

Good example of midterm election race essay

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



McConnell versus Grimes for United States Senate

- Introduction

When most Americans think about election time, they often refer to the Presidential election that occurs every four years. However, the outcomes of the United States midterm election most often affect Americans on an individual level compared to the outcomes of the Presidential race. Midterm elections are held every two years after the four-year Presidential election has occurred.

Virtually all United States Congress, including the House of Representatives and Senate, have seats up for grabs, and at least three-fourths of our 50 states will hold gubernatorial elections as well (Pfiffner and Davidson 254). It should come as no surprise that midterm elections play a very important role in our government, as all of these elected officials are directly responsible for creating and implementing the laws of our country.

- The Importance of Midterm Elections

The midterm election of 2014 holds the same importance as midterm elections in the past. One of the most important aspects of midterm elections is the long-standing notion that the current President's popularity is directly related to the victors in the House and Senate races. Historically, the party of the sitting President often loses seats in Congress (Pfiffner and Davidson 254). In fact, in the last 21 midterm elections, the party of the incumbent President has lost in both the House and the Senate (Pfiffner and Davidson 254). The party of the President often remains in control of either the House, Senate, or both, yet losing seats to the opposing party during midterm elections often predicts how the country may vote in the next

Presidential race (Pfiffner and Davidson 254). This is most often related to the decrease in the President's popularity by the time midterm elections roll around. These statistics, however, do not change much regardless if the sitting President is serving their first or second term (Pfiffner and Davidson 254). While numerous midterm elections in the past have allowed the sitting President's party to remain in control of either the House or the Senate, numerous seats are still lost to the incumbent's party.

Additionally, especially within recent decades, research has suggested a relation between newly-elected members of the United States Congress and Presidential candidates in the primary races following the midterm elections. This leads many researchers to believe, for example, that the majority of the country's Presidential candidates are introduced after their victories during the midterm elections. Current President Barack Obama, for example, was first elected to office as a United States Senator from Illinois only two years before winning both the Democratic nomination and Presidential election of 2008 (Morse, Vagner, Flanigan, and Zingale, 65). Political Scientists continue to see this trend increasing.

Besides the importance that midterm elections hold for the House of Representatives and the Senate, the fact that over half of all states hold gubernatorial elections bears a great influence on the political policies of our country as well. The outcome of gubernatorial midterm elections also serves as a predictor for how particular states may vote in the impending Presidential election. There have been instances where newly-elected or incumbent Governors may decide to vie for their party's Presidential nomination (Morse et al. 40). Governor Rick Perry from Texas, for example,

used his popularity from the gubernatorial race to springboard his campaign for the Republican Presidential nomination in 2008 against Mitt Romney (Morse et al. 40).

- Kentucky United States Senate Race: Mitch McConnell versus Alison Lundergan Grimes

In order to see the real importance and weight that the United States midterm elections carry, we can turn to the heated, controversial, and close race happening in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. This race is being considered one of the most competitive, and expensive, races in the 2014 midterm elections. 30-year Republican incumbent Mitch McConnell is once again fighting to keep his United States Senate seat as well as defend his title of United States Senate Majority Leader. McConnell is seeking to be reelected for the sixth time. His competition is the Commonwealth of Kentucky's sitting Secretary of State, and Democrat, Alison Lundergan Grimes.

Current polls, surveys, and political analysts have still failed to predict a solid winner (Glueck 1). As of now, despite numerous rumors and falsified statistics, the open Senate seat in Kentucky is still "anyone's" game. Back in June of this year, for example, polls in Kentucky suggested that McConnell would be the clear winner, yet one poll released last month showed Grimes ahead by two percent (Glueck 1). The recent debate held between the two candidates last week did not aid political analysts in predicting a clear winner; recent polling completed after the debate yielded the same, close results. While there is a third candidate in the race, Libertarian David Patterson, polls are predicting that he will only receive a mere 3% of the vote

(Glueck 1).

As previously mentioned, we can look at midterm election results on a historical basis and see that there are predictive trends that occur. These trends aid political analysts, political scientists, and others within the field of Political Science to predict what voter outcomes are needed in order for a candidate to try and successfully secure a victory. For the purpose of this assignment, an analysis of midterm election trends, as well as voting trends in Kentucky, has been used to predict a winner in this important and heated race. After analyzing the resources, and despite the closeness of recent polls, it seems rather clear that United States Senate Majority Mitch McConnell will be the victor.

- McConnell: The Incumbent

3. 2Kentucky: A “ Red” State

What is found to be very interesting about Kentucky voting trends is that the state is usually considered a “ red” state, or a state that generally votes in favor of the Republican party (Cherkis and Carter 1). However, according to records, there are more registered Democrats in the state of Kentucky compared to Republicans, yet historically, Republican voters turnout to vote in much larger numbers than their fellow registered Democrats. This is quite obvious when looking at the sitting Governor of Kentucky, Steven BeShear; he became the first Democratic Governor of Kentucky to be elected in over 30 years (Cherkis and Carter 1). Since Kentucky voters typically elect and reelect Republicans to Senate seats, this serves as yet another example of why McConnell will likely defeat his competition.

3. 3Historical Advantage

McConnell also has a clear advantage if midterm election history repeats itself because as a Republican, he is the opposing party of President Obama. In addition, President Obama did not win the state of Kentucky in the 2012 Presidential election, and McConnell has been using Grimes' association with President Obama against her (Beam 1). As previously discussed, in the last 21 United States midterm elections, the party of the President has lost seats in both the House and Senate. There is one aspect of this heated midterm election that all political analysts have been able to agree on: the United States Senate race in Kentucky could easily change the balance of power in the Senate (Cherkis and Carter 1).

Since Obama's reelection, the Democrats have been able to hang on to their slim majority in the Senate, but with numerous Senate seats up for grabs in the 2014 midterm race, there is no certainty of which party will take control of the Senate. Democrats, for example, fear that if both the Senate and House succumb to a Republican majority then programs, such as the Affordable Care Act, will be terminated (Beam 1). Republicans, on the other hand, fear that losing both the Senate and the House to Democrats, especially if Grimes is victorious of knocking McConnell from Senate Majority Leader, then the country will become too liberal in its policies (Beam 1).

One factor of this election that has not previously been discussed is gender. While most may not think gender plays a role in political elections, when we analyze the numbers, it is obvious that in certain states gender does play a factor (Terrell 1). Kentucky, for example, is considered a more conservative state where, generally speaking, not as many females choose to run for federal office when compared to other, more liberal states. Moreover,

Kentucky has never elected a female United States Senator (Terrell 1). While there is a chance Grimes could be the first female to break this barrier, statistically and historically, she more than likely will not. Moreover, Kentucky has recently been ranked as the fourth worst in the entire country for practicing gender equality among elected officials.

3. 4McConnell versus Grimes: A Smear Campaign

Midterm election season goes hand-in-hand with political phone calls, literature left on doors and in mailboxes, and campaign advertising. It comes as no surprise that the McConnell and Grimes campaigns in Kentucky have been among the most expensive in the nation for buying ad slots on television and radio. In fact, this campaign has been a “smear” campaign unlike many political analysts has seen in the state of Kentucky. It is estimated that the McConnell campaign has spent at least four million dollars on ads, while the Grimes campaign has spent around half of that (Beam 1). Most of these ads have been targeted at smearing the opponent. However, the two candidates have only appeared together on stage once to discuss their platforms and debate the issues. McConnell has received support from various politicians, such as former President George W. Bush, and Junior U. S. Senator Rand Paul from Kentucky, who is rumored to be a Presidential hopeful in the 2016 campaign (Glueck 1). Secretary Grimes has been seen campaigning alongside former President Bill Clinton and his wife, former U. S. Secretary of State, Hillary, who is also rumored to be a Presidential hopeful in 2016 (Glueck 1). Therefore, it is not unexpected that both McConnell and Grimes have been given ample monetary resources and support to buy more ad slots than other candidates in the 2014 midterm

election. As expected, the midterm U. S. Senate race in Kentucky has exceeded its last in terms of money spent on political advertising.

- Conclusion

It never fails that when midterm elections come around we usually look to see what is going to happen in the state of Kentucky. The United States Majority Leader plays a large role within Congress and our Legislative branch of government, and since McConnell has held this title for such an extended period of time, it is unsurprising the amount of frustration his repetitive victories have brought to the Democratic Party. Additionally, both Republicans and Democrats have expressed distaste with McConnell's track record of creating a gridlock among policies in our nation's capital.

While many Kentuckians will surely be shocked by a Grimes victory, there are others that will undoubtedly be disappointed to see McConnell reelected.

With Kentucky being one of the few states left in the country to still allow straight-ticket voting, it is known that the incumbent usually has the advantage. While research helps in predicting a McConnell victory, if the history behind political elections has taught us anything it is that a true winner cannot be called until the polls are closed and the votes are counted.

What we do know for absolute certain is this: the U. S. Senate race in Kentucky could determine the balance in the Senate (Preston 1)

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