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Inside Elections

with

Nathan L. Gonzales

Nonpartisan Analysis

FEBRUARY 2, 2018

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2018 Senate Ratings

Toss-Up

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Donnelly (D-Ind.) | McCaskill (D-Mo.) |
| Manchin (D-W.Va.) | Heller (R-Nev.) |
| Heitkamp (D-N.D.) | AZ Open (Flake, R) |

Tilt Democratic

Baldwin (D-Wis.)
Nelson (D-Fla.)
Tester (D-Mont.)

Tilt Republican

Lean Democratic

Brown (D-Ohio)
Casey (D-Pa.)

Lean Republican

Likely Democratic

Smith (D-Minn.)

Likely Republican

TN Open (Corker, R)

Solid Democratic

Cantwell (D-Wash.)
Cardin (D-Md.)
Carper (D-Del.)
Feinstein (D-Calif.)
Gillibrand (D-N.Y.)
Heinrich (D-N.M.)
Hirono (D-Hawaii)
Kaine (D-Va.)
King (I-Maine)
Klobuchar (D-Minn.)
Menendez (D-N.J.)
Murphy (D-Conn.)

Solid Republican

Barrasso (R-Wyo.)
Cruz (R-Texas)
Fischer (R-Neb.)
Wicker (R-Miss.)
UT Open (Hatch, R)

Whitehouse (D-R.I.)

| | GOP | DEM |
|-------------------|-----|-----|
| 115th Congress | 51 | 49 |
| Not up this cycle | 43 | 23 |
| Currently Solid | 5 | 15 |
| Competitive | 3 | 11 |

Takeovers in *italics*, # moved benefiting Democrats, * moved benefiting Republicans

West Virginia Senate: Last Democrat Standing

By Leah Askarinam

The path to a Democratic Senate majority cuts through West Virginia, where Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton by a 42-point margin and the congressional representation has flipped from entirely Democratic to almost entirely Republican since 2000. Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin is the lone survivor.

But Democrats aren't counting on losing this seat this fall, and Republicans know they can't take the Senate race for granted. While West Virginians may increasingly believe they don't belong in today's Democratic Party, that doesn't necessarily mean they're ready to fully embrace the GOP—or throw out a politician they have supported for nearly 20 years.

Manchin outperformed the Republican presidential nominee in 2012, and Democrats are hoping for a repeat performance after President Barack Obama received 36 percent. But the climb is steeper this time around—Clinton failed to crack 27 percent, and the number of West Virginia Democrats in both state and federal office has decreased since 2012. Gallup released numbers this week that showed that President Trump's highest approval rating (61 percent) is in West Virginia, much higher than his 38 percent approval nationally.

There are nine other Democratic senators running for re-election in states that Trump carried in 2016, but Manchin is running in the state that supported Trump by the widest margin. Despite the fact that Manchin is a Democrat running in Trump country, however, he could still win re-election. Manchin has touted his relationship with the President, and it's not yet clear how formidable a general election opponent Republicans will nominate this cycle. Republicans are facing an expensive primary featuring the state attorney general, a congressman, and a wealthy former coal executive who was recently released from federal prison.

In order to regain the majority, Democrats likely need to re-elect all of their own incumbents because they have so few takeover opportunities, namely Sen. Jeff Flake's open seat in Arizona and Sen. Dean Heller's seat in Nevada, which Clinton carried in 2016. Manchin scared Democrats by considering retiring in the immediate aftermath of the government shutdown last month. But he's in, and probably remains the only Democrat who can win a state Trump won by more than 40 points.

Lay Of The Land

According to voter registration totals posted by the West Virginia Secretary of State, registered Democrats outpaced Republicans through the end of 2017, but the trendline isn't good for Manchin. Democrats

Continued on page 4

New Jersey 11: Open Seat Shifts to Toss-up

by Nathan L. Gonzales

Writing about open seats is all the rage, but not all open seats are created equal. While South Carolina Rep. Trey Gowdy's retirement isn't a problem for Republicans because of the seat's rightward lean, GOP Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen's retirement makes his 11th District of New Jersey even more vulnerable for his party.

The congressman certainly wasn't a perfect incumbent. It was unclear whether he was ready for a difficult re-election fight and he appeared to overreact when he tried to out an employee at a local bank as a Democratic activist. But the Frelinghuysen family has been a part of New Jersey politics for generations, he can claim influence as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and he had \$1.2 million in his campaign account at the end of the year.

The 11th District covers part of North Central New Jersey including eastern Morris County. Even though Republicans have dominated at the local level, Donald Trump narrowly carried the district, 49-48 percent, over Hillary Clinton in 2016 after Mitt Romney carried it by a more comfortable 52-47 percent four years earlier, according to Daily Kos Elections. In the recent 2017 gubernatorial race, Democrat Phil Murphy carried the 11th District narrowly, 49.2-48.5 percent, according to J. Miles Coleman of DecisionDeskHQ, even though Murphy prevailed by 14 points statewide.

The seat is also vulnerable considering the potential Democratic nominee. Mikie Sherrill is a retired Navy helicopter pilot and former federal prosecutor who raised \$1.2 million last year and had \$822,000 in her campaign account on Dec. 31, and should continue to raise more with national attention, including a recent *New York Times* piece.

Republicans have two months before the April 2 filing deadline to find a candidate who can compete with Sherrill's early fundraising. It's possible that Republicans could benefit from a fresh face who doesn't have the baggage of a longtime Member of Congress. But a national wave could overwhelm an upstart GOP contender.

The potential Republican field includes Rosemary Becchi (tax attorney and former Senate Finance Committee staffer), Assemblyman Jay Webber, Assemblyman Tony Bucco, Jr., and state Sen. Joseph Pennacchi, according to *Roll Call's* Simone Pathé. Katie Whitman Annis, daughter of former GOP Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, and Morris County Freeholder Christine Myers are mentioned as potential candidates. The

primary for both parties will be June 5.

Trump's narrow victory and Kim Guadagno's narrow loss demonstrate the area's Republican tendencies. But over half of the 11th District population has a college degree (the national average is 31 percent), a constituency that could give the President's party fits in the fall. We're changing our rating from Likely Republican to Toss-Up as the open seat develops. **IE**

Candidate Conversation



H.P. Parvizia (D)

Candidate for Texas' 2nd District

Interview Date: Jan. 31, 2018

Date of Birth: Aug. 16, 1977;
Washington, D.C.

Education: European Univ -
Montreux, Switzerland (2004)

Elected Office: None; First run
for office

Current Outlook: Parvizia is the underdog in the Democratic primary (non-profit executive Todd Litton is the frontrunner) in a Houston-area district where the Democratic nominee will be the underdog in the general election (Donald Trump carried the district 52-43 percent). It's an open seat because GOP Rep. Ted Poe is not running for re-election. If Democrats are winning here, it's probably a historic night for the party.

Evaluation: President Donald Trump and the mood on the Hill has inspired hundreds of first-time candidates—some are in better position than others. In our interview, Parvizia was warm and armed with the number of votes necessary to make a runoff. And he has an interesting personal story from working in his father's Oriental rug business to working in the dog training business and therapy industry and non-profit world, as well as work with Autism Speaks and volunteering in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. There was just little evidence that Parvizia will raise enough money to compete and reach his campaign goals.

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Pennsylvania 18 Special: Race Starts to Heat Up

Ready or not, here it comes.

It's been almost two months since the Alabama Senate race and the next congressional special election is just a little more than a month away. GOP state Rep. Rick Saccone and Democratic attorney Conor Lamb are set to square off on March 13 in Pennsylvania's 18th District, and both parties are engaged in battle on television and on the ground.

The race is taking place in a time of some national political uncertainty with President Donald Trump in the White House and Democrats anxious for a comeback. In addition, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court threw out the congressional map and ordered the Legislature to draw new ones for the regular elections. The court said the 18th District special election would continue under the current lines, although the district could look significantly different for the new incumbent this fall with a new map.

There's been only one recent public poll in the race, conducted Jan. 18-19 by DFM Research (a Democratic firm), which showed Saccone with a 41-38 percent lead. That feels like an optimistic view of the race for Democrats, but there is nervousness among some GOP strategists.

Candidly, Saccone is an almost 60-year-old guy with a moustache, mediocre fundraising and a conservative reputation in an unpopular state Legislature facing a 33-year-old Marine Corps JAG officer and first-time candidate who could easily play a congressman in an HBO series, and is starting to get some national attention. This week, Massachusetts Rep. Joe Kennedy went from his State of the Union response to the campaign trail for Lamb.

One of the biggest challenges for Lamb is the terrain. It's a western Pennsylvania district that has more in common with West Virginia than Philadelphia. Trump carried the district by 19 points in 2016 (58-39 percent) over Hillary Clinton, and Mitt Romney carried the district by 18 points (58-41 percent) in 2012.

Republicans aren't taking the race for granted. Congressional Leadership Fund has been airing TV ads since early January and the NRCC is now on television as well. The party has been picking up the slack for Saccone, who trails Lamb in fundraising. Lamb raised \$560,000 through the end of 2017 and finished December with \$412,000 in the bank. Saccone raised \$215,000 and had \$200,000 over the same time period.

The DCCC is also on television. A heavier investment from Democratic outside groups (such as House Majority PAC) would be evidence that the party smells a real opportunity. But HMP may not need to come in if Lamb continues to outpace Saccone.

There are some similarities to the Georgia 6 special election last year, except the 18th District went for Trump by a wider margin. Once again, Republicans are relying on Nancy Pelosi (specifically attaching her to the Democratic candidate) to deliver a victory.

The attacks won't catch either party by surprise. The Democratic attacks on Saccone are spelled out on the DCCC's website under "Races," near the bottom of the home page. The Republican attacks on Lamb are previewed on an orphan site called DemocratFacts.org. This is one way the campaign committees communicate with outside groups without illegal coordination. The race will come down to execution, which messages resonate the most, and the political environment.

Republicans are still likely to win, but if the race follows the trend, it will get closer and more competitive before it is over.



2018 House Ratings

Toss-Up (8R, 3D)

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| AZ 2 (Open; McSally, R) | NJ 5 (Gotthelmer, D) |
| CA 39 (Open; Royce, R) | NJ 11 (Open; Frelinghuysen, R)† |
| CA 49 (Open; Issa, R) | PA 7 (Open; Meehan, R)† |
| MIN 1 (Open; Walz, DFL) | TX 23 (Hurd, R) |
| MIN 2 (Lewis, R) | VA 10 (Comstock, R) |
| NH 1 (Open; Shea-Porter, D) | |

Tilt Democratic (3D, 1R)

| |
|--------------------------|
| AZ 1 (O'Halleran, D) |
| FL 7 (Murphy, D) |
| NV 3 (Open; Rosen, D) |
| WA 8 (Open; Reichert, R) |

Tilt Republican (7R)

| |
|------------------------|
| CA 48 (Rohrabacher, R) |
| CO 6 (Coffman, R) |
| FL 26 (Curbelo, R) |
| NE 2 (Bacon, R) |
| NY 19 (Faso, R) |
| NY 22 (Tenney, R) |
| TX 7 (Culberson, R) |

Lean Democratic (1D, 1R)

| |
|-------------------------------|
| FL 27 (Open; Ros-Lehtinen, R) |
| MIN 8 (Nolan, DFL) |

Lean Republican (17R)

| |
|--------------------------|
| CA 10 (Denham, R) |
| CA 25 (Knight, R) |
| IA 1 (Blum, R) |
| IL 12 (Bost, R) |
| KS 2 (Open; Jenkins, R) |
| KS 3 (Yoder, R) |
| KY 6 (Barr, R) |
| MI 8 (Bishop, R) |
| MI 11 (Open; Trot, R) |
| MIN 3 (Paulsen, R) |
| NJ 2 (Open; LoBlundo, R) |
| PA 6 (Costello, R) |
| PA 8 (Fitzpatrick, R) |
| PA 15 (Open; Dent, R) |
| PA 16 (Smucker, R) |
| PA 18 (Vacant, R)† |
| UT 4 (Love, R) |

Likely Democratic (6D)

| |
|------------------------|
| CA 7 (Bera, D) |
| FL 13 (Crist, D) |
| MIN 7 (Peterson, DFL) |
| NV 4 (Open; Kihuen, D) |
| PA 17 (Cartwright, D) |
| WI 3 (Kind, D) |

Likely Republican (20R)

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| CA 21 (Valadao, R) | NY 11 (Donovan, R) |
| CA 45 (Walters, R) | NY 24 (Katko, R) |
| CA 50 (Hunter, R) | OH 12 (Vacant, R) |
| GA 6 (Handel, R) | TX 32 (Sessions, R) |
| IL 6 (Roskam, R) | VA 2 (Taylor, R) |
| IL 13 (Davis, R) | VA 5 (Garrett, R) |
| IA 3 (Young, R) | VA 7 (Brat, R) |
| ME 2 (Poliquin, R) | |

| | GOP | DEM |
|---------------------|-----|-----|
| 115th Congress | 241 | 194 |
| Currently Solid | 187 | 181 |
| Competitive | 54 | 13 |
| Needed for majority | 218 | |

| |
|------------------------|
| MI 6 (Upton, R) |
| MTA-L (Glanville, R) |
| NC 9 (Pittenger, R) |
| NJ 7 (Lance, R) |
| NM 2 (Open; Pearce, R) |

moved benefiting Democrats, * moved benefiting Republicans Takeovers in *italics*

West Virginia: Dems are Dwindling in Formerly Blue Bastion

Continued from page 1

comprised 52 percent of registered voters on Oct. 1, 2012, when he was first elected to a full term in the Senate, compared to 43 percent on Dec. 31 of last year. But the Democratic defectors are not all flocking to the GOP. In that same time frame, the number of Republicans has increased just three percentage points, from 29 to 32 percent.

Like some other formerly Democratic areas across the country, the voting registration doesn't dictate voting results, and can be a lagging indicator of the trend of the state. The state voted for Trump 69-27 percent. And for the second cycle in a row, all three congressional districts elected Republicans to the House. At the same time, the "D" that appeared next to Gov. Jim Justice's name didn't disqualify him from getting elected in 2016. He won 49-42 percent as a wealthy businessman and outsider in the Trump mold (even though he ran as a Democrat). But six months later he announced his switch to the GOP at a Trump rally, potentially because he saw the trend of the state.

Justice, however, was the exception to the rule in 2016: Three statewide offices that had gone to Democrats in 2012 (secretary of state, auditor, and commissioner of agriculture) switched hands to Republicans. That included Natalie Tennant, who won her 2012 secretary of state race by 25 points (62-38 percent), but lost her 2014 Senate bid to Sen. Shelley Moore Capito by 28 points (62-35 percent), and then lost re-election for secretary of state in 2016 by 2 points (49-47 percent).

With Justice's switch to the GOP, Manchin is one of just two Democrats who has won election since 2012 and remains in office, along with State Treasurer John Perdue, who was first elected over 20 years ago. Since 2012, Democrats have also lost control of both the state House and Senate.

The Republicans

There are five Republicans on the primary ballot, but Attorney General Patrick Morrisey and Rep. Evan Jenkins are in the top tier. Still, in a five-way race where nobody is likely to win more than half the vote, the three other candidates (including Don Blankenship) could influence the outcome of the GOP primary on May 8.

In 2012, Morrisey unseated Democrat Darrell McGraw 51-49 percent, becoming the state's first Republican attorney general since the 1930s. Prior to running for office in West Virginia, Morrisey was a partner at King & Spalding, and he's also worked on the Hill for the House Energy and Commerce Committee. In 2000, he ran for Congress in New Jersey's 7th District but finished last in a four-way GOP primary. Republican Mike Ferguson won that seat and held it until he retired in 2008.

In 2016, Morrisey won re-election 52-42 percent over Doug Reynolds, a former member of the West Virginia House of Delegates. In that

Television Markets in West Virginia

Source: Media Strategies & Research



race, the Republican Attorneys General Association spent millions of dollars to support Morrisey. Since then, Morrisey has replaced former Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange (yes, the appointed senator who lost to Roy Moore) as RAGA chairman. Morrisey's Senate campaign will highlight an ideologically conservative record, including a leading role in suing the Environmental Protection Agency over Obama's Clean Power Plan, which landed him some national press. But Morrisey earned another round of less favorable press in the summer of 2016, when CBS News investigated his and his wife's ties to pharmaceutical distributors in the midst of the opioid crisis. Morrisey was previously paid to lobby for a trade group which received funding from a distributor that West Virginia was suing, and Morrisey's wife was a lobbyist for one of the defendants, according to the CBS report.

The Morrisey campaign team includes ColdSpark for general consulting, Doug McAuliffe for media, and Public Opinion Strategies for polling.

The Senate Conservatives Fund has endorsed Morrisey, and a Super PAC formed to support his run, 35th, Inc. PAC. Fabrizio, Lee and Associates is polling for the PAC, and former Republican Governors Association director Phil Cox is a senior adviser, according to *Roll Call*.

Jenkins switched parties to unseat Democratic Rep. Nick Rahall in 2014. Rahall served for 38 years in the House, first in the 4th District (which no longer exists) and subsequently in the 3rd. Rahall had previously outperformed President Obama, who was particularly

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West Virginia: GOP Gears Up For Expensive Primary

Continued from page 4

disliked in West Virginia for his stances on coal and energy. And Jenkins cited Obama as a major reason he left the Democratic Party in a 2013 statement, according to *Politico*. Jenkins, with monetary help from outside groups, defeated Rahall 55-45 percent. He easily won re-election in 2016, 68-24 percent.

Jenkins previously served in the state House (1995-2001) and state Senate (2003-15) before he was elected to Congress. He now represents the 3rd District, which is the southern one-third of the state, sharing a border with three other states: Virginia in the east, Kentucky in the west, and Ohio in the northwest.

Jenkins' campaign team includes general consultant Andy Seré of PRIME Media Partners, which is also handling the media, pollster Dave Sackett of The Tarrance Group, and Aaron Leibowitz from Targeted Creative Communications for direct mail.

Blankenship, the former CEO of Massey Energy, just wrapped up a one-year sentence in a California federal prison for conspiring to violate mine safety standards following the 2010 explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine that killed 29 people. He's now on supervised release in Las



Evan Jenkins

Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call

Vegas until May 9, the day after the West Virginia primary. But that's not stopping him from investing millions of dollars of his own money for a Senate campaign. He can still travel to West Virginia, though he must check in occasionally in Nevada, and has held town halls in the state.

Blankenship has been on the television airwaves, including an ad that calls the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration investigation "fixed," a claim that Politifact rated as "Pants On Fire." Blankenship has been a GOP donor in the past and active in political causes.

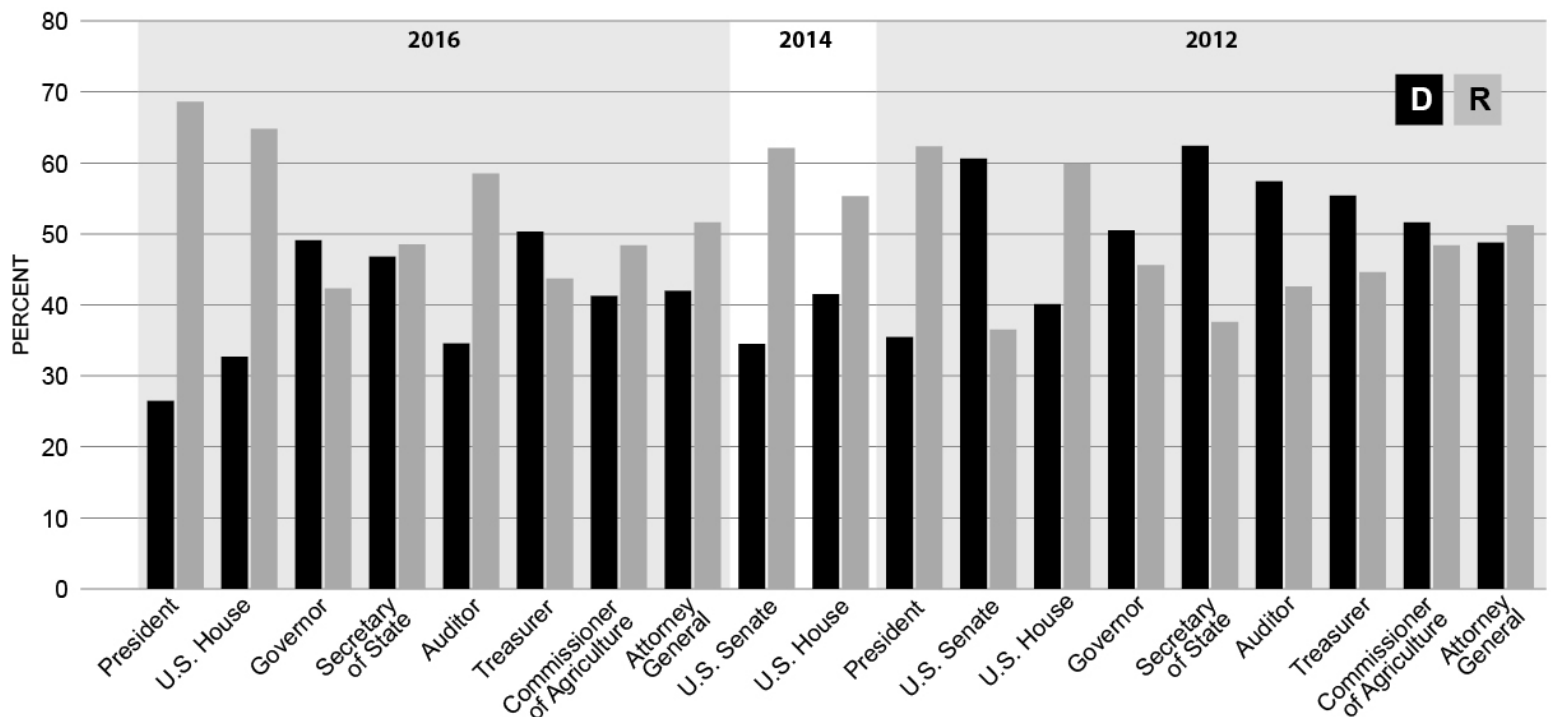
The Blankenship campaign has hired Greg Thomas as an adviser. West Virginia-based Mark Blankenship, who is unrelated to the Senate candidate, has conducted some polling for the campaign.

Maj. Tom Willis entered the race in early January. A Green Beret veteran and former tax lawyer who now co-owns an inn in Fayette County, Willis is entering the race without name recognition. He even says in his campaign video that "you probably haven't heard of me," highlighting that he's running as a political outsider. Republicans familiar with the race say that if he can raise enough money to raise his name I.D., he could become a serious candidate. But he won't have the kind of personal money that Blankenship has in the race, and at this point it's unlikely he'll make a splash.

Bo Copley made national headlines after he confronted Hillary Clinton in 2016 at a roundtable discussion after she mentioned putting "coal miners and companies out of business." He had previously been laid off from his job in the coal mining industry. Copley filed his statement of candidacy with the Federal Election Commission in July but doesn't appear to have filed a fundraising report yet.

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West Virginia Statewide Elections Results



West Virginia: Attorney General, Congressman Make Up Top Tier

Continued from page 5

The Republican Primary

Morrissey began the race with an edge in name recognition. He's well known in the panhandle, which includes some Washington, D.C. commuters in Jefferson and Berkeley counties, where he's been active in the party and has lived in Harpers Ferry since 2006. It's a valuable asset considering the panhandle is covered by the most expensive media market in the state (the D.C. market) with a dense population that can be tough to penetrate.

Morrissey's name ID statewide is further bolstered because he has appeared on the statewide ballot twice as a candidate for attorney general. An Oct. 19-22 poll of likely primary voters by Fabrizio, Lee and Associates for 35th PAC Oct. 19 and 22 found Morrissey ahead of Jenkins 40-34 percent, and that Morrissey had greater name recognition.

Jenkins, on the other hand, represents southern West Virginia, where Democrats have performed better in general elections and where fewer GOP primary voters live. The congressman will need to overperform in his own district and the 2nd District and offset his losses in the panhandle.

There's also a battle beyond geography. Jenkins will likely highlight Morrissey's past as a lobbyist and Morrissey's wife's current work as a lobbyist at a firm that has represented Planned Parenthood and gun control advocates, as well as his time out of state in New Jersey. Morrissey, on the other hand, will go after Jenkins' past as a Democrat and 2008 endorsement of Hillary Clinton—equating it to being a liberal—and his record in the House.

End-of-the-year FEC reports were due on January 31, but senators and Senate candidates still file by paper and it can take a while for full reports to be posted online. Morrissey released his fourth quarter



Patrick Morrissey

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

numbers in a press release, however, and had \$1.1 million cash on hand on Dec. 31, while Jenkins had \$1.4 million. But Morrissey also has a friendly PAC (\$470,000 cash on hand) that could make up the difference between their fundraising.

Any prospect of a normal Republican primary race was shredded when Blankenship entered the race in late November.

According to a West Virginia Republican, Blankenship doesn't have a budget and will self-fund as necessary. He has already aired several television ads, and plans to continue to do so. His advertising includes theories that Manchin and Obama orchestrated a coverup to pin the blame for the explosion at Massey mine on Blankenship, but it's unclear if enough West Virginia voters distrust the government (and are disgusted enough with Morrissey and Jenkins) to support Blankenship for the Senate.

From Blankenship's ads alone, it's clear that he's no fan of Manchin, and it's been questioned whether Blankenship was running to win or as a less expensive way to attack Manchin (candidates pay a lower rate for television ads). But one GOP source says that Blankenship is seriously running to be the next U.S. Senator, and another said he has made disparaging remarks about Morrissey and Jenkins. So while Blankenship is currently aiming his attacks on Democrats and the senator, he could impact that race if he attacks either of his Republican opponents disproportionately.

Even though Blankenship has a controversial past, he does have a base of support in the southern part of the state, according to veteran radio host and analyst Hoppy Kercheval. If Blankenship receives as little as 10 to 20 percent of the vote, that would likely hurt Jenkins because of a shared base in the south.

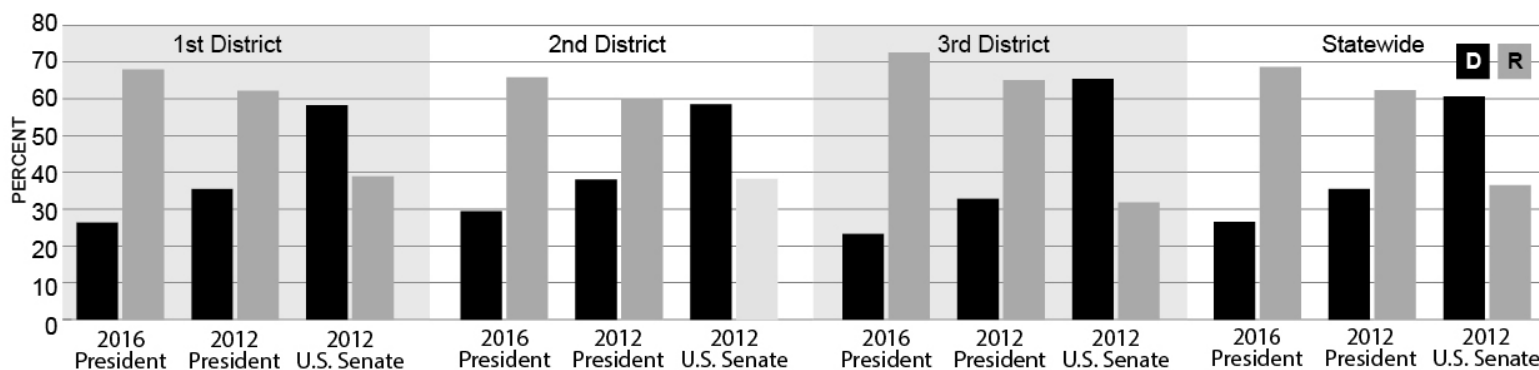
With three months to go before the primary there isn't a clear frontrunner. Both Morrissey and Jenkins have paths to the nomination, and Blankenship (and his personal money) is a wild card. This race is likely to get uglier before voting begins, but there is still time for the party to come together to take on Manchin, who will be difficult to defeat.

The Incumbent

Manchin first ran for statewide office in 1996, losing a gubernatorial primary to Charlotte Pritt (who later ran for governor in 2016). But

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West Virginia Election Results by Congressional District



West Virginia: A Long History of Voting For Manchin

Continued from page 6

rather than endorse the winner of the Democratic nomination, according to *Politico*, Manchin sent a letter to hundreds of Democratic leaders explaining why he'd support GOP candidate Cecil Underwood, who went on to win the general election. In 2000, he defeated Pritt in the primary race for secretary of state and won the general election. Then, in 2004, when Democratic governor Bill Wise announced he would



Joe Manchin

not run for a second term amidst scandal, Manchin ran again and won.

Manchin was re-elected governor in 2008, and became chairman of the National Governors Association in 2010. But shortly after, Democratic Sen.

Robert Byrd, who had been elected to the Senate nine times, died. As governor, Manchin appointed a temporary successor, Carte Goodwin, who chose not to run in a special election to complete Byrd's term. Manchin ran in the special election and defeated Republican John Raese, 54-43 percent.

Manchin won a rematch against Raese in 2012 to a full term, 61-37 percent, in a race that was never really in doubt. The Senator gained national attention for one of the most famous campaign ads in recent history when he shot a version of the so-called cap-and-trade bill to demonstrate his opposition to the unpopular piece of legislation.

The Manchin campaign team includes Global Strategy Group for polling and veteran media consultant Karl Struble.

In the renewed struggle for the heart and soul of the Democratic Party after losing the White House, some liberal activists were critical of Manchin's moderate style and that hypothetically could result in a primary.

Paula Jean Swearengen, the daughter of a coal miner who's been active in environmental causes, is challenging Manchin in the Democratic primary. But she had just \$60,000 in the bank on Sept. 30 (compared to over \$4 million for Manchin) and she isn't viewed as a serious threat, although she was featured in a lengthy Vice News profile exploring whether Bernie Sanders' platform could help Democrats in Trump country. Most Democrats understand that Manchin is the party's only hope of holding onto this seat.

How It Plays Out

Manchin has been a top GOP takeover target for the entire cycle, yet Trump invited him to the White House for bipartisan dinners instead of attacking him, perplexing members of the President's party.

But, much to the delight of GOP strategists, Trump recently soured on Manchin in a *New York Times* article: "He talks. But he doesn't do anything. He doesn't do... 'Hey, let's get together, let's do bipartisan.' I say, 'Good, let's go.' Then you don't hear from him again." And on Wednesday night, Vice President Mike Pence gave a speech in West

Virginia criticizing Manchin, and released a Twitter storm that attacked Manchin's vote against the GOP tax bill and tied the senator to Planned Parenthood and Democratic leadership.

Manchin, who has routinely discussed his openness to working with Trump (including being floated as a potential cabinet member), will need to continue to show that he's still working with him, according to a GOP operative.

The morning after the State of the Union, Manchin appeared on CBS This Morning and pointed to several areas where he would work with

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Candidate Conversation



Dino Rossi (R)

Candidate for Washington's 8th District

Interview Date: Jan. 29, 2018

Date of Birth: Oct. 15, 1959; Seattle, Wa.

Education: Seattle Univ. (1982)

Elected Office: State Senate (former 2016-2017, 2012, 1997-2003); 2004, 2008 gubernatorial nominee; 2010 U.S. Senate nominee

Current Outlook: Rossi is the likely Republican nominee in the open seat to replace Republican Rep. Dave Reichert, who is not seeking re-election. It's a suburban Seattle district that stretches into the central, more rural part of the state, but that Hillary Clinton and President Barack Obama carried in recent presidential elections. Based on those results and Reichert's previous ability to take a competitive district out of play, the district is critical to Democratic efforts to win the majority now that he is leaving. But Rossi might be the only Republican who gives his party a chance to hold the 8th, even under adverse midterm electoral conditions.

Evaluation: Rossi is as polished as a first-time congressional candidate gets. He's been through three competitive statewide races (even certified as governor in 2004 before a final count), so he gets the drill. Rossi tells a compelling story about going from waxing floors at the Space Needle to working in commercial real estate, and points to tangible bipartisan work on the budget during his time in the Legislature. Even though he is on the cusp of being a perennial candidate, Rossi has consistently outperformed the presidential ticket and has done well in this district in his statewide losses. He has represented part of the 8th in the Legislature, but his most recent stints have been by appointment and he hasn't been on the ballot in nearly eight years. Rossi has been able to leverage his statewide donor base into over \$1 million raised last year for this race and looks to have avoided a serious threat in Aug. 7 primary. The Democratic field has been slower to develop but this could be a brutal year for GOP candidates, and Reichert—with his reputation as former King County sheriff—made this district look less competitive than it really is. Democrats will also take a fresh look at his real estate business. This is still a good Democratic takeover opportunity but Rossi is going to make them work and spend for it.

West Virginia: Manchin's Trump Debacle

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the president. He said of the President's speech, "a lot of the things he said I liked," pointing to infrastructure and the opioid crisis as areas where Democrats and Republicans could work together. He added, "I probably vote in the middle more than anybody else." Manchin was one of three Democrats who voted for Neil Gorsuch for the Supreme Court last year (the other two, Sen. Joe Donnelly of Indiana and Sen. Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, are also running for re-election in states that Trump carried). But no Democrats supported the GOP tax bill, the GOP's signature achievement since the party took over the executive branch and all of Congress—which is sure to come up in the campaign. Manchin also likely won't receive an endorsement from the NRA this re-election fight.

Manchin could struggle in the GOP-leaning eastern panhandle, where there's less of a connection to the old Democratic Party. In the rest of the state, Manchin needs a combination of Democrats and Republicans to win.

One political operative points to the fact that the staggering losses in Democratic Party registration in the state haven't translated into immediate gains for GOP registration, so Manchin can survive if he maintains his own brand of the Democratic Party rather than being tied to the national party. It's up to Republicans to convince voters that Manchin has changed since they last voted for him.

The state has a long history of favoring incumbents. Legendary Sen. Byrd represented West Virginia for 50 years. But Republicans believe the

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Candidate Conversations



Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

Owen Hill (R)

Candidate for Colorado's 5th District

Interview Date: Jan. 30, 2018

Date of Birth: Feb. 17, 1982; Boonton, N.J.

Education: Air Force Academy (2003); Pardee RAND Graduate School (Ph.D., 2006)

Elected Office: State Senate; 2014 U.S. Senate candidate

Current Outlook: As a sitting state senator, Hill is one of the most credible primary challengers to an incumbent House Member anywhere in the country. GOP Rep. Doug Lamborn, who was first elected in 2006 to the Colorado Springs-based district, was nearly toppled in the primary in 2016 by a political neophyte. There is potential for anti-Lamborn voters to split between Hill and 2016 Senate nominee Darryl Glenn. Glenn raised just \$12,000 in the third quarter but had \$201,000 in the bank on Sept. 30 compared to Hill's \$214,000. This is a solid Republican district so the GOP primary is tantamount to the general election.

Evaluation: It's clear that the Colorado state Senate is not going to be sufficient for Hill. He ran for the U.S. Senate in 2014 and ruffled some feathers when he didn't immediately halt his campaign after Rep. Cory Gardner made his late announcement. Now Hill is challenging an incumbent in a primary and already represents about one-fifth of the congressional district. Hill is young and energetic and will make the case that the congressman is inattentive to the district's needs, particularly on defense issues. In our interview, he was friendly and engaging, but it's not hard to see him coming across as too confident in certain settings. He has a somewhat eclectic background, from the Air Force, to Compassion International, to Sen. Rand Paul's state chairman for the 2016 presidential campaign, so it's not immediately clear where he would fit into the Republican Conference on the Hill. And he'll likely have to answer for some bipartisan work in the Legislature, particularly on education, that could get him sideways with GOP primary voters. Whether it's this race or another, we likely haven't seen or heard the last from Owen Hill.



Thomas McKinnis/CQ Roll Call

Matt Heinz (D)

Candidate for Arizona's 2nd District

Interview Date: Oct. 18, 2017

Date of Birth: June 6, 1977; Midland, Mich.

Education: Albion College (1999); Wayne State School of Medicine (MD)

Political Office: Arizona House (former; 2009-2013); 2016 2nd District nominee

Current Outlook: Heinz is a credible contender in one of Democrats' better takeover opportunities. GOP Rep. Martha McSally is leaving the Tucson-based seat to run for the Senate. In 2016, Hillary Clinton carried the district 50-45 percent while Heinz lost to McSally 57-43 percent. Heinz isn't the favorite of the party establishment but he shouldn't be ignored considering his previous race and willingness to confront former Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (the frontrunner) on her moderate record from the past. The primary is Aug. 28.

Evaluation: Heinz first ran for the state Legislature during his third year of residency and lost, but had more luck when he ran in 2006. He worked at Tucson Medical Center during his four years in the state House, and continued to work there, commuting about every three weeks, after he was appointed as the Director of Provider Research at the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, DC. Heinz returned to Arizona full time in 2015, and shortly after began his first challenge to McSally. Heinz came to our interview armed with data and message points and delivered them very quickly. He's an energetic guy who believes that the Democratic primary is the most important race this year and that McSally's exit alleviates the argument that his party needs to nominate Kirkpatrick because of her fundraising ability. He'll contrast his local connections to the 2nd District and present himself as more of a fresh face, compared to the former congresswoman. The relatively cheap Tucson media market could help him deliver his message, but he still has a serious challenge in getting out of the primary.

West Virginia: Democrats Hope for 2012 Repeat

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partisanship of the state is overcoming that trend, with Jenkins' defeat of Rahall as evidence.

Democrats point to Manchin's overperforming Romney in 2012 as evidence that voters see him as an individual rather than as a party staple. But the state has shifted to the right since Manchin's last race, and even though there is an ugly GOP primary, there will be a more credible Republican nominee and more interest from national GOP groups than 2012 when the senator faced Raese.

Democrats in states such as Virginia and Pennsylvania, which include major urban centers and rural areas, will try to overperform in the cities and keep losses to a minimum in the rural areas; the President's low approval rating in these states could boost turnout among urban voters and suppress the vote in rural areas. Manchin won't enjoy those advantages, considering the largest city has 50,000 people.

Republicans also point to six years for Manchin to develop a record that's out of step with the state, along with ethical questions, including the role his daughter, Mylan CEO Heather Bresch, played in raising the price of epipens. But one GOP operative argued that it will be more difficult for Morrissey to distance himself from the opioid lobbying issue than it will be for Manchin to distance himself from his daughter's issues. Manchin also supported Hillary Clinton in 2016, when some West Virginians were particularly angry with her for suggesting that coal companies would go out of business.

There is some Republican concern that Blankenship could continue his crusade even after losing the primary. But West Virginia has a "Sore Loser" Law, meaning any candidate who loses the primary is prohibited from filing as an independent and running in the general election. That means while Blankenship has the capacity to self-fund an independent

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Candidate Conversations



Thomas McKinless/CQ Roll Call

Ann Kirkpatrick (D)

Candidate for Arizona's 2nd District

Interview Date: Oct. 12, 2017

Date of Birth: March 24, 1950; McNary, Ariz.

Education: Univ. of Arizona (1972; law school 1979)

Elected Office: U.S. House

(former, 2009-2011, 2013-2017); Arizona House (former, 2005-2007); 2016 U.S. Senate nominee.

Current Outlook: Kirkpatrick is a top contender for the open seat left by GOP Rep. Martha McSally's run for the Senate. Kirkpatrick, who used to represent the 1st District to the north and was defeated for re-election in 2010, was already mounting a serious challenge to McSally in one of 23 districts Hillary Clinton carried that is currently represented by a Republican. Kirkpatrick is viewed as the Democratic favorite but can't take the August primary for granted. This is a top takeover opportunity for her party.

Evaluation: In a sea of first-time candidates, Kirkpatrick stands apart. In our interview, she was clearly comfortable in her own skin and unafraid of talking about policy positions that could be more liberal than her past constituencies. And she is one of few candidates we've met with who was open about her admiration for Nancy Pelosi. After trying to cultivate a moderate image during her first tenure in the House and losing re-election, Kirkpatrick appears to have decided to shift to the left and let the chips fall where they may. The 2nd District is more moderate than her old district and Arizona has a whole, so it's not as likely to be a liability. Kirkpatrick will have to answer the carpetbagging question (she emphasizes her ties to Tucson, where she taught public school, attended college, and got married) and is a politician at a time when some voters are looking for new faces. But she's been in and through tough races before and could find herself back in the House for a third time.



D.A. Banks/CQ Roll Call

Lea Marquez Peterson (R)

Candidate for Arizona's 2nd District

Interview Date: Jan. 10, 2018

Date of Birth: Jan. 19, 1970; Santa Fe, N.M.

Education: Univ. of Arizona (1992); Pepperdine Univ. (MBA, 1996)

Elected Office: None; First run for office

Current Outlook: Marquez Peterson is the likely GOP nominee in the open seat race to replace Republican Rep. Martha McSally, who is running for the Senate. As the president of the Tucson Chamber of Commerce and former small business owner who has never run for office before, she is one of Republicans' top recruits anywhere in the country. Republicans need a good candidate in the 2nd District, which no longer has an incumbent and Hillary Clinton carried in 2016. This is a top Democratic takeover opportunity.

Evaluation: Marquez Peterson has many of the qualities of a good, first-time candidate. In our interview she was warm and friendly and told a compelling personal story about building a small business with her husband, from owning one gas station to six stations across southern Arizona, but she also was reluctant to delve into details about policy. Marquez Peterson has done a good job of keeping the Republican field clear of credible opponents, but her biggest challenge is still the general election, where the district has appeared to shift to Democrats in recent cycles. As a Hispanic woman with a business background, it's not hard to see her attracting attention from Republicans across the country who realize the party needs more people like her on Capitol Hill. But it's still unclear whether she can raise enough money to run against the tide this year.

West Virginia: Manchin Aims To Survive National Trends

Continued from page 9

campaign, his campaign will be over if he loses in May.

Blankenship's candidacy is a long shot due to his record in the state. But his attacks on Manchin during the primary could soften up the incumbent and help the eventual Republican nominee.

Strategists point to West Virginia's small population as an asset for Manchin, who's 17 years in statewide office—as secretary of state, governor and senator—has allowed him to meet much of the population of 1.8 million. As one West Virginia Democrat describes it, the state is composed mostly of rural areas and small towns, meaning he'll need to run the race more like a mayoral race, traveling from town to town and county to county. One political operative noted that Manchin typically starts ramping up his campaign later into the cycle, and the

GOP primary will likely shape what the general election race will look like.

If Morrissey is the GOP candidate, there's a clear geographic base for each candidate, with Manchin in the south and Morrissey in the panhandle. If Jenkins wins the primary,



Don Blankenship, during the 2010 Senate hearing on mine safety.

Scott J. Ferrell/CQ Roll Call

however, the southern voters could be more conflicted. Jenkins carried the 3rd District in 2016 by 44 points, while Manchin carried the 3rd in 2012 by 34 points, 65-32 percent.

The Bottom Line

Tuesday night's State of the Union speech was a good example of Manchin's challenge, as he sat a few seats away from Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and not far from the President who dominated his state, unsure of when or whether to applaud or sit on his hands.

The larger context of West Virginia's changing political climate is part of a national shift of white, blue-collar voters from the Democratic Party to the GOP, and the concurrent trend of white-collar, white voters moving toward the Democratic Party. It's the "class inversion" that's been going on since the 1960s, according to CNN analyst/ Atlantic columnist Ronald Brownstein. Manchin has survived that trend in West Virginia up to this point, but this year will be an even tougher test.

It's hard to imagine any Democrat other than Manchin winning a high-profile race in the state. As Kercheval noted, before George W. Bush carried the state in 2000, the last non-incumbent Republican to carry the presidential ticket was Herbert Hoover in 1928. Since then, Republicans have taken over the state House and state Senate, and all but two statewide offices. While Democrats may hope that losses in 2014 and 2016 were aberrations resulting from a couple good GOP cycles, it's more likely that West Virginia is trending Republican.

Even so, Morrissey has a profile that might not resonate this year as a former lobbyist, as shown in the Virginia governor's race where attacks on Republican Ed Gillespie's past as a DC lobbyist paid off. And

if Jenkins wins, he'll have to compete for voters from coal country who have previously supported Manchin.

Rahall's story should be at least a little ominous for Manchin: The election before he was replaced by a Republican, he won re-election by 8 points. In 2014, he was defeated by 11 points in a great year for Republicans. This won't be a great cycle nationally for Republicans, but could still be good for the GOP in states such as West Virginia.

It's unclear if former Democratic voters in West Virginia believe that Manchin still encompasses their old definition of the Democratic Party, and if so, whether West Virginians still prefer the old Democratic Party to the new Republican Party. This race will ultimately test whether Manchin's brand can hold up under the political gravity of a state on the cusp of a complete transition to the GOP.

IE

2018 Gubernatorial Ratings

| Toss-Up | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| FL Open (Scott, R) | Walker (I-Alaska) |
| MI Open (Snyder, R) | NV Open (Sandoval, R) |
| Tilt Democratic | Tilt Republican |
| <i>Rauner (R-Ill.)</i> | OH Open (Kasich, R) |
| Lean Democratic | Lean Republican |
| Wolf (D-Pa.) | Hogan (R-Md.) |
| CO Open (Hickenlooper, D) | Reynolds (R-Iowa) |
| CT Open (Malloy, D) | Sununu (R-N.H.) |
| <i>ME Open (LePage, R)</i> | |
| <i>NM Open (Martinez, R)</i> | |
| Likely Democratic | Likely Republican |
| Brown (D-Ore.) | Colyer (R-Kansas) |
| MN Open (Dayton, DFL) | Ducey (R-Ariz.) |
| | Walker (R-Wis.) |
| | GA Open (Deal, R) |
| | OK Open (Fallin, R) |
| | TN Open (Haslam, R) |
| Solid Democratic | Solid Republican |
| Cuomo (D-N.Y.) | Abbott (R-Texas) |
| Ige (D-Hawaii) | Baker (R-Mass.) |
| Raimondo (D-R.I.) | Hutchinson (R-Ark.) |
| CA Open (Brown, D) | Ivey (R-Ala.) |
| | McMaster (R-S.C.) |
| | Ricketts (R-Neb.) |
| | Scott (R-Vt.) |
| | ID Open (Otter, R) |
| | SD Open (Daugaard, R) |
| | WY Open (Mead, R) |

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