

WNDC



Political Dispatch

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From the Committee on Public Policy and Political Action

Democrats: Keep Your Eye on the Ball

The midterm election coming up in just a few weeks is the most important mid term election in my lifetime. We have one shot at impeding a tyrannical president, who is leading our country into dangerous and uncharted waters.

The simple message that resonates with almost anyone uneasy with the path Trump is taking our country is this: we need to put the brakes on. The polls all show Trump's declining popularity except from his stalwart base. A large percentage of Americans are unhappy with what is happening with regard to addressing climate change, the way immigrants are being treated, disparities in income, tax breaks for the rich and super rich, tariff wars, gun violence, access to affordable health care, police brutality against people of color, unaffordable college education, how women are treated, the Russian interference in our elections, and our weakening role as a leader of nations. The list goes on.

Democrats are, for the most part, very aware of these issues. You can't pick up a newspaper or turn on the TV without being reminded of the fragile and frightening state we are in right now. But it is not just us Democrats. It is also a high percentage of Independents, whose ranks are growing as disillusioned Republicans jump ship, and some traditional Republicans, especially well educated, suburban women, who for now are staying in the party.

But it is no longer the Republican Party. It is the Party of Trump. And there is not a single "formerly" Republican representative in Congress who has had the courage to consistently take on the president for his unconscionable behavior. With the Party of Trump in the majority in both houses of Congress, Trump is getting pretty much what he wants. There is no way to stop him unless Democrats regain control of at least one branch of government. This is, after all, the role our Founding Fathers intended for the legislative branch of government.

The midterm election is our opportunity to put the brakes on. That is the central message we Democrats must broadcast relentlessly between now and the November 6 election: "Elect people who will stand up to Trump!"

It looks like we have a good chance of taking back control of the House, not so much the Senate, but even that is possible. What we need is a Blue Wave and a big one. This will send a message that America has not sold out on its traditional values and that there is no place for a narcissistic demagogue leading our country. It will show that America still has the resilience to make mid-course corrections.

Whether we succeed or not will depend on two things: getting a large share of the Independent and moderate Republican vote and voter turnout by Democrats. Trump's base will turn out en masse. The record for Democrats turning out in midterm elections is poor, bordering on terrible. If we are going to change the direction of the country, this year has to be different.

So Democrats: keep your eye on the ball. Though his name is not on the ballot, the 2018 midterm election is about Trump and only about Trump. Checks and balances must return. The stakes have never been higher.

--Joseph Howell, Chair, Task Force on Populism

Howell is the author of *Hard Living on Clay Street*, originally published in 1973 with a 2017 edition with the cover endorsement by Joan C. Williams of the University of California: "Want to know why Trump won the 2016 election? Read this book."

Trump and Tariffs on China

President Trump announced last Monday that he would impose a 10 percent tariff on \$200 billion of Chinese imports to the US that will take effect this week and is set to increase to 25 percent by the end of this year.

This latest round of excises comes on top of a 25 percent tariff already imposed on about \$50 billion in Chinese goods.

Demonstrating that the US may have the upper hand, Trump's announcement that he's imposing new tariffs on China came in a week that ended with the US stock market skyrocketing to a record high, with the unemployment rate at an all-time low, and wages rising. Financial markets were dismissing the trade tensions between Washington and Beijing, while celebrating the booming American economy.

Also, there is bipartisan support in Congress, including Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), for a harder economic line on China. This support reflects a growing consensus that US policy is not working and that Washington needs to do something in response to China's intellectual-property theft, forced technology transfers, and joint-venture requirements.

But President Trump needs to recognize that a long trade war between the world's two largest economies would eventually have harmful effects on the American economy and slow its growth, especially because Chinese imports would mean higher prices for American consumers.

With that in mind, Trump should explain what it is exactly that he hopes to achieve through the pressure he is now exerting on China.

His unitary tariff policy will probably not succeed in achieving what should be the main goals of the US, which is to press China to change its trade practices, allow more foreign companies to compete, and protect intellectual property.

Washington could achieve these goals more effectively by working with its trade partners to alter Chinese behavior, and re-entering the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which former President Obama advocated.

--Alyn Hadar,

Chair, Task Force on Foreign Policy

Stop Demonizing Government

Government isn't bad. We need government. You wouldn't know that from listening to the media, especially in this time of crisis in our democracy. Voices speak with venom about "unelected bureaucrats" as responsible for everything bad that is happening. Unelected bureaucrats are vilified by voices speaking from the private sector. You would not know that it is the elected bureaucrat who is accountable to you through the governments they elect. Private sector representatives are not accountable unless they are regulated by the public sector. This is the reason the President has been on the warpath against any kind of regulation, because regulations work against the interests of the very rich. And that is why the tax cuts for the rich, which come from the money you lost, have not benefited you. Victims of the hurricane in Puerto Rico are an example. They are getting rebuilding aid money from the federal government (FEMA), but in derisory small sums. The tax money the 1% should be paying isn't coming in to be used for the public welfare like disaster relief. They can afford to pay those taxes. Their keeping their money doesn't translate into any (or very little) benefit for the other 99% of taxpayers.

Following the Republican script what are taxpayers getting? Nothing. They are not using the money from unconscionable tax cuts to raise your wages, build your roads, protect against the disaster, or give you fast and safe public transportation. Your wages have not been raised, your healthcare has not been improved, your children's public education has been so downgraded that there are communities where they can only go to school four days a week. Public service is called public service for a reason. It is benefiting you, the individual member of the public. The elected bureaucrat is, in fact, accountable to you. You elect the government that hires qualified people to stop your water being contaminated with lead or hog excrement. It's the private sector that isn't accountable to you. How much are you, the taxpayer, paying for regulation versus how much are you going to be paying if there isn't any regulation?

Americans needed government regulations for a gas company like Columbia Gas of Massachusetts, which was allowing too much pressure to build up in gas pipes in Lawrence and other towns in Massachusetts. The company is one of these labyrinthine private entities, hard to regulate in any event, with its parent company being an obscure entity not in Massachusetts but NiSource in Indiana. Because they weren't regulated 80 houses blew up from exploding gas pipes; one person died and 20 were injured and 8,500 homes and businesses were affected.

In Washington's Metro area the plan is to outsource to private companies the extension of the Metro line to Dulles Airport, including maintenance. The goal is to "save" the taxpayers mostly because the private sector employees won't get pensions. This transportation is a public sector operation. Public sector employees should get pensions. This privatization also puts profits ahead of safety. What is to say the selected corporation will not shortcut safety the way the gas company did in Massachusetts. In the end, it won't save money. The money should be there to ensure both pensions and safety.

The government should get the funds it needs - totally legitimately - from reasonable taxation of the very wealthy.

Taxpayers need government regulations so that you have taxpayers who don't drink water contaminated with lead as in Flint Michigan - still! - or nowadays in the wake of hurricane Florence, water with hog excrement. These are not difficult regulations but people need to recognize that a country is no better than its government and that what makes democracy function is an elected government that staffs agencies to build roads, to hire police, and to care for the sick and elderly.

--Elizabeth Spiro Clark, Chair, Committee on Public Policy and Political Action

Major Gun Reform Advocacy Groups Make Candidate Endorsements - Update

The Political Dispatch issue for July-August featured a list of candidates endorsed by major gun reform advocacy groups. Below is an updated list, adding numerous other candidates. As we stated in that earlier issue, a task force briefing in April by the Legislative Director of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence dashed our hopes for any meaningful legislation from this Congress, so the only real chance we have in this regard is to change the makeup of Congress. As we were told at that briefing, there is a "cultural shift" regarding the NRA and a demonstrated shift toward gun safety as a top electable issue. Giffords PAC recently revealed polling data showing that "candidates who stand for gun safety get a 7-point boost over opponents who side with the gun lobby."

Citizens need, and frankly deserve, representatives in the House and Senate who are committed to end gun violence, and that will happen ONLY if we are knowledgeable about which candidates these are and give them the support they need. The following is a full list of federal candidates now endorsed by leading gun reform advocacy groups:

[Continue reading on next page...]

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Coalition to Stop Gun Violence:

U.S. House Seats:

Rep. Ami Bera (CA-7). Democratic incumbent being challenged by Republican Andrew Grant.

Ammar Campa-Najjar (CA-50). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Duncan Hunter, recently indicted.

Rep. Salud Carbajal (CA-24). Democratic incumbent being challenged by Republican Justin Fareed Leslie Cockburn – (VA-5). Challenging Republican Denver Rigglesman for open seat vacated by Republican Thomas Garrett.

Linda Coleman (NC-2). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. George Holding

Angie Craig (MN-2). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Jason Lewis.

Lizzie Pannill Fletcher (TX-7). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. John Culberson.

Katie Hill (CA-25). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Steve Knight

Chrissy Houlahan (PA-6). Challenging Republican Greg McCauley in newly-redrawn congressional district

Gina Ortiz Jones (TX-23). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Will Hurd.

Joseph Kopser (TX-21). Challenging Republican candidate Chip Roy for open seat vacated by retirement of Republican Rep. Lamar Smith.

Mike Levin (CA-49). Challenging Republican Diane Harkey for open seat vacated by retirement of Republican Rep. Darrell Issa.

Elaine Luria (VA-2). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Scott Taylor.

Lucy McBath (GA-6). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Karen Handel

Rep. Stephanie Murphy (FL-7). Democratic incumbent being challenged by Republican Mike Miller.

Katie Porter (CA-45). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Mimi Walters,

Betsy Rader (OH-14). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. David Joyce

George Scott (PA-10). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Scott Perry in newly-redrawn congressional district.

Abigail Spanberger (VA-7). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Dave Brat

Jennifer Wexton (VA-10). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Barbara Comstock

U.S. Senate:

Sen. Tim Kaine (VA). Challenged by Republican Corey Stewart.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar (MN). Challenged by Republican Jim Newberger.

Sen. Chris Murphy (CT). Challenged by Republican Matthew Corey.

Sen. Bill Nelson (FL). Challenged by Republican Gov. Rick Scott.

Beto O'Rourke (TX). Challenging Republican incumbent Sen. Ted Cruz

Brady Campaign:

U.S. House:

Rep. Brendan Boyle (PA-2). Democratic incumbent being challenged by Republican David Torres in newly-redrawn district.

Gil Cisneros (CA-39). Challenging Republican candidate Young Kim in open seat vacated by Republican Rep. Ed Royce.

Jason Crow (CO-6). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Mike Coffman

Madeleine Dean (PA-4). Challenging Republican Dan David in newly-redrawn district.

Antonio Delgado (NY-19). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. John Faso.

Mary Barzee Flores (FL-25). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart

Rep. Ruben Gallego (AZ-7). No challenger.

Josh Harder (CA-10). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Jeff Denham

Katie Hill (CA-25). Challenging Republican incumbent Steve Knight.

Chrissy Houlahan (PA-6). Challenging Republican Greg McCauley in newly-redrawn district.

Andy Kim (NJ-3). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Tom MacArthur.

Joseph Kopser (TX-21). Challenging Republican candidate Chip Roy for open seat vacated by retirement of Republican Rep. Lamar Smith

Susie Lee (NV-3). Challenging Republican Danny Tarkanian in open seat vacated by Dem. Rep. Jacky Rosen, who is running for US Senate.

Mike Levin (CA-49). Challenging Republican Diane Harkey for open seat vacated by retirement of Republican Rep. Darrell Issa.

Rep. Alan Lowenthal (CA-47). Challenged by Republican John Briscoe.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney (NY-12). Challenged by Republican Eliot Rabin.

Nate McMurray (NY-27). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Chris Collins, also indicted.

Joe Morrell (NY-25). Challenging Republican James Maxwell to fill vacant seat caused by the death of Rep. Louise Slaughter.

Jessica Morse (CA-4). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Tom McClintock.

Rep. Stephanie Murphy (FL-7). Democratic incumbent being challenged by Republican Mike Miller.

Rep. Bill Pascrell (NJ-9). Challenged by Republican Eric Fisher and Libertarian Claudio Belusic.

Rep. Scott Peters (CA-52). Challenged by Republican Omar Qudrat.

Katie Porter (CA-45). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Mimi Walters.

Harley Rouda (CA-48). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Dana Rohrabacher.

Mary Gay Scanlon (PA-5). Challenging Republican Pearl Kim.

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-23). Challenged by Republican Joe Kaufman

David Shapiro (FL-16). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Vern Buchanan.

Mikie Sherrill (NJ-11). Challenging Republican Jay Webber in open seat vacated by retiring Republican Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen.

Jennifer Wexton (VA-10). Challenging Republican incumbent Rep. Barbara Comstock.

U.S. Senate:

Sen. Bob Casey (PA). Challenged by Republican Lou Barletta and Green and Libertarian Party candidates

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (CA). Challenged by Democrat State Sen. Kevin de Leon, who won second spot in primary.

Sen. Mazie Hirono (HI). Challenged by Republican Ron Curtis

Sen. Tim Kaine (VA). Challenged by Republican Corey Stewart.

Sen. Robert Menendez (NJ). Challenged by Republican Bob Hugin.

Rep. Beto O'Rourke (TX). Challenging Republican incumbent Sen. Ted Cruz.

Rep. Jacky Rosen (NV). Challenging Republican incumbent Sen. Dean Heller

Giffords PAC:

Gabby Gifford's 501c(4) and the Giffords PAC have endorsed 34 candidates, many of the same candidates as the CSGV and the Brady Campaign (Feinstein, Houlahan, Sherrill, Lee, Cisneros, Craig, Rosen, and Brown). To see all endorsements in a tidy package [click HERE](#).

(Quote from the Brady Campaign)

"The intensity of pro-gun violence voters has never been stronger. If you stand with the overwhelming majority of voters for common-sense gun reform, you will be rewarded at the ballot box. If you stand with the NRA and the gun lobby, you will be looking for a new job."

--Shelly Livingston, Acting Chair, Task Force to Prevent Gun Violence

Prohibition Did Not Stop Americans from Drinking Alcohol; Overturning Roe V. Wade Will Not Stop American Women from Obtaining Contraception or Abortions

From the beginning of recorded time, many couples have sought to separate the act of intercourse from the birth of a child. Unfortunately, religious leaders and heads of state have historically also mandated “Be fruitful and multiply” and forbidden both contraception and abortions well into the 20th century.

Despite Church/State laws and, at times, horrific penalties against women, countless couples have made their own choices to limit their families to the numbers of children that they could adequately care for.

Medical monographs, historic gynecologic texts, and stories told by grandmothers reveal the amazing ranges of historic attempts to prevent pregnancies.

Men have tried various means to place sperm in a variety of sites away from contact with eggs. Male condoms, AKA “French letters,” have been crafted from an array of vegetable and animal coverings. Women have inserted an astounding list of substances and devices to prevent sperm from meeting eggs: beeswax, honey, paraffin, clay, dried sod, collar button studs, bottle caps....

Desperate couples have resorted to dangerous measures to self-induce abortions. Women douched with lead contaminated water, arsenic solutions, Lysol, and turpentine. And women swallowed large doses of laxatives and herbs to induce vomiting. All such methods were dangerous as well as ineffective but were attempted because accidental pregnancies can be devastating, especially to middle class and poorer families.

Let's be clear: No one is “pro-abortion.”

But re: abortion, class differences have been and will remain life threateningly significant. Women of affluent families could always be cared for by well-credentialed private physicians. Common terms for illegal abortions were “menstrual extraction,” or a “back bay appendectomy,” or “getting it taken care of.” Affluent families could also travel to Puerto Rico, Canada, or Western Europe for a safe abortion. Accordingly, affluent women rarely died from hemorrhage or sepsis.

But before Roe v. Wade, middle class and poor women were left with few options: self-abortion via the classic “coat hanger” method, or a barely affordable barbaric “back alley butcher.” In the 1950's and 1960's the CDC recorded about 2,000 maternal deaths per year from abortion complications, mostly in lower income women, which amounted to about 20% of all maternal deaths.

Smaller towns in the Midwest are known by oral history of older women to have had safe abortions provided by ethnic midwives who came to the woman's home. It's unknown how widespread this practice might have been.

So passage of Roe v. Wade was enacted to save women's lives, most of whom were already mothers. Roe v. Wade never promoted or increased abortions as stated by right-wing religious and political zealots. But Roe v. Wade has decreased maternal deaths from unsafe abortions.

As of 2016, 1 in 4 women under the age of 45 has had an abortion, without risking their lives to do so. Additionally, the rate and the numbers of abortions have dropped dramatically over the past decade as much more reliable contraception has been developed and made affordable to all families.

Many families wonder why the far right continues the outright lie that “all birth control methods cause abortions.” As Dr. C. Everett Koop stated, “The best way to decrease abortions is to make **contraception** widely available.” As many remember, Dr. Koop was an Evangelical Christian pediatrician appointed to be Surgeon General by President Reagan. Dr. Koop was personally against abortion, but did not impose his personal views on the American people whose health he was appointed to protect.

The current SCOTUS nominee, Brett Kavanaugh (attorney), and Dr. Rand Paul (ophthalmologist) have wrongly labeled current methods of contraception as “abortion inducing.” Both men should do their own research on the ACOG website (American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology) to obtain scientifically accurate information rather than obtaining medical information from sources having NO gynecologic expertise.

One wonders if some of the young women in the affluent Catholic school where Mr. Kavanaugh volunteers might use some form of contraception, because their gynecologists know today's birth control methods are safe and effective and, in many cases, medically indicated for some gynecologic conditions.

So what happens if/when Roe V. Wade is overturned? And what happens when so called “religious freedom” allows employers to deny affordable contraception to employees through health insurance?

Affluent women will be fine. They will continue to obtain the contraception or the safe abortion they desire without difficulty.

Women who are *mistresses* of congressmen will be pressured to *have abortions* as occurred with Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R) in 2015 and Rep. Tim Murphy (R) in 2017.

Working class and low income women will be denied their right to effective contraception and there will be more unplanned or crisis pregnancies. Lower income women will be denied the safe abortions that affluent women will continue to be able to obtain. Some women will cross into Canada or Mexico for medical abortions, which will be less safe without adequate medical follow-up. Unlicensed abortionists will provide surgical abortions and women's deaths from hemorrhage and infections will again increase.

Roe v. Wade is not just a woman's privacy and reproductive civil rights issue; it is a class issue. All women have the right to the same state-of-the-art medical care, regardless of ability to pay.

Politicians and religious leaders have no right to interfere with women's health care, or with women's lives. All men have the right to confidential medical care and all women must have the very same right to confidential medical care. Religious leaders and politicians cannot be allowed to intrude into any exam room or any doctor/patient relationship. Ever.

--Karen J. Pataky, Chair, Health Policy Task Force