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From: Morning Score
Sent: Thur 11/9/2017 3:03:56 PM
Subject: POLITICO's Morning Score: Virginia fallout — GOP's suburban nightmare — The Trump conundrum

By Kevin Robillard | 11/09/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With Zach Montellaro and Elena Schneider

THE FALLOUT - "Republicans have a serious suburban problem in 2018," by Campaign Pro's Scott Bland: "Republicans thought Donald Trump's 2016 performance in the suburbs was as low as the GOP could go. Then Ed Gillespie went even lower. The Republican nominee for Virginia governor underperformed the unpopular president in a toxic political environment for the GOP - losing by landslide margins even in some territory where, just three years prior, he had nearly broken even in a run for Senate. ... The GOP started the year seeing a silver lining in Trump's bad suburban 2016 results. He didn't drag other Republicans down with him, they said, and if the party could figure out how to pair its traditional suburban strength with Trump's rural enthusiasm, it would be unbeatable. But in the past 24 hours, that ambition has given way to alarm. Republican strategists described Gillespie's 9-point loss and other election results around the country as a massive early warning signal for the 2018 elections, when House Republicans must defend 23 mostly suburban districts that Trump lost last year. 'If it were just Virginia, we could put it down to federal workers and contractors, but it happened in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, too,' Chris Wilson, a GOP strategist, wrote in an email. 'If you're a GOP incumbent in a heavily suburban, college educated district, I think you're worried today and rightfully so.'"

[Full story.](#)

- "GOP faces wrenching call: Running with or away from Trump," by POLITICO's Alex Isenstadt: "With Trump's approval ratings cratering in swing states across the country, some senior party strategists are imploring lawmakers to abandon the president. Others argue that shunning Trump and his populist base is simply out of the question and that anything other than a full embrace of the president would spell electoral disaster. ... White House advisers spent Wednesday combing through the election results and fuming about Gillespie's have-it-both-ways approach. By keeping Trump at arm's length, they said, Gillespie squandered an opportunity to motivate conservatives whose support he needed. ... The dilemma is expected to be a major topic of discussion next week at the Republican Governors Association annual meeting in Austin, Texas. And top House GOP campaign strategists, trying to preserve their now-tenuous majority, said they wanted to look more deeply into the Virginia results before drawing conclusions. 'It's quite a predicament,' said Tony Fabrizio, a longtime GOP pollster who worked on the Trump campaign. 'You can't be the anti-Trump guy in the primary. But you don't want to be the 100-percent-for-Trump guy in the general,' he added. 'When you go to one extreme or the other, that's when you fall short.' ... In the end, Gillespie released about \$500,000 worth of mailers highlighting the president's endorsement of him." [Full story.](#)

- "House GOP faces its fears after Virginia election," by Elena Schneider: "Virginia's elections set off a wave of panic inside the House GOP Tuesday night, increasing worries that the party's majority is in jeopardy in 2018 and that more incumbents may decide to retire rather

than run for reelection next year. ... Paul Shumaker, a Republican strategist based in North Carolina, talked to several of his political clients Wednesday morning, warning them: 'First of all, you have to run the race of your life. Second, you have to carve out a unique set of issues for yourself, which is very hard to do for down-ballot races, and localize issues to overcome concerns voters might have about Trump.' 'That's a tall order,' Shumaker said. ... 'What terrifies Republicans most about losing the majority is having more of these retirements, which could speed up after Virginia,' said a Republican fundraiser. 'The number of swing district retirements - [Reps. Martha] McSally, [Dave] Reichert, [Charlie] Dent, and we're expecting five or six more - could be the true measure of Democratic ability to flip the House.'" [Full story](#).

- **"Battered by Trump, Obamacare triumphs at the polls," by POLITICO's Rachana Pradhan:** "A remarkable 4 out of 10 Virginians in early exit polls said health care was their top issue in a race that saw Democrat Ralph Northam, the current lieutenant governor, handily defeat Republican Ed Gillespie to become Virginia's next governor. And in Maine, voters in a landslide backed Obamacare Medicaid expansion, which their governor had vetoed on five separate occasions. ... 'We have an opportunity to send a very clear signal to anyone who is spending time and money opposing the ACA,' said Jonathan Schleifer of the Fairness Project, which poured funding into the Maine ballot measure campaign and is trying to boost lookalike Medicaid initiatives in states such as Utah and Idaho." [Full story](#).

- **"Democratic women sweep into office in state elections," by Campaign Pro's Maggie Severns:** "Women running for office for the first time may have wrested control of the Virginia House of Delegates from Republicans, who held the chamber since the 20th century. Another female Democrat flipped the Washington state Senate to her party's control, alongside Democratic women who picked up state legislative seats in Georgia and Michigan, while Manchester, N.H. elected its first Democratic mayor in decades in Joyce Craig - who is also the city's first-ever female mayor. ... Tuesday's elections will at least double the share of women represented in Virginia's House of Delegates. They also represented close to half of the candidates this year, and two thirds of the candidates running in the crucial 17 House of Delegates districts won by Hillary Clinton in 2016." [Full story](#).

- **THE KIDS ARE ALL WOKE - Estimates show Northam winning 69 percent of young voters, turnout spiking:** Estimates from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University has 34 percent of registered voters age 18-29 turning out for the governor's race, up from 18 percent in 2009 and 26 percent in 2013. And while Gov. Terry McAuliffe won these voters 45 percent to 40 percent over Republican Ken Cuccinelli, Northam won them 69 percent to 30 percent over Gillespie. There was no similar turnout surge in New Jersey, where 18 percent of voters age 18-29 turned out, essentially the same as in 2009 and 2013. [Full story](#).

- **THE NUMBERS - NGP VAN sees 5.5 million door knocks:** NGP VAN, which is used by basically every Democrat running for office and major progressive organization, logged 5.5 million door knocks and 5.1 million phone calls using their software to contact Virginia voters since January 2017.

- **Memo Moment:** Here's polling data and memos from [Latino Decisions](#), [Women's Voices](#)

Women Vote Action Fund, and Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

RECRUITING UPDATE - Democrats push Bredeesen in Tennessee Senate, per The New York Times' Alexander Burns and Jonathan Martin: "In the Senate, too, Democrats are seeking to expand the map. Facing a narrow path to a majority, they are strenuously wooing Phil Bredeesen, a former Tennessee governor, to run for the seat that Sen. Bob Corker is vacating. Mr. Bredeesen has been courted personally by Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York, the minority leader, as well as several former governors who now serve in the Senate, including Mark Warner of Virginia, according to Democrats briefed on the overtures. And the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee commissioned a poll aimed at coaxing Mr. Bredeesen to run. Mr. Bredeesen is in Washington this week for meetings and is said to be nearing a decision." Full story.

Days until the 2018 election: 362.

Thanks for joining us! You can email tips to the Campaign Pro team at sbland@politico.com, eschneider@politico.com, krobillard@politico.com, dstrauss@politico.com and mseverns@politico.com.

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ENDORSEMENT WATCH - FIRST IN SCORE - "End Citizens United endorses 5 House challengers," by Campaign Pro's Elena Schneider: "The group is now backing Democrats Ann Kirkpatrick (AZ-02), Brendan Kelly (IL-12), Elissa Slotkin (MI-08), Dan McCready (NC-09), and Mikie Sherrill (NJ-11). Sherrill is in a crowded primary and Kirkpatrick, a former congresswoman, has challengers as well, but the other three have clearer paths to the Democratic nomination in their Republican-held districts." Full story.

- FIRST IN SCORE - EMILY's List endorses Kim Schrier in WA-08: EMILY's List is backing pediatrician Kim Schrier in Washington's 8th Congressional District, the seat held by the retiring Reichert. The endorsement could give Schrier a leg-up in the crowded all-party primary. "At a time when congressional Republicans continue to sabotage health care for millions of families, Kim's perspective as a doctor and a patient with a pre-existing condition is needed in Washington now more than ever," EMILY's List President Stephanie Schriock said.

PRIMARY CONCERNS - "This Megadonor Has Spent Millions On Republicans. Now He's Thinking About Running Against One," by BuzzFeed News' Tarini Parti: "Republican megadonor Foster Friess was busy writing checks to GOP candidates, contemplating the future of health care, and getting coffee with liberals for his campaign to 'restore civility' in politics last month, when he got an unexpected call from President Trump adviser and provocateur Steve Bannon. 'I get this call, 'Foster would you consider running against [Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso ?' And I said, 'What's your name?' 'Steve Bannon?' Because we're pretty much strangers, it kind of struck me as how did he even get my name or my number?' Friess, a multimillionaire investor, is now launching a 'listening tour' to help him decide whether he should challenge Barrasso - his 'personal friend' and 'hero' - in a GOP primary, he told BuzzFeed News in a 90-minute, wide-ranging interview this week. ... Friess says he has aired his policy

frustrations with elected officials, including Barrasso, with no tangible outcomes. He now plans to decide in the next three to four months if he should mount a Senate bid himself." [Full story.](#)

- "In shake-up, Pennsylvania GOP Senate candidate to run for lieutenant governor, join Wagner ticket," by the Philadelphia Inquirer's Jonathan Tamari and Chris Brennan: "In a shake-up for two statewide races, Main Line Republican Jeff Bartos is dropping out of Pennsylvania's U.S. Senate race and joining the gubernatorial ticket of state Sen. Scott Wagner, according to three Pennsylvania GOP sources. A formal announcement is expected Thursday. Bartos will run as Wagner's lieutenant governor candidate. His decision removes the main obstacle for U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta on his path to the Republican nomination for the Senate." [Full story.](#)

2018 WATCH - "Cynthia Coffman is running for governor of Colorado, adding to long list of GOP primary candidates," by the Denver Post's Jesse Paul and John Frank: "Colorado Attorney General Cynthia Coffman will enter the crowded, messy Republican race for governor Wednesday, saying she is the candidate that can bridge the prosperity divide between urban and rural Colorado. ... The one-term top prosecutor faces a difficult path to victory in a race against a handful of candidates with big names and more campaign cash, particularly given her more moderate approach on social issues." [Full story.](#)

- "George Brauchler mulling jump from crowded governor's race to open GOP attorney general primary," by the Denver Post's Mark K. Matthews and Jesse Paul: "Republican gubernatorial candidate George Brauchler is weighing a run for attorney general now that Cynthia Coffman, currently in the post, has entered the governor's race, according to his campaign and several GOP sources. Brauchler already has reached out to some of his potential rivals - notably U.S. Rep. [Ken Buck](#), R-Windsor, who said earlier this year that he might seek Coffman's job if she left the post. Buck said in an interview Wednesday that he was staying put in Congress." [Full story.](#)

AIR WARS - 45Committee pressures Heitkamp, Manchin, Donnelly on tax reform: GOP outside group 45Committee is out with ads pressuring Democratic Sens. [Joe Manchin](#) of West Virginia, [Heidi Heitkamp](#) of North Dakota and Indiana Sen. [Joe Donnelly](#) to vote for tax reform. 45Committee, which is partially funded by Sheldon Adelson, uses footage from each senator's most well-known ad in the 30-second spots. **Watch the ads [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).**

WEB WARS - FIRST IN SCORE - GOP outside group targets Brown with new site: Senate Leadership Fund, the super PAC controlled by allies of Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#), is out with a new website targeting Democratic Sen. [Sherrod Brown](#), www.sherrodfiles.com. The group will have paid digital ads directing voters to the site. "This website is the latest installment in our substantial paid digital campaign against our 2018 Democrat targets," SLF spokesman Chris Pack said. "We look forward to exposing Sherrod Brown's extremely liberal record that is out of touch with the people of Ohio." The site attacks Brown as a "hippie liberal."

AROUND THE MAP - Quick takes from across the country:

SENATE

Alabama: A poll conducted by Strategy Research has Republican Roy Moore leading Democrat Doug Jones 51-40, [WBRC](#) reported.

Nebraska: Susan B. Anthony List endorsed Sen. [Deb Fischer](#), per a statement from the group.

Ohio: Rev 18, a super PAC founded by controversial Trump supporters and whose first endorsement was Josh Mandel, is shutting down, [Cleveland.com](#) reports.

HOUSE

CO-06: Republican Roger Edwards told [Colorado Politics](#) that he plans to challenge Rep. [Mike Coffman](#) in the GOP primary.

IL-06: All eight Democrats vying for the nomination will hold a public forum on Dec. 12, via [Patch.com](#).

MN-08: Republican Stewart Mills, who has narrowly lost twice to Rep. [Rick Nolan](#) (D-Minn.), said he will not run in 2018, via [The Ely Echo](#).

NV-03: Republican Michelle Mortensen, a consumer advocate for the local CBS affiliate, launched her bid for the open seat, per a statement from her campaign.

TX-05: Dallas County Republican Party Chairman Phillip Huffines passes on a bid, via [The Dallas Morning News](#).

WV-03: State GOP Chairman Conrad Lucas is running for the seat, via [the Charleston Gazette-Mail](#).

GOVERNOR

Alabama: Jason Childs, a Democrat and founder for Center for Progress in Alabama, announced his run, via [The Alabama Reporter](#).

Nevada: Attorney General Adam Laxalt has hired veteran GOP operatives Kristin Davison and Stephen Puetz to help run his campaign, the [Nevada Independent](#) reports.

South Carolina: Democrat Marguerite Willis, an attorney, said she is considering a run, via [The State](#).

Wisconsin: Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, running for a third term, has flip-flopped and now says governors should be able to serve more than three terms in office, [the Associated Press](#) reports.

CODA - QUOTE OF THE DAY: "There is a reverse story here that could be written, about

how people should be spending more time thinking about the commemoration or the one-year anniversary, the birthday, of Trump shocking everyone. That, to me, is a much more significant moment than Virginia." - Breitbart Editor-in-Chief Alex Marlow, [explaining](#) why some conservative media outlets didn't extensively cover Tuesday's election results.

To view online:

<https://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-score/2017/11/09/virginia-fallout-223265>

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