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From: Morning Score
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Subject: POLITICO's Morning Score: House FEC report analysis: 37 incumbents outraised in Q3 — Bannon hits up GOP mega-donors exasperated with McConnell — A trio of new polls shows Virginia governor's race tightening

By Elena Schneider | 10/18/2017 10:00 AM EDT

With Kevin Robillard, Zach Montellaro and Daniel Strauss

The following newsletter is an abridged version of Campaign Pro's Morning Score. For an earlier morning read on exponentially more races - and for a more comprehensive aggregation of the day's most important campaign news - sign up for Campaign Pro today. (<http://www.politicopro.com/proinfo>)

MONEY TALK - "House FEC report analysis: 37 incumbents outraised in Q3," by Campaign Pro's Elena Schneider: "More than three dozen House incumbents - mostly Republicans - trailed opponents in third-quarter fundraising, and a handful are already behind 2018 opponents in terms of cash in the bank, heralding potentially difficult campaigns next year. That's the headline finding in POLITICO's analysis of House campaign finance reports from the third quarter, which were due with the FEC on Sunday. The House landscape also features a glut of self-funders pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars into campaigns around the country. [See our full House third-quarter fundraising chart here.](#)" Here are some highlights: Incumbents outraised by challengers; Republican incumbents outraised by primary challenger, self-funders; Incumbents with less cash on hand than challengers; and Battleground incumbents who raised less than \$250,000. [Full story.](#)

BANNON WATCH - "Bannon hits up GOP mega-donors exasperated with McConnell," by POLITICO's Alex Isenstadt: "Former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon flew to Atlanta last week to huddle with Republican mega-donor Bernie Marcus - and to hear him vent. A Home Depot co-founder who's been one of the most prolific givers to Senate Republicans, Marcus fumed to Bannon for hours about the lack of return on his investment. In the last six months alone, Marcus has funneled \$2 million to a super PAC aligned with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and tens of thousands more to the National Republican Senatorial Committee - only to watch the Senate fail again and again. Over the last several weeks, Bannon has crisscrossed the country meeting with dozens of the party's biggest contributors - all in the hopes of capitalizing on their anger at McConnell. The populist bomb-thrower wants donors to bankroll primary challenges against Republican incumbents, or short of that, to close their wallets to McConnell-aligned causes." [Full story.](#)

- **"Bannon's army includes candidates backed by the GOP establishment," by POLITICO's Annie Karni:** "Matt Rosendale, the Montana state auditor running for Senate, recently received the endorsement du jour in Republican politics: Steve Bannon plucked him for the slate of candidates he is backing as part of his war on the GOP establishment. ... But Bannon's interest in Rosendale - as well as many of the other candidates on his dance card - also has some Washington GOP power brokers confused by his definition of 'anti-establishment.'" [Full story.](#)

NEW VIRGINIA NUMBERS - TIGHTENING RACE - A trio of new polls has Democrat Ralph Northam and Republican Ed Gillespie in a dead heat. The first, from the Wason Center at [Christopher Newport University](#), has Northam up 48 percent to 44 percent. Libertarian Cliff Hyra is at 3 percent. The Wason Center notes that this is the first time that Northam's lead is within the margin of error. The poll was in the field from Oct. 9-13, with a margin of error of 4.2 percent. A [Monmouth University](#) poll has Gillespie up 48 percent to 47 percent, which Hyra pulling in three percent. That poll was in the field from Oct. 12-16 and has a margin of error of 4.9 percent, and the pollsters note that neither candidate has had more than a five-point lead in this poll. The final poll, from [Roanoke College](#), gives Northam a six-point lead, 50 percent to 44 percent, with Hyra pulling in 2 percent. It was being surveyed from Oct. 8-13 with a MoE of 4 percent.

- MORE POLLING DATA - Fox News poll finds Moore, Jones tied in Alabama: "A new [Fox News poll](#) shows a tied Alabama Senate race between U.S. Attorney Doug Jones and former Alabama Supreme Court Judge Roy Moore. This is the first survey of the special election that has shown anything other than a Moore lead. The Fox News survey, released this evening, showed the Democrat Jones and the Republican Moore tied at 42 percent in the race to succeed Sen. [Luther Strange](#) and Attorney General Jeff Sessions." [Full story.](#)

Days until the 2017 election: 20.

Days until the 2018 election: 384.

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.

You can also follow us on Twitter: [@politicoscott](#), [@ec_schneider](#), [@politicokevin](#), [@danielstrauss4](#) and [@maggieseverns](#).

MONEY IN YOUR EARS - POLITICO's new Money podcast brings you to the intersection of Washington and Wall Street with the most influential minds on the economy. Every Wednesday, Ben White will help you understand the economic and financial policies that move markets. While money never sleeps, you have to - so let Ben keep you up to speed and turn dollars into sense. The first POLITICO Money podcast, premiering with our launch sponsor, Morgan Stanley, features Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. Click [HERE](#) to subscribe.

TAX REFORM PRESSURE - Americans for Prosperity expands ad campaign to 11 more states: Americans for Prosperity, which had already spent \$4.5 million pressuring three Democratic senators on tax reform, is expanding its ad buy to 11 additional states with digital ads running on YouTube, Facebook and other platforms. The ads are now targeting Sens. [Bob Casey](#) (D-Pa.), [Bob Corker](#) (R-Tenn.), [Heidi Heitkamp](#) (D-N.D.), [Joe Manchin](#) (D-W.Va.), [John McCain](#) (R-Ariz.), [Lisa Murkowski](#) (R-Alaska), [Bill Nelson](#) (D-Fla.), [Jon Tester](#) (D-Mont.), [Susan Collins](#) (R-Maine), [Jerry Moran](#) (R-Kan.) and [Dean Heller](#) (R-Nev.). The group isn't revealing the size of the buy.

- **Club for Growth goes after McCaskill:** The Club for Growth is spending \$600,000 on two 15-second ads pressuring Democratic Sen. [Claire McCaskill](#) on tax reform, saying she "opposes the Trump tax cuts." Both spots began airing on Tuesday in the St. Louis media market. **Watch the ads [here](#) and [here](#).**

- **AAN launches ads during CNN debate:** The American Action Network will air national TV ads during CNN's tax reform debate between Texas Republican Sen. [Ted Cruz](#) and Vermont independent Sen. [Bernie Sanders](#), urging support for the GOP tax reform plan. **Watch the ad [here](#).**

KICKING OFF - Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker starts campaign with digital ads: Wisconsin GOP Gov. Scott Walker is kicking off his reelection campaign with a 60-second digital ad. "There's more to be done," Walker says in the ad. "Investing in training for our workers. Helping people create jobs. Making our schools even better. At the end of each day, after all of the miles and conversations, I can't wait for the alarm to ring to see what opportunities tomorrow will bring. Are you with me?" The ad campaign will push both the 60-second video as well as shorter 15-second and 6-second versions on Facebook and YouTube. Walker will have a formal launch event soon. **Watch the ad [here](#).**

FEC REPORT - Conservative watchdog files complaint against Perez after POLITICO report: DNC Chairman Tom Perez may have violated campaign finance law when he transferred funds from his campaign account to pay off the debt of his former rivals for DNC chair, says a new complaint to the Federal Election Commission from the conservative watchdog group Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust. The complaint alleges that Perez, acting as an agent of the DNC, transferred non-federal funds from his account to other accounts - a possible legal violation, FOX News reports. The transfers were first reported by POLITICO earlier this year. DNC spokesman Michael Tyler told FOX that FACT's complaint is "completely without merit."

- **Stephen Spaulding, strategy chief at Common Cause,** gave Campaign Pro his two cents on how the FEC might handle the complaint: "The matter is likely to turn on whether Mr. Perez was acting on behalf of the DNC, and exactly who donated what to whom. ... Given the dismal state of affairs right now at the agency, I wouldn't expect the Commissioners to take action anytime soon given how many important matters from years ago are still unresolved," Spaulding said.

LAST NIGHT IN ARIZONA - "Steve Bannon in attendance for Kelli Ward Senate fundraiser," via The Associated Press. [Full story.](#)

- **How's this for a contrast:** The Arizona Democratic Party notes that while Ward was rallying with talk show host Laura Ingraham, Flake was at a fundraiser hosted by Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#).

- **Former Ward aides prebut rally:** Two former Ward staffers, Dustin Stockton and Jennifer Lawrence, both of whom are also former staffers for Breitbart, issued a press release on Tuesday afternoon apologizing for "helping legitimize the candidacy of Kelli Ward." "Even Jeff Flake

was a solid conservative as a member of the House before he betrayed his base in pursuit of his ambition in the Senate," Lawrence said in a statement. "We have a responsibility to our fellow America First activists to prevent another heartbreak at the hands of a politician's blind ambition. We're going to make sure that Arizona gets Senators that will make America First activists proud. Stay tuned."

CONSULTING MERGER - Axiom Strategies merges with Revolvis: Per a press release announcing the merger: "Axiom Strategies, the largest Republican political consulting firm in the country, announced a completed merger with Revolvis, a full-service political consulting firm with a strong west coast presence. As part of the merger Revolvis Principal Duane Dichiaro and Justin Matheson will join Axiom Strategies. The deal will increase Axiom's west coast presence to four offices: San Diego, San Francisco, Sacramento and Seattle. Stephen Puetz, the former Chief of Staff to San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and a Revolvis alum rejoined Axiom this summer."

GETTING THE NOD - "Run for Something backs dozens of progressive candidates," via Edward-Isaac Dove: "Run for Something, the organizing and empowerment group urging young progressives to run for local office, added 37 more endorsements today, bringing its total to 121 candidates backed for the 2017 and 2018 election cycles. While other groups have focused on getting Democratic candidates ready for statewide runs or House races, Run for Something works with candidates, many of them first-timers, for state legislatures on down. Some of the endorsed candidates in the latest round are running for county clerk and library committee seats." [Full story.](#)

TIMES A'CHANGIN' - Early and mail voting topped 40 percent in 2016: "More than two out of every five voters cast their ballots using a method other than a voting machine on Election Day 2016, according to the [findings](#) in a new U.S. Election Assistance Commission white paper. In total, 57.2 million Americans cast a ballot early, by mail or absentee in 2016. Of those, 24.1 million were early votes. For comparison, 24.9 million people voted using a method other than showing up on Election Day in 2004." [Full story.](#)

WEB WARS - Senate Leadership Fund attacks Manchin: Senate Leadership Fund is up with a digital ad attacking Manchin for renovations to the Governor's Mansion in the first year of his governorship, which included the addition of 12 flatscreens and a hot tub. **Watch the ad [here](#).**

- American Bridge imagines Stewart-Gillespie conversation: American Bridge is launching a digital ad campaign pushing an imagined text conversation between Gillespie and Prince William County Board of Supervisors Chair Corey Stewart, who has so far declined to endorse him. **Watch the ad [here](#).**

NAME CHANGE - Americans for Responsible Solutions rebrands as Giffords: Former Rep. Gabby Giffords and Capt. Mark Kelly announced a rebrand for their group to Giffords, per a statement from the organization. ARS PAC is now Giffords PAC.

CODA - QUOTE OF THE DAY: "I personally as a Republican in the past few weeks have wondered, is the republic safer if Democrats take over the House in 2018. I raised that issue with

the leading Republican in D.C. last week, and the remarkable thing is he had been thinking exactly the same thing. This is a president that needs a greater check on his power than Republicans in Congress have offered." - Former Rep. David Jolly said on [MSNBC](#).

To view online:

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-score/2017/10/18/house-fec-report-analysis-37-incumbents-outraised-in-q3-222870>

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