

From the National Director

At times it seems as if the news media thinks that the only 2000 Senate race is between Hillary Clinton and Rudy Guiliani. Let's not forget that voters in 32 other states will also elect senators next November. The winners in Vermont, Wyoming, Delaware, North Dakota and Montana where populations range from 481,000 to 880,000 will each have one vote in the Senate just like New York's new Senator representing 18,175,000 Americans.

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Good Signs for Winning a House Democratic Majority and the Ouster of Arme y, DeLay, Hyde, Burton, et al.

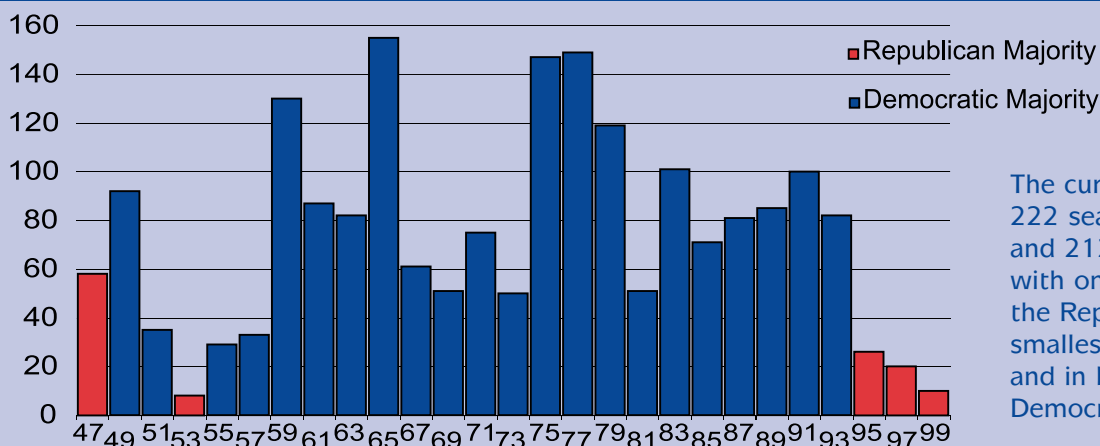
Control of the House of Representatives truly hangs in the balance. The GOP's margin of control is the smallest the House has seen since 1953, the last period in which the Republicans were in the majority. (See bar chart below.)

A net Democratic gain of just five seats (1% of the 435 up for election on November 7) will return the GOP to minority status in the House.

Even these figures understate the precarious nature of the Republicans' hold on power. The House is not merely in play in 2000 — the playing field itself tilts in the Democrats' favor. That's because, to date, GOP retirements outnumber Democratic by 4 to 1; 22 Republican House members have announced that they will not seek reelection, compared to just six Democrats.

Good Signs continued on page 2

GOP Advantage is Smallest Since 1953, Democrats Poised to Regain House



The current lineup in the House is 222 seats for the Republican Party and 212 for the Democratic Party, with one independent. That makes the Republicans' majority the smallest in the House since 1953 — and in November of 1954, the Democrats swept back into power.

The Three Branches of Government and the Future Direction of the Nation are at Stake in the 2000 Election

Good Signs continued

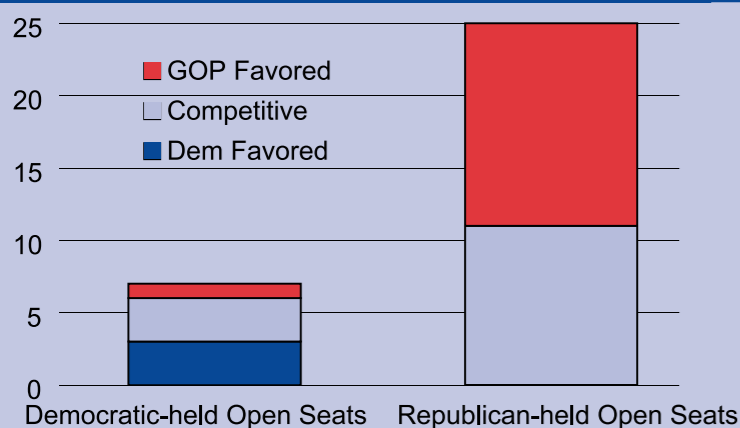
Hill insiders report that this GOP rush to the exits may be creating its own momentum; the number leaning towards retirement appears to be swelling, as Republican members contemplate the prospect of life in the minority.

This disproportionate retirement rate puts the GOP at a tremendous disadvantage. In the last decade, for example, 9 out of 10 House incumbents who sought reelection won, but the seats of retiring members switched parties one-third of the time. A race-by-race NCEC analysis shows, moreover, that this year half the seats of retiring Republican members are in competitive congressional districts (see chart below).

The Big Picture

Local issues, the caliber and campaign skills of the candidates, fundraising, demographic shifts, and other factors unique to each race will play a role in the battle for control of the House. But congressional races also have a significant national dimension, especially in presidential election years. Here again the signs are favorable for the Democratic Party, as outlined here.

Retirements Benefit Democrats

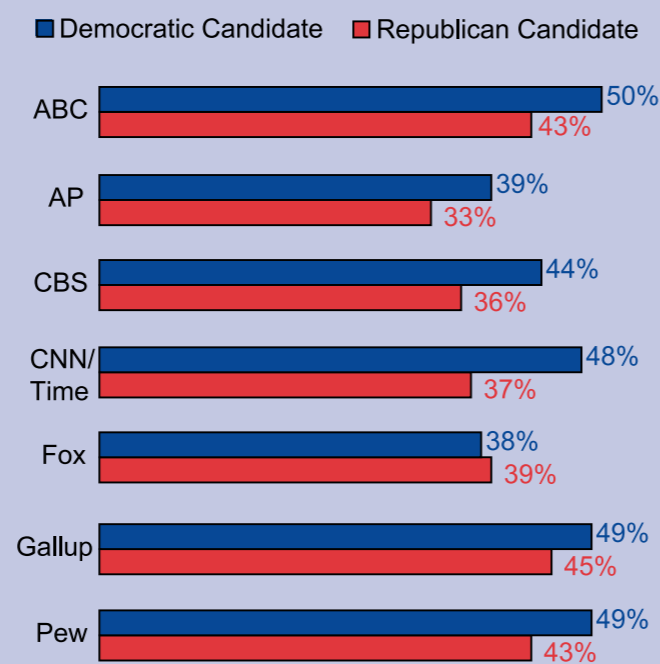


Democrats have a head start in the race for majority status in the House, thanks to a disproportionate number of GOP retirements.

Democrats Lead in "Generic Ballot" Test

Pollsters take a kind of nationwide, eye-in-the-sky, snapshot of the electorate using a "generic ballot" question. Voters are asked which candidate they would vote for in their congressional district, the Democrat or the Republican, if the election were being held today. Actual candidate names are not used (at this juncture, contenders have not yet emerged in many districts), but this has proven to be a useful gauge of the political climate. In 1994, when the Republican Party captured the House, the generic ballot question signaled swelling discontent with the Democrats. As the chart below shows, recent national polls signal heavy weather on the horizon for congressional Republicans.

"Generic Ballot" Shows Democrats with Edge

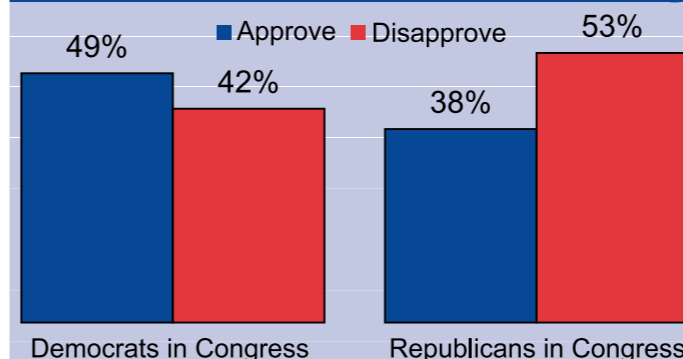


Voters are inclined to elect a Democrat as their representative in the U.S. House, according to national-level polling from late 1999.

GOP Ratings Trail Democrats'

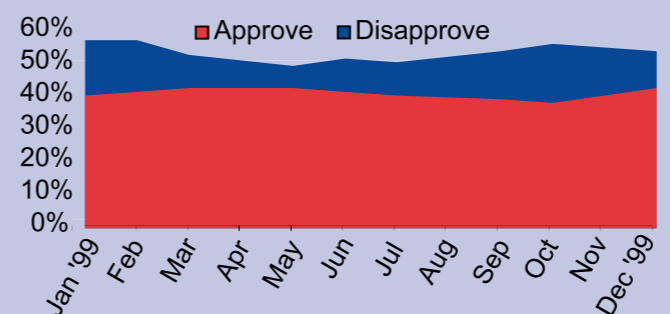
The U.S. is experiencing a period of economic expansion of unprecedented duration, the country is at peace, crime rates are declining, and optimism about the nation's future, as measured in polls, is at near-record levels. Very little credit accrues to this Congress. In stark contrast to the President's strongly positive job ratings, ratings for Congress as a whole are negative. The ratings are even lower when the public is asked about the job being done by Republicans in Congress, and by Republican congressional leaders.

Job Ratings: Democrats & Republicans in Congress



Public disapproval focuses specifically on congressional Republicans, while Democrats enjoy net positive ratings, according to recent national polling.

Job Ratings: Republican Leaders in Congress



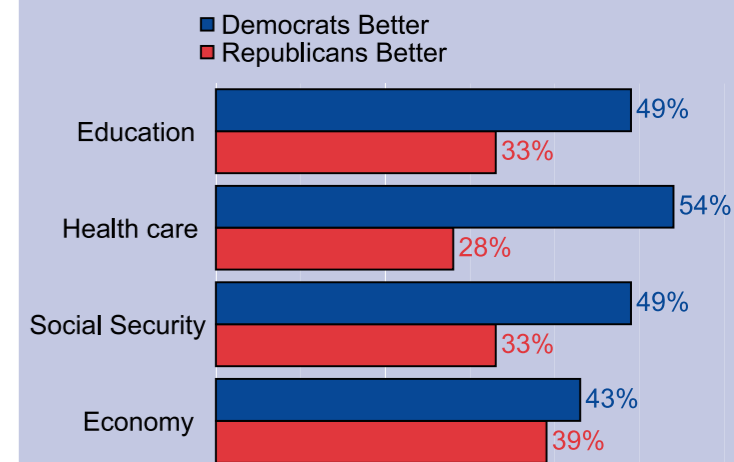
GOP congressional leaders' ratings were strongly negative during 1999 — although their ratings improved somewhat after Congress adjourned in December.

Voters' Agenda is a Democratic Agenda

In the last session of Congress, GOP initiatives (such as their failed \$800 billion tax cut for the rich) and obstructionist policies (killing the Patients' Bill of Rights and Medicare drug benefits, killing meaningful gun control measures, and a minimum wage increase) served to solidify their low approval ratings. Now it's evident that congressional Republicans are on the wrong side of the emerging agenda for campaign 2000.

The voters' agenda is a Democratic agenda. The issues that top the list when Americans are asked to name their election-year priorities — including education, health care, and Social Security — correspond to the issues that the Democratic Party is seen as best able to handle. And Americans pick the Democrats over the Republicans when they are asked which party has "better ideas for leading the country into the 21st century" (CBS News/New York Times Poll).

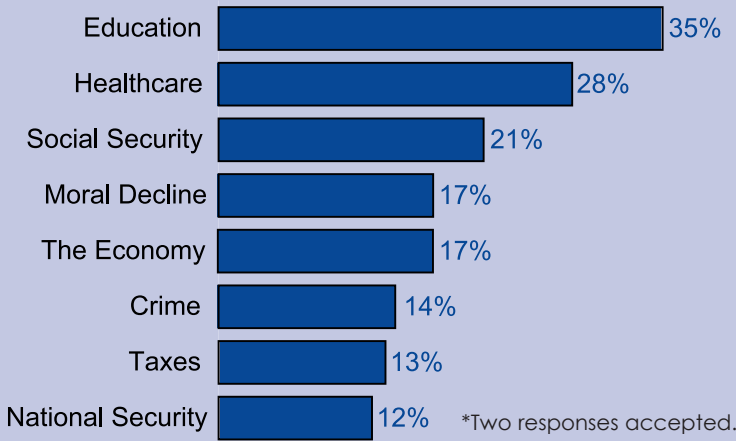
Party Better Able to Handle Top Issues



The Democrats have a clear edge over the GOP on the issues seen as top election-year priorities.

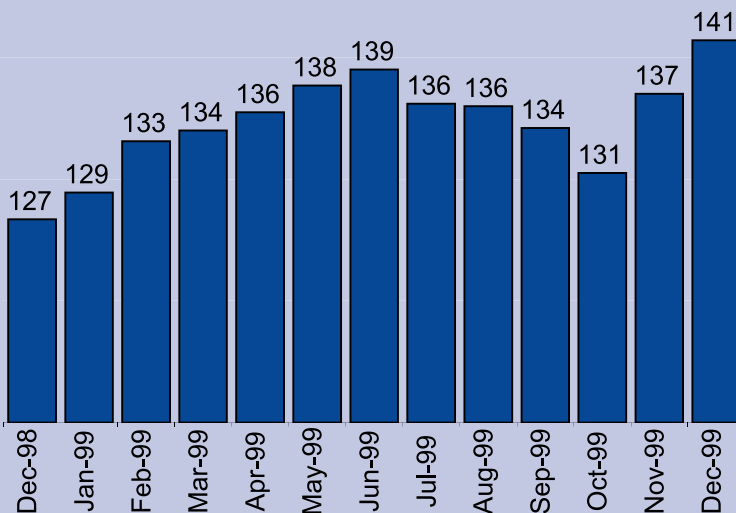
American's Top Priority Issues are at the Heart of the Democratic Agenda

Priorities for Congressional Elections*



Social concerns are the top voter priorities as the election year gets underway.

Consumer Confidence Hits 31-Year High



Consumer confidence is the highest it's been since 1968 and has made sizeable gains over the past 12 months. Not only is the Democratic Party seen as better able to handle the economy, but President Clinton's ratings on the economy are so strong, according to media polls, that even a majority of Republicans give him a thumbs-up.

National Director, continued

This newsletter focuses on the House of Representatives and NCEC's optimism about regaining majority control from the regressive conservatives now in control of the national agenda.

Over the next weeks we will bring you up to date news on the US Senate contests.

Most pundits are predicting little change in the 45 – 55 Senate lineup with Trent Lott, Jesse Helms and their right wing fellow travelers in control.

We, at NCEC, are more optimistic. We aren't ready yet to predict a new Democratic majority in the Senate but we see a real chance for gains.

With every election cycle NCEC has been able to improve the quality of its technical campaign services so important to our candidates. New innovations in 2000 will give candidates an additional edge.

We count on your support to insure that every progressive House and Senate candidate has this important NCEC advantage.

“ NCEC has provided invaluable technical assistance to my reelection effort. Their expertise has made a major difference not only in my race, but in countless races across the country. Without a doubt, the NCEC has led the fight for progressive candidates and won many of the most important battles. ”

-Senator Edward Kennedy
Democrat, Massachusetts