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Seven States Key to 2020 Presidential Election

By Matt A. Mayer

It seems almost irresponsible to start talking about the Electoral College results in 2020 so soon after the 2018 midterm elections, but history and the 2018 results foreshadow what likely will occur in 2020.

First, two big assumptions are that Donald Trump will run for re-election and there won't be a viable independent candidate who will shift a state in either direction.

On the Republican side, it is a safe bet that the following states will vote for Trump in 2020 (with electoral votes): Alabama (9), Alaska (3), Arkansas (6), Georgia (16), Idaho (4), Indiana (11), Iowa (6), Kansas (6), Kentucky (8), Louisiana (8), Mississippi (6), Missouri (10), Montana (3), Nebraska (5), North Dakota (3), Oklahoma (7), Ohio (18), South Carolina (9), South Dakota (3), Tennessee (11), Texas (38), Utah (6), West Virginia (5) and Wyoming (3).

Some will argue that Georgia and Ohio are battleground states, but, in terms of Georgia, one close gubernatorial election in the first midterm of a Republican president doesn't mean it will go blue in 2020. Georgia is changing, but hasn't gone blue presidentially since 1992. Trump won Georgia by more than 5 percent in 2016. As for Ohio, given the nearly 9 percent Trump win in 2016 and the comfortable election of all statewide Republicans in 2018, Ohio has lost its status as a battleground state going into 2020. Those 24 states give Trump 204 electoral votes.

On the Democratic side, these states and the District of Columbia will vote for blue in 2020: California (55), Colorado (9), Connecticut (7), Delaware (3), District of Columbia (3), Hawaii (4), Illinois (20), Maine (4), Maryland (10), Massachusetts (11), Minnesota (10), Nevada (6), New Jersey (14), New Mexico (5), New York (29), Oregon (7), Rhode Island (4), Vermont (3), Virginia (13) and Washington (12).

Colorado and Virginia have become the Democrats' Ohio — those states are no longer battleground states, but reliable blue states. Ten of 11 state and federal elected officials in Colorado and Virginia are Democrats. Seven of eight of Nevada statewide election officials are now Democrats. If Nevada goes blue in 2020 as expected, it will join those two states as a reliably blue state. Those 19 states and the District of Columbia give the Democratic ticket 229 electoral votes.

With just seven states left to allocate, Trump will be 66 electoral votes shy of re-election and the Democratic ticket will need 41 electoral votes to win back the presidency. The seven states are Arizona (11), Florida (29), Michigan (16), New

Hampshire (4), North Carolina (15), Pennsylvania (20) and Wisconsin (10).

In the 2018 midterm elections, Arizona slightly favored Democrat Krysten Sinema for U.S. senator, but re-elected Republican Doug Ducey in a 15-point landslide. Florida sided by a whisker with Republican Ron DeSantis for governor and Republican Rick Scott for U.S. senator.

Michigan re-elected Democratic U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow — though John James' 6-point loss was closer than expected — and put Democrat Gretchen Witmer in charge as governor. New Hampshire re-elected Republican Chris Sununu as governor. North Carolina sat out this election. Pennsylvania re-elected Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf and Democratic U.S. Sen. Bob Casey.

Finally, Wisconsin ended Republican Scott Walker's tenure as governor by 31,000 votes and re-elected Democrat Tammy Baldwin to the U.S. Senate.

What do these results likely tell us?

That Arizona, Florida and North Carolina likely will remain red in 2020, bringing Trump to 259 electoral votes, and that both parties will face the same challenge in 2020 to win Michigan, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin by appealing to the working class and suburban women voters in those states. It would seem Trump has an advantage in that he could secure new trade deals with Europe, Japan and China in follow-up to his new deals with South Korea, Mexico and Canada. Keep in mind, in places like Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, Trump's trade stance is supported by pro-union, blue collar Democrats like Ohio's U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, so his appeal to workers in manufacturing, construction, transportation and trade will remain high.

It also means that the seven battleground states will get hit with a massive wave of attention from both parties. If you thought the 2018 midterm election was exhausting, just wait until the 2020 primary season begins about a year from now. Unfortunately for the left, President Donald Trump's 2016 election combined with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's adoption of Harry Reid's 50-vote confirmation threshold meant that a conservative Supreme Court majority could thwart the left's ambitions for a generation, if achieved. That potential reality has the left in an absolute panic.

Now that it has lost the U.S Senate for at least four more years due to the relative safety of most of the 2020 Senate incumbents, the left will do whatever it takes to get the presidency back to prevent another conservative Supreme Court nominee should Justices Ginsberg or Breyer retire. Don't be fooled, America is far better off ruled via the legislative process than by five smart lawyers who go beyond the Constitution's words to create an America they deem best.

With so much at stake, don't expect much of a break before the 2020 battle begins.

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