



2018 ELECTION RESULTS: TAX FAIRNESS IS A WINNING MESSAGE

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- 1. Republicans lost the tax messaging war in 2018 because progressives clearly defined the problems with the Trump-GOP tax cuts and were unified on the message.**
 - “Republicans lost the messaging battle on the [tax] issue,” according to a Sept. 2018 poll for the [Republican National Committee](#). By 61% to 30% voters said the Trump-GOP tax cuts benefit “large corporations and rich Americans” over “middle class families.”
 - “The challenge for GOP candidates is that most voters believe that the GOP wants to cut back on (Medicare and Social Security) in order to provide tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy,” the [RNC poll found](#).
 - The [RNC poll found](#) that progressive’s success at winning the message was also attributable to “a fairly disciplined Democrat attack against the recent tax cuts.”
- 2. Republican candidates for Congress ran hard on tax issues and lost.** They either accused their Democratic opponents of favoring tax increases or, less frequently, supporting the Trump-GOP tax law. They lost their House majority to many candidates who ran *against* the tax cuts and their potential threats to services like Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.
 - One-third of all GOP TV ads were about tax issues in general—the most of any issue (healthcare was #2 at 25%). Just 12% of GOP ads were about the Trump-GOP tax law.
 - 52% of Democratic ads were about health care; general tax issues were second at 16% and 7% about the Trump-GOP tax law. ([Data sources found here.](#))
- 3. The outcome of key races where taxes and the tax cut law were factors demonstrate that the 2018 election has put to rest the belief that promising voters tax cuts works as a winning campaign message.** [A more detailed [analysis can be found here.](#)]
 - Four members of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee were defeated, including some of the key architects of the Trump-GOP tax cut law. Four other committee members barely hung onto their seats after winning by double-digit margins in 2016.
 - Many other races around the country found the tax message—either promising tax cuts or accusing their opponents of wanting to raise taxes—ineffective with voters.
- 4. The trickle-down tax message no longer works with the public.** The failure of the Trump-GOP tax cuts should close the book on the typical and tired GOP strategy that tax cuts favoring the wealthy and well-connected will trickle down to working families.
 - Voters understand that they are not personally getting much of a tax cut. The 2018 [election exit poll](#) found that just 28% of voters said the Trump-GOP tax cuts benefitted them, while 45% said they had no effect.
 - Voters understand the threat large, unpaid for tax cuts pose to funding key services like Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and education.

