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Change versus more of the same:

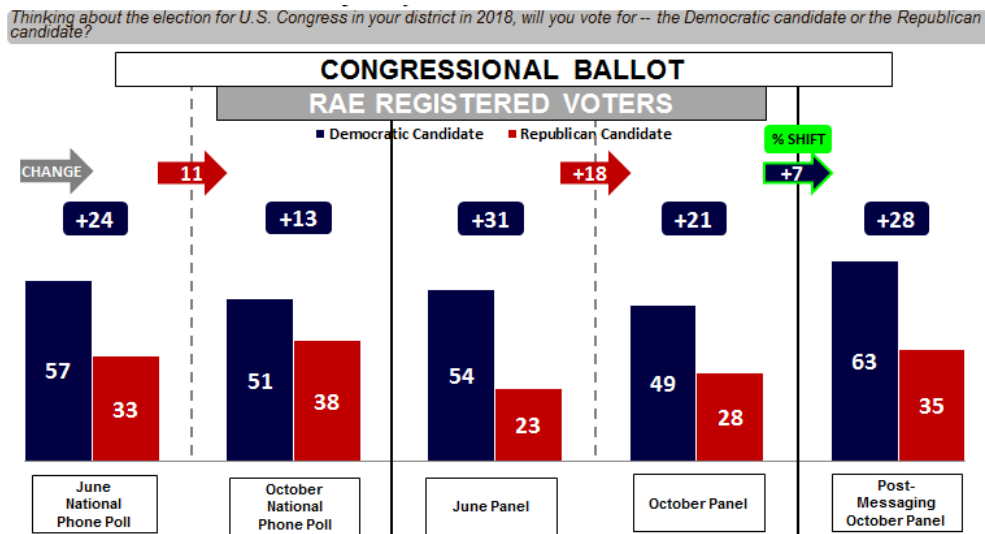
On-going panel of target voting groups provides path for Democrats in 2018

There are big forces at work in the coming year that could produce an earthquake of an off-year election, including a parade of indictments, the GOP civil war playing out in Republican primaries, a congressional impasse on everything, a wrong track number nearing 75 percent and a presidential job approval that does not get over 40 percent – as we now report in this second wave of *Democracy Corps'* phone poll and panel program on behalf of *Women's Voices. Women Vote Action Fund.*¹ African Americans are holding solid on key measures and ready to play their part; unmarried women can be readily stirred; and millennials, who are more disengaged than any other group, can be engaged if leaders and organizations get their act together. Democrats may push the generic ballot into double-digits with a promise to disrupt the status quo, a powerful economic change message, a focus on the unpopular Republican Congress, and attacks on the Republicans for their plans for health care and to cut Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security.

WVWVAF and *Democracy Corps'* on-going web-panel of turnout and persuasion targets shows what is happening and how Democrats can get to that strong result. This is a unique polling program consisting of national phone polling fielded simultaneous with an on-going web-panel of turnout and persuasion targets – primarily consisting of the Rising American Electorate (RAE) of minorities, millennials, and unmarried women, but also including white working class women. The RAE is the core of the Democratic base, yet has been underperforming in their vote and turnout for Democrats in recent elections, including 2016. Along with white working class women, with whom they share so much in common, they will decide the outcome in 2018. By return-

¹ These results are the second to be released from an innovative phone and on-going panel research program for *Women's Voices. Women Vote Action Fund* to deeply understand the diversity of America and the potential to shape the electorate and outcome in 2018. It is the second in a series of three waves of 1,000 national registered voter phone surveys with accompanying registered voter web-surveys among a panel of minorities, millennials, unmarried women and white non-college educated women (the RAE+), among 4,000 respondents from the first wave of web-surveys and 2,454 respondents in the second wave. The national phone survey of 1,000 voter-file matched registered voters with 65 percent of respondents reached on cell phones was conducted October 7-12, 2017. The voter-file matched RAE+ panel of 2,425 registered voters was conducted online October 6-18, 2017. Unless otherwise stated, the results are shown by the RAE only. Where white working class women are displayed, the results are shown for the full RAE+ sample to accurately reflect the attitudes of these voters. Where changes from the first wave are displayed, the wave 1 responses are filtered to wave 2 respondents only.

ing to the same RAE and white working class voters in this groundbreaking panel polling program, we are able to see real changes in enthusiasm and vote preference among actual voters.



This second wave finds that Democrats have lost some ground with these same respondents since we last surveyed them in June.

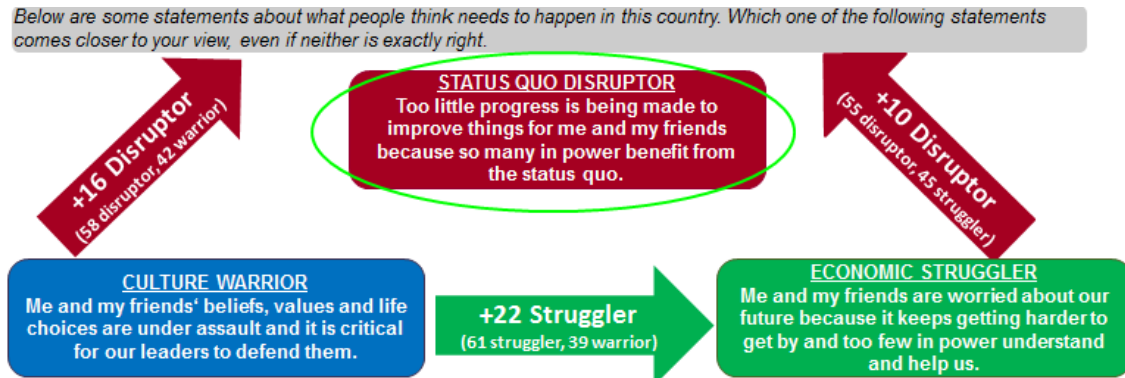
- The web-panel shows Democratic slippage in the congressional ballot and determination to vote across the RAE, though not among African Americans.
- It shows a weakening of the Democratic brand, as events and Trump following Bannon's advice leaves Democrats invisible on the economy and jobs and not fighting for health care, as in June.
- Critically, Trump is hated, but he is not collapsing and is stable on many parts of his identity and job performance. This will be controversial, but it is based on this panel of the same RAE voters and white working class women, and it is the best possible measurement of real changes.

Fortunately, these voters are determined to vote for change and to hold the GOP Congress and Senator Mitch McConnell in disdain. Those are the ingredients of an earthquake result in 2018.

Desire for change and disruption

The country's dissatisfaction is the starting point. Over three-quarters of the RAE and 63 percent of white working class women said the country is on the wrong track. They are deeply dissatisfied with the status quo that favors the powerful and doesn't produce a better economy. When Democrats really understand that is where their base is coming from and communicate they share their deep discontent and desire for disruptive change, they can consolidate and mobilize these voters, including the millennials.

The RAE and white working class women want to disrupt the status quo because ‘too little progress is being made...because so many in power benefit from’ it, and almost as many are driven by their economic concerns because ‘it keeps getting harder to get by and too few in power understand and help us.’ The least important demand across the board was for leaders to wage into the culture war to defend their ‘beliefs, values and life choices’ which are ‘under assault.’ That is further reflected in the 8-in-10 Rising American Electorate voters who said ‘people in power haven’t paid much attention to what I worry about.’



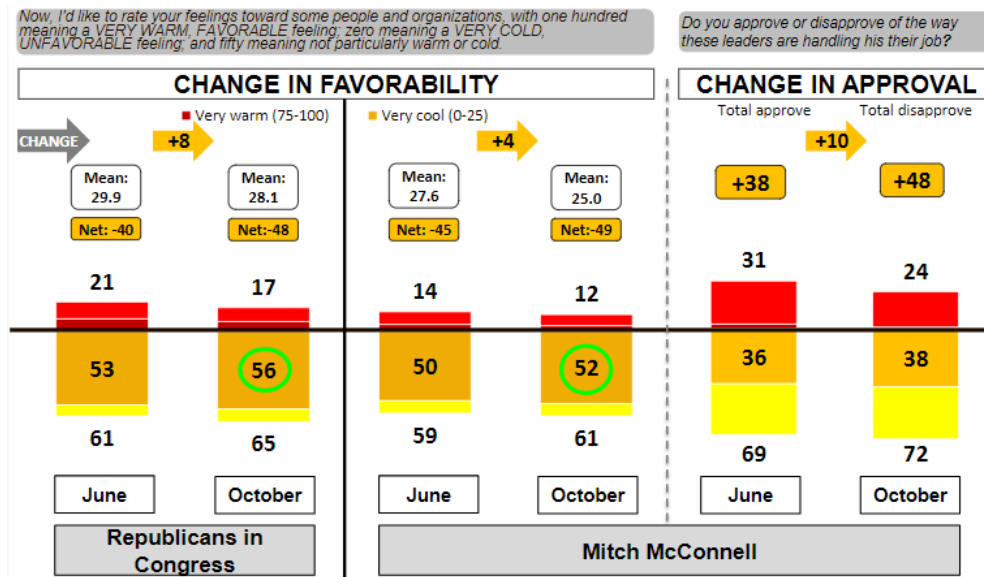
Perhaps the declining performance for Democrats since June is because outrage over Donald Trump’s actions on “culture wars” issues has dominated the Democratic opposition’s communications. Because voters do not hear Democrats expressing dissatisfaction with the status quo on economics or the balance of power when so many are concerned about the direction of this country, only 4-in-10 RAE voters said Democrats ‘know what it’s like to live a day in my shoes’ and are ‘for the right kind of change.’

Half of the RAE agreed with the Republicans that a real difference between them is the ‘Democrats are just more of the same business as usual’ while they ‘are disrupting the status quo in Washington.’ Reflecting where they see Democrats’ priorities, half agreed with the Republicans that the ‘Democrats care more about the rights of illegal immigrants than American citizens’ while they ‘want to keep our country safe from criminal illegal immigrants.’

Still these voters are very clear what they don’t want and that is the Republican Congress and those who lead it. Recall that 60 percent of the RAE, including 60 percent of white millennials, said progress making change is stalled because those in power defend the status quo.² Since June, these panel members have turned against them further, as roughly 55 percent expressed unfavorable feelings about the GOP and Mitch McConnell.

The Republican Congress said, trust us, no more politics as usual but they’ve taken U-turn after U-turn. They said their tax cuts would be for the middle class, but their plan is more trickle-down tax cuts for the top 1 percent who should pay their fair share. They promised better, cheaper health care, but their plans would make older workers pay 5 times more. They promised zero cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, but they’re pushing drastic cuts to them all. Enough politics as usual and broken promises!

² This is in comparison to a statement about the need to defend culture war issues.



Trump hated but not collapsing

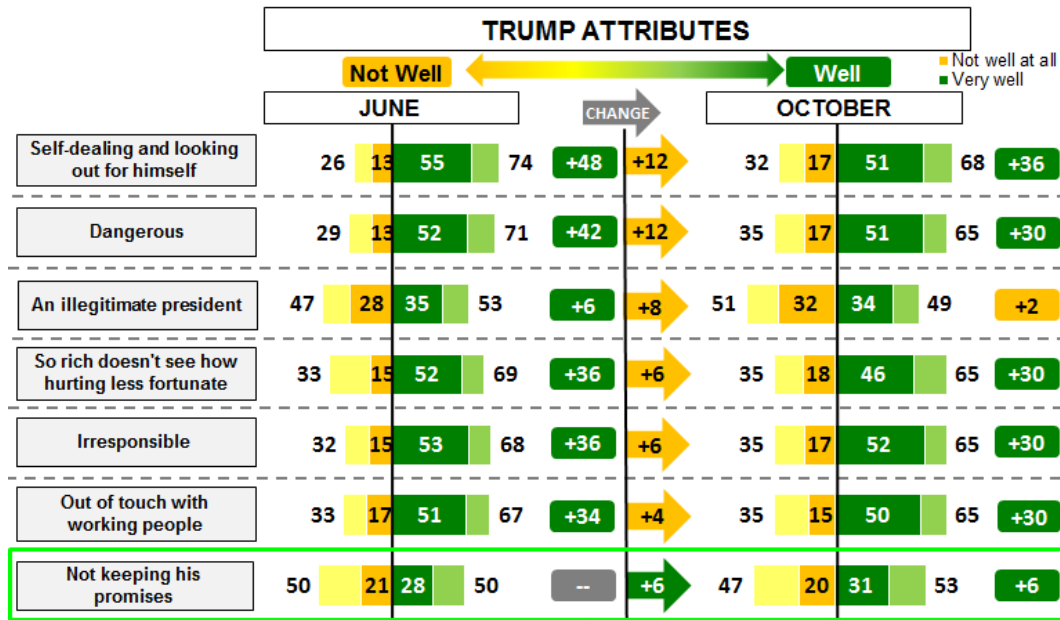
Trump’s approval is about 40 percent among all voters, and 31 percent with RAE in both the phone and panel back surveys, which is a marginal improvement among these panel respondents since June.

In our national phone poll among all registered voters nationally, Trump wins 55 percent of the Republican primary vote in a future presidential election. That is about the same as the proportion he achieved in the 2016 primaries and is consistent with a leader with a stable base of support as well.

When looking at a whole battery of negative attributes, the number that said he is ‘self-dealing,’ ‘dangerous’ and ‘irresponsible’ had fallen from June. (Remember, this is reporting on the same panel respondents, so these are real changes.) Maybe, they have been watching the adults ‘manage’ him and are somewhat less worried.

Even with the reduced doubts and marginal improvement in Trump’s approval, we should keep perspective: strong disapproval of Trump reached 55 percent and two-thirds accepted nearly all the negative descriptions of him, half strongly. Nearly two-thirds continued to believe that he is ‘out of touch with working people’ and that he is ‘so rich he doesn’t see how he is hurting the less fortunate.’

Crucially, he lost ground on ‘not keeping his promises,’ and two-thirds said that ‘we cannot afford to give Donald Trump more time,’ including 4-in-10 white working class women. Asked why they say he is ‘not keeping his promises,’ the independents and Trump voters cited that he ‘failed to repeal and replace Obamacare’ and is ‘getting us involved in foreign wars.’



GOP and Trump deeply vulnerable

Trump won the presidency saying, “trust me, I am not your typical politician.” An attack that reminds voters of this and goes on to describe his repeated U-turns on critical economic issues for the middle class says both that he *is* just like the rest and *will hurt* people like them. Over 60 percent said this attack raised serious doubts, 44 percent very serious – making it the top doubt in a long list of alternative tested. It also raised very serious doubts with one-third of the white working class women,

Donald Trump said trust me, I'm not your typical politician, but he's taken U-turn after U-turn. He said the richest would pay more taxes, but the top 1 percent is getting huge cuts. He promised better cheaper health care, but his plan makes older workers pay 5 times more. He promised zero cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, but now he is cutting all three.

No wonder two-thirds still said he is ‘out of touch with working people’ and a growing number said he is ‘not keeping his promises’ – things that describe a typical politician. That is the context where he takes his biggest hit.

Second election act for health care

The Democrats hold hefty advantages over the Republicans on knowing ‘what it’s like to live a day in my shoes,’ being ‘on my side’ and being ‘for the middle class.’ The party’s advantages are about double the advantage in the generic vote in the RAE. But when it comes to making

health care more affordable, the Democratic advantage is a whopping 37 points and rose to 43 percent at the end of the survey, with intensity much higher than any other issue.

Democrats *want* the election to be about making health care affordable and the terrible things Republicans tried to do.

It is hard to overstate how intense is the reaction to the Graham-Cassidy effort to replace the Affordable Care Act as 6-in-10 gave it a very cool response. African American voters are almost exclusively intense in their cool ratings, intense negative feelings outnumbered total positive feelings by three-to-one across the rest of the RAE, and intense negative feelings even exceeded positive ones among white working class women.

The Affordable Care Act, on the other hand, has become more popular than before, though voters still hope the Republicans will improve it, not destroy it, just as they still want Democrats to work to make health care more affordable.

A health care frame is also the most credible difference between the parties when voiced by Republicans. That the Democrats ‘will make Obama’s government takeover of health care permanent’ while Trump and Republicans want to ‘want to repeal and replace Obamacare’ was a real difference according to 6-in-10 in the RAE and two-thirds of white working class women.

Again, at the end of the survey, the battle over health care produces double the shift to the Democrats compared to any other issue area.

The strongest choice for election: no radical cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid and no to trickle-down tax cuts

These are the two most powerful framings of the choice in this election available for Democrats. They are seen as capturing real differences between the parties and they make voters more likely to vote for the Democrat. They are the frames with the strongest resonance among unmarried women and white unmarried women, millennials and white millennials – groups that were dropping off in their vote and enthusiasm since June – and they are two of the top five frames among minorities.

RICHEST MUCH PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE OF TAXES, NOT TRICKLE DOWN

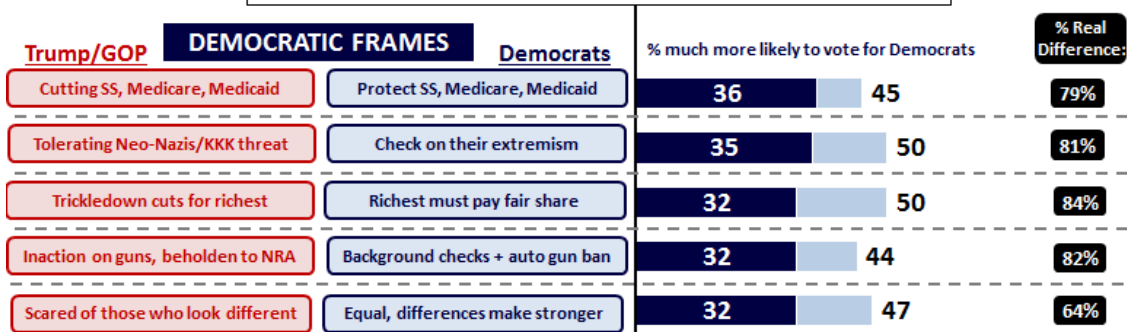
Donald Trump and the Republicans are wedded to trickle-down economics cutting taxes for the richest. The Democrats say trickle-down has failed and the richest need to pay their fair share of taxes.

PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE, MEDICAID

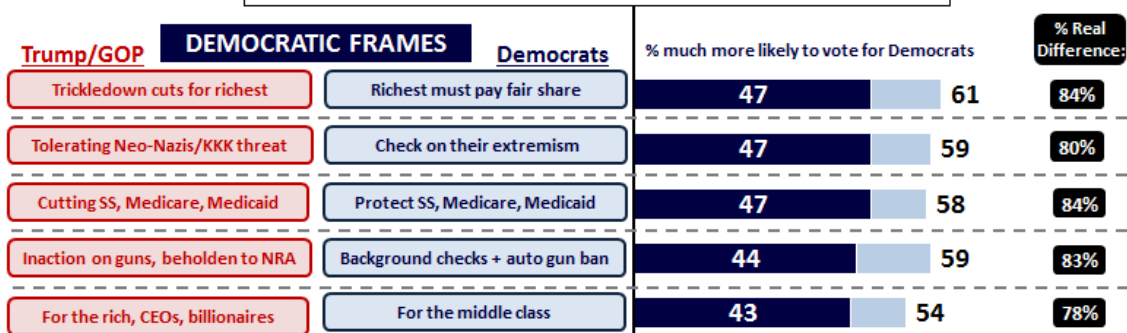
Donald Trump and the Republicans are pushing radical cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

(IF REAL DIFFERENCE) When you think about that difference, does it make you much more likely to vote for the Democratic/Republican candidate for Congress in 2018, somewhat more likely, or does it make no difference.

TOP FRAMES: MILLENNIALS



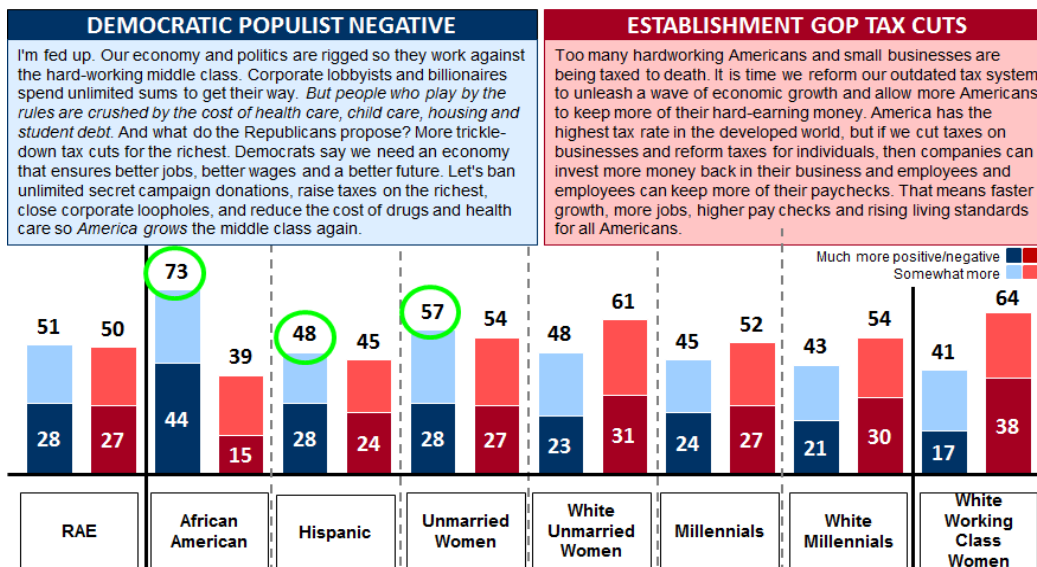
TOP FRAMES: UNMARRIED WOMEN



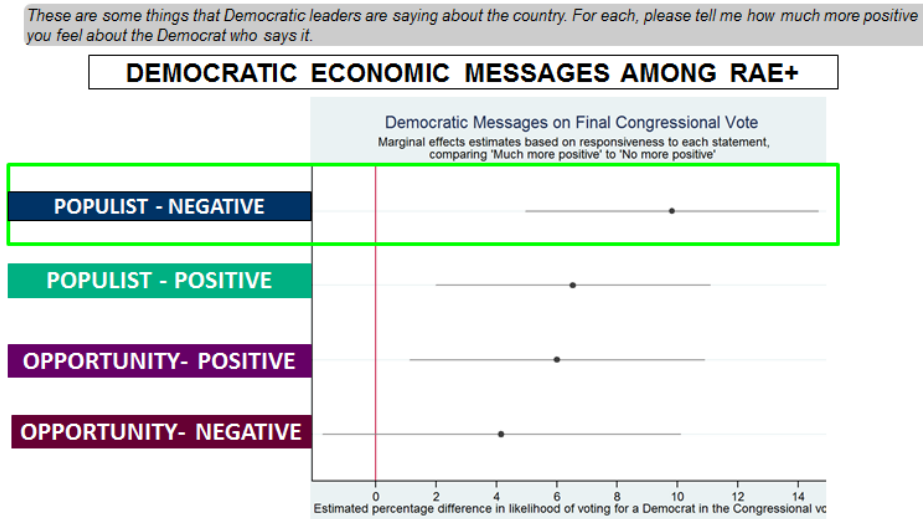
Fed up!

It is time to recognize that these voters will not be motivated unless they hear a message from the candidate that says he or she is ‘fed up’ and ‘the economy and politics are rigged against the hard-working middle class.’ This message deplores that ‘corporate lobbyists and billionaires spend unlimited money to get their way,’ which is more ‘trickle down’ while ‘people who play by the rules are crushed by the cost of health care, child care, housing and student debt.’ While it ends by proposing a range of changes ‘so American grows the middle class again,’ it is otherwise mostly negative and dramatic.

For each, please tell me how much more positive you feel about [the Democrat who says it/Donald Trump after reading it.]



This ‘fed up’ populist progressive message where two-third of the content is negative outperforms all the Democratic messages tested, including a less negative alternative, in shifting the vote for Congress. Nothing else comes close. It negates any Trump-led effort to turn the GOP into gate-crashers. It is time for progressives to adapt this framework and posture.

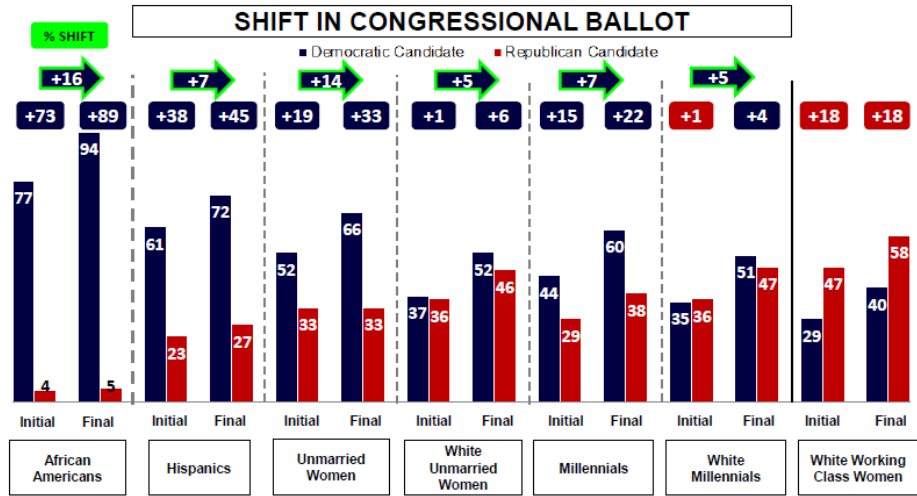


The potential earthquake

The advice is clear: Democrats must make the main choice in this election about how the Republicans in Congress have gone back on their promises on health care and protecting Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. They must express their anger with the status quo under GOP control that has produced no changes for those struggling in the economy while benefiting those in power even more. They said ‘trust me’ to voters and ran as disrupters of politics as usual, but just like politicians took U-turns on every issue.

When Democrats appeal to the motivations of the electorate and focus on this area where they are trusted to act, stronger Democratic support and engagement is possible. Intense interest in the election in 2018 in this survey rose from 27 to 34 percent across the Rising American Electorate and the margin for Democrats increased from +21 to +28. This strategy produced breath-taking shifts among African Americans and unmarried women and grudging but real changes with Hispanics and millennials.

Thinking about the election for U.S. Congress in your district in 2018, will you vote for -- the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?



Let me ask you again, there will be an election for U.S. Congress and other state and local offices in 2018. What are the chances of you voting in the election in 2018?

