



12 APRIL 18

Blue Wave Coming? Probably. Will It Matter? Maybe.

Don't sound the tsunami warning siren just yet for that "blue wave" supposedly heading our way in this year's midterm elections. While Democrats in Washington continue to have a decided advantage, there are at least two reasons for caution: one is that Republicans appear to have gained some ground in recent months. The other reason is structural — read district boundaries. **A blue wave in blue districts will do little to change the political balance of power.**

Democrats have a 9-point advantage in the generic ballot for the state legislature and a 10 point advantage in the generic ballot for Congress. Both of those leads are down from January.

The "generic ballot" asks voters which party they are more likely to support in the November election. In the legislative races, because each district will have 2 or 3 races, the question asks if the voter is likely to vote for "all Republicans, mostly Republicans, all Democrats or mostly Democrats." In the congressional question, the incumbent was named and identified by party. So, for example, the question in the 9th district asked about "incumbent Democrat Adam Smith vs. his Republican challenger."

In races for the state legislature:

46% intended to voted for mostly Democrats, including 21% who were voting only for Democrats; 37% were voting for mostly Republicans, including 16% voting only for Republicans.

The Democratic vote is the same as it was in January, while the Republican vote climbed 4 points since then. With both houses of the legislature and the governor's office controlled by Democrats, this runs somewhat counter to the finding that 50% of respondents rated the recent session of the legislature as "somewhat" (44%) or "very effective" (7%) in dealing with state issues. 38% said it was not effective. (The 50% total is due to rounding.)

Most Democrats (64%) rated the session as effective; most Republicans (51%) said it was not, and Independents leaned toward "effective" (49-46%).

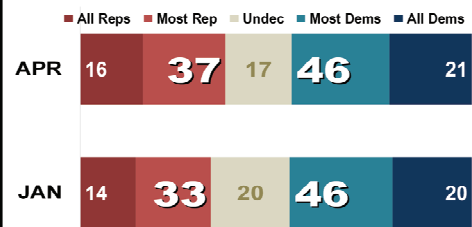
Of course, a statewide generic ballot question only gauges the political climate. It doesn't predict local weather. Control of the legislature depends on what happens in individual districts. The legislature could not be any more evenly divided, with one-vote Democratic majorities in both houses. Of Washington's 49 legislative districts, only 8 sent both Republicans and Democrats to the legislature. Control of both houses will likely be determined in those 8 swing districts.

There were 85 survey respondents in swing districts.—too small a sample to be predictive ($\pm 11\%$), but too tempting to resist peeking at. Voters in those swing districts were inclined to vote 42% for Republicans and 40% for Democrats. So a faint glimmer of hope for Republicans.

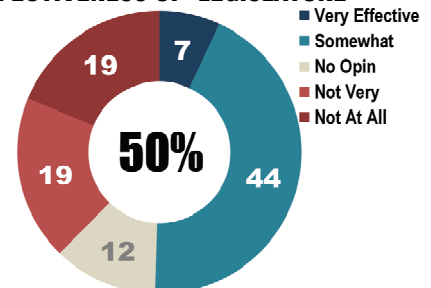
That glimmer may be dimmed by the finding that only 44% of voters in all-Republican districts intend to vote for mostly or all Republicans. (36% plan to vote for Democrats).

On the other side, 61% of voters in all-Democrat districts plan to vote mostly for Democrats (27% for only Democrats). This finding signals an "enthusiasm gap" between Democrats and Republicans, which is getting attention nationally. More on that on page 4.

GENERIC VOTE FOR LEGISLATURE



EFFECTIVENESS OF LEGISLATURE



Republicans Running on Tip O’Neil’s Strategy: “All Politics is Local”

The polarizing atmosphere of national politics makes the broad strategies of both parties here in Blue Washington plain and simple: Democrats will try to nationalize the election and Republicans will try to localize it. Republicans will talk about waking up every day to fight for the hard-working people of the district. Democrats will talk about the scourge of Donald Trump. Republicans will talk about keeping “Seattle values” out of our wholesome district. Democrats will talk about the scourge of Donald Trump. How is that likely to work?

Differentiating “Northwest Republicans” from “National Republicans” makes strategic sense for the local GOP. Neither party is held in high regard, but the national GOP’s “favorability rating” is underwater by nearly 2:1 here. The state GOP is only moderately disliked by comparison (46/50% favorable/unfavorable), and more on par with state Democrats (48/46% favorable/unfavorable).

As noted (p.1) Washington’s legislature could not be any more closely divided. One-vote Democratic majorities in both houses; 21 districts are represented by 3 Democrats and 20 have all 3 Republicans. Among the 8 bi-partisan districts, 4 have 2/3 Democrats and 4 have 2/3 Republicans.

With margins that thin, any little edge is important.

Donald Trump carried 19 legislative districts. Of those, only 2 are mixed districts. Hillary Clinton carried 30 districts, 6 of which are mixed districts. That suggests a structural advantage for the Democrats.

The table on the right indicates the proportion of respondents in several categories who said they were inclined to vote for “mostly” candidates of each party in the upcoming legislative races.

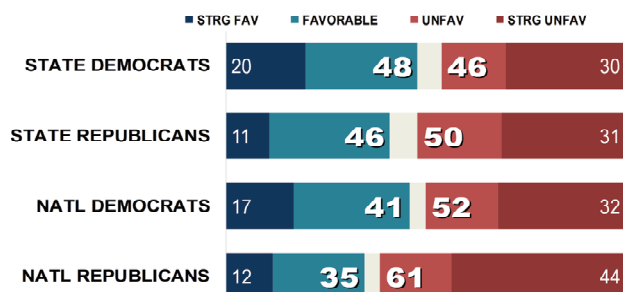
These findings suggest a demographic advantage for the Democrats to complement their structural advantage.

Broad tendencies only go so far. With the legislature as closely divided as it is, it will only take one or two key wins to flip the majority in either house and shift the balance of power in the capitol.

INTENDED VOTE FOR LEGISLATURE

	REP	DEM	ADVANTAGE
REGION			
SEATTLE	11	80	69
KING (Non-Seattle)	38	46	8
PIERCE/KITSAP	45	38	7
N. SOUND	39	43	4
COAST	33	49	16
EAST	44	36	8
VOTE HISTORY			
PERFECT VOTERS	35	47	12
LIKELY VOTERS	37	47	10
MARGINAL VOTERS	36	45	9
PARTY			
ALL GOP LEG DIST	44	36	8
ALL DEM LEG DIST	26	61	35
SWING LEG DIST	42	40	2
CLINTON LEG DIST	33	53	20
TRUMP LEG DIST	41	37	4
REPUB VOTERS	87	4	83
DEM VOTERS	1	94	93
INDEPENDENTS	35	30	5
GENDER			
WOMEN	30	56	26
MEN	44	36	8
AGE			
18-35	28	64	36
36-50	33	52	19
50-64	39	47	8
65+	37	39	2
INCOME			
UNDER \$50,000	29	52	23
\$50 - 75,000	34	49	15
\$75 - 100,000	42	44	2
\$100,000+	41	51	10
EDUCATION			
HIGH SCHOOL	36	45	9
SOME COLLEGE	45	40	5
COLLEGE GRAD	35	47	12
GRAD SCHOOL	28	58	30

PARTY FAVORABILITY



Dems Hold 10-pt Advantage in Generic Congressional Vote

Democrats maintained a 10-point lead in the generic congressional race: 48% planned to vote for the Democrat vs. 38% for the Republican in their district. The 10-point advantage is the same as it was in January but down from 14-points last November and higher than current national average of 8-points.

As an indicator of how partisan these races have become, only 13% said they were undecided —with 7 months to go before the election — even though only the incumbents were named. The question was phrased, for example, as “Republican incumbent Dan Newhouse vs. his Democratic challenger.” The exception was CD5 where there are just two candidates, so both were named (McMorris-Rodgers vs. Brown). The 10 districts were combined into the generic statewide vote reported here.

National politics factor into local races, creating a challenge for Republicans: 70% of these voters were disappointed” (24%), “worried” (20%) or “angry” (25%) about the “Republicans’ leadership of the national government.” Just 27% were “enthusiastic” (10%) or “satisfied” (17%).

At a similar point in the Obama administration, 42% were satisfied or enthusiastic vs. 55% disappointed, worried or angry.

Voters’ mood does not augur well for Republicans:

- In congressional districts currently held by Republicans: 37% were worried (20%) or angry (17%); while 29% were disappointed; and only 32% were enthusiastic (12%) or satisfied (20%).
- In legislative districts carried by Trump: 40% were worried (21%) or angry (19%); while 28% were disappointed; and only 29% were enthusiastic (13%) or satisfied (16%).

TRUMP FACTOR

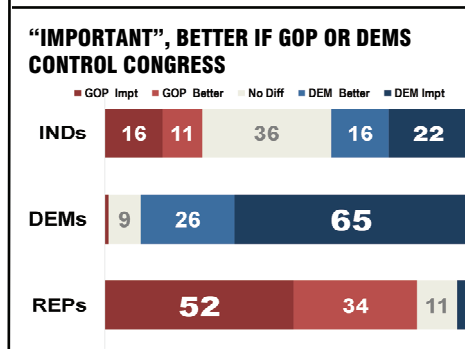
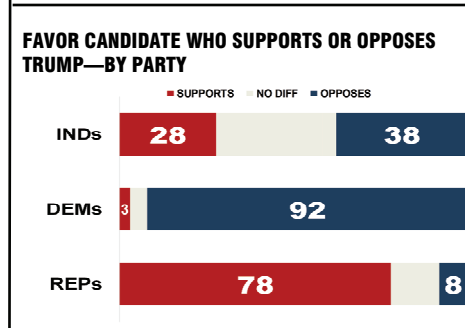
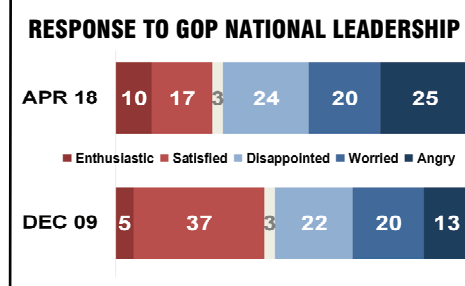
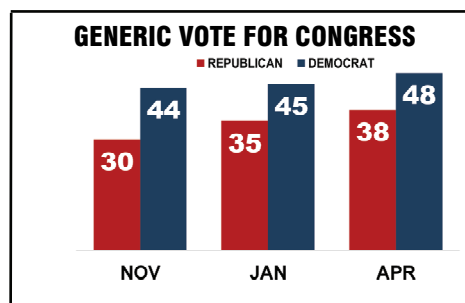
Overall, Donald Trump is more of a burden than a help to local candidates. Among all respondents: 50% were more likely to vote for a candidate who opposes Trump; 32% were more likely to vote for a Trump ally. Opinion differed by party, as expected: 78% of Republicans were more likely to vote for a Trump ally; 92% of Democrats were more likely to vote for someone to stand up to Trump.

- Independents leaned towards opposition, with 38% likely to vote for a Trump opponent ,and 28% likely to vote for a Trump ally.

CONTROL OF CONGRESS

When asked about the upcoming congressional elections: 32% of all voters said that it is “important” that the Democrats take control of at least one house of Congress; while 20% said it was “important” that the Republicans maintain control. Again, party identification made a difference: 65% of Democrats said it was “important” that they take at least one house; but only 52% of Republicans said it was important that their party maintain control.

- Independents broke as they had with regard to Trump: 37% said it would be better if Democrats won at least one house; 27% said it would be better for Republicans to maintain control; 29% said it didn’t matter which party controlled Congress.



Sample Profile

500 registered voters, selected at random from registered voter lists in Washington state, were interviewed April 5-10 by live, professional interviewers. 32% of the interviews were conducted on cell phones. The margin of sampling error is ±4.5% at the 95% level of confidence. This means, in theory, had this same survey been conducted 100 times, the results would be within ±4.5% of the results reported here at least 95 times.

REGION

King County	31%
Pierce + Kitsap	15%
North Sound (Snohomish to Whatcom)	15%
Western Washington (Clallam to Clark)	18%
Eastern Washington	21%

GENDER

Male	49%
Female	51%

AGE

18-35	8%
36-50	20%
51-64	41%
65+	30%

PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Democrat	36%
Republican	27%
Independent	37%

VOTE HISTORY (last 4 elections)

Voted in 4 of 4 elections	26%
Voted in 3 of 4	18%
Voted in 2 of 4	20%
Voted in 1 of 4	21%
Voted in 0 of 4	12%

EDUCATION

High School	11%
Some College	27%
College Graduate	40%
Post Graduate	20%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

<\$50,000	21%
\$50 - 74,000	19%
\$75 - 99,000	18%
\$100,000+	23%
No Answer	19%

The Elway Poll

The Elway Poll is an independent, non-partisan analysis of public opinion in Washington and the Northwest.

PROPRIETARY QUESTIONS: Each quarter, space is reserved in the questionnaire to allow for proprietary questions. The fee for proprietary questions is \$1000 per question. You will receive the results of your question(s) with full crosstabulations within three days after the interviews are completed.

The Elway Poll
Seattle, WA

206/264-1500 FAX: 264-0301
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Enthusiasm Favors Democrats

Much is being made of an “enthusiasm gap” going into the midterm elections. Evidence from this survey suggests that Democrats are more motivated than Republicans about this election. To review:

GOP leadership in DC: Democrats +27

- 49% of Democrats polled were “angry” about the Republican leadership in Washington D.C.;
- 22% of Republicans were “enthusiastic” about their party’s leadership.

Donald Trump: Democrats +14

- 92% of Democrats were more likely to vote for a candidate who opposes Trump;
- 78% of Republicans were more likely to vote for a Trump ally.

Control of Congress: Democrats +13

- 65% of Democrats said it was “important” that their party take at least one house in Congress this year;
- 52% of Republicans said it was “important” that they retain control of both houses.

National Party Affinity: Democrats +7

- 83% of Democrats had a positive opinion of their national party;
- 76% of Republicans had a positive opinion of their national party

Legislative Vote: Democrats +7

- 94% of Democrats were planning to vote for mostly or all Democrats for the legislature;
- 87% of Republicans planned to vote for mostly or all Republicans.

State Party Affinity: Democrats +4

- 87% of Democrats had a positive opinion of their state party;
- 83% of Republicans have a positive opinion of their state party.

Taken alone, any of these measures can be discounted. The fact that they all point in the same direction, and all favor the Democrats, indicates more energy among Democrats going into the election.

They also indicate that most of that energy and motivation is being generated by national politics. What this means for state races remains to be seen.