

The 2018 Cycle

--Budget and Beyond--

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Format

- I will outline the political landscape.
- Then I will respond to questions.

Political landscape

- Why talk about politics in 2017?
- Because the political landscape says a lot about what kind of policy outcomes will emerge.
- Because politicians on the ballot in 2018 set the tone and likely success of their campaigns in this year.
- And because we have a still-developing administration and power structure in DC after eight years of the Obama administration.

First a little review

- Republicans won the presidential race in Wisconsin for the first time since 1984, Ronald Reagan's re-election race; Donald Trump beat Hillary Clinton in a state that was to be her firewall.
- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, a first term Republican elected in 2010, defeated Russ Feingold for a second time after being written off in the late summer. Outpolled Trump.
- Republicans, already in control of state government, actually grew their majorities in the state Senate and the state Assembly.
- Republicans at the national level won back the White House and the U.S. Senate to go along with their majority in the U.S. House, led by Janesville's Paul Ryan.

Democrats weak

- By almost any measure, Democrats are weak nationally and in the state.
- No obvious leader at either level.
- Democrats not all that long ago were in a similar position to Republicans – after the 2008 elections. Gov. Jim Doyle and Democrats controlled governor's office and Legislature for the first time in 24 years, while Obama and Democrats controlled Congress. Then in 2010, the GOP captured the statehouse – the first time in more than 70 years that partisan control of all three switched in the same election.
- Dems' best short-term hope: a snapback occurs in the 2018 elections ...that they succeed in the first midterm as Republicans succeeded in Obama's first midterm in 2010. And that a U.S. Supreme Court decision on remap gives them a morale boost and closer majorities.

Things to watch this year

- Success of Gov. Scott Walker's re-election budget. Will fellow Republicans continue to challenge Walker on transportation, school spending, tax cuts? Will Walker's popularity numbers recover ...been below 50 percent approval. New poll out tomorrow.
- Baldwin's role in Dems' efforts to thwart Obamacare repeal. Already Republican attacks on her.
- The overall success of the Obamacare repeal-and-replace effort. Anger over the all-Democratic effort on health care helped fuel GOP wins in 2010. Will Republicans suffer a similar fate?
- And who will emerge as top candidates against WalkerBaldwin?

The challengers

- Some Democratic names for governor ...state Sen. Kathleen Vinehout, of Alma; state Rep. Dana Wachs, of Eau Claire; Jefferson County DA Susan Happ; businessman Andy Gronik, of the Milwaukee area; and Madison Mayor Paul Soglin.
- Some Republican names for U.S. Senate ...Kevin Nicholson, consultant, ex-Marine; banker Eric Hovde, who ran unsuccessfully for the GOP Senate nomination in 2012; state Rep. Dale Kooyenga and state Sens. Scott Fitzgerald and Leah Vukmir.

Trump factor

Bad numbers vs. other new presidents. But strong core support

Dominates media

--Will 2018 results hinge on his personal success ...or economy, stock market, health care changes?

--Or will Walker, Baldwin be able to break through the noise and set their own agenda?

--More polarized now. Last time a gov, Senate candidate of different parties won Wisconsin in a mid-term....? 1998: Thompson and Feingold during Clinton's second term. Good economic times.

Questions

- Thank you and your questions?
- Email: mayers@wispolitics.com

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