



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Lauren Passalacqua, David Bergstein 202-545-3567

Recess Report: Nasty Primaries, Health Care Fallout Spoil Republicans' Summer

As [Politico](#) observed in July: “there isn’t a state on the Senate map where national Republicans are facing their dream candidate scenario,” and “in seven of the eight most competitive states in 2018, either a top candidate has turned them down, two candidates are staring at a potentially messy primary, or both.” Over the recess, primaries grew nastier and GOP divisions deepened. Take a look at why “[Republicans are terrified](#)” heading into the midterms.

GOP “[Disunity Playing Out](#)” In Primaries:

- **Arizona:** President Trump along with Kelli Ward and other potential GOP challengers spent the summer blasting Flake, leading [TPM](#) to write “Republicans’ primary woes are back, with a Grand Canyon-sized vengeance.” Public [polling](#) revealed how weak incumbent Senator Jeff Flake is – a point President Trump echoed on [Twitter](#) as he expressed support for Ward. While Flake’s talked tough on Trump, Arizona [political reporter Dennis Welch](#) observed he’s actually voted with the president more than 93 percent of the time – a record that won’t help [convince Independents and moderates](#). Meanwhile, the president is still poking at Flake’s [primary](#), meeting with other prospective challengers as his own billionaire backers [poured money](#) into Ward’s super PAC.
- **Nevada:** President Trump is active in another western primary and joined Senator Heller’s challenger Danny Tarkanian in [slamming](#) the incumbent. Heller’s nightmare of his own making earned him a spot at the top of every most vulnerable lists along with headlines like these: [NBC: Why Dean Heller is the Senate’s Most Endangered Republican](#). Heller had few public events but that didn’t limit his gaffes: [lying again](#) about Planned Parenthood; [failing to answer](#) tough questions at a Hispanics in Politics breakfast; and [demanding](#) a college student support his reelection.
- **Indiana:** “[The GOP’s nastiest primary](#)” continued in full swing. A series of unflattering stories on Congressman Rokita’s diva-like [driving demands](#) and how [poorly he treats his staff](#) invited barbs from Congressman Messer. Political observers across the state note that the primary has devolved into a constant “[pummeling](#)” between the two Congressmen – a stark contrast to drama-free [Joe Donnelly](#), whose sole focus remains on what’s best for Hoosiers.
- **Missouri:** In the few weeks Attorney General Josh Hawley announced his exploratory committee, he’s faced questions about [legal troubles](#) and [ladder](#) climbing, and now, after his mentor former U.S. Senator Jack Danforth declared Republicans should disavow Trump, whether [Hawley agrees](#) – a damaging question amidst a [crowded primary](#) that may continue to grow. Here’s how MissouriNet summed up Hawley’s summer: [GOP Party Drama Slows Missouri AG’s Momentum at Run for U.S. Senate](#).
- **Wisconsin:** Kevin Nicholson – a former Democrat who is [already misleading Wisconsin](#) voters about his record – may be the only declared Republican candidate but not for long. The [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) wrote “It’s game on in the Republican contest to challenge Democratic

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin as next year” with State Senator Leah Vukmir and Eric Hovde likely to announce this fall. In the meantime, Nicholson is under fire for [failing to act](#) on concerns about a veterans home while serving on the state veterans board and had to [pull down an ad](#) for including footage of a veterans’ cemetery.

- **Montana:** Montana Republicans – long [unimpressed](#) with the field – continue to criticize it. One Montana conservative wrote last week rebuking one candidate, Matt Rosendale while calling two others, Troy Downing and Russell Fagg, “[uninspiring establishmentarians](#).” Meanwhile, Downing [dismissed](#) Fagg as just “another Lawyer” as Fagg [knocked](#) Rosendale for his Maryland roots.
- **Pennsylvania:** Jeff Bartos [attacked](#) Congressman Barletta in a TV ad and that wasn’t even the low point for Barletta, whose official campaign announcement was met with a “[meh](#)” in Pennsylvania. The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)’s John Baer observed: “Barletta faces a potentially crowded and resource-draining primary” with “a hill to climb.”
- **West Virginia:** The attacks [haven’t let up](#) between Congressman Evan Jenkins and Attorney General Patrick Morrisey. The Congressman says by running “Morrisey is breaking his promise to the West Virginia voters,” while Morrisey’s spokeswoman retorted ““It’s really sad how desperate Evan Jenkins has become.””

The Toxic GOP Health Care Plan Was Front-And-Center:

If GOP Senate candidates hoped for a break on health care, they were disappointed by a series of reports that kept the issue – and their toxic agenda – front-and-center.

Associated Press: [Trump Moves Trigger Health Premium Jumps for 2018.](#)

- “The Trump administration’s own actions are triggering double-digit premium increases on individual health insurance policies purchased by many consumers, a nonpartisan study has found.”
- “Insurers who assumed that Trump will make good on his threat to stop billions in payments to subsidize copays and deductibles requested additional premium increases ranging from 2 percent to 23 percent, the report found.”
- ““In many cases that means insurers are adding double-digit premium increases on top of what they otherwise would have requested,” said Cynthia Cox, a co-author of the Kaiser report. “In many cases, what we are seeing is an additional increase due to the political uncertainty.””

New York Times: [Trump Threat to Obamacare Would Send Premiums and Deficits Higher.](#)

- “Premiums for the most popular health insurance plans would shoot up 20 percent next year, and federal budget deficits would increase by \$194 billion in the coming decade, if President Trump carried out his threat to end certain subsidies paid to insurance companies under the Affordable Care Act, the Congressional Budget Office said Tuesday.”
- “About 5 percent of the nation’s population would have no insurers in the individual insurance market next year without the subsidies, it said. By contrast, if the subsidies are paid, fewer than one-half of 1 percent of people would be in such areas, the report said.”

Nevada Independent: [Nevada could lose \\$250 million under Graham-Cassidy-Heller proposal, new report says.](#)

- “Nevada stands to lose \$257 million in federal funds if a health-care proposal backed by U.S. Sen. Dean Heller to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act and make significant changes to the federal Medicaid program becomes law, according to a report released by a left-leaning think tank on Thursday.”
- “The [analysis](#) from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found the so-called Graham-Cassidy-Heller plan would restructure and cut the Medicaid program, increase out-of-pocket costs for people who purchase health-care plans on their own and weaken protections for people with pre-existing conditions. Nevada, which has a lower per capita income and lower population density than most other states, wouldn’t be hurt as badly as wealthier, denser states but would still face significant cuts to the federal funds it receives over the next 10 years.”
- “Heller’s office did not respond to a request for comment about the report’s conclusions, nor did Gov. Brian Sandoval’s office about whether the governor supports the proposal.”

Daily Beast: [DSCC launches “innovative, digitally savvy” health ad.](#)

Politico: [WEB WARS — DSCC releases “bumper flock” video ads.](#)“

The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee is out with a series of six-second digital ads that will follow users across the internet to tell a full story, in this case about the dangers of Obamacare repeal. Here, here and here are versions of the ad targeting Nevada Sen. Dean Heller.”

Politics PA: [DSCC Launches Digital Ads Against Barletta, Bartos & Saccone](#)

“The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) is launching new digital ads against Congressman Lou Barletta (R-Luzerne), Jeff Bartos, and state Representative Rick Saccone (R-Allegheny) using Google’s new bumper ads. The ads target the Republicans on the GOP’s healthcare plan.”

Florida Politics: [Nat’l Democrats serve up trio of ads attacking Rick Scott.](#)

“The committee backing Senate Democrats released a series of attack ads Tuesday against Gov. Rick Scott...The three six-second-long anti-Scott bumpers, which DSCC said are the first of its kind this cycle, depict a son texting his mother about health insurance from an emergency room. The teen asks his mother what type of health insurance the family has, and she responds with ‘I’m sorry honey, we don’t.’”

Cleveland.com: [DSCC targets Gibbons, too.](#)

“Mandel is the favorite to win next year’s Republican Senate primary, but the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee is going after Gibbons as well. The DSCC on Tuesday launched a new digital-ad campaign targeting both Gibbons and Mandel, claiming the Republicans would ‘spike’ health-care costs.”