



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

- How to build momentum when Congress is slow to act
- Webinar: How prior authorization disrupts patient care—and how we can fix it
- Initial House ratings: battle for majority starts as a toss-up

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### **How to build momentum when Congress is slow to act**

By the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF)

When Congress is slow to advance legislation or when issues are technical, it creates challenges for professional advocates. How do you keep your grassroots supporters motivated to urge Congress to do the same thing year after year? How do you manage advocacy messaging when the issues are highly technical or sensitive? How do you demonstrate impact when Congress won't advance your legislative priorities? Here are FOUR tips for building momentum when Congress is slow to act:

#### 1. Ask Yourself "Why" (Repeat)

Washington is a wonky town and wonks love to get lost in the weeds surrounding their issues. While it's important to understand potential implications of small details, professional advocates don't want to lose their citizen-advocates in the weeds. When a detail is important, ask yourself WHY it's important, then ask why the answer is important, then repeat that process until the reason is simple. For example, the American Heart Association asked itself why funding for research about heart disease is important. After several cycles of asking itself, "why?", the answer became clear and simple. "Life is why."

#### 2. It's Your Job to Make People Care

Convincing people to take action is key to any advocacy leader's success. While data can be convincing, research shows that stories have the power to evoke an emotional response for listeners, and compel them to take action. Advocacy leaders who use relevant personal stories to illustrate how policies can have real-world impact are better equipped to keep their networks motivated. Advocacy leaders are advised to collect stories (story banks) that can communicate to your audience how proposals can affect real people just like them.

#### 3. Make Data Work for You

In this data-driven world we live in, advocacy leaders need to demonstrate that they are building momentum even if their issues aren't being advanced in Congress. Impact measures are difficult to collect, so advocacy leaders better collect the data that is most valuable and invest resources toward achieving goals. Examples might include the following: Number of

supporters represented by key lawmakers, number of supporters who have participated in advocacy training, and number of effective advocacy stories.

#### 4. Identify Elements You Can Control

Many advocate leaders spend years working to push Congress to pass legislative priorities. Much of that success is out of their control. While building and maintaining a motivated and effective grassroots/grasstops network can be a challenge, focus on what you can do to compel people to care about your cause, and effectively illustrate why.

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#### **Webinar: How prior authorization disrupts patient care—and how we can fix it**

93% of physicians surveyed by the AMA in 2021 said that prior authorization delays access to necessary care, and even worse, 34% of physicians reported that prior authorization has led to a serious adverse event for a patient in their care. Physicians know they spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with the hassles of prior authorization, but when patients are being harmed because of it—it's clear something has to change.

AMA President Jack Resneck Jr., MD, hosts a webinar on Friday, April 14 at 11 a.m. Central, to dig further into the current state of prior authorization and how the AMA is working to fix it. Heather McComas, PharmD, director, Administrative Simplification Initiatives, AMA, and Emily Carroll, JD, senior legislative attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, AMA, will join Dr. Resneck to talk about the latest reform efforts and how you can get involved. You'll also hear about results of the AMA's latest prior authorization survey conducted at the end of 2022.

#### **Host**

Jack Resneck Jr., MD, president, AMA

#### **Speakers**

Heather McComas, PharmD, director, Administrative Simplification Initiatives, AMA  
Emily Carroll, JD, senior legislative attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, AMA

[Registration is now open.](#)

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#### **Initial House ratings: battle for majority starts as a toss-up**

By [Kyle Kondik](#)

After consecutive election cycles in which the favored side won the House, but by significantly smaller margins than many (including us) expected, we want to be clear from the start how we're viewing the House this cycle: **The race for the majority begins as a Toss-up.**

While midterms, and not presidential years, much more frequently serve as the engine of change in the House — 10 of the last 12 shifts in power came in midterm cycles — **it is also rare for a midterm to produce such a small majority for the winning side as last year's did.**

The Republicans won a 222-213 edge last year, which is just 4 seats above the magic number of 218. **That is the smallest number of seats won by the winning side in a midterm since the 1942 election**, when Republicans won the national popular vote for

House but were unable to break the Democratic majority (Democrats won 222 seats to the Republicans' 209, with the remaining few seats going to third parties).

In the years since then, every other majority won in a midterm was at or above 230 seats except for the majorities that Republicans won in 1998 (223) and 2002 (229). Those happened to be a pair of strong midterm cycles for the incumbent president, Bill Clinton's Democrats in the former and George W. Bush's Republicans in the latter. This past midterm will also go down as a good one for President Biden's Democrats, and while they still lost the House, they kept their losses to such a manageable number that they put themselves in striking distance of winning the House majority this cycle. That's the same thing Republicans did in their impressive albeit losing House effort in 2020 — keeping it close and setting themselves up for the following election.

The bottom line is that parties typically build themselves a bigger buffer in the midterm than Republicans did last year, **which likely contributes to the history that the House has not flipped in a presidential year since 1952**. Such streaks are noteworthy but are often made to be broken.

Speaking of 1952, which represented 1 of just 2 House victories for Republicans from the Great Depression all the way through the Republican Revolution of 1994 (1946 was the other), Republicans got an assist that year in redistricting. Following the 1950 census, Republicans in California and New York engaged in what the legendary congressional scholar David Mayhew described as “ingenious cartographic efforts” in redistricting that contributed to Republicans flipping the House.

More than 7 decades later, redistricting may also prove decisive in the House — potentially helping Republicans hold on to the majority and keeping the long streak of the House not flipping in presidential years alive. Meanwhile, those key states of California and New York again loom large in this cycle's battle for the House.

— **Both North Carolina and Ohio are poised to have new congressional maps this cycle.** There will be time to go through the contortions and specifics later, but the overall point is this: State Supreme Courts in both states constrained the maps that the GOP wanted to impose in both states last cycle, and conservatives scored victories in key state Supreme Court races in both states last November, which should give the Republicans a freer hand to operate in both states. New GOP gerrymanders could threaten up to 3 Democratic seats in Ohio and 4 in North Carolina — this is why we are starting all of those potential Republican targets in the Toss-up column for now. This reflects the Democratic exposure in these 2 states while also conveying uncertainty about what is actually going to happen. These potential redistricting losses — not all of which are guaranteed to occur — make up the majority of the Democratic Toss-up column.

— **There are a number of other unresolved court cases that could impact redistricting, potentially in favor of Democrats in at least some places.** CNN's Ron Brownstein recently had a good summation. At the moment, the only states where the anticipation of future redistricting changes impacts our ratings are, again, North Carolina and Ohio. If and when other legal developments increase the likelihood of new maps in other states, we will adjust our ratings as warranted.

— We are assuming, for the sake of these ratings, that Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D, MI-7), a proven incumbent in a marginal Lansing-based seat, ends up running for U.S. Senate (she is not an announced candidate, but observers on both sides of the aisle expect her to run). **So her district starts as a Toss-up; we will move her district to Leans Democratic if she unexpectedly runs for reelection instead.** Also starting in the Toss-up category is CA-47 in Southern California, which Rep. Katie Porter (D) is leaving behind as she pursues an open-seat Senate run of her own. The district voted for Joe Biden by 11 points, which suggests that it should not be a Toss-up. But CA-47 is not as blue down the ballot — as Porter’s 3.5-point victory last cycle suggests — and Republicans have scored some surprising successes in similar kinds of districts in California recently. One other wrinkle is the possibility of a strange outcome in the state’s top-2 primary; all candidates run together on the same ballot in the primary, with the top 2 finishers advancing to the general election regardless of party. Although such a scenario has not come to pass in a truly competitive seat since the 2012 cycle, Democrats sometimes worry about 2 Republicans advancing to a general election in a district like this. It may also be the case that Republicans have a competitive presidential primary going on in California at the time of the primary while Democrats do not, which could impact turnout. Democrats already have credible options running to replace Porter, although the departing incumbent is an exceptionally strong fundraiser, which is helpful in a district covered by the expensive Los Angeles media market. So this is all enough for us to start CA-47 as a Toss-up.

[Continue reading](#)

### Advocacy calendar

## APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					31	1
					AMPAC Candidate Workshop	
2 AMPAC Candidate Workshop	3	4	5	6	7 World Health Day	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

  

AMA Events	Senate in Session	House in Session	Both Chambers in Session
State Work Periods	District Work Periods	Both Work Periods	

Be sure to follow all the AMA's Physician Grassroots Network social media accounts for all the latest news on physician advocacy and what you can do to make sure your voice is heard on Capitol Hill.



[AMA Advocacy](#)



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