

Melissa Grant's Notes for September 18th presentation:

Initial experiences in politics

Lobbied for enactment of the Clean Air Amendments of 1977:

Among other things, the Amendments set an acceptable schedule for future reduction in emissions from automobiles for the first time. Henry Rogers and Edmund Muskie (the Senate sponsor) had been trying to get the Amendments enacted for a few years.

At the time, I was working in the Government Relations department of Corning Glass Works in Washington, DC. Corning Glass Works makes the catalytic converter for cars. A catalytic converter is an exhaust emission control device that converts toxic gases and pollutants in exhaust gas from an internal combustion engine into less-toxic pollutants by catalyzing a redox reaction. Corning's VP of Government Relations instructed me to enlist other companies with a vested interest in the Amendments to join a Business Environmental Council, which would lobby for their enactment. I enlisted those companies and worked with them in lobbying their representatives to pass the bill. The effort was so successful that Rep. Rogers asked Corning if I could work from his office whipping the votes of the representatives of the companies in the Business Environmental Council. The Amendments passed and were signed into law.

This experience taught me not to vilify corporations, but to look for common ground to work together on mutual goals. It also taught me the importance of politics.

Trip to the Soviet Union (specifically Russia) when Brezhnev was the head of the government. I saw firsthand what it means to live under autocratic rule, where there are no democratic freedoms. I will do everything I can to preserve our democracy, which is under threat today.

Legislative Aide for Congressman Richard Ottinger: Ottinger was a member of the post-Watergate class of representatives, along with Henry Waxman and Tom Harkin. I learned that politics is the art of compromise and that the key to a representative's and senator's reelection is constituent service.

2022 Midterms Election:

No question, that since the repeal of *Roe v. Wade*, Democrats have the wind at their backs—but we can't take anything for granted. The question is whether we can keep the momentum going and make the election about keeping the “extreme” MAGA Republicans from taking the Congress, instead of referendum on President Biden.

The key to winning in the midterms is TURNOUT. And the most effective way to turn out the vote is to canvass. We didn't do it 2020 and lost seats to Republicans who did canvass. CANVASS, CANVASS, CANVASS. You can also phonebank and write postcards. <https://linktr.ee/grassrootsdemhq>

Polls still say that Republicans are favored to win the House:

Republicans have an 80% chance of holding between 208 and 245 seats.

Cook Report: 188 seats are solid Republican /162 seats are solid Dems

29 seats Likely or Leaning Dems and 25 seats Likely or Leaning Republican

California House Seats – Current Polls

22nd District – David Valadao v. Rudy Salas – toss-up Salas +5

27th District – Mike Garcia v. Christie Smith – toss-up

40th District – Young Kim favored to win over Asif Mahmood

41st District – Ken Calvert v. Will Rollins – Calvert favored to win

45th District - Michelle Steel v. Jay Chen – slightly favors Steel

47th District - Katie Porter v. Scott Baugh – Porter favored to win

49th District – Mike Levin v. Brian Maryott - Levin favored to win

Current Polls say Democrats are favored to win the Senate:

Pennsylvania – John Fetterman favored to win over Mehmet OZ – Fetterman +5

Georgia – Rev. Raphael Warnock slightly favored to win over Herschel Walker – some say it's a toss-up; But Real Clear Politics has Warnock +6

Wisconsin – Ron Johnson slightly favored to win over Mandela Barnes - Johnson+1

Ohio – J.D. Vance favored to win over Tim Ryan – But Real Clear Politics has Ryan +1

Florida – Marco Rubio favored to win over Val Demings – Rubio +2

North Carolina – Ted Budd slightly favored to win over Cheri Beasley – Budd +3

Arizona – Mark Kelly favored to win over Blake Masters – Kelly +2

Nevada – Catherine Cortez Masto slightly favored to win over Adam Laxalt – Laxalt +1

Alaska - Tshibaka +8 over Murkowski

Generic poll – for House as of today is tied 46/46

Bisen 45% approve 52 disapprove

Wrong Track – right direction 27, wrong track 68

2022 Primaries

Republican Primaries:

Of the ten House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump, four opted to retire, four lost primaries to Trump-backed candidates, and another, Rep. David Valadao (CA-22), is at serious risk of losing in November. Only Rep. Dan Newhouse (WA-04), who barely scraped by his primary, is sure to return in January.

But Trump's influence extends beyond that list: 21 of his 26 endorsees won their primaries. Of the five who lost, two lost to similarly proMAGA candidates in Georgia open seat runoffs and another was self-sabotaging Rep. Madison Cawthorn (NC-11). Only Reps. Nancy Mace (SC-01) and Newhouse truly beat back Trump-backed challengers, and they did so by thin margins with lots of help from center-right outside groups.

However, one reason Republicans are still favorites to retake the House is that they've avoided nominating MAGA-style candidates in most swing district races. In competitive districts (those rated Lean or Toss Up for the fall), a "Traditional/Governing" Republican emerged as the nominee 63% of the time. These include suburban legislators like Zach Nunn (IA-03), Tom Kean, Jr. (NJ-07) and Jen Kiggans (VA-02).

The pro-MAGA exceptions could help Democrats rein in GOP gains. Ardent pro-Trump candidates including John Gibbs (MI-03), Sam Peters (NV-04), Bo Hines (NC-13) and Yesli Vega (VA-07) could be tougher sells to suburban voters in Biden-won seats.

Democratic Primaries:

On the Democratic side, the party's progressive icons have been less successful in pushing the party left than Trump has been remolding the GOP in his image. Candidates endorsed by Sanders, Warren and/or AOC prevailed in 15 of 25 primaries, but this includes victories by five current incumbents such as "Squad" Reps. Rashida Tlaib (MI-12), Cori Bush (MO-01) and Ilhan Omar (MN-05), who barely scraped by in Minneapolis. Overall, "Establishment/Traditional" Democrats prevailed 65% of the time. And heavy spending by stridently pro-Israel groups such as DMFI was the difference-maker torpedoing progressive contenders in many of these races. But Progressives did score breakthroughs in several open, deep blue seats.

Still, high-profile wins by favorite targets of the left, Blue Dog Rep. Henry Cuellar (TX-28) and DCCC Chair Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (NY17), suggest that Democratic voters in rural areas and suburbs remain leery of embracing progressive activists. House Democrats are poised to move ever-so-slightly left in 2023, but a GOP takeover of swing seats held by centrist Democrats could be just as big a factor as primaries.

27th District – Mike Garcia v. Christy Smith

The newly drawn 27th district closely mirrors the previous 25th district, with one major change that will significantly boost Christy Smith's chances of flipping the seat in 2022: Simi Valley, a Republican stronghold, is no longer in the district (Julia Brownley unfortunately gained Simi Valley). In addition, the Democratic-leaning city of Lancaster is now in the district, moving the district from Biden+10 to Biden+12.

Christy recently tweeted "Roeverember." Christy is emphasizing a woman's right to choose and that Mike Garcia's voting record shows he is an extreme MAGA Republican

Garcia: He has the typical advantages of an incumbent, but it also means that the conservative congressman, who hasn't always softened his positions to match the blue hue of his district, will have to defend his record.

While Garcia bucked much of his party by supporting a bill codifying the right to same-sex marriage, he also voted against the certification of the 2020 presidential election,

He maintains sterling ratings with advocacy groups that oppose abortion rights, and recently compared the Federal Bureau of Investigation to the “Third Reich” after federal agents searched Donald Trump’s Florida residence, Mar-a-Lago.

(See the Grassroots Democrats HQ’s Christy Smith Information Library for more information on her positions and Garcia’s positions.

45th District – Michelle Steel v. Jay Chen

As a result of redistricting, the 45th swung from R+6.5 to D+5. When Steel won in 2020 the old district was 70% white and more conservative. The new district is diverse – nearly 37% are Asian Americans, 36% are white, and 23% are Latino. And there are large immigrant and refugee communities from Vietnam, the Middle East, South Asia, and North Africa.

Steel has an A rating from the NRA and an extreme anti-abortion track record.

If Republicans take the majority, Steel will join with those in her party to pass a national law making abortion illegal in all circumstances, including if the pregnancy risks the woman’s life. She even supports banning certain types of birth control and passage of the Life at Conception Act.

Amidst the backdrop of a 10-year-old rape victim forced to travel from Ohio to Indiana in order to obtain an abortion, Steel doubled-down on her extreme views on abortion by voting against HR 8297, a bill that will protect the right to seek abortions outside of a home state, and the Women’s Health Protection Act of 2022 that would protect a woman’s right to access abortion. She was also among the cohorts that signed a legal brief asking the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

She voted against the Consumer Fuel Price Gouging Prevention Act, and accepted \$100 from Exxon Mobil, \$100 Phillips-66, and \$1000 from the Association of Oil Pipeline PAC.

She also accepted \$12500 from Honeywell Int’l – a corporate polluter on EPA’s watchlist for polluting water districts with cancer-causing chemicals, PFAs. As a result, she voted against holding PFA polluters accountable.

Pew research found that 3/4s of AAPI voters say abortion should be legal—more than any other racial group

Chen is emphasizing his position on a woman’s right to control her body/her life, and abortion. Steel is running on the bread-and-butter issues, hoping voters will be motivated by inflation and the economy.

(See the Grassroots Democrats HQ's Jay Chen Information Library for more information on Jay's and Steel's positions).

Sign up to canvass, postcard, or phonebank: <https://linktr.ee/grassrootsdemhq>