



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

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- Webinar: What to expect in a meeting with a member of Congress
- Sizing up the 2020 House and Senate landscapes
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### **Issues to watch in the 116th Congress**

Under the shadow of a partial government shutdown, the 116th Congress convened on Jan. 3. The House is now under the leadership of Democrats and Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA). In the Senate, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), finds himself with a slightly larger Republican majority than the one he enjoyed over the previous two years. Recent polling has continued to demonstrate that there are a handful of health care issues at the top of the minds of many voters and, consequently, their representatives in Congress. Among them are health care costs—particularly the cost of health insurance and prescription drugs.

Democrats in the House have already acted to preserve the ACA by taking steps to intervene in ongoing litigation (*Texas v. Azar*) in which a Federal District Court in Texas recently ruled the ACA was unconstitutional.

On the issue of prescription drug prices, there are some areas where Republicans and Democrats may find common ground. The new Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Charles Grassley (R-IA), expressed in a recent Senate floor speech a strong interest in stopping the exploitation of regulatory loopholes by industry which unfairly extends monopolies over drugs, reducing competition. Other areas that will likely see activity in the new Congress include a close examination of drivers of health care costs overall, as well as the issue of unanticipated medical bills from out-of-network physicians and other providers.

Despite the intense interest on these and other concerns in the health care sphere, the reality of a politically divided Congress will make enactment of significant new legislation a challenge.

### **What to expect in a meeting with a member of Congress**

Every year, thousands of Americans work with their associations, nonprofits, or companies to attend “fly-in” events or “lobby days” in Washington. But many

participants don't know what to expect when they meet with their legislator, or their perceptions are shaped by the media.

Join our partners at the Congressional Management Foundation for a webinar on January 31, 2019 at 3:00 PM EST to discuss this important topic. Access to this webinar is a VIP member benefit.

[Register here!](#)

This presentation will provide participants with the following:

- an overview of congressional offices
- an outline of staff roles in meetings
- tips for successfully meeting with Members of Congress and their staffs.

The webinar will be conducted by [Bradford Fitch](#), President and CEO of CMF, and [Seth Turner](#), Director of Citizen Engagement.

If you have any questions regarding this presentation, please contact Jaime Werner at CMF at [JWerner@CongressFoundation.org](mailto:JWerner@CongressFoundation.org).

### **Sizing up the 2020 House and Senate landscapes**

By [Charlie Cook @CHARLIECOOKDC](#)

The political world will be a three-ring circus over the next two years, and while the contest for the presidency will obviously dominate, there will be plenty to watch in the House and Senate rings as well.

Democrats start out with 235 House seats to 199 for Republicans, with one vacant seat due to the disputed outcome in North Carolina's 9th Congressional District (a special election is likely to follow). This means that the GOP will need a net gain of either 18 or 19 seats, depending upon the outcome in North Carolina.

Democrats will be defending 31 seats in districts that voted for Donald Trump in 2016, but equally important, there was about a 7-point boost for Democrats in the overall popular vote in House races from 2016 to 2018. Whether that persists is anyone's guess. Republican pollster Glen Bolger points out that the House has now changed parties under four consecutive presidents: in 1994 under Bill Clinton, 2006 with George W. Bush, 2010 with Barack Obama, and now 2018 with Trump.

Though all these swings occurred in midterm elections rather than in presidential years, this Democratic majority is still precarious given the volatility of American politics today and the growing proclivity of straight-ticket voting. One thing worth watching is this geographic sorting that we are seeing, with Democrats dominating in urban and suburban districts and Republicans winning small-town and rural constituencies. The challenge for the GOP is that there are more of the former than

the latter.

The Senate, currently split with 53 Republicans and 47 Democrats, would seem to be up for grabs given that Republicans have 22 seats up next year to just 12 for Democrats. Democrats would need a four-seat net gain if the GOP retains the presidency, three seats if Democrats prevail. But this ratio is a bit deceptive. The 22 GOP seats up doesn't quite match the exposure Democrats had with 24 seats up in 2018, and the vast majority of the Republican seats up are in solidly-to-strongly GOP states; none are deep in enemy territory for the GOP. Sens. Cory Gardner of Colorado and Susan Collins of Maine are the only two GOP incumbents up in states that voted Democratic in the 2016 presidential race; Colorado voted for Hillary Clinton by 5 points, Maine by 3 points.

In the last few years, there has been an unprecedentedly high correlation between presidential and senatorial outcomes in states, so this is an important statistic to monitor. Five other Republicans are up in states that Trump won by single-digit margins: Sens. Martha McSally of Arizona and Thom Tillis in North Carolina, which are states that voted for Trump by 4-point margins; Sen. David Perdue in Georgia, a state that voted Republican by 5 points; and Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, which voted for Trump by 9 points.

Conversely, Democrats have two seats up in states that voted for Trump and four seats in states that voted for Clinton by single digits. The lone Democrat up in heavily Republican territory, Sen. Doug Jones in Alabama—where Trump won by 28 points—is reminiscent of the five Democratic incumbents who were up in 2018 in states that Trump carried by 19 points or more. Sens. Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, Joe Donnelly of Indiana, and Claire McCaskill of Missouri all lost reelection, while Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Jon Tester of Montana managed to survive. The other Democratic incumbent to lose last year was Sen. Bill Nelson in Florida, a state that Trump won by a point. Also up next year is Democratic Sen. Gary Peters in Michigan, where Trump won by his narrowest margins, three-tenths of a percent.

The four Democrats up in states that Clinton won by single digits are Sens. Jeanne Shaheen in New Hampshire (Clinton by four-tenths of a point), Tina Smith in Minnesota (2 points), Mark Warner in Virginia (5 points), and Tom Udall in New Mexico (8 points).

Looking at the dozen states that would seem worth keeping an eye on, six from each side, neither party looks disproportionately vulnerable. But one potential 'X' factor is that there are a dozen incumbents whose seats are up in 2020 who will be 70 or older by Election Day—five Democrats and seven Republicans. One of those, GOP Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, will be 80 by next year's election and has already announced plans to retire.

## VIP news and notes

### **Space still available for 2019 AMPAC Candidate Workshop in Washington, DC**

Ever wonder how Doctors get elected to Congress or your state legislature? Considering a run for office for yourself? The AMPAC Candidate Workshop will teach you how to run a winning political campaign, just like we taught many of your AMA colleagues over the years.

The Candidate Workshop is designed to help you make the leap from the exam room to the campaign trail and give you the skills and strategic approach you will need to make a run for public office.

At the Candidate Workshop, Republican and Democratic political veterans give you expert advice about politics and the sacrifices needed to mount a competitive campaign. You will learn: how and when to make the decision to run; the importance of a disciplined campaign plan and message; the secrets of effective fundraising; what kinds of media advertising are right for your campaign; how to handle the inevitable crises that emerge for every campaign; the role of your spouse and your family; and how to become a better public speaker. Get answers to your questions, and determine if running for public office is for you.

Candidate Workshop is open to physician spouses and we encourage those interested in a future in politics to attend.

[Registration is now OPEN](#) – deadline to register is February 8! For more information, e-mail [politicaleducation@ama-assn.org](mailto:politicaleducation@ama-assn.org) or call (202) 789-7455

### **AMPAC still accepting nominations for the 2019 Award for Political Participation**

Awarded every two years by the AMPAC Board of Directors the AMPAC Award for Political Participation recognizes an AMA or AMA Alliance member who has made significant personal contributions of time and talent in assisting friends of medicine in their quest for elective office at the federal and state level. These can include: volunteer activities in a political campaign or a significant health care related election issue such as a ballot initiative or referendum.

Nominees must be a current member of the AMA or AMA Alliance and AMPAC with preference given to members with a demonstrated history of AMPAC involvement. The deadline to submit nominations is January 31. The full criteria for the 2019 AMPAC Award for Political Participation including how to submit a nomination can be found [here](#).

The winning nominee will receive special recognition during the AMPAC Board Chair's speech before the House of Delegates or during the AMPAC luncheon at the AMA Annual Meeting in Chicago. The winning nominee will also receive free

admittance (including airfare and hotel expenses) to a future AMPAC political education program (campaign school or candidate workshop) in Washington, DC.

### **New Congress, New Contacts**

The 116th Congress was sworn in last week ushering in one of the largest freshman classes in recent history. All told there are 101 new members of the House of Representatives and 10 new Senators that were elected to serve in the 116th Congress.

That's a lot of new faces walking the halls of Congress and we need your help - do you have a relationship with one of the new members of Congress? If so, we'd like to hear about it. If you support, voted for or have a personal relationship with any freshman legislator, please take a few moments and [fill out this brief survey](#).

Already have a relationship with a non-freshman member of Congress? We want to hear from you too! Please click on the survey above and let us know. The information will help strengthen our grassroots network.

For more information please visit [our VIP site](#).

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