.

[...] "No district is off the table," said Representative Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico, the House Democratic campaign chairman, who vowed that Democrats would cast the widest possible net.

LA TIMES: THE EARLY NUMBERS DON'T LOOK GOOD FOR CALIFORNIA REPUBLICANS

As Democrats work to regain power in the House, there are more than three times as many congressional challengers across the state today than there were before the 2016 election. With 80 challengers so far, the candidates have raised money more quickly than any group of challengers going back to 2003.

[...] The explosion of challengers and dollars is not evenly distributed: 90% of the money raised by California challengers has gone to Democrats, in part because they far outnumber Republican challengers. Of the 80, 58 are Democrats.

[...] The California numbers reflect a nationwide trend

There are far more challengers running across the country this year too, and most of them are Democrats.

POLITICO: DEMOCRATS RECRUIT VETERANS EARLY FOR 2018 BATTLE

Democrats are looking to turn the Donald Trump resistance movement into an army of candidates to try to take back the House in 2018.

Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee leaders have already met with 255 potential candidates across 64 districts, convinced that the shifting political environment has opened new opportunities that they'll chase in next year's midterms.

[...] This past Saturday, candidates preparing to be in the first round of campaign announcements quietly made their way to DCCC headquarters in Washington for the first pre-launch boot camp, following several staff training sessions. Half the attendees were women, and half were veterans, according to a DCCC official.

WSJ: DEMOCRATS ENLIST VETERANS AHEAD OF 2018 HOUSE ELECTIONS

For the first time this year, the DCCC is working with VoteVets, a liberal political-action committee with which the party's House campaign arm has often been at odds. VoteVets, which in the past has backed Democratic veterans in primary challenges, is now targeting competitive general election races.

FULL 91-DISTRICT BATTLEFIELD

- AL-02 – Martha Roby
- AR-02 – French Hill
- AZ-02 – Martha McSally
- AZ-06 – David Schweikert
- CA-04 – Tom McClintock
- CA-10 – Jeff Denham
- CA-21 – David Valadao
- CA-22 – Devin Nunes
- CA-25 – Steve Knight
- CA-39 – Ed Royce
- CA-45 – Mimi Walters
- CA-48 – Dana Rohrabacher
- CA-49 – Darrell Issa
- CA-50 – Duncan Hunter
- CO-03 – Scott Tipton
- CO-06 – Mike Coffman
- FL-06 – Ron DeSantis
- FL-16 – Vern Buchanan
- FL-18 – Brian Mast
- FL-25 – Mario Diaz-Balart
- FL-26 – Carlos Curbelo
- FL-27 – *Open*
- GA-06 – Karen Handel
- GA-07 – Rob Woodall
- IA-01 – Rod Blum
- IA-03 – David Young
- IL-06 – Peter Roskam
- IL-12 – Mike Bost
- IL-13 – Rodney Davis
- IL-14 – Randy Hultgren
- IN-02 – Jackie Walorski
- IN-09 – Trey Hollingsworth
- KS-02 – *Open*
- KS-03 – Kevin Yoder
- KY-06 – Andy Barr
- ME-02 – Bruce Poliquin
- MI-01 – Jack Bergman
- MI-06 – Fred Upton
- MI-07 – Tim Walberg
- MI-08 – Mike Bishop
- MI-11 – *Open*
- MN-02 – Jason Lewis
- MN-03 – Erik Paulsen
- MO-02 – Ann Wagner
- MT-AL – Greg Gianforte
- NC-02 – George Holding
- NC-08 – Richard Hudson
- NC-09 – Robert Pittenger
- NC-13 – Ted Budd
- NE-02 – Don Bacon
- NJ-02 – *Open*
- NJ-03 – Tom MacArthur
- NJ-07 – Leonard Lance
- NJ-11 – Rodney Frelinghuysen
- NM-02 – *Open*
- NY-01 – Lee Zeldin
- NY-02 – Pete King
- NY-11 – Dan Donovan
- NY-19 – John Faso
- NY-21 – Elise Stefanik
- NY-22 – Claudia Tenney
- NY-23 – Tom Reed
- NY-24 – John Katko
- NY-27 – Chris Collins
- OH-01 – Steve Chabot
- OH-07 – Bob Gibbs
- OH-10 – Mike Turner
- OH-12 – *Open*
- OH-14 – Dave Joyce
- PA-06 – Ryan Costello
- PA-07 – Pat Meehan
- PA-08 – Brian Fitzpatrick
- PA-11 – *Open*
- PA-15 – *Open*
- PA-16 – Lloyd Smucker
- TX-07 – John Culberson
- TX-21 – *Open*
- TX-23 – Will Hurd
- TX-32 – Pete Sessions
- UT-04 – Mia Love
- VA-02 – Scott Taylor
- VA-05 – Tom Garrett
- VA-07 – Dave Brat
- VA-10 – Barbara Comstock
- WA-03 – Jaime Herrera Beutler
- WA-05 – Cathy McMorris Rodgers
- WA-08 – *Open*
- WI-01 – Paul Ryan
- WI-06 – Glenn Grothman
- WV-02 – Alex Mooney
- WV-03 – *Open*

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