

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Pete Maysmith, LCV Victory Fund SVP for Campaigns
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SUBJECT: Retaking a green majority in the House of Representatives

Winning at least one pro-environment majority in Congress in 2018 would be incredibly valuable to halting the Trump administration's myriad of environmental attacks. Since 2012, LCV Victory Fund has focused on making smart investments in U.S. Senate races, and bolstering that green firewall continues to be a top priority. But with 2018 emerging as our best chance in years to retake a pro-environment majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, targeted investments in House races can be the catalyst to retaking the chamber and blocking Congress and Trump's toxic agenda.

That is why LCV Victory Fund plans to invest a record \$15 million, possibly more, in at least 25 targeted congressional districts to retake a green majority in the U.S. House of Representatives. This push is at least four times larger than our previous record House investment in 2012.

The House has been in the hands of anti-environment leadership since the Republican wave in 2010 when they captured 63 seats, and the Republican caucus' average LCV score has sunk to [record lows](#). With partisan gerrymandering freezing many congressional districts, previous wisdom held that there was scant opportunity to put pro-environment leadership in place before new districts were drawn after the 2020 census. That thinking changed as the extent of Trump's unpopularity and the broad disapproval of the House leadership's agenda – including their unrelenting environmental attacks – became clear.

To win the 23 net seats needed to flip control of the House, we will focus on defeating anti-environment incumbents facing strong pro-environment challengers – the next generation of leaders on our issues. We'll prioritize races where our investment can make a winning difference and environmental issues resonate with voters. Our recent [polling](#) of 20 House districts shows that environmental messaging, particularly the health impacts of cuts to clean air and water protections, is extremely effective in battleground districts – swinging vote choice by 11 points on average when combined with a message on the Republican health care or tax bills. From the Global Strategy Group poll memo:

The Trump-aligned candidates' positions on environmental issues are deeply unpopular with key groups and across the political spectrum. Many of the policies proposed and/or enacted by anti-environment Republicans in Washington – led by their efforts to open the Arctic Refuge and our public lands to oil and gas companies – are extremely unpopular, even more than their highly unpopular health care plan. Notably, voters who are undecided on the initial named Congressional ballot, who compose 13% of the Electorate, are more likely to reject these policies than the average voter.

Democratic gains are particularly large among independents voters, women and more moderate Republicans. The environmental messaging generates particularly large gains among some key electoral blocs. After messaging, the Democratic candidates improve by a net 21 points among independents, by a net 17 points among white women, and by a net 17 points among Latinas.

Importantly, support for the environment is bipartisan. Environmental messaging also speaks to less conservative members of the Republican coalition, resulting in a net 19-point shift in favor of Democrats among Republican women, and a net 17-point shift among non-conservative Republicans.

LCV's PAC – LCV Action Fund – has endorsed in 54 House races so far, and our targeted races will develop as endorsements continue to roll out. But based on support for climate action, our most likely targets include Republican-held seats where Hillary Clinton outperformed previous Democratic candidates and where our significant, concentrated programs can be a deciding factor.

Our first wave of investments are likely to include 12 districts:

CA-25, 45, 48 and 49 – California Swing Districts

These four districts voted for Clinton yet remain represented by anti-environment House Republicans – including one retiring member, Rep. Darrell Issa. The remaining members have LCV lifetime scores of ten percent or below: Reps. Dana Rohrabacher (CA-48, 10%), Steve Knight (CA-25, 3%) and Mimi Walters (CA-45, 4%). The average shift in the Democratic margin for these districts from 2012 to 2016 was over 13 points, and our [polling](#) in CA-25 demonstrated significant power in public health messaging on the environment.

CO-06, MN-03 and VA-10 – Out of Step Incumbents

All these districts shifted towards Clinton from Obama, and some feature extremely conservative incumbents who are among the worst on climate action. It appears these incumbents know our issues resonate with their constituents – they've even attempted to fool voters into thinking they're better on the environment than they actually are. Rep. Erik Paulsen (MN-03, 16%) made public lands the focus of his first TV ad, and he's joined the Climate Solutions Caucus yet continues to vote anti-environment. Reps. Mike Coffman (CO-06, 5%) and Barbara Comstock (VA-10, 5%) are also members of the caucus despite their poor voting records.

IA-03, MN-02, NC-09 and NJ-03 – 2016 Trump Districts

These districts voted for Trump in addition to electing an anti-environment Republican to Congress, but several strong challengers and sharp contrasts on the issues put the races in play. In North Carolina, solar energy entrepreneur Dan McCready would be a great climate champion – and he's running in an open seat after Rep. Robert Pittenger (NC-09, 1%) lost his primary. In Minnesota, [our poll](#) shows environmental messaging is effective against Jason Lewis (MN-02, 0%), a racist and misogynistic first-term Trump supporter with a perfect zero on LCV's scorecard. The Iowa district has been a historic battleground and the state shows signs of swinging away from far-right partisans like Rep. David Young (IA-03, 3%). Additionally, [our poll](#) shows environmental messaging is extremely powerful in NJ-03, where Rep. Tom MacArthur (NJ-03, 14%) will also have to answer for leading the charge on the disastrous Republican health care bill. While these are among the tougher districts on our list, they represent a great opportunity to replace bad actors with environmental champs.

WA-08 – Prime Retirement Opportunity

With Rep. Reichert retiring we have a great opportunity to pick up a seat and defeat perennial candidate Dino Rossi yet again. Rossi has a failing 20 percent lifetime environmental voting score from his time in the state legislature, yet he's already trying to muddle his conservation record. Districts like this are vital to building a durable majority, and the area has a large share of voters whom we can engage on our issues.

The following 25 districts are on our watchlist:

DISTRICT	INCUMBENT	LCV SCORE
CA-10	Jeff Denham	6%
CA-21	David Valadao	4%
CA-39	Ed Royce (OPEN)	11%
FL-16	Vern Buchanan	19%
IA-01	Rod Blum	2%
IL-06	Peter Roskam	7%
IL-12	Mike Bost	4%
IL-14	Randy Hultgren	5%
ME-02	Bruce Poliquin	15%
MI-06	Fred Upton	26%
MI-07	Tim Walberg	3%
MI-08	Mike Bishop	5%
MI-11	Dave Trott (OPEN)	4%
NC-13	Ted Budd	0%
NE-02	Don Bacon	6%
NJ-11	Rodney Frelinghuysen (OPEN)	33%
NM-02	Steve Pearce (OPEN)	4%
NY-22	Claudia Tenney	6%
OH -01	Steve Chabot	12%
PA-07	Charlie Dent (OPEN)	17%
TX-23	Will Hurd	2%
TX-32	Pete Sessions	2%

VA-02	Scott Taylor	6%
VA-07	Dave Brat	1%
WA-05	Cathy McMorris Rodgers	3%

While our programs will vary district to district, we will focus on persuading key swing voting blocks to support our candidate, particularly conservative-leaning women and older Latinos. Our turnout work will include voters who are not regular participants in midterm elections like people of color and young voters. Tactics will include a variety of tested turnout techniques like television, mail and digital advertising, and we hope to continue experimenting with innovative testing to make our work as effective as possible.

If we're successful at changing control of the House, history tells us that a majority of the battleground seats will be decided by small margins. Our swing voter persuasion and unlikely voter turnout efforts are designed to push our candidates over the edge to victory. "Wave" years happen due to smart, effective work that delivers many victories by small margins – and that's exactly what we're planning to do.

With strategic and successful investments, LCV Victory Fund will be a leading partner in restoring Congress as a voice for the people, not polluters. We may never match the spending of Big Oil and the Kochs, but we have one important thing they don't: winning issues. **By elevating the environment in competitive 2018 elections, we will retake the House and voters will send the unequivocal message that our communities will not tolerate environmental attacks and climate inaction.**

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