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Rep. Dave Loebsack, a veteran incumbent from southeastern Iowa, is among those to be targeted in 2018. | Getty

House Republicans name Democratic targets for 2018

The early target list includes 36 members, one-third of whom represent districts Trump carried in 2016.

By **ALEX ISENSTADT** | 02/08/2017 06:04 AM EST

Republicans, already hoping to expand their House majority in 2018, have devised a 36-seat list of top Democratic targets for the next two years — and they are particularly focused on blue-collar parts of the country where President Donald Trump is popular.

The National Republican Congressional Committee's target list provides an early window into how the GOP is preparing for the midterm elections — a still-far-off political fight, but one that is already taking shape behind the scenes.

One-third of the districts, detailed in a NRCC spreadsheet, are seats that President Donald Trump carried over Hillary Clinton even while a Democratic House member also claimed victory. That segment of the list is heavy on blue-collar districts in the Midwest, which Republicans believe will be especially fertile political territory in the Trump era. It includes two Democrats who were not heavily targeted by the GOP in 2016: Reps. Dave Loebsack, a veteran incumbent from southeastern Iowa, and Ron Kind, who is from west central Wisconsin and ran unopposed in 2016 while Trump carried his seat by more than 4 percentage points.

Another Democratic incumbent in the category is Rep. Rick Nolan, who represents a swing district based in the Minnesota Iron Range. Nolan and Trump narrowly won the district in 2016. In all, the committee plans to target three Minnesota Democrats.

Midterm elections are typically challenging for the party in control of the federal government. But Republicans note that Democrats have recently struggled to motivate their supporters in non-presidential election years, which helped turned the 2010 and 2014 midterms into nightmares for the party.



CONGRESS

DeVos defeat just the start for reeling Democrats

By ELANA SCHOR and BURGESS EVERETT

Just as those midterms were referendums on Barack Obama's presidency, 2018 will almost certainly be a test of the popularity of Trump's agenda.

"The success of our government depends on Republicans maintaining a strong majority in the House," NRCC Chairman Steve Stivers said in a statement. "We owe the American people assurance that the agenda we were elected on — healthcare reform, a stronger national defense, and more good-paying jobs — is fulfilled."

Last month, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee released its initial target list, which included 59 Republican-held seats. Democrats must net 24 seats in order to win control of the lower congressional chamber.

The full list of NRCC 2018 targets: Reps. Tom O'Halleran (AZ-01), Kyrsten Sinema (AZ-09), Ami Bera (CA-07), Salud Carbajal (CA-24), Raul Ruiz (CA-36), Scott Peters (CA-52), Ed Perlmutter (CO-07), Joe Courtney (CT-02), Elizabeth Esty (CT-05), Stephanie Murphy (FL-07), Charlie Crist (FL-13), Dave Loebsack (IA-02), Cheri Bustos (IL-17), Bill Keating (MA-09), John Delaney (MD-06), Dan Kildee (MI-05), Sander Levin (MI-09), Tim Walz

(MN-01), Collin Peterson (MN-07), Rick Nolan (MN-08), Carol Shea-Porter (NH-01), Ann Kuster (NH-02), Josh Gottheimer (NJ-05), Michelle Lujan Grisham (NM-01) (who is retiring to run for governor), Ben R. Lujan (NM-03), Jacky Rosen (NV-03), Ruben Kihuen (NV-04), Tom Suozzi (NY-03), Sean Patrick Maloney (NY-18), Tim Ryan (OH-13), Peter DeFazio (OR-04), Kurt Schrader (OR-05), Matt Cartwright (PA-17), Derek Kilmer (WA-06), Denny Heck (WA-10), and Ron Kind (WI-03).