



Welcome to the spring edition of the AMA's Very Influential Physician (VIP) Insider. Read on for details about these topics:

- House to vote on drug pricing legislation
- What to watch for in the race for the House
- Follow up is key, here is why
- The campaign trail starts here – registration now open for 2019 AMPAC Campaign School
- VIP exclusive: 2019 Congressional calendar

### **House to vote on drug pricing legislation**

On Thursday the House is expected to vote on a package of bills including prescription drug legislation that would increase transparency and expand competition. H.R. 987–Strengthening Health Care and Lowering Prescription Drug Costs Act, includes a number of bills which the AMA has previously supported, including:

- The CREATES Act (H.R. 965), which was recently reported by both the House Judiciary and Energy and Commerce Committees. The CREATES Act would penalize drug manufacturers that withhold samples needed during the FDA approval process from their generic rivals.
- Protecting Consumer Access to Generic Drugs Act of 2019 (H.R. 1499) which would ban "pay-for-delay" agreements whereby one manufacturer pays another to delay market entry.
- BLOCKING Act (H.R. 938) to discourage "parking" of the 180-day exclusivity period by the first generic applicant.

This is a step in the right direction and good news for patients and physicians who have been pushing hard on Congress to enact drug pricing legislation that makes prescription drugs more accessible. As this package of legislation makes its way to the floor, the AMA will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates through its grassroots social media channels. Stay informed on the latest developments by following us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

### **What to watch for in the Race for the House**

By [Charlie Cook](#) of The National Journal

Last year's midterm elections may have been the first time in modern history that the elections for the House drew more attention, both before and after the balloting,

than those for the Senate.

In fact, many competitive House races saw spending levels comparable to what would have typically been spent in Senate races not long ago. Democrats outspent their Republican rivals in 59 of the 75 most competitive House races, according to OpenSecrets.org, including many GOP incumbents, some by ratios of 2- or 3-to-1.

Can Democrats hold onto this majority next year? The 18 seats that Republicans would need to gain isn't a particularly big number, given that Democrats are defending 31 seats in districts that President Trump carried in 2016 compared to only three GOP seats in districts where Hillary Clinton prevailed. Their turf includes district long held by Republicans in suburbs of Atlanta; Dallas; Houston; Kansas City; Oklahoma City; Richmond, Virginia; and coastal South Carolina.

Increasingly, geography is destiny—presidential voting in a state or district is a strong indicator of down ballot voting, though not entirely determinant. But at the same time, history seems to be more with Democrats.

Cook Political Report House Editor David Wasserman points out that control of the House has not flipped in consecutive elections since 1954, and the last time the House changed control in a presidential election year was 1952. The House rarely flips—five times (1954, 1994, 2006, 2010, 2018) in the last 65 years—but when it does, it is almost always in midterm years, which tend to be more explosive.

Wasserman also points out that Democrats have gained House seats in five of the past six presidential election years, with newly redrawn maps in Texas making 2004 the lone exception.

History works against Republicans in another way: open seats. Typically, when a party loses its House majority, it then sees disproportionate retirements in the very next election, while the party with the newly acquired majority usually sees relatively few. That only stands to reason—a party that has been waiting to get in power is likely to see few members immediately bail out, while members who have lived in the promised land of a majority often don't enjoy minority status and thus hit the road.

Jessica Taylor, ace political reporter for National Public Radio and contributor to the Cook Political Report, points out that in 1996, after Republicans captured their first majority in the House in 40 years, Democrats saw 28 retirements in the next election, Republicans just 21.

After Republicans lost their House majority in 2006, Republicans saw two-dozen retirements in 2008, compared to just three for Democrats. After Democrats lost their majority in 2010, Taylor points out, 20 Democrats didn't seek reelection in 2012.

The number of Republican and Democratic retirements, and the makeup of those districts, is of great importance to the 2020 House landscape.

Obviously, these are all secular trends—factors related exclusively to what is going on within the House. But also important is how strong the top of the ticket will be for each party and which side is benefiting or suffering from turnout.

An interesting argument Republicans have been making lately is that in 2018, like in many midterm elections, it was basically a referendum on the incumbent president. Trump had low approval ratings, so his party paid the price. The current, though not terribly loud, argument heard now is that 2020 will be less of a referendum on Trump—after all, his name will be on the ballot—and that GOP candidates will not be quite as tethered to Trump as they were in 2018.

It's an interesting argument. We'll know in 18 months whether it pans out or not. That is one reason why Republican attempts now to effectively put Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and democratic socialism on the ballot in each district makes a lot of sense in some of these newly acquired Democratic districts. The college-educated, suburban women who helped put Democrats over the finish line in many of these key districts in 2018 are not necessarily on board with the same agenda that some of these new Democrats, though not necessarily Speaker Nancy Pelosi, are promoting today.

There are good reasons to watch the House. Democratic control is hardly a lock, but if you had to bet today, with just what we know today, there is a greater chance that Democrats will hold the chamber than Republicans will in recapturing it.

### **Follow up is key, here is why**

Our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) wanted to know whether constituents engage in timely and helpful follow up after their meetings with Congress. To find out, they asked Legislative Directors and Legislative Assistants the following question:

*"Do constituents (or their organization) generally follow up with you in a helpful and timely manner?"*

What we learned: Citizen advocates need to step up their game when it comes to following up after meetings with Congress. A clear majority of staff (85%) indicated that citizen advocates could improve their follow-up efforts. While only 15% of the congressional staff agreed that constituents follow up after meetings in a timely AND helpful manner; 40% said "No," indicating that follow up is neither timely or helpful; 39% said follow up is "timely, but not helpful;" and 6% responded that follow up is "helpful, but not timely."

Congressional offices host an average of 28 meetings every day! Constituents who wait too long to follow up after meetings or don't provide the helpful information

requested by staff during meetings, risk being soon forgotten. Or WORSE, staff question whether the issues discussed are really a priority.

**The campaign trail starts here – registration for 2019 AMPAC Campaign School now open!**

Open to AMA members, their spouses, medical students, residents and state medical association staff who want to become more involved in campaigning process, the 2019 [AMPAC Campaign School](#) will be taking place Sept. 26-29 at the AMA offices in Washington, D.C.

The Campaign School is designed to provide participants with the skills and strategic approach they need to run a successful political campaign. During the two-and-a-half day in-person portion of the program, under the direction of AMA political experts, participants will be broken into campaign staff teams to run a simulated congressional campaign using what they have learned during group sessions on strategy, vote targeting, social media, advertising and more.

Faculty, materials and all meals during the meeting are covered by the AMA. Participants are responsible for the registration fee and hotel accommodations at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. The deadline to register is June 21. For more information or to apply visit: [ampaonline.org/apply](http://ampaonline.org/apply) or contact [politicaleducation@ama-assn.org](mailto:politicaleducation@ama-assn.org).

**VIP Exclusive: 2019 Congressional calendar**

As a VIP member you now have access to the 2019 Congressional calendar we recently developed for the program. With this downloadable calendar you'll never have to guess if the House and Senate are in session again. Use it to plan your next advocacy event or campaign. [Click here](#) to access your calendar today!

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