

There's A Reason DC Democrats Are Always Winning, Even When They Lose

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(Watch the video for the monologue and an interview with the Conservative Partnership Institute's Rachel Bovard on what's wrong in Washington and how to fix it.)

Washington Republicans are excited for the 2022 elections, and they have reason to be — they're going to do well. They're heavy favorites to take back the House of Representatives; and despite a very bad Senate map, it's a coin flip they'll retake that too.

None of this is too shocking: First-term presidents usually face a backlash, and often it's a bloodbath.

President Barack Obama crushed Sen. John McCain, then lost 63 House seats two years later; President Donald Trump lost 42 seats in 2018; President Bill Clinton lost 54. In fact, the only first-term president to not lose House seats in the midterms in the past 55 years was President George W. Bush, in the post-9/11 2002 midterms.

This is the nature of politics: A new man is swept in and carries fellow party members with him, then two years later enthusiasm has waned, the president's promises have turned into a more frustrating reality, and opposition voters are angry and fired up. So what happens? They punish the party in power.

All of that figures to be even worse for President Joe Biden. Nobody is passionate about Biden himself, and in 2022 Democrats won't be turning out to vote against Trump, so even if Biden were doing a bang-up job he'd still be in for what his old boss called "a shellacking."

But Biden is not doing a great job — he's doing terribly. He ran on solving COVID, but COVID is, of course, still here. Even worse, so are the absurd restrictions COVID has placed on our lives: Our children are still masked, flying is still miserable, big businesses are being coerced into injecting their employees with a leaky vaccine, and small businesses are still being executed at the decree of state and local health officials.

Biden ran on bringing humanitarian values to the border. Instead, he has virtually abolished the border. By the end of the year, 2 million people may have arrived there, and hundreds of thousands more will have crossed undetected or simply arrived by flying here and then overstaying a visa.

Many of those arrivals have already disappeared into the U.S. interior, and some of them have been picked up by sex and labor traffickers. It turns out when you stop enforcing laws and backing the men and women on the line, crime takes over and people suffer.

Inflation is setting in because of course it is: You can't go out and complain about setting \$2 trillion on fire over 20 years in Afghanistan, then try to more than double it in one go right here at home.

Crime is rampant, and why wouldn't it be? Just like on the border, stopping crime doesn't require any complicated dissertations on root causes — it's been with us forever, and it's always been stopped by arresting and punishing the bad guys. That's it. So naturally, that's the one tactic it's now unacceptable to deploy.

It's all gotten so bad even corporate media are beginning to wonder if the semiconscious man they've spent nearly two years now essentially holding upright might not be all there. Who would have guessed?

And hey: If the old man decides to step down today, his replacement is Vice President Kamala Harris, who is somehow even less popular. So all in all, Washington Republicans have reason to be happy.

But here's the bad news: Conservatives don't have reason to be happy — or at least we have just as much reason to be happy as we do for basically any Republican congressional majority.

Why? To explain, let's take a step back first and look at the budget fights raging right now: Trillions of dollars in spending on what? "From Cradle to Grave," The New York Times headline blared, "Democrats Move to Expand Social Safety Net."

"The \$3.5 trillion social policy bill that lawmakers begin drafting this week," it reads, "would touch virtually every American, at every point in life, from conception to old age."

It's amazing: The Times is so excited they're actually admitting that unborn children are alive.

True, there's no guarantee Democrats will get everything they want in this fight, although if they don't it will be because of Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin, not Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. But that's not the point: The point is they're choosing to pick this battle in the first place, and damn the torpedoes. They know it's dangerous and they're doing it anyway. Why? Therein lies conservatives' problem.

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is 81 years old. She's worth tens of millions of dollars at least. She owns a vineyard. She has a refrigerator filled with expensive ice cream. And every single day she comes to work with the full intention of changing this country.

What did she say about the Democratic budget? That, "This legislation will be the biggest, and perhaps the most controversial, initiative that any of us have undertaken in our official lives." And then she did it.

You see that in a lot of places. Do you think the public is happy that the military is giving out free transgender operations and having generals learn about "white rage"? Do they like their children being fed critical race theory? Do they like COVID relief being handed out based on skin color rather than need?

Of course not, but Democrats know that if they can get those policies implemented now, many of them will remain forever. They'll lose Democrats in the process, but so be it — there will be more Democrats in the future. It's impossible to watch politics professionally for over a decade, through some of its liveliest battles in a long time, and not come to the understanding that Democrats in general do politics differently.

Modern liberal politicians often come to Washington as activists — they want to change the world. Republicans, on the other hand, most often come to Washington because it's prestigious. They want a feather in the cap of their successful career in business or law.

Here's how this dynamic plays out: When Democrats are legislating on something major, they look around the field and say to themselves, "Yeah, we're going to take some casualties on this one, but we're going to change America." And then they blast right through it. Pelosi is going to lose members for this overhaul of our country and she knows it — she's just decided that given the trouble they're already heading into, it's worth it.

She's thrown away a House majority before, back in 2010. But guess what? Before she did, she changed the entire country with Obamacare. That was her exit bomb; that was the sacrifice she made. And now she's back, Obamacare is still the law (because of the Republicans and the legacies), and the temptation is going to return to laughing at her when she loses again in 2022.

But if she gets this budget through, well then who cares. Her legacy will be remaking the role of government and its interactions with an increasingly dependent class of citizens in the most major way since President Lyndon B. Johnson and his Great Society 60 years ago.

Now, what do Republicans do when they're in charge? And not just having the House — when they get to pass whatever they want without consequence — but when it matters.

When it matters, Republicans look around and say, "Oh no we can't do that, we'd lose a man. The Democrats would take seats." They are virtually a majority for the sake of being a majority. They just want to polish it up, put it on the shelf, and look at it. "Border? Abortion? Woof, those are tough fights, we'll lose members. It's an election year, after all, or if it isn't, it will be soon."

To put it simply, Republicans approach politics like America fights wars: They don't want to lose a single man. Democrats, on the other hand? They look at politics like the Russians looked at Stalingrad: The congressman in front votes now; when they fall the next man gets elected and he will vote too.

So you see a repeating pattern to American politics: There isn't a true back-and-forth. Instead, Democrats change the country a lot while they're in power. Then Republicans hold power and push the pause button. There's no rollback that a new executive order can't undo.

Maybe they cut taxes; bring back the Mexico City policy; junk a regulation that Democrats created but didn't manage to implement; but that's about it. When was the last time Republicans passed a huge law — one that changed America forever the way Democrats do every time they hold serve in American politics? You don't see it.

This is how you use politics to remake the country. This is why it always feels like conservatives are fighting a rearguard action — because they are.

The problem is multiple-fold in Washington, where calcified think tanks lack both the faculties and vision needed to defeat an enemy they've been losing to for so long, and where politicians are either lazy, risk-averse, easily led by corporate interests, or a combination of all three.

Hopefully this is changing. The intelligentsia of the city is disrupted, with new and interesting people and organizations rising to the occasion. At the same time, there are also more active, populist, hard-hitting Republicans coming to the fore — Republicans who want real change, not just the promise of one.

It's a culture shift and it's long needed, but like anything so entrenched as culture, change takes time — time that we don't really have.