

DCCC MEMORANDUM

To:Interested PartiesFrom:Cheri Bustos, DCCC Chairwoman
Lucinda Guinn, DCCC Executive DirectorDate:Thursday, January 16, 2020Subject:Democrats Set to Protect & Expand House Majority, as 2020 Kicks off

Democratic candidates and the DCCC spent 2019 shattering fundraising records, building strong local brands and recruiting candidates deep into the offensive battlefield.

Now, with fewer than 300 days to Election Day, Democrats are in a commanding position to protect and expand our House majority. We did this by:

- Focusing on delivering results in line with the priorities of the American people, a sharp contrast to Washington Republicans and Mitch McConnell who are hurting everyday Americans by standing with their special interest backers;
- Making bold and effective early investments that put us in position to capture organic voter enthusiasm in offensive districts, including easing access to the ballot box and building trust with communities of color; and
- Ensuring the DCCC, our candidates, and Frontline members built the financial strength in the off-year to aggressively communicate clear, localized messages in 2020.

With the infrastructure in place to support a large battlefield, Democrats are adding the following districts to the DCCC's offensive battlefield.

AK-AL

In 2018, Congressman Don Young of Alaska, currently the longest serving member of the House, was held to his closest race in over a decade, carrying the district with just over 5% of the two-way vote. Data already shows Young is in for another close race: New DCCC polling shows that, by a 13-point margin, voters are ready to consider someone else or replace Don Young. Republicans know Young is vulnerable, which is why the Congressional Leadership Fund devoted significant resources to the state for a last-minute GOTV effort to push Young over the line in the last days of 2018. Republicans are again facing a significant challenge heading into November of 2020, where they will have to defend the most entrenched Washington Republican.

- In 2018, the Democratic House candidate earned 46.7% of the two-way vote, the strongest performance for a Democrat in recent elections, and a 5-point improvement on 2016.
- Independent Bill Walker won the gubernatorial election in 2014 with 51.2% of the two-way vote.



CA-25

California's 25th Congressional District is a dense, overwhelmingly suburban seat situated in northern Los Angeles County and eastern Ventura County. Democrats currently hold <u>a 6-point registration advantage</u>, and the district is trending rapidly toward Democrats as it becomes increasingly diverse. Re-tread candidate Steve Knight brings two factors to 2020 that dogged him in 2018: perennially weak fundraising and a record in Washington attuned to the needs of special interests, not the working people of California's 25th district.

- This district is overwhelmingly suburban (80.7% suburban) and has strong minority compositions, with Hispanic/Latinos (30.0%), African Americans (8.3%), and AAPI (7.9%) making up over 46% of the district's eligible voters.
- Clinton won this district in 2016 with 53.6% of the two-way vote, and Democrat Katie Hill won the district in 2018 with 54.4% of the two-way vote, defeating Steve Knight by nearly 9 points.

KS-02

After making historic gains in Kansas in 2018, the 2nd Congressional District presents an opportunity for Democrats to grow their majority in 2020. Last cycle, Governor Laura Kelly won this district and defeated Kris Kobach to win the Governor's Mansion, and the 2018 Democratic House candidate came within just 0.8 points of winning – a 14-point improvement on 2016 and the strongest performance for a Democrat at the House level in recent elections. Meanwhile, incumbent Rep. Steve Watkins has spent his first year in office building a record of embarrassing scandals and repeated votes against lowering the cost of health care and prescription drugs. That starts to explain why new DCCC polling shows voters by a 30-point margin are ready to replace Watkins or consider someone new.

- In 2018, the Democratic House candidate earned 49.6% of the two-way vote, the strongest performance for a Democrat in recent elections, and a 14-point improvement on 2016, while Kelly also carried the district (55.1% two-way) in 2018.
- As a result of Steve Watkins' scandals, he is facing a significant primary challenge and will likely be forced to spend to zero to win the nomination.

NC-08

North Carolina's <u>redrawn</u> congressional map puts the state's 8th Congressional District <u>squarely in play</u>, forcing incumbent Republican Rep. Richard Hudson into the first competitive general election of his career. Hudson will have to answer for his votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act, oppose lowering prescription drug costs, and give tax handouts to Washington special interests. The newly redrawn district, Hudson's out of



touch record, and a strong Democratic field have led <u>local commentators</u> and <u>analysts</u> alike to view this race as one to watch.

- This district improved after the Republican gerrymander was ruled illegal and maps were redrawn in November, moving from a district Trump carried by 14.8-points to a district Trump carried by 9.3-points overnight.
- In a similar, neighboring district, Dan McCready overperformed Trump by 10points during the NC-09 Special Election just months ago.
- This newly drawn district is majority suburban (56.7%) and has strong minority communities, with African Americans making up 28.1% of the district's eligible voters and AAPI voters making up 6.5%.

NJ-02

Republicans face a significant challenge holding onto New Jersey's 2nd Congressional District, and Congressman Jefferson Van Drew's party switch does not improve their chances in November. Beyond the vulnerabilities highlighted in his own internal polling, Van Drew's party switch further weakened him as a candidate. Van Drew's ability to win a primary as a questionable Republican, but an unquestionable "traitor," remains uncertain.

- NJ-02 is majority suburban (56.9%), with minority populations comprising over 25% of the district's eligible voters. President Obama won this district twice, and in 2017, Governor Phil Murphy won with 51.7% of the two-way vote.
- In Van Drew's own <u>internal</u> polling, voters wanted a new representative by a 17% margin. Now, considering Van Drew's shapeshifting, it is unclear if he would win a Republican primary.

TX-02

When Republican Texas House Speaker Dennis Bonnen <u>admitted President Trump was</u> <u>killing the Republican Party in "urban-suburban districts" across the Lone Star State</u>, he was talking about places like Texas' 2nd Congressional District. Freshman Congressman Dan Crenshaw vastly underperformed in his 2018 campaign, scraping by with an historically low vote share for a Republican in this quickly-changing district. One year into his new job, Congressman Crenshaw has already gone Washington – caving to drug manufacturing lobbyists and <u>flat-out breaking a key 2018 campaign promise to lower</u> <u>prescription drug costs</u>.

• The district is highly educated (41.3% with a college degree). It's an urban suburban mix (68.3% urban, 31.4% suburban) and has strong minority compositions, with African Americans (11.6%), Hispanics/Latinos (21.0%), and AAPIs (6.7%), making up a combined 39% of the district's eligible voters.



• The district is trending Democratic and growing, with a 21.0% increase in citizen voting age population from 2010 to 2018. U.S. Senate Candidate Beto O'Rourke narrowly lost this district in 2018, earning 49.4%.

THE DCCC CAN CONTINUE TO EXPAND THE OFFENSIVE BATTLEFIELD FOR FOUR IMPORTANT REASONS:

DEMOCRATS' MESSAGE IN LINE WITH AMERICANS' PRIORITIES

Democrats have put themselves on path to re-election by following through on their promises to the American people: passing landmark anti-corruption legislation and passing bipartisan legislation to bring down the cost of prescription drugs. Not only are these the priorities Democrats ran and won on in 2018, they are among <u>voters' top</u> <u>priorities</u>.

In contrast, Washington Republicans and Senate Leader Mitch McConnell have worked against the American people at every turn. In fact, McConnell has gone so far as to label himself "the grim reaper." While Democrats have put themselves on the right side of the American people's priorities, Republicans who represent increasingly competitive districts have chosen a dangerous ally for themselves.

New national DCCC polling shows McConnell maintains a 24% favorable, 56% unfavorable rating (-33 net approval rating). House Republicans will be forced to defend yet another well-known Washington politician who is deeply unpopular with American voters. The DCCC has already seized on <u>McConnell's legislative graveyard</u> to drape this albatross around House Republicans' necks, and as we push further into Republican-held territory the importance of McConnell as a foil beyond President Trump will be even more central.

To put it simply: Democrats have kept their promise to be the party that fights for the top priorities of the American people; Mitch McConnell and the Republicans have done nothing but do the bidding of their special interest backers and work against the needs of everyday Americans.

EARLY INVESTMENTS WITH LONG-TERM DIVIDENDS

After flipping an historic number of seats in 2018 and getting right to work in 2019 to fight for the priorities of the American public, the DCCC knew that protecting and expanding this House majority in a Presidential year hinged on building the infrastructure to support a large offensive and Frontline battlefield. As such, the DCCC made large-scale strategic investments early in 2019 and laid the groundwork to maximize opportunities to engage voters early and lay the groundwork to turn record enthusiasm into record turnout.



The DCCC launched the Cycle of Engagement in June of 2019 - building on 2018's successful Year of Engagement – to engage young people and people of color and earn their support. Through the Cycle of Engagement, the DCCC has already been able to make major investments in research that will be applied through voter registration programs and aid communication across the battlefield, including among <u>rural African American voters in North Carolina</u> and <u>eligible</u>, <u>but non-voting Latinos in Texas</u>. This early work lays the groundwork to maximize voter engagement in a Presidential year and will continue in additional communities of color throughout the cycle.

The DCCC followed that investment by uplifting March Forward, a multi-year program that has put nearly 60 Field Managers on the ground in swing districts across the country. These organizers have registered more than 12,000 voters, met one on one with more than 4,900 activists, and trained more than 1,750 volunteers. Just this week, the DCCC announced it is expanding that program, adding 11 constituency field organizers to actively engaging with key communities of color in battleground districts.

After flipping two Texas districts in 2018, the DCCC announced a new <u>Texas</u> <u>Headquarters</u> led by native Texans to capitalize on the proven grassroots energy in the state. Since launching that on-the-ground offensive, three of the DCCC's six targets have retired, a signifier of how momentous these retirements will be, and added "<u>TEXODUS</u>" to the political vernacular.

Further, the DCCC, <u>in partnership with the DSCC</u>, has invested 8-figures in strategic voting rights litigation taking on Republicans' decades long crusade to build barriers to the ballot for core Democratic voters. This multi-state legal strategy has <u>already</u> <u>changed voting laws</u> in Florida, Michigan, and North Carolina.

BANKING STRENGTH IN THE OFF-YEAR

The DCCC, Frontline Members, and challenger candidates raised the financial resources to build a large battlefield and stretch Republicans thin, forcing them to play defense in places they cannot afford, if they in fact intend to challenge the House majority. The DCCC raised nearly \$125 million in 2019, roughly \$20 more than we raised in 2017. The DCCC's fundraising in 2019 was anchored by \$59.6 million in grassroots contributions, with an average online gift of \$17. This fundraising advantage is crucial because it allows the DCCC to effectively communicate our widely popular priorities to voters and make large-scale strategic investments to support a large battlefield.

In addition to the DCCC's fundraising dominance, Democratic Frontline Members set themselves on track for a successful re-election by raising more than \$91 million in 2019. Across the full Democratic Frontline class, roughly 75% ended with more than \$1 million cash on hand, and Frontline Members ended 2019 with over \$74 million on hand.



Democratic challenger candidates also raised huge sums of money in 2019: at least \$41 million in 2019, ending the year with well over \$25 million cash on hand. As a reminder, many of these candidates only got into the race in the second or third quarter of 2019.

2018'S FAVORABLE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT UNCHANGED

As Democrats expand the battlefield further into Republican held territory, Democrats are in a position to capture historically high levels of voter enthusiasm, and a political environment that mirrors November of 2018 when we flipped 40 seats and won the House. In short: there is a reason Republicans are retiring in droves and Democrats start the on-year in a strong position to protect and expand this House majority.



