

We Can't Win; We Must Win; We Will Win¹

Michael K. Cantwell

Our democracy and our planet were on the ballot in November 2020 . . . and they survived, barely. Biden won, Warnock and Ossoff won, and we weathered the worst attack on our democracy since the nation's founding.

Our democracy and our planet are back on the ballot this November, and this time the party of the Big Lies will be aided by 34 voter suppression laws enacted in 19 states, including Florida. These laws, succinctly [summarized](#) by *The New York Times*, “make it harder for people to vote and easier to subvert their will if they do.” They “advance the goals of the Jan. 6 rioters — not by breaking laws but by making them.”

The corporate media has already announced the midterm results—a Republican rout. They have been predicting this for months, and why not? After all, the common wisdom is that first-term presidents lose seats in Congress in their first midterms, even when their supporters are not prevented from voting.

It is far too soon to panic and never too soon to prepare. “All things are ready if our minds be so,” as Henry V assured his fearful troops before they routed the French, who outnumbered them 5 to 1 at the battle of Agincourt.

Or, for a more contemporary pep talk, there's Matthew Rosza writing in Salon:

Sometimes the “laws” of politics (or economics) are characterized as immutable, akin to the laws of physics. They're not, of course. Not a single ballot has been cast in the midterms. If Democrats can find a way to turn out their voters at unexpectedly high levels, while Republicans don't, they could turn 2022 into another blue wave. Political trends do not govern us; they are the results of human behavior, which is never entirely predictable.

The most striking exception to the not entirely immutable “rule” that the president's party always loses seats in the first midterm was 1934, when Democrats flipped 9 seats in the House and another 9 in the Senate. Like Republicans today, the plutocrats, bankers, and business magnates were monolithically and malevolently opposed to the president, denouncing him and his New Deal as “socialist” (to which FDR memorably responded, “I welcome their hatred”).

At this point two years ago, the common wisdom was that Donald Trump would sail into a second term, despite the impeachment, and despite his manifest unfitness for any office, much less our highest, because “it's the economy, stupid.”

Were it not for a craven, clueless corporate media acting like it's 2016 again, Democrats might be favored to break the midterm curse. However, much can change before November, including a

¹ [The Delray Democrat](#), January 2022, page 5.

reduction in inflation as supply chains loosen and a reduction in disruptions of the economy if omicron becomes the dominant variant and we achieve herd immunity.

There's also the possibility that a federal voting rights bill or the Build Back Better Act will pass. Publication of the January 6 Committee's findings could be a game changer, as could the outcome of Attorney General Merrick Garland's investigation.

We cannot rely on any of the above, however. We only have control over what we do, personally and collectively. If Biden's legislative agenda remains frozen, the smart and proper target is the Republican Party, not Manchin and Sinema. To paraphrase FDR, "they may be bastards but they're our bastards." Because of the capital D after their names, Biden was able to appoint 40 federal judges last year, tying Ronald Reagan's first year record

Let's focus on what's been accomplished to date, achievements that are all the more remarkable given the 50-50 split in the Senate and the monolithic and malevolent opposition of Republicans:

- 6,215,000 jobs created in 11 months since his inauguration (the fastest first year on record and an average of 565,000 per month)
- 2021 GDP estimated to hit 5.6% (versus a minus 3.7% GDP in 2020)
- child poverty projected to fall by half in 2021
- 72.8% of adult Americans and 87.6% of seniors fully vaccinated

We must be visible! We need to get on the streets, into the communities, to register and turn out voters, to wave signs, to write letters, and to never stop reminding people that Democrats have always worked for them while Republicans have always worked against them, not only against their economic interests but often against their very lives.