2016 Senate Ratings

Pure Toss-Up

Ayotte (R-NH)	IN Open (Coats, R)*
Blunt (R-MO)#	NV Open (Reid, D)
Toomey (R-PA)	

Toss-Up/Tilt Democrat	Toss-Up/Tilt Republican
	Burr (R-NC)

Lean Democrat	Lean Republican
Johnson (R-WI)	Rubio (R-FL)
Kirk (R-IL)	

Democrat Favored	Republican Favored
	McCain (R-AZ)
	Portman (R-OH)

Safe Democrat	Safe Republican
Bennet (D-CO)	Boozman (R-AR)
Blumenthal (D-CT)	Crapo (R-ID)
Leahy (D-VT)	Grassley (R-IA)
Murray (D-WA)	Hoeven (R-ND)
Schatz (D-HI)	Isakson (R-GA)
Schumer (D-NY)	Lankford (R-OK)
Wyden (D-OR)	Lee (R-UT)
CA Open (Boxer, D)	Moran (R-KS)
MD Open (Mikulski, D)	Murkowski (R-AK)
	Paul (R-KY)

	GOP	DEM	
114th Congress	54	46	Scott (R-SC)
Not up this cycle	30	36	Shelby (R-AL)
Currently Safe	14	9	Thune (R-SD)
Competitive	10	1	LA Open (Vitter, R)

Takeovers in Italics   # moved benefiting Democrats,
* moved benefiting Republicans

Will Trump Tip Senate to Democrats?

By Nathan L. Gonzales

Senate Republicans thought they had successfully navigated the Donald Trump storm. There was no guarantee they would maintain a majority in the Senate, but the party was in surprisingly strong shape considering their nominee's historic unfavorable ratings and a map that put the GOP on the defensive in difficult states from the beginning.

But the release of the 2005 audio tape from Access Hollywood with Trump's lewd comments turned an already exciting election on its head. Some Republican elected officials scrambled to distance themselves from Trump, including New Hampshire Sen. Kelly Ayotte and Rep. Joe Heck, who is running for the Senate in Nevada. Other senators are trying to stay the course by walking a fine line between denouncing and endorsing or not saying much of anything at all.

Incumbents are getting squeezed from the middle by voters increasingly turning their back on Trump and from the right, where a vocal minority of Trump supporters are angry with Republicans for "abandoning" their candidate. If GOP candidates see even a 2-3 percent drop in support from either direction in the most competitive races, that would be enough to give Democrats control of the Senate.

An initial NBC News/Wall Street Journal survey, conducted at potentially the lowest point for the Republicans (just after the tape surfaced, on Saturday and Sunday), showed 49 percent of likely voters preferred Democrats control Congress compared to 42 percent who preferred Republicans were in control. It's a wider margin than Democrats have enjoyed since the government shutdown in the fall of 2013.

But subsequent polling data showed the bottom hasn't fallen out from underneath Republicans, at least not yet. NBC News/Wall Street Journal surveys released on Thursday and conducted entirely after the second debate showed GOP Sen. Rob Portman maintaining his huge lead in Ohio and Sen. Richard Burr tied with Democrat Deborah Ross in North Carolina. Of course, there is still time for things to get worse for Republicans.

The margin in the presidential race matters for multiple reasons. The deeper Trump's losses, the more crossover voters Republican incumbents need to survive. And if the presidential race gets out of hand, Democrats can start shifting money to Senate races. Priorities USA is considering shifting some of its money designated for Clinton in North Carolina, New Hampshire, Nevada, and Pennsylvania to the Senate races. And Clinton's campaign could start shifting money to Arizona and Georgia and potentially have a down-ballot effect.

But even with a Trump collapse, the Senate playing field isn't likely to expand dramatically. Ohio appears to be off the table for good, and it

CALENDAR 2016

October 19	Third Presidential Debate, Las Vegas, Nev.
November 8	Election Day
December 10	Louisiana Runoff
January 10	Georgia Runoff (if necessary)

RothenbergGonzales.com

Clinton Tightens Grip on Presidential Victory

By Nathan L. Gonzales

The 2016 presidential race is stranger than fiction. The already-unprecedented contest took another turn last weekend when audio from a 2005 tape from NBC's Access Hollywood revealed Donald Trump crudely talking with host Billy Bush about sexually assaulting women.

The comments weren't surprising to anyone who has been paying attention, but it made Trump's treatment of women more palpable and caused a flurry of elected Republicans to renounce their support of him.

It's all-but-impossible for a GOP nominee with a fractured party to win a presidential race. Based on the most likely outcome in each state, the Republican needed to sweep the pure toss-ups while Hillary Clinton could win by carrying just one.

Trump steadily closed the post-convention gap with Clinton by consolidating GOP voters. But that momentum stalled after the first debate and may have reversed itself following the release of the tape, the second debate, and numerous allegations of improper sexual advances.

Even though the most recent polling data isn't quite as dramatic as the initial NBC News/Wall Street Journal survey (taken Oct. 8th and 9th, before the debate), which showed Clinton ahead by 11 points in the four-way ballot test, it looks like the former secretary of state gained at least a few points in most of the battleground states.

Our ratings show Clinton narrowly above the 270 electoral votes necessary to win, but her hold on the election is more significant. There is little chance that she loses any of the states where she currently has an advantage, while Clinton has the opportunity to sweep the toss-up states and even win normally Republican states such as Arizona and Georgia in her best-case scenario.

We are changing ratings in a few races including Colorado and Virginia from Lean Democratic to Democrat Favored. We're also moving Nebraska from Safe GOP to Republican Favored (because Clinton could pick off a single electoral vote by winning the 2nd District) and Maine from Safe to Democrat Favored (because Trump could win an electoral vote by carrying the 2nd District).

Of course three weeks feels like an eternity in this election, but there are no signs Trump will regain any footing, since he can't resist attacking GOP leaders and doesn't have the attention span to consistently target Clinton's weaknesses.

2016 Presidential Ratings
(Electoral Votes)

Pure Toss-Up (68)

Florida (29)	Iowa (6)	North Carolina (15)	Ohio (18)

Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic (16)		Toss-Up/Tilt Republican
Nevada (6)	Wisconsin (10)	

Lean Democratic (24)		Lean Republican (27)	
New Hampshire (4)	Pennsylvania (20)	Arizona (11)	Georgia (16)

Democrat Favored (52)		Republican Favored (32)	
Colorado (9)#	Minnesota (10)	Indiana (11)	Nebraska (5)#
Maine (4)*	Virginia (13)#	Missouri (10)	Utah (6)
Michigan (16)			

Safe Democratic (187)		Safe Republican (132)	
California (55)	New York (29)	Alabama (9)	Oklahoma (7)
Connecticut (7)	Oregon (7)	Alaska (3)	South Carolina (9)
Delaware (3)	Rhode Island (4)	Arkansas (6)	South Dakota (3)
DC (3)	Vermont (3)	Idaho (4)	Tennessee (11)
Hawaii (4)	Washington (12)	Kansas (6)	Texas (38)
Illinois (20)		Kentucky (8)	West Virginia (5)
Maryland (10)		Louisiana (8)	Wyoming (3)
Massachusetts (11)		Mississippi (6)	
New Jersey (14)		Montana (3)	
New Mexico (5)		North Dakota (3)	

270 needed to win
Takeovers in Italics
 # moved benefiting Democrats,
 * moved benefiting Republicans

Electoral Votes
Clinton 279
Trump 191

Ratings Shift in Six Races for Governor

By Nathan L. Gonzales

A dozen states will vote for governor next month, but you'd hardly know it from the avalanche of media coverage surrounding the presidential race and fight for the Senate.

Unlike the Senate map, where Republicans are defending more states than Democrats, Democrats are defending more governorships than Republicans this year, including some very challenging territory.

Holding a majority of governorships doesn't count for much more than a press release at this point in the decade, but Republicans and Democrats want to have as many governors as possible at the end of the decade because many governors play a role in the redistricting process. And new governors elected this year will be up for re-election in 2020, the final election before the census, reapportionment and redistricting.

There are currently 31 Republican governors, 18 Democratic governors, and an independent governor in Alaska that Democrats helped elect.

Indiana Governor.
Trump is poised to win Indiana (at least before the 2005 tape was released), but Lt. Gov. Eric Holcomb is still struggling to put this race away and keep the governorship in GOP hands. Gov. Mike Pence can't seek re-election while running as Trump's vice presidential candidate. Former Democratic state House Speaker John Gregg lost the race to Pence in 2012 but is likely

John Gregg

leading this race now. But Holcomb has an opportunity to gain ground by increasing his name identification, and Republicans are banking on an improving economy to help pull him over the line. Some of Democrats' campaign strategy looks irrelevant with Pence out of the race, making it more difficult to run against the governor's record, including his handling of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which Democrats characterize as an anti-gay rights bill. Trump still looks likely to win Indiana and the conservative lean of the state should boost Holcomb at the end. But this race is tight. Move from Lean Republican to Toss-Up/Tilt Republican.

Missouri Governor.
Gov. Jay Nixon is term-limited, leaving Democrats with a governorship to defend in a state where Trump has been leading in the polls for most of the general election. But Democrats have a solid nominee in state Attorney General Chris Koster, who earned endorsements from the National Rifle Association and the Farm Bureau. Iraq/Afghanistan War veteran/retired Navy Seal Eric Greitens won a four-way GOP primary with 35 percent but hasn't gained his footing in the general election. Democrats have kept him on the defensive on his tax returns and non-profit compensation. The Show Me State is turning into a fascinating battleground, as Trump looks poised to carry it, Koster could get elected governor, and

Secretary of State Jason Kander could upset GOP Sen. Roy Blunt. We're changing our rating of the gubernatorial race from Pure Toss-Up to Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic.

Monmouth Univ., Oct. 9-11 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Koster over Greitens 46%-43%.

Monmouth Univ., Aug. 19-22 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Koster over Greitens 51%-40%. IDs: Koster 34% favorable/14% unfavorable, Greitens 30% favorable/15% unfavorable.

New Hampshire Governor.
Executive Councilor Chris Sununu won the crowded GOP primary with 31 percent and a margin of just 1 point over second place finisher Frank Edelblut. It was important that Sununu won the primary because GOP strategists didn't appear all that interested in the general election if one of the other four candidates prevailed.

Chris Sununu

Sununu, who is the brother of former Sen. John Sununu and son of former Gov. John Sununu Sr., faces fellow Executive Councilor Colin

2016 Gubernatorial Ratings

Pure Toss-Up
NH Open (Hassan, D)*

Toss-Up/Tilt Democrat	Toss-Up/Tilt Republican
McCrory (R- NC)#	IN Open (Pence, R)#
MO Open (Nixon, D)#	
VT Open (Shumlin, D)*	
WV Open (Tomblin, D)#	

Lean Democrat	Lean Republican
Bullock (D- MT)	

Democrat Favored	Republican Favored

Safe Democrat	Safe Republican
Brown (D- OR)	Herbert (R- UT)
Inslee (D- WA)	ND Open (Dalrymple, R)
DE Open (Markell, D)	

*# moved benefiting Democrats,   * moved benefiting Republicans*

Governor: Democrats Gain Advantage in Key States

Van Ostern in the general election. Democratic Gov. Maggie Hassan is not seeking re-election in order to challenge GOP Sen. Kelly Ayotte. Democrats believe Clinton will win the Granite State by a large enough margin to pull Van Ostern across the line. Democrats are portraying Chris as out-of-step with the state and even his better-known family members. Many New Hampshire voters still aren't familiar with Van Ostern. But both parties are spending big here now that the late primary is over. Republicans haven't won the governorship in over a decade, but they've got a shot this year. We're changing our rating from Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic to Pure Toss-Up.

Suffolk Univ., Oct. 3-5 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Sununu over Van Ostern 40%-36%. IDs: Sununu 35% favorable/32% unfavorable, Van Ostern 28% favorable/18% unfavorable.

Univ. of NH for WBUR, Sept. 27-29 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Sunun over Van Ostern 47%-44%.

Monmouth Univ., Sept. 17-20 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Sununu over Van Ostern 49%-43%. IDs: Sununu 36% favorable/22% unfavorable, Van Ostern 28% favorable/6% unfavorable.

North Carolina Governor.
The doom-and-gloom narrative about GOP Gov. Pat McCrory's re-election chances over HB2 were premature but he is still in significant trouble for a second term. The national outrage from Democrats, progressive groups, and the media weren't as damaging as the subsequent stories about business and major sporting

Roy Cooper

events leaving the state as a result of the legislation. McCrory faces state Attorney General Roy Cooper in the general election. Republicans are determined to hold him accountable for mismanaging his office and not being tough enough on crime. The governor still has a chance of winning, but calling this a Pure Toss-Up isn't accurate. We're changing our rating to Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic.

Marist for NBC News/Wall Street Journal, Oct. 10-12 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Cooper over McCrory 49%-48%.

High Point Univ., Oct. 1-6 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Cooper over McCrory 49%-42%.

Selzer & Co. for Bloomberg, Sept. 29-Oct. 2 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Cooper over McCrory 50%-44%. IDs: McCrory 49% favorable/ 44% unfavorable, Cooper 45% favorable/35% unfavorable.

Quinnipiac Univ., Sept. 27-Oct. 2 (LVs)--General Election: Cooper over McCrory 48%-46%.

Public Policy Polling (D)(IVR) for VoteVets, Sept. 27-28 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Cooper over McCrory 45%-42%. Cooper ID: 40% favorable/33% unfavorable. McCrory job rating: 42% approve/47% disapprove.

Public Policy Polling (D)(IVR), Sept. 18-20 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Cooper over McCrory 46%-41%, Cecil 2%. McCrory job rating: 41% approve/49% disapprove. Cooper ID: 40% favorable/32% unfavorable.

Siena College for New York Times, Sept. 16-19 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Cooper over McCrory 50%-42%.

Elon Univ., Sept. 12-16 (LVs)--General Election ballot: McCrory over Cooper 49%-46%.

Vermont Governor.
In one of the more surprising races of the cycle, Republicans have an opportunity to win the governorship in a state Hillary Clinton might win by at least 25 points. GOP Lt. Gov. Phil Scott, a construction contractor and former stock car race driver, is popular and likely leading former Democratic state transportation secretary Sue Minter

Sue Minter

with less than a month left in the campaign. Democratic Gov. Peter Shumlin, a former DGA chairman, is not seeking re-election. For part of the cycle, Democrats were confident that Sen. Bernie Sanders' popularity would help pull Minter across the line, but there doesn't appear to be any love lost between the former presidential candidate and the governor, and Sanders hasn't been particularly active on the campaign trail for Minter. Democrats are trying to highlight Scott's policy positions to portray him as out of step with the state, but time is running out. We're changing our rating from Democrat Favored to Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic.

West Virginia Governor.
Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin is term-limited, so Democrats are left defending a governorship in a state Clinton could lose by 25 or more points. But wealthy coal executive/developer/Greenbrier Resort owner Jim Justice has been in the lead for virtually the entire race. Republicans are hoping that a huge Donald Trump victory will pull state Senate President/auto dealer Bill Cole across the finish line (with some help from straight-ticket voting). But Democrats think Justice, a wealthy political outsider, is closer to the Trump profile than Cole. We're changing our rating of the race from Pure Toss-Up to Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic.

Just Win Strategies for state Republican Party, Sept. 8-10 (LVs)--General election ballot: Justice over Cole 44%-42%.

Global Strategy Group (D), Aug. 1-3 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Justice over Cole 47%-37%.

Repass Research and Strategic Consulting for MetroNews, Aug. 19-30 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Justice over Cole 46%-34%.

Global Strategy Group (D) for Justice, Aug. 21-26 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Justice over Cole 36%-30%.

Orion Strategies (D), Aug 24-25 (LVs)--General Election ballots: Justice over Cole 34%-31%.

Still Waiting for the Wave in the House

By Nathan L. Gonzales

One of the most remarkable pieces of this year's elections has been the resiliency of House Republicans while running on the ballot with a polarizing and sometimes offensive presidential nominee in a volatile election cycle. But now everyone is waiting to see if that work was wiped away by the release of a decade-old video tape, the second presidential debate, and allegations of inappropriate conduct by Donald Trump.

Before the audio tape of Trump talking about grabbing women was released, Republicans were all-but-certain to hold their majority in the House. Democrats were spending money on seats that should have already been in their column including Florida's 13th District, Iowa's 1st District, and Nevada's 4th District, instead of spending that money on lower-tier targets needed to win the majority.

Two weeks ago, we revised our projection downward from a Democratic gain of 10-15 seats to 7-12 seats. Nancy Pelosi's party needs to gain 30 seats for a majority.

But according to the initial NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, conducted on the Saturday evening after the tape was released and on Sunday, before the second debate, voters said they preferred Democrats controlled Congress by a 49-42 percent margin. That's the greatest Democratic advantage on that question since the government shutdown in 2013 when it was 47-39 percent.

This week's results sent shockwaves through Washington and talk about the House being "in-play" spiked after months of ignoring the chamber, but the numbers could use some context. Democrats had a 15-point advantage on the NBC News/WSJ generic ballot question in 2006 before gaining 30 House seats and a 12-point advantage in 2008 before gaining 21 seats. And that was before Republicans redrew congressional maps in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina to take some competitive seats off the map.

Polling conducted over the last few days continues to show some trouble spots for Republicans, particularly in suburban districts, but there isn't yet evidence of a uniform wave that is sweeping across the country. There's still time for the bottom to drop out of the election for Trump and impact GOP candidates down the ballot, but the Republican majority still looks likely to stay in place.

Arizona's 1st District. Republicans would love to take back Democratic Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick's open seat, but this race isn't trending in the right direction for the GOP. Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu (R) has enough baggage to keep GOP outside groups from spending in the district and focus more on defending dozens of Republican districts around the country. Democratic nominee Tom O'Halleran looks increasingly likely to win. Move from Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic to Lean Democratic.

Moore Information (R) for Babeu, Oct. 4-5 (LVs)--General Election ballot: O'Halleran over Babeu 39%-36%, IDs: Babeu 27% favorable/30% unfavorable, O'Halleran 22% favorable/5% unfavorable.

Global Strategy Group (D) for DCCC, Sept. 22-25 (LVs)--General Election ballot: O'Halleran over Babeu 45%-38%. IDs: O'Halleran +18, Babeu -4.

Illinois' 10th District. Both parties agree that Clinton is going to win this district by at least 20 points but fundamentally disagree whether GOP Rep. Bob Dold has weathered the storm or is getting dragged down with Trump. His rematch with former Democratic Rep. Brad Schneider looks destined to be close considering past races between the two men. Leaves as Pure Toss-Up for now.

North Star Opinion Research (R) for Dold, Oct. 8-10 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Dold over Schneider 50%-43%. Dold ID: 45% favorable/32% unfavorable.

Normington Petts (D) for Schneider, Sept. 28-29 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Schneider over Dold 46%-41%. Dold ID: 34% favorable/29% unfavorable. Dold job rating: 38% excellent/good, 35% not so good/poor.

Iowa's 1st District. GOP Rep. Rod Blum was supposed to be one of

Al Drago/CQ Roll Call
Monica Vernon

Democrats' easier takeover targets, but Trump's stronger-than-expected performance in the Hawkeye State is keeping the congressman in the game. Democrats are still confident in Monica Vernon's chances, but this is another seat that has become much tougher than initially thought. Move from Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic to Pure Toss-Up.

Normington Petts (D) for HMP, Oct. 10-11 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Blum over Vernon 45%-44%. IDs: Blum 37% favorable/27% unfavorable. Blum job rating: 45% approve/34% disapprove.

Polling company (R) for Blum, Sept. 29-Oct. 1 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Blum over Vernon 52%-36%. Blum job rating: 48% approve/24% disapprove. IDs: Blum 47% favorable/23% unfavorable, Vernon 29% favorable/26% unfavorable.

Loras College, Sept. 20-22 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Blum over Vernon 45%-38%. IDs: Blum 43% favorable/27% unfavorable, Vernon 35% favorable/27% unfavorable.

Kansas' 3rd District. Democrats are determined to defeat GOP Rep. Kevin Yoder and are finally putting some money behind their enthusiasm. The DCCC is set to begin over $1 million in television advertising next week through Election Day. Mitt Romney won the district by 10 points in 2012, but Clinton is poised to carry it this year. The Yoder campaign tried to dismiss a poll by one of Democrats' top polling firms (which showed the congressman with a narrow 44-40 percent advantage over Democrat Jay Sidie) as a "push poll." That doesn't inspire a lot of confidence in the GOPer's campaign operation. Move from Safe to Republican Favored.

Garin Hart Yang (D) for DCCC, Oct. 5-8 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Yoder over Sidie 44%-40%, Hohe 8%. Yoder over Sidie 50%-45%. Yoder ID: 35% favorable/34% unfavorable.

GBA Strategies (D) for Sidie, Aug. 28-30 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Yoder over Sidie 49%-37%, Steve Hohe 8%. IDs: Yoder 32% favorable/39% unfavorable, Side 10% favorable/14% unfavorable.

POS for Yoder, August 6-8 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Yoder of Sidie 53%-36%.

House: Democrats Using Trump in Suburban Seats

New York's 3rd District. Republicans believed state Sen. Jack Martins was the right candidate to take over retiring Democratic Rep. Steve Israel's seat, but the race just isn't coming together. Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi (D) is in the lead in a district Clinton is winning.

2016 House Ratings

Pure Toss-Up (8R, 1D)

FL 18 (Open; Murphy, D)	NV 3 (Open; Heck, R)
FL 26 (Curbelo, R)	NY 19 (Open; Gibson, R)
IL 10 (Dold, R)	NY 22 (Open; Hanna, R)
IA 1 (Blum, R)*	TX 23 (Hurd, R)
ME 2 (Poliquin, R)	

Toss-Up/Tilt Dem (4R, 1D) — Toss-Up/Tilt GOP (9R)

Toss-Up/Tilt Dem (4R, 1D)	Toss-Up/Tilt GOP (9R)
MN 2 (Open; Kline, R)	CO 6 (Coffman, R)
NE 2 (Ashford, D)	FL 7 (Mica, R)
NH 1 (Guinta, R)	IA 3 (Young, R)
NV 4 (Hardy, R)	MI 1 (Open; Benishek, R)
	NY 1 (Zeldin, R)
	NY 24 (Katko, R)
	NJ 5 (Garrett, R)
	PA 8 (Open; Fitzpatrick, R)
	VA 10 (Comstock, R)#

Lean Democratic (1R, 3D) — Lean Republican (2R)

Lean Democratic (1R, 3D)	Lean Republican (2R)
AZ 1 (Open; Kirkpatrick, D)#	MI 7 (Walberg, R)
CA 7 (Bera, D)	WI 8 (Open; Ribble, R)
FL 13 (Jolly, R)	
NY 3 (Open; Israel, D)#	

Democrat Favored (2D) — Republican Favored (9R)

Democrat Favored (2D)	Republican Favored (9R)
CA 24 (Open; Capps, D)	CA 21 (Valadao, R)
MN 8 (Nolan, DFL)	CA 25 (Knight, R)
	CA 49 (Issa, R)
	IN 9 (Open; Young, R)
	KS 3 (Yoder, R)#
	MN 3 (Paulsen, R)
	MT A-L (Zinke, R)#
	UT 4 (Love, R)

Safe Democrat (2R) — Safe Republican (1D)

Safe Democrat (2R)	Safe Republican (1D)
FL 10 (Open; Webster, R)	*FL 2 (Open; Graham, D)*
VA 4 (Open; Forbes, R)	

	GOP	DEM
114th Congress	247	188
Currently Safe	215	182
Competitive	31	7
Needed for majority	218	

Takeovers in Italics
 # moved benefiting Democrats,
* moved benefiting Republicans

It's probably too expensive for national Republicans to try to buy the seat, particularly while trying to defend their own seats elsewhere. Move from Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic to Lean Democratic.

Siena College, Sept. 28-29 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Suozzi over Martins 50%-34%. IDs: Suozzi 44% favorable/29% unfavorable, Martins 23% favorable/18% unfavorable.

GBA Strategies (D) for Suozzi, Sept. 19-21 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Suozzi over Martins 55%-38%.

Montana's At-Large District. As a retired Navy Seal, GOP Rep. Ryan Zinke appears to have the right profile for the state, but he is taking heat from Democrats on a public lands issue and for not spending enough time in Montana (he has a home in Santa Barbara, California). State Superintendent of Public Instruction Denise Juneau (D) is a credible candidate and can probably get at least 43 percent, it's just not clear she can get enough votes to win. Democratic strategists have been enthusiastic about the race but, up to this point, there has been no outside spending. That could change soon. Move from Safe GOP to Republican Favored.

Moore Information (R) for Zinke, Oct. 2-3 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Zinke over Juneau 49%-38%, Libertarian 3%.

Harstad Strategic Research (D), Sept. 20-25 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Zinke over Juneau 45%-42%.

Pennsylvania's 6th District. Democratic strategists took great delight when the NRCC posted opposition research online on Democratic nominee Mike Parrish because they took it as a sign Republicans are worried GOP Rep. Ryan Costello will lose to a candidate they've ignored for months. Romney won the district narrowly, 51-48 percent, in 2012, so the district isn't solidly Republican, but Parrish hasn't raised enough money to be credible. Still,

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

Ryan Costello

Trump could get pummeled here, as well as in the nearby 16th District. If Democratic nominees win one or both seats, it will be because of a wave, because Democratic strategists have no plans to spend money for them in the expensive Philadelphia media market. Leave as Safe GOP for now.

Texas' 23rd District. Both parties are confident their nominee is going win this expansive border district. It's a rematch between GOP Rep. Will Hurd and former Democratic Rep. Pete Gallego. This doesn't look like a case of averaging the polls and coming up with a close contest, one party is wrong and one is right. It's just not clear which one just yet. Rating: Pure Toss-Up.

Virginia's 10th District. Trump is at risk of getting crushed in this suburban/exurban Washington, D.C. district and could bring down GOP Rep. Barbara Comstock with him. Television ads by the congresswoman, Democratic challenger LuAnn Bennett, and both parties are flooding the airwaves. This continues to be a race to watch and is a must-win for Democrats. Move from Lean Republican to Toss-Up/Tilt Republican.

Senate: Blunt and Kander Locked in Tight Race

doesn't look like Democrats are interested in getting back into a spending battle in Florida or playing in Georgia or Iowa. Arizona looks like the only potentially new takeover target as Democrats focus their efforts on winning the seats already in play.

Democrats need to gain 4 seats to control the Senate next year with a White House victory and are still poised to gain 3-6 seats. The upper-end of that range looks most likely as Trump implodes, but many of the GOP incumbents have been resilient and Republicans' remarkable comeback in Indiana against former Democratic Sen. Evan Bayh is keeping the party within striking distance of pulling off a major coup by holding the majority.

In **Florida**, Democratic Rep. Patrick Murphy raised a considerable $3.3 million in July, August, and September, only to see GOP Sen. Marco Rubio raise $9.6 million. Murphy is increasingly on his own as Democratic strategists shift resources elsewhere (Senate Majority PAC cancelled the rest of its reservations in the state) and Florida wasn't on the list of reported states that PrioritiesUSA, the pro-Clinton Super PAC, was interested in shifting money to Senate races. The partisanship of Florida probably prevents a blowout, but Rubio still has a significant advantage. Rating: Lean Republican.

Marist for NBC/Wall Street Journal, Oct. 3-6 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Rubio over Murphy 48%-46%.

Quinnipiac Univ., Sept. 27-Oct. 2 (LVs)--General Election: Rubio over Murphy 48%-44%.

In **Georgia**, there is significant concern that GOP Sen. Johnny Isakson won't top 50 percent on Nov. 8 and then, according to state law, be forced to a Jan. 10 runoff. Republicans don't believe he'll lose his seat, but it's another two months of campaigning for the incumbent who previously announced that he has Parkinson's. Democratic nominee Jim Barksdale never caught the attention of party insiders and outside groups. Rating: Safe GOP.

Landmark Communications, Oct. 11-12 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Isakson over Barksdale 50%-37%, Buckley (Libertarian) 5%.

Quinnipiac Univ., Sept. 13-21 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Isakson over Barksdale 55%-34%.

In **Illinois,** Democratic Rep. Tammy Duckworth continues to have the advantage over GOP Sen. Mark Kirk. A Southern Illinois University survey from earlier this month showed her with a 48-34 percent lead in the general election ballot test. Drilling deeper, Duckworth topped Kirk 61-26 percent in the city of Chicago, where Kirk received 19 percent in 2010 when he was first elected statewide. But Kirk wasn't close to his Downstate totals. He outpaced Duckworth 44-36 percent, but received 59 percent in 2010. Kirk was the earliest and most vocal opponent of Trump among the vulnerable GOP senators. But with or without Trump at the top of the ticket, this was always going to be a difficult race. Rating: Lean Democratic.

GS Strategy Group (R) for Kirk, Oct. 4-5 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Duckworth over Kirk 41%-37%.

Southern Illinois Univ., Sept. 27-Oct. 2 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Duckworth over Kirk 48%-34%, 3% Libertarian Party, 2% Green Party.

Normington Petts (D) for Duckworth, Sept. 27-29 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Duckworth over Kirk 46%-37%.

In **Indiana**, Republican attacks on former Democratic Sen. Evan Bayh has narrowed his lead over GOP Rep. Todd Young from 20 points to a few points or to dead even. Even if Bayh is narrowly ahead, the trend has been

dramatically against him as Republicans focused on the lack of time he has spent in Indiana, his post-office work for lobbying firms, and committee attendance record in the Senate. But the last few points are going to be the most difficult for the Republicans. Trump still looks poised to win Indiana, although not by the wide margin before the most recent tape and allegations. We're moving the race from Toss-Up/Tilt Democratic to Pure Toss-Up.

Public Opinion Strategies (R) for Howey Political Report, Oct. 3-5 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Bayh over Young 42%-41%, Brenton 8%. IDs: Young 33% favorable/26% unfavorable, Bayh 43% favorable/39% unfavorable.

There is growing concern in GOP circles about Sen. Roy Blunt's re-election chances in **Missouri**. It's remarkable that some of the same attacks haunting Bayh in Indiana are hurting Blunt here -- being a long-time politician with connections to the lobbying industry and a message that he doesn't prioritize his home state. Democratic Secretary of State Jason Kander came off as over-confident early in the cycle, but he's run a good race and is giving Blunt the run of

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Roy Blunt

his life. One public poll showed the senator up narrowly, but most private surveys show Kander with an edge. There's still time for Blunt to pull this off, but he's lost control of his image, according to one GOP strategist, and Republicans have to find a way to change the trajectory of the race. We're changing our rating from Toss-Up/Tilt Republican to Pure Toss-Up.

Monmouth Univ., Oct. 9-11 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Blunt over Kander 46%-45%. IDs: Blunt 32% favorable/33% unfavorable, Kander 33% favorable/14% unfavorable.

In **Nevada**, there's been plenty of second-guessing GOP Rep. Joe Heck's decision to back away from Trump after the Access Hollywood tape in the middle of a tight race for retiring-Sen. Harry Reid's seat. Up through last weekend, Heck held a consistent yet narrow edge in the race over former Democratic attorney general Catherine Cortez Masto. Some Republicans (and analysts) believe he unnecessarily risked alienating some Trump supporters with his decision. A couple of Democratic polls taken and released this week showed Cortez Masto with a narrow lead for the first time in months, in large part from a lack of GOP support, but a Republican poll showed Heck keeping Republican voters and having a 3-point edge. This continues to be one of the most competitive races in the country. Rating: Pure Toss-Up.

Clarity Campaign Labs (D) for End Citizens United, Oct. 10-11 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Cortez Masto over Heck 44%-41%.

POS (R) for Senate Leadership Fund (R), Oct. 10-11 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Heck over Cortez Masto 47%-44%.

Public Policy Polling (D), Oct. 10-11 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Cortez Masto over Heck 43%-39%. IDs: Heck 37% favorable/51% unfavorable, Cortez Masto 39% favorable/46% unfavorable.

Senate: Johnson Narrows the Gap in Wisconsin

Hart Research (D) for Wall Street Journal, Sept. 27- Oct. 2 (RVs)-- General Election ballot: Heck over Cortez Masto 47%-46%.

Suffolk Univ., Sept. 27-29 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Heck over Cortez Masto 38%-35%.

In **New Hampshire**, GOP Sen. Kelly Ayotte received national attention and criticism for saying Trump is a role model during a debate with Democratic Gov. Maggie Hassan. But the senator didn't lose support in the polls and was even building a narrow lead, at least before the Trump tape. But now she has denounced Trump and it remains to be seen whether she'll lose support from Republicans, similar to Heck's situation in Nevada. This is a fascinating situation where Clinton's support continues to grow but Ayotte is still kicking. Rating: Pure Toss-Up.

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

Kelly Ayotte

MassINC for WBUR, Oct. 10-12 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Ayotte and Hassan tied at 47%. IDs: Ayotte 44% favorable/44% unfavorable, Hassan 47% favorable/41% unfavorable.

UMass Lowell, Oct. 7-11 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Ayotte over Hassan 45%-44%.

Suffolk Univ., Oct. 3-5 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Ayotte over Hassan 47%-41%, Chabot 3%. IDs: Ayotte 48% favorable/33% unfavorable, Hassan 42% favorable/40% unfavorable.

In the **North Carolina** Senate race, some Republicans were frustrated with GOP incumbent Richard Burr for not ramping up his campaign operation fast enough in the face of a volatile election environment. His delay likely allowed former state Rep. Deborah Ross an opportunity to gain some steam and develop into a credible candidate (she raised $4.25 million in the third quarter). Now Republicans are finally starting to unload their opposition research book on her from cases she supported during her work as the state director for the ACLU. It looks to have slowed her momentum, but Burr is still in serious trouble. Rating: Toss-Up/Tilt Republican.

Marist for NBC News/Wall Street Journal, Oct. 10-12 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Burr and Ross tied at 46%.

Suffolk Univ., Oct. 10-12 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Burr over Ross 40%-36%, Haugh 6%.

High Point Univ., Oct. 1-6 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Burr over Ross 47%-42%.

Selzer & Co. for Bloomberg, Sept. 29-Oct. 2 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Ross over Burr 46%-44%.

Quinnipiac Univ., Sept. 27-Oct. 2 (LVs)--General Election: Ross and Burr tied at 46%.

Even in the worst-case scenarios for Republicans, it looks like **Ohio** is off the table for Democrats. GOP Sen Rob Portman gets credit for running one of the best campaigns of the cycle and proved the benefits of great fundraising and starting early. If Democrats somehow come up short of control of the Senate by a seat, their early all-in strategy for former Gov. Ted Strickland will probably be a hot topic. He just hasn't been willing to do what is expected of a Senate candidate these days. Rating: Republican Favored.

Marist for NBC News/Wall Street Journal, Oct. 10-12 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Portman over Strickland 55%-37%.

Public Policy Polling (D)(IVR), Oct. 5-6 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Portman over Strickland 51%-36%. Portman job rating: 44% approve/32% disapprove. Strickland ID: 31% favorable/48% unfavorable.

Monmouth Univ., Oct. 1-4 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Portman over Strickland 54%-39%. IDs: Portman 42% favorable/13% unfavorable, Strickland 27% favorable/37% unfavorable.

Quinnipiac Univ., Sept. 27-Oct. 2 (LVs)--General Election: Portman over Strickland 55%-38%.

Polling in the **Pennsylvania** Senate race is all over the place. Some surveys give GOP Sen. Patrick Toomey the edge while others show Democrat Katie McGinty with an advantage. It's safe to say that the race is very competitive and close and will help decide which party controls the Senate. The senator has been very non-committal on Donald Trump and it drives Democrats crazy. They're trying to use the latest allegations that Trump groped women as a way for him to take a stand. Toomey knows that he needs both Trump supporters and Trump haters to win re-election. Rating: Pure Toss-Up.

Susquehanna Polling & Research, Oct. 4-9 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Toomey over McGinty 42%-38%.

Marist for NBC/Wall Street Journal, Oct. 3-6 (LVs)--General Election ballot: McGinty over Toomey 48%-44%.

Monmouth Univ., Sept. 30-Oct. 3 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Toomey and McGinty tied at 46%. IDs: Toomey 32% favorable/30% unfavorable, McGinty 27% favorable/29% unfavorable. Toomey job rating: 42% approve/38% disapprove.

Franklin & Marshall College, Sept. 28-Oct. 2 (LVs)--General Election ballot: McGinty over Toomey 41%-35%. IDs: Toomey 30% favorable/39% unfavorable, McGinty 33% favorable/33% unfavorable.

Quinnipiac Univ., Sept. 27-Oct. 2 (LVs)--General Election: Toomey over McGinty 50%-42%.

In **Wisconsin**, it was unreasonable to expect former Democratic Sen. Russ Feingold to maintain a big lead over GOP Sen. Ron Johnson, but this race has gotten much closer than most people outside of the senator's campaign expected. A new poll by Marquette University Law School had Feingold up just 46-44 percent, and that's backed up by at least one private survey. But there is very little offensive or defensive activity that usually marks a close race. The NRSC had previously cancelled all of its ad reservations in the state and doesn't appear poised to jump back in, although the Club for Growth is on television for Johnson. Democrats aren't concerned enough to spend money yet. It's worth keeping an eye on, but it's not clear yet how Johnson is going to get over the top if Trump is tanking. Rating: Lean Democratic.

Marquette Univ. Law School, Oct. 6-9 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Feingold over Johnson 46%-44%. IDs: Johnson 43% favorable/37% unfavorable, Feingold 45% favorable/40% unfavorable.

YouGov (online) for CBS News, Oct. 5-7 (LVs)--General Election ballot: Feingold over Johnson 45%-42%.