

OFFICIAL BALLOT

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

FEDERAL

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DOWN-BALLOT DAMAGE

How Trump and Cruz Will Cost
House Republicans Seats

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - DISTRICT

Vote for one person by filling in the circle to the left of your choice.



DOWN-BALLET DAMAGE:

HOW WILL TRUMP & CRUZ COST HOUSE REPUBLICANS SEATS

Fear and Loathing at the Capitol Hill Club

“Restless, Exasperated, Impatient”: not just descriptions of the electorate that has given rise to Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump, and Tea Party darling Ted Cruz. These are adjectives from one morning’s worth of headlines describing the panic of Washington D.C. Republicans – including House Republican leadership – about the rise of Trump and Cruz, and their impact on the party’s chances up and down the ballot in 2016.

Even if neither Trump nor Cruz is the ultimate nominee, it is clear that the entire Republican brand has been impacted irreparably by Trump and Cruz’s magnetic pull to the extreme right.

On Capitol Hill, what began as behind-closed-doors consternation has spilled out into the open; there hasn’t been this much House Republican handwringing since the last time it rained on a Seersucker Thursday. With less than a week to go until the Iowa Caucus, Charlie Cook notes that House Republicans are “genuinely frightened” by the very real possibility that their party nominates Donald Trump or Ted Cruz for president, instigating a **possible “down-ballot apocalypse.”**

Fueling the fear is Speaker Ryan’s and NRCC Chairman Greg Walden’s own polling, which shows that even if establishment Republicans are successful in toppling Trump, the heir apparent, Senator Cruz, would be even worse for their electoral chances in November. According to POLITICO, the House GOP’s polling indicates that Senator Cruz would be the biggest drag on House Republicans down ticket, but even still, “a plurality of respondents — 48 percent to 40 percent — would be less likely to vote for a Republican congressional candidate or incumbent if Trump were the nominee.”

Trump, Cruz & the House Republicans’ Battlefield

If House Republicans are “frightened” by the prospect of either Trump or Cruz atop their ticket, they should be downright terrified of the damage already done to their party. The fact is that the Presidential frontrunners have already imperiled several House Republicans’ chances at reelection – well before the first votes are cast in the nominating contest.

While Cook Political Report notes that even House Republicans from “deep-red districts” are concerned about Trump and Cruz, the negative impact is most

pronounced for several Republican incumbents in blue or purple districts where the House GOP is playing defense this cycle.

Empowering & Highlighting the Socially Intolerant

The rise of Trump and Cruz – and the subsequent normalization of inflammatory rhetoric in the conversation within the Republican Party – has invited new scrutiny on House Republican incumbents who have themselves made offensive statements that echo Trump and Cruz’s divisive comments.

Members with a history of hateful rhetoric – Mike Coffman of Colorado, or Barbara Comstock of Virginia – find themselves being compared anew to Trump, who has become a particularly potent symbol for the GOP’s xenophobia among the Latino community.

Trump and Cruz have created an atmosphere of social intolerance, and have chosen to shine a spotlight on social issues. For example, by **celebrating Kim Davis, the Kentucky Clerk against gay marriage**, there is a spotlight subsequently shone on Republicans like Rod Blum in Iowa and Scott Garrett in New Jersey, for their support of the First Amendment Defense Act, which is incredibly out of step with their district.

Further, the national focus on the **heavily-edited Planned Parenthood videos**, particularly on the Presidential debate stage, kept national news attention on them. This forced and/or empowered House Republicans to react with repeated defund votes and the launch of a Planned Parenthood investigative committee.

You Can’t Take that Back

Some vulnerable House Republicans have been emboldened by Trump’s bombast, making their own pronouncements **parroting his comments** – with the difference being that these Republicans are on the ballot in moderate, diverse districts where their hateful remarks will be a general election liability.

Florida Congressman John Mica’s thinly-veiled dog whistling and public insistence that President Obama meet with “young thugs in homicide prone cities” might sound like a routine soundbite from a Trump rally, but Mica is now up for reelection in a district with a roughly 10 percent African-American population where his comments will reverberate.

Get on the Trump Train, or Be Run Over By It

As Trump's foothold within the GOP base has solidified; Republican officials throughout the party have been **hesitant to speak their mind about his candidacy**.

To date, Speaker Ryan has repeatedly confirmed he would support Trump as his party's nominee, in the face of such an outcome's increasingly likely odds. Similarly, perhaps fearing for their own right flank, multiple vulnerable House Republicans have heaped praise on Trump's candidacy and its impact on the party. Iowa Congressman Rod Blum went so far as to try to draw parallels between himself and Trump, putting voice to similarities that Blum's opponent can exploit next fall, whether or not the Iowa and New York businessmen are on the ballot together.

Stuck Between Trump, Cruz and a Hard Place

For some Republican members who have gone to great lengths to project a moderate veneer to voters, the impact of the GOP presidential nominating contest is particularly fraught. On the one hand, Trump and Cruz's rhetoric and policy positions are often in direct conflict with the positions these members would stake out if they were truly the moderates they purport to be. However, Trump and Cruz have stirred up real, authentic consternation among the GOP base, sentiment that – as told by GOP operatives to Charlie Cook – could “backfire” on incumbents who endorse establishment presidential candidates.

Illinois' Bob Dold is running in an extremely competitive district, yet still felt compelled by the current political climate to address an anti-Muslim conference and to harshly dial-up his anti-Obama rhetoric. Maine's Bruce Poliquin – a favorite of Wall Street Republican donors – cannot bring himself to denounce the offensive, Trump-like rhetoric of Governor Paul LePage, a move many in the state are ascribing to a fear of retribution.

Trump & Cruz Light Fire under Democratic Base

In addition to the negative impact that Trump and Cruz have had on the entire Republican brand, they have also already **played an important role in motivating the Democratic base**, long before November 2016.

Regardless of who is the ultimate Republican presidential nominee, all Presidential candidates have been pulled to the extreme right, and this will fire up traditional Democratic voters, and increase their turnout in Democratic and Democratic-leaning districts on Election Day. House candidates, like those in NV-04 challenging Cresent Hardy, will continue to channel this energy in their races.

This is Just the Beginning...

Following are examples of Trump and Cruz's early impact, as of January 2016, on vulnerable House Republicans. This list is sure to grow if either extreme candidate is met with success in the upcoming contests in Iowa and New Hampshire.

Co-06: MIKE COFFMAN

Hispanic State Legislator wrote an op-ed titled - ["Mike Coffman paved the way for anti-Immigrant Donald Trump"](#)

Colorado Pols - ["Mike Coffman is Terrified of Answering Trump Questions"](#)

Colorado Pols - ["Colorado GOP Critical of Trump Muslim Comments...Except for Mike Coffman"](#)

The Colorado Independent- ["Why Mike Coffman spoke to the "nation's leading anti-Muslim hate group"](#)

VA-10: BARBARA COMSTOCK

MSNBC - [GOP candidate: US should track immigrants like Fed-Ex packages](#)

"Immigration needs to be done by legislation, not executive order," Comstock said Wednesday. "First and foremost, we need to stop playing politics with this, secure the borders and do it. We know how to do it."

"Fed-Ex can track packages coming in here all of the time, we can track people who are coming into the country and we can do that right," she added.

Politico - [GOP wrestles with prospect of Trump-led ticket](#)

Among signs waved by Latino, labor and Black Lives Matter protesters outside of Donald Trump's rally here Wednesday night was one targeting a local congresswoman: "Trump & Comstock: Respect Women," read a placard hoisted by an organizer for NARAL Pro-Choice Virginia.

CA-25: STEVE KNIGHT

Steve Knight Suggested Democrats Only Want to Give Immigrants

Citizenship so They Will Vote for Democrats ([AUDIO](#)). –23:08

“And the only reason you want somebody to become an American citizen, is because you’ll believe that that group of people will vote for you, more than they’ll vote for the other person.”

Steve Knight supports First Amendment Defense Act, which allows discrimination against same-sex married couples: [LINK](#)

FL-07: JOHN MICA

Orlando Sentinel – Mica to Obama: Talk to ‘thugs’ – not on CNN

John Mica Compares Providing Food to Families on Welfare to Feeding Alligators ([VIDEO](#)). Here’s what John Mica had to [say](#):

“Now people are not alligators, but I submit that with our current handout, non-work welfare system, we’ve upset the natural order. We’ve failed to understand simple warning signs. We’ve created a system of dependency.”

John Mica supports First Amendment Defense Act, which allows discrimination against same-sex married couples: [LINK](#)

NV-04: CRESENT HARDY

Hardy Didn’t Think He Was Going To Win His Seat Because He Thought It Was A Minority District ([VIDEO](#)). Here is what Cresent Hardy had to [say](#):

“Well, just to give you, when I looked at this last summer, when they asked me to take a look at this race; I didn’t think it was a winnable race either because I thought it was a minority district.”

Nevada State Democratic Party - Cresent Hardy says one thing to Spanish language media, the opposite to English language media

Cresent Hardy supports First Amendment Defense Act, which allows discrimination against same-sex married couples: [LINK](#)

IA-01: ROD BLUM

Rod Blum supports First Amendment Defense Act, which allows discrimination against gay individuals: [LINK](#)

Rod Blum Compares Himself to Donald Trump in Interview ([AUDIO](#)). Here's what Rod Blum had to say:

"Yeah I think Trump is, I'm not a political expert or a polling expert, but it seems to me that he's probably getting a lot of support from folks that are tired of this business. Politics as usual, they're tired of it. And they want to have straight talking candidates, straight talking elected officials, who are actually going to get things done instead of always just talking about things, getting things done. And I think business people, like myself, that's what we've had a career of doing is getting things done, solving problems."

MI-07: TIM WALBERG

WILX, NBC - Walberg Says Presidential Candidates Can Learn from Trump

"Republican Presidential Candidate Donald Trump has been getting a lot of criticism for his blunt answers. But Michigan Congressman Tim Walberg says Trump is concise, and other Presidential candidates should learn from him. In an interview with News 10, Congressman Walberg said, 'I think this can only be good as long as it remains focused on taking back the prize of the White House, and moving in a direction that's patterned after the framers and founders of the constitution of our country.'"

WJR, 760 AM - Walberg reaction to Obama's executive action

"America is stepping up to the plate and saying we fear a runaway government. We fear this Administration, this President, and pushing back against our liberties and we are going to show it by purchasing weapons to take care of ourselves and let it be known that we are not going away like sheep and letting the government control our lives."

Steve Gruber Show - Walberg called Black Lives matter student protestors at University of Michigan "whiny snot-nosed people" in interview. ([AUDIO](#))

Tim Walberg supports First Amendment Defense Act, which allows discrimination against same-sex married couples: [LINK](#)

MI-08: MIKE BISHOP

Michigan's Big Show – Bishop announces his support for Donald Trump in interview. ([AUDIO](#)) Here's what Mike Bishop had to say:

*“Donald Trump has really done something I have not seen in a long time, which is really opened up the interest in the political process, which I think is great for the political process. I think a lot of folks would like to see someone else get the nomination, but **you’ve not seen this kind of interest in the public debate in a long time... so it’s good, I think he’s brought good discussion.** It’s amazing, it really is. It’s great to see.”*

Mike Bishop supports First Amendment Defense Act, which allows discrimination against same-sex married couples: [LINK](#)

NY-01: LEE ZELDIN

ABC News – Donald Trump Finds Praise on Capitol Hill, but No GOP Endorsements

Freshman Rep. Lee Zeldin, R-N.Y., who has been a prominent opponent of the Iran deal as Congress’s only Jewish Republican, broadly praised Trump’s positioning on foreign policy.

“He understands that our enemies do not respect weakness,” Zeldin said.

While Zeldin also said he wasn’t prepared to endorse Trump or any other candidate, he also complemented Trump’s persona.

“Americans want candid, brutally honest, sometimes politically incorrect leadership,” he said.

Lee Zeldin supports First Amendment Defense Act, which allows discrimination against same-sex married couples: [LINK](#)

PA-07: PATRICK MEEHAN

The New York Times - With Some Abstentions, Pennsylvania Republicans Welcome Donald Trump in New York

“Mr. DiGiorgio said that there had been calls from within the party to rescind Mr. Trump’s invitation to headline the lunch, which is supposed to have about 300 attendees, but that organizers resisted the idea. Several of Pennsylvania’s top lawmakers say they are staying home to work on the budget, others cited scheduling problems, and some, such as Representative Patrick Meehan, have publicly expressed concerns about associating publicly with Mr. Trump.

While the luncheon will bring big dollars to the party's coffers, Democrats have made it clear that Republicans could pay a price for letting Mr. Trump raise money for them."

IL-10: BOB DOLD

Capitol Fax - [Dold hit for signing NRCC contract, appearing with anti-immigrant blogger](#)

Bob Dold attended and was the keynote speaker at an anti-Muslim conference.

ME-02: BRUCE POLIQUIN

Roll Call - [Before Donald Trump, There Was Maine's Paul LePage](#)

Many are calling Maine Governor Paul LePage's recent racist remarks a "Trump-effect" – where Trump is opening the door to more bigoted comments in our public discourse. In Maine, many GOP-ers were too afraid to even comment on LePage's racist rant, including Maine Republicans Sen. Collins and Congressman Bruce Poliquin.

NJ-05: SCOTT GARRETT

Scott Garrett supports First Amendment Defense Act, which allows discrimination against same-sex married couples: [LINK](#) [LINK](#)

Scott Garrett refuses to pay dues to NRCC, due to support for gay candidates: [LINK](#)

NY-24: JOHN KATKO

John Katko breaks campaign promise - in socially-moderate district - and repeatedly votes to defund Planned Parenthood

Syracuse Post-Standard - [House GOP votes to defund Planned Parenthood with help of John Katko](#)

Katko had promised during his 2014 campaign for Congress that he would not vote to defund Planned Parenthood.

But this summer Katko called for Congress to investigate undercover videos from abortion opponents. Abortion opponents claimed the videos showed a Planned Parenthood official discussing the sale of fetal tissue from abortions, which is illegal.

In August, Katko said the heavily-edited videos were "deeply disturbing."

Syracuse Post-Standard -- [Will Planned Parenthood vote cost Rep. John Katko women's support?](#)