



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

- Congress needs to act on telehealth – here is what you can do
- Theresa Rohr-Kirchgraber, MD, FACP, FAMWA, wins AMPAC Award for Political Participation
- Writing the narrative of the 2022 midterms
- 2021 redistricting – Republicans are better positioned to determine next decade's House seats

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### **Congress needs to act on telehealth**

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the delivery of health care in a number of ways.

#### [Support making expanded telehealth services permanent.](#)

During the pandemic, telehealth services emerged as a critical tool to provide care to patients while supporting physical distancing efforts and reducing the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases by avoiding unnecessary outpatient visits. In response, Congress acted to temporarily expand access to Medicare covered telehealth services to all Medicare beneficiaries by authorizing HHS to waive outdated statutory restrictions on where telehealth services may be provided.

Stories poured in from all over the country from physicians and patients alike about the positive effects of expanded telehealth benefits. It has continued to allow physicians to provide high-quality care using new digital tools.

### ***Congress needs to act!***

Recently, legislation was introduced in both the House and Senate that, if passed, would make the expanded access to telehealth services permanent. The Telehealth Modernization Act of 2021 (H.R. 1332/S. 368) would lift the rural-only restriction and add any site where a patient is located as a potential originating site and ensure all Medicare beneficiaries may receive covered Medicare telehealth benefits, including at home and via mobile technologies as appropriate, while the CONNECT for Health Act (H.R. 2903/S. 1512) would provide HHS with permanent authority to waive these restrictions, similar to the authority the agency has for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

*The evidence is in* – The success of telehealth technology adoption during the COVID-19 public health emergency has made it abundantly clear that Medicare covered telehealth benefits should be available to ALL Medicare patients regardless of where they live or how they access broadband services!

[Please contact your Senators and member of Congress](#) and ask them to support making expanded telehealth services permanent today!!

Expanded telehealth IS working for our patients, let's fight to keep it that way!

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### **Theresa Rohr-Kirchgraber, MD, FACP, FAMWA, wins AMPAC Award for Political Participation**

Awarded every two years, the AMPAC Award for Political Participation recognizes an AMA or AMA Alliance member for their outstanding work through volunteer activities in a political campaign or significant health care related election issue such as a ballot initiative or referendum. The winner of this year's AMPAC Award for Political Participation is Theresa Rohr-Kirchgraber, MD, FACP, FAMWA. Dr. Rohr-Kirchgraber was nominated by her peers at the Indiana State Medical Association (IMSA) and the Indiana Medical Association PAC (IMPAC) for having demonstrated standout contributions through her efforts in political campaigns, fundraising, state and federal PAC education and garnering support for health care-related issues during the 2020 election cycle.

A committed activist on behalf of physicians across Indiana, Dr. Rohr-Kirchgraber played an important role in raising awareness of the impact on women's health issues and health policy on the state and national level—including the high infant and maternal mortality rates in Indiana. Dr. Rohr-Kirchgraber worked with the POWER Caucus of Indiana, a bipartisan group of women legislators, and created a program to help them better understand the health needs of women in the state. Together they advocated by writing letters to the editor of local newspapers, writing advocacy articles for the Women in Medicine blog of Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM), going to the state house and working with other health care organizations around the state.

[Learn more](#) about AMPAC Award for Political Participation.

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### **Writing the narrative of the 2022 midterms**

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

*Will independents judge Democrats on the performance of the economy? Or will Republicans be able to plant other seeds of doubt in voters' minds?.*

For more years than I would like to think about, a phrase coined by my freshman college English professor has come to my mind. Trying to coax a class into explaining the essence of a particular short story, the professor facetiously asked, "What is its aboutness?" That's how I often think about what an upcoming election will turn on.

So what will the 2022 midterm elections be about? Midterms have long been referenda on incumbent presidents, as the electorate—more specifically, independent voters—often vents its spleen with buyer's remorse over the performance of a president.

Last week, [this column](#) looked at the narrow “trading range” of American politics today, a new phenomenon of high floors and low ceilings of presidential approval created by extreme partisanship. Almost two-thirds of Americans identify as partisans and about nine out of 10 of those fall monolithically into patterns of approval/support or disapproval/opposition based entirely on whether a president or candidate is of their party or the other. That leaves any real flux in the hands of “true” independents—the 5 to 12 percent of all adults who don't lean one way or the other.

But what drives these independents? For generations, until about a dozen years ago, Americans were known to put their assessment of the economy first and foremost; they were said to “vote their pocketbooks.” Then, [under both the Obama and Trump presidencies](#), politics has increasingly become driven by identity and cultural wars, producing or aggravating extreme partisanship. As noted by political scientists Lynn Vavreck, John Sides, and Michael Tesler in their seminal book *Identity Crisis*, presidential approval is no longer correlated with consumer confidence. Note that President Trump's approval ratings were hardly affected by how the economy was doing; his numbers were driven by attitudes about him personally.

But what about now? On Friday morning, [the Bureau of Labor Statistics will release the unemployment rate](#) for the month of May.

Will the new jobless rate and other economic indices point to a strengthened and vibrant economy, or one in danger of overheating into inflationary territory? Is it still in a fragile state, at risk of turning down again, perhaps triggered by some unexpected shock like cyber-ransom attacks? And if the economy isn't doing well, will voters blame President Biden and his party, or will they march instead to the drummers of identity and culture?

Last year's elections looked to be pretty much a referendum on Trump as a person and president. Interestingly, the much-maligned polling on both the state and national levels pretty much hit Biden's share of the vote on the money. The number pollsters missed, for the second presidential election in a row, was Trump's share. The undecided vote, which was relatively small but still quite relevant in a competitive race, seemed to break strongly for Trump, as well as for Republicans in Senate and House races.


To my mind, Republicans avoided a wholesale electoral washout last year thanks to talk in Democratic circles of “defunding the police,” “Medicare-for-all,” and other left-wing priorities. Meanwhile, the GOP was all too happy to remind voters of their rivals' progressive tendencies, warning them about handing the keys of government to the likes of Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. To the extent that some Republicans are not trying to relitigate the 2020 presidential election and reinstall Trump as president (indeed to the extent that the GOP has developed any strategy for next year), it is to continue to fight those fights.

The aboutness of this election won't truly be known for at least a year. But every month, we'll get clues that we'll be [sifting and winnowing](#) to find the truth.

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## 2021 redistricting – Republicans are better positioned to determine next decade’s House seat

Our friends at the National Journal recently came out with a new series of slides that point to Republicans having the early advantage in the upcoming redistricting battles that will be happening in multiple states this fall and into next year. In fact, the National Journal currently projects that Republicans will pick up three to four House seats in 2022 just through redistricting. With the current Democratic majority in the House sitting at four votes, this is an ominous warning for Democrats ahead of the 2022 midterm elections. For more information please review the slides below.




**NJ** PRESENTATION CENTER

### Republicans are in a better position to determine the next decade’s House seats

**Redistricting control map**

■ Democratic ■ Republican ■ Split ■ Commission ■ N/A



**ANALYSIS**

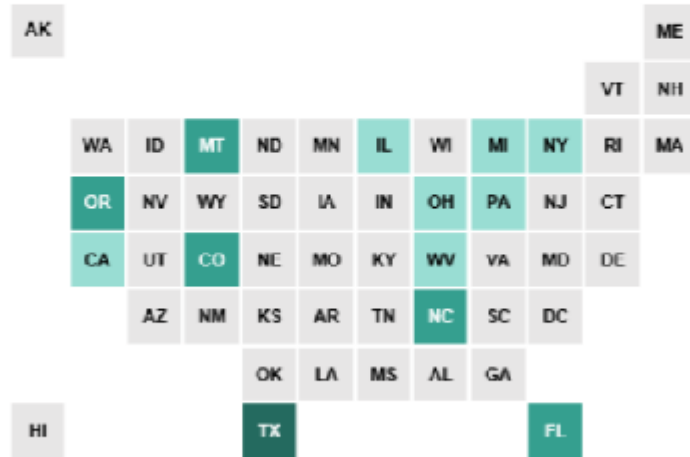
- 187 seats are controlled by Republicans (compared to 219 seats in 2011)
- 75 seats are controlled by Democrats (compared to 44 seats in 2011)
- 121 seats will be drawn by independent or bipartisan commissions (compared to 88 seats in 2011)
  - Commissions in Utah, Iowa, and Ohio can be overruled by GOP-controlled legislatures
  - New York’s commission can be overruled by the Dem-controlled legislature
- 46 seats will be drawn in states with split-party control or by courts (compared to 77 seats in 2011)
- 6 seats are for at-large districts

SOURCE: Cook Political Report, MICHELLE SCHRIER 4/27/21

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# 2020 reapportionment results

■ No change ■ Lost 1 seat ■ Gained 1 seat ■ Gained 2 seats

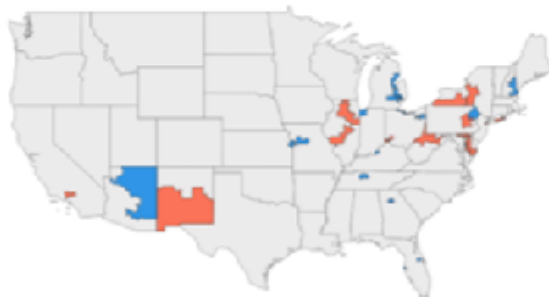


SOURCE: Cook Political Report  
MICHELLE SCHRICK 4/27/21

# Republicans are projected to pick up 3.5 House seats this cycle due to redistricting

## House incumbents at moderate to high risk due to redistricting alone

■ Seat held by a Republican ■ Seat held by a Democrat



## MOST VULNERABLE HOUSE SEATS

- AZ-1: Rep. Tom O'Halleran (D)
- CA-25: Rep. Mike Garcia (R)
- CA-44: Rep. Nanette Barragan (D)
- FL-7: Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D)
- FL-13: Rep. Charlie Crist (D)
- GA-6: Rep. Lucy McBath (D)
- GA-7: Rep. Carolyn Bourdeaux (D)
- IL-15: Rep. Rodney Davis (R)
- IL-16: Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R)
- IN-1: Rep. Frank Mrvan (D)
- KS-2: Rep. Sharon Davids (D)
- KY-5: Rep. John Yarmuth (D)
- MO-1: Rep. Andy Harris (R)
- MO-5: Rep. Dan Claitor (D)
- MI-5: Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D)
- MI-8: Rep. Andy Levin (D)
- MI-11: Rep. Haley Stevens (D)
- MO-5: Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D)
- NH-1: Rep. Chris Pappas (D)
- NM-2: Rep. Yvette Herrell (R)
- NY-1: Rep. Lee Zeldin (R)
- NY-11: Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R)
- NY-22: Rep. Claudia Tenney (R)
- NY-25: Rep. Tom Reed (R)
- OH-1: Rep. Steve Chabot (R)
- OH-9: Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D)
- OH-13: Rep. Tim Ryan (D)
- PA-6: Rep. Matt Cartwright (D)
- PA-8: Rep. Dan Meuser (R)
- TN-5: Rep. Jim Cooper (D)
- WV-1: Rep. David McKinley (R)

SOURCE: Cook Political Report  
MICHELLE SCHRICK 4/27/21