

DCCC MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties
From: Cheri Bustos, DCCC Chairwoman
Lucinda Guinn, DCCC Executive Director
Date: Thursday, May 21, 2020
Subject: **Democrats' Money, Message, and Mobilization Chart Path to Expanding the Majority**

After flipping 40 seats in the 2018 midterms, Democrats have positioned ourselves not only to protect the most diverse House majority in American history but expand it further. Just under six months from Election Day, House Democrats have raised the money and laid the nimble mobilization framework needed to support a massive overall battlefield. And while Republicans have refused to learn lessons from the 2018 midterms as they continue their attacks on people's health care, Democrats have consistently led with [our focus on Americans' kitchen table needs](#), setting up a sharp contrast for this November.

Democrats come out of the first election conducted during a global pandemic in a stronger position than we entered. We used this Special Election to road-test turnout strategies and online mobilization tools that will have vast impacts across the battlefield in November. Already, the DCCC is putting those lessons into practice: reconfiguring our field investments to cater to each district's unique COVID-19 needs, hiring field directors in over 40 districts, and, for the first time, hiring mobilization directors in individual districts. This pilot program is launching in over 30 districts, with the ability to scale further to meet the needs of the battlefield.

But at the core of all of that, Democrats' greatest weapon supporting our ability to build a large battlefield is the overwhelming strength of our Frontline Members and challenger candidates. That includes our growing list of [Red to Blue candidates, many of whom are already outraising their Republican opponents](#). Most recently, Republican recruitment problems were exposed when the NRCC backed candidate in CA-10 faced [multiple rounds](#) of national press coverage on his history of racist and hateful beliefs.

Democrats' strength across the full battlefield marks a sharp contrast with Republicans' failure to recruit viable candidates in districts that would have been critical to their ability to challenge for the House gavel.

The Washington Post

"With disadvantages in money, a rotten message to defend, and lack of new recruits, Republicans are in trouble."



"Republicans failed to land top-tier candidates against Trump-district Democrats..."

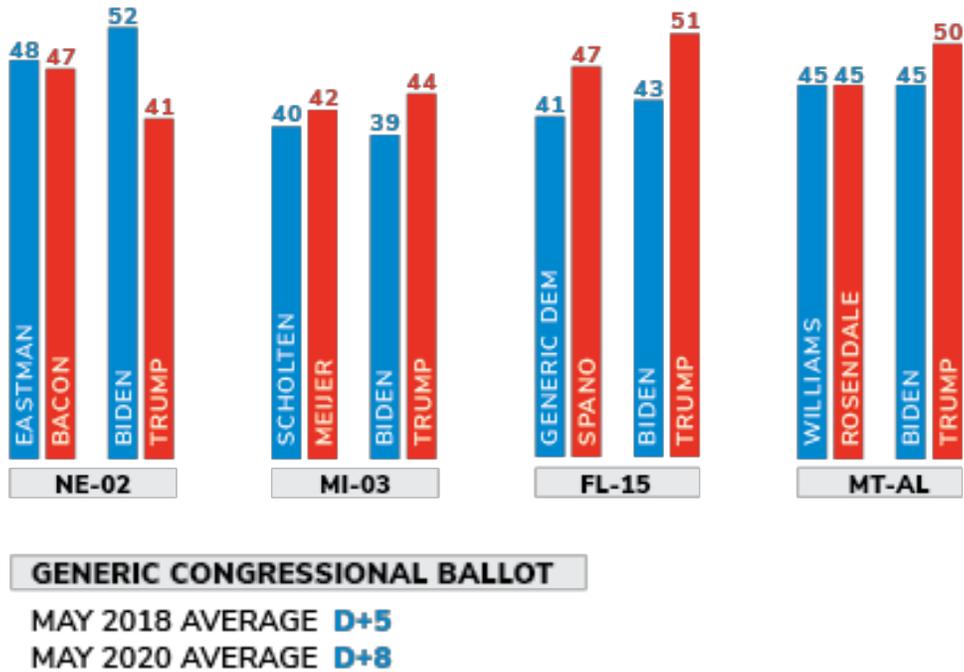
POLITICO

"Recruitment flops and lackluster fundraising have weakened Republicans' chances in over a dozen competitive House districts..."



"Combination of self-inflicted wounds, slow recruiting and suburbs continuing to shift against Trump diminish GOP chances..."

And while Republicans have struggled to lay the groundwork for the 2020 election cycle, Democrats are in a strong position in key offensive districts.



Across the battlefield, here's where we stand.

DEMOCRATS BUILD WARCHESTS TO FORTIFY OUR FRONTLINE & GO ON OFFENSE

Democrats knew that building the large battlefield needed to both protect and expand the House majority was contingent on continuing Democrats' 2018-cycle financial dominance over Republicans. Throughout this election cycle, that financial advantage has only grown, putting many Republicans' targeted seats out of reach and opening up Democrats' offensive battlefield.

- Frontline Democrats raised more than \$31.3 million in Q1 of 2020 and ended the quarter with more than \$99.3 million cash on hand. The entire Republican field running against them raised \$16.1 million and has a total of \$22.9 million cash on hand.
- Of the 55 seats on the NRCC's February 2019 "Offensive Targets" list, the median Democratic incumbent ended March 2020 with \$2.2 million on hand — a six to one advantage over the median leading GOP challenger's \$366,000.
- In contrast, 11 out of 13 Democratic Red to Blue candidates outraised the incumbent Republican or highest raising Republican candidate in Q1 of 2020.

The sizable financial advantage for Democrats continues at the committee level as well: the DCCC outraised the NRCC in 15 of the last 17 months, building a more than \$30 million cash on hand advantage. As one GOP strategist stated bluntly, "The NRCC and their candidates do not have a pot to p--- in."



DEMOCRATS' CONSISTENT MESSAGE CONNECTS WITH VOTER PRIORITIES

In this Presidential election cycle, Democrats have remained steadfast in their message discipline. We have put a constant focus on voters' top priorities:

- The kitchen table economy that drives folks' decision making, including the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs;
- Putting everyday Americans ahead of Washington special interests, and;
- Standing up against Republicans' attacks on Americans ability to access health care.

Our promise to work for the American people is a sharp contrast with Republicans' tone deaf rhetoric that has been [deeply criticized by leaders within the Republican caucus](#), including [leaders with close ties](#) to President Trump.

- [In January](#), the DCCC launched a bilingual seven-figure ad-buy hitting Mitch McConnell and House Republicans for blocking bipartisan prescription drug legislation.
- [In early March](#), the DCCC immediately began tying House Republicans to the Trump Administrations' failures to prepare for COVID-19, spotlighting the administrations' focus on special interest profits over Americans' health and safety.
- In May, the DCCC joined together with the [DNC, DSCC, DGA, DAGA, and the DLCC](#) to reaffirm that health care is on the ballot, from top to bottom, in 2020.

New DCCC polling shows this steadfast focus on health care continues to be critical as President Trump and Washington Republicans put American lives at risk during the global COVID-19 pandemic. That polling found connecting Republicans' continued support for repealing the Affordable Care Act to the global pandemic we currently face strengthened an already potent attack, raising concerns about Republicans for 60% of respondents.

DEMOCRATS IN POSITION TO MOBILIZE VOTERS AFTER PAYOFF FROM EARLY INVESTMENTS

Democrats' aggressive strategy reflected in early, on-the-ground investments forced [12 Republicans retirements](#) inside of our targeted battlefield, including [NRCC Recruitment Chair Susan Brooks](#) and ["rising star" Will Hurd](#). Revealing pessimism about their chances in November, a total of 35 Republicans have retired across their rank-and-file.

Now, six months out from Election Day and with a political environment that reflects where we stood at this point in 2018, Democrats are in a position to convert these opportunities into flipped seats.

Our investments included early and ongoing engagement with the core of our Democratic coalition, aggressive on-the-ground and digital organizing, and an historic investment in voting rights that will have important short and long-term impacts on access to the ballot. And now, as we prepare to wage the final six months of this campaign in a global pandemic, House Democrats are tripling down on our organizing work online.

Here's how Democrats' grassroots mobilization will support its offensive and defensive battlefield:

- In Spring of 2019, the DCCC launched the Cycle of Engagement, a two-year, committee-wide initiative designed to engage, persuade, mobilize, and turn out AAPI, Black, Latino, and millennial voters.



- The DCCC put Field Managers on the ground in 26 states who have worked with progressive partners like Indivisible chapters, Swing Left, and College Democrats to register more than 12,000 voters.
- In April, the DCCC launched 51 Facebook Groups that have grown consistently week to week with currently over 2,100 members.
- Reflecting the need to adapt our tactics to campaigning during COVID-19, the DCCC has expanded its online mobilization footprint, hiring additional staff and launching the Virtual Action Center to engage newly energized volunteers in the digital space. [Click here to read more.](#)
- The DCCC, in partnership with the DSCC, made a more than \$10 million commitment to voting rights litigation across the country, including in 9 battleground states: Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas. These are all states that have grappled with a longtime GOP-led crusade to suppress voters' access to the ballot in minority communities. [Click here to read more.](#)

BOTTOM LINE: DEMOCRATS' MONEY, MESSAGE, AND MOBILIZATION KEY TO COMMANDING POSITION HEADING INTO SUMMER

[Dave Wasserman, Cook Political Report](#): For the first time this cycle, neither party is a clear favorite to gain House seats this fall. Anything from no net change to a small single-digit gain for either side is possible. That's good news for Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Democrats.

[Nathan Gonzales, Inside Elections](#): If Trump can't improve his standing, Republicans down the ballot will need to outrun him in order to win, and that will take money to redefine the terms of the debate in their own congressional races.

[Jennifer Rubin, Washington Post](#): The latest Monmouth survey shows Democrats leading 52 percent to 42 percent. That margin is "similar to the polling advantage Democrats held at a similar point in the last midterm election (49% to 41% in April 2018). Democrats went on to win the national House vote by 8 points that November (53% to 45%)." It is not clear whether Republicans' behavior... or their policy positions... is the source of the problem, or whether Trump's brand has tainted his entire party. In either case, Democrats might actually gain seats in November.