

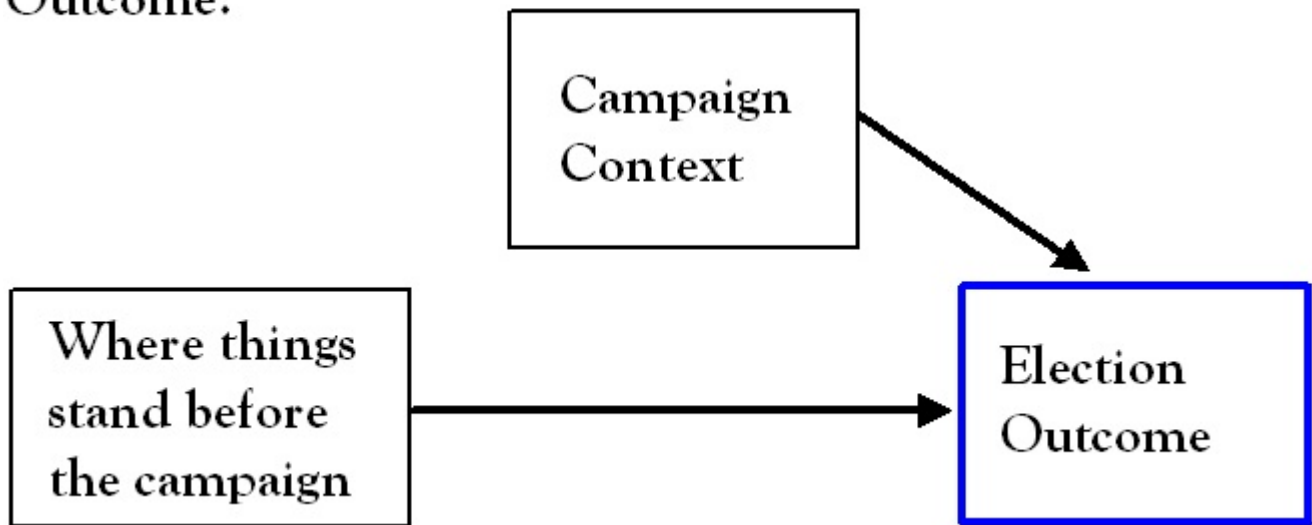
The Seats in Trouble Forecast
of the 2010 Elections to the U.S. House

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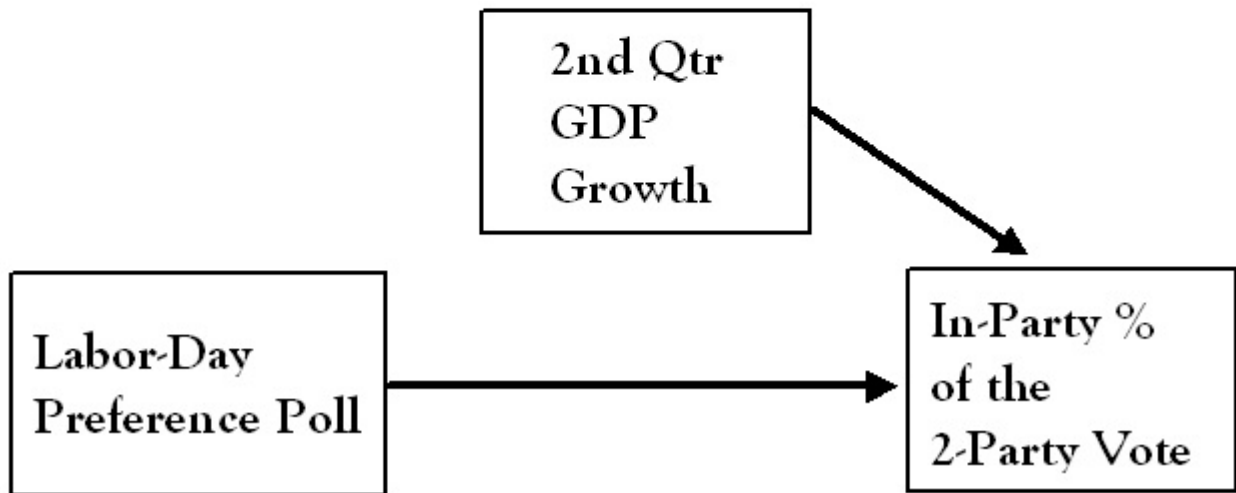
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My general approach to election forecasting:

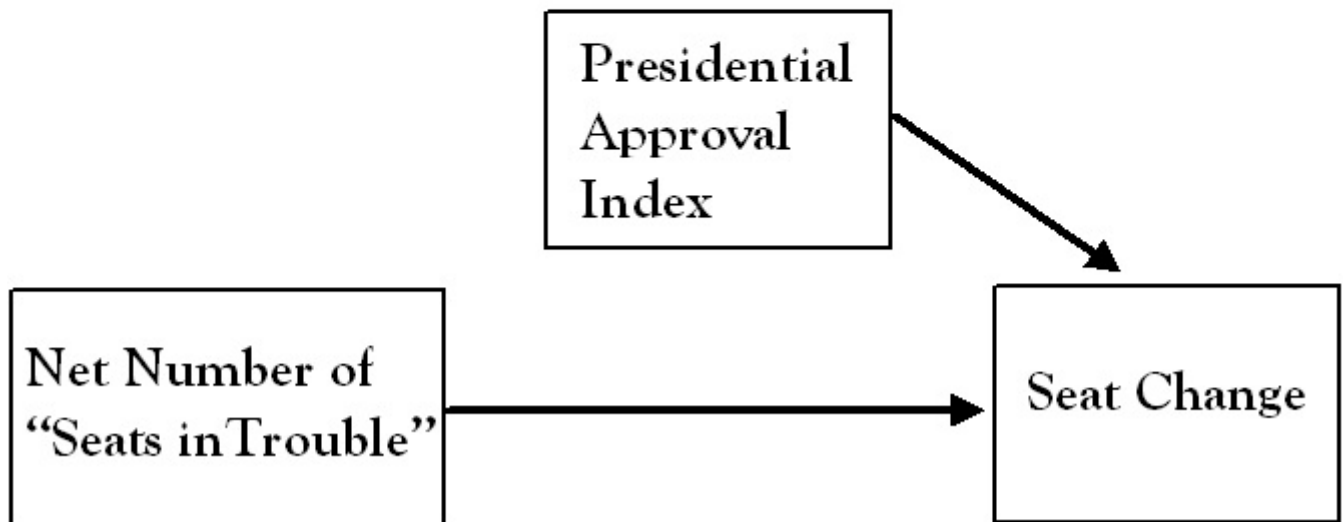
3. Assess the historical relationships of the Pre-campaign standing and the Campaign's context to the Election Outcome.



**In Presidential Elections:
The Trial-Heat and Economy Model**



In House Elections:
The Seats in Trouble Model



Seats in Trouble

This is calculated from The Cook Political Report's assessment of House races.

House races are classified in one of seven categories:

1. Sold Democratic
2. Likely Democratic
3. Leaning Democratic
4. Toss Up
5. Leaning Republican
6. Likely Republican
7. Solid Republican

Seats in Trouble

A seat won in the previous election by a party is considered to be in trouble if it is NOT solid likely, or leaning to that same party.

Seats in trouble are mostly a party's toss-up seats, but also include those lost in special elections, party switchers, and those now leaning, likely, or solidly in the other party's column.

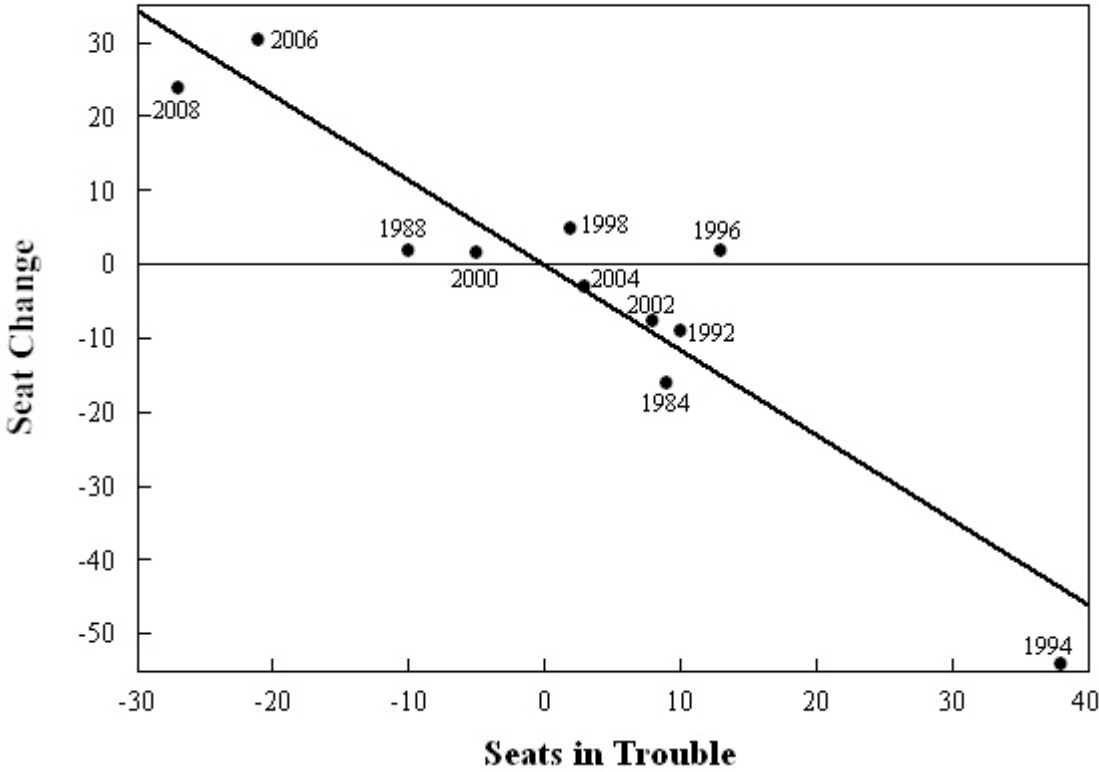
The Seats in Trouble Index is the net partisan difference in seats in trouble (i.e., D seats in trouble minus R seats in trouble).

Seats in Trouble

The assessments used were made between July and September 1st. These were available for 11 elections (1984, 1988, and 1992 to 2008).

The data necessary to calculate the seats in trouble index were generously supplied by Charlie Cook and his associates at the Cook Political Report.

Figure 1. Relationship between Seats in Trouble and Seat Change



Seats in Trouble in 2010

Based on *The Cook Political Report* of August 17, 2010.

Democrats: 257 seats after 2008

155 Solid Democratic Seats

30 Likely Democratic Seats

30 Leaning Democratic Seats

Leaving 42 Democratic Seats in Trouble

Republicans: 178 seats after 2008

160 Solid Republican Seats

14 Likely Republican Seats

6 Leaning Republican Seats

Leaving -2 Republican Seats in Trouble

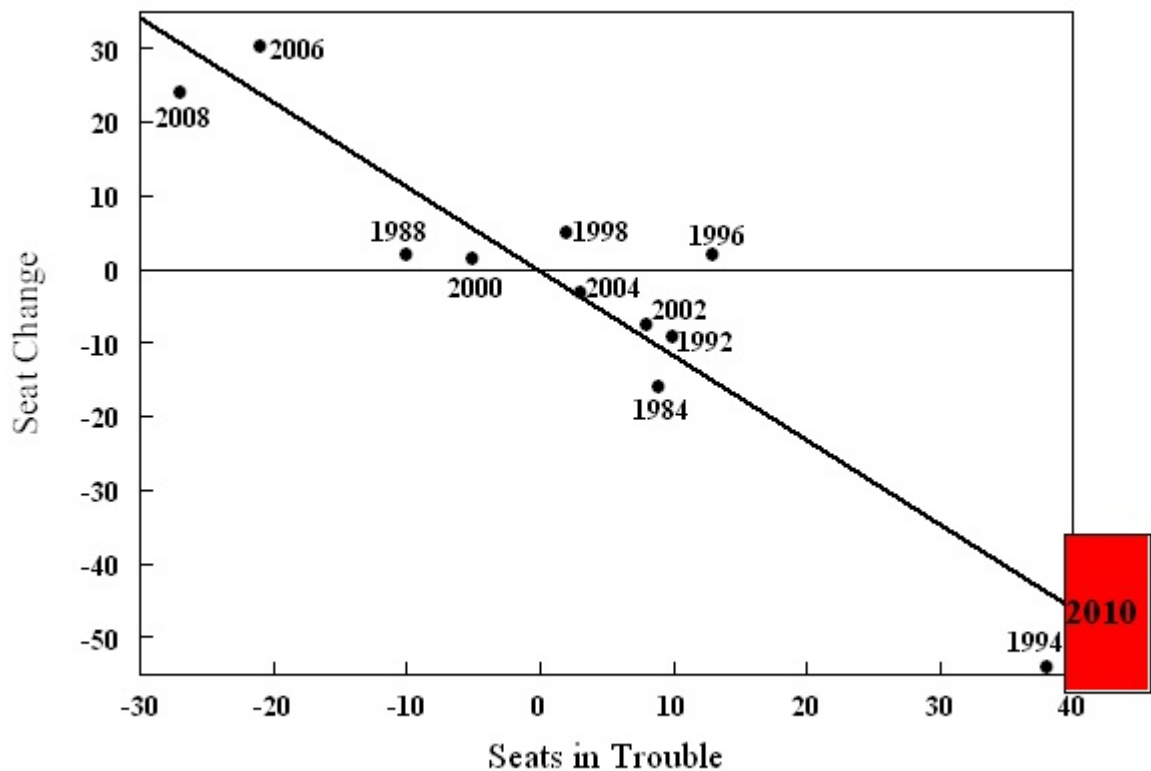
A net of 44 for the Democrats (more than 1994!)

Of the 42 Democratic Seats in Trouble

23 were in districts carried by
Bush in '04 and McCain in '08
and

Another 16 were carried by
a Republican presidential candidate
in one of the last two elections.

Figure 1. Relationship between Seats in Trouble and Seat Change



Note: The variables are oriented in terms of the Democratic Party. The correlation is -0.92 .

Two Context Variables

1. The Number of Seats Held by the Party after the last election. You can't lose seats you don't have and more seats, means more seats in less hospitable territory.

2. An Index of Presidential Approval

2. An Index of Presidential Approval

Recognizes the different politically neutral points for approval in on-years vs. midterms.

Difference from 45% in On-years

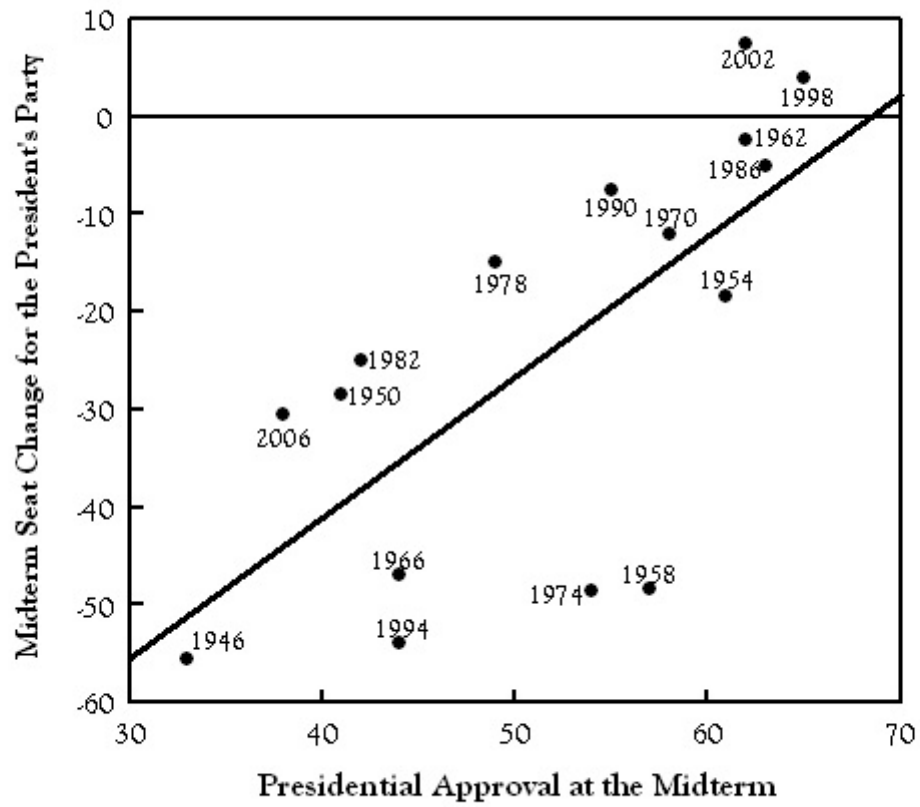
Difference from 65% in Midterms

Oriented by the Party of the President:

points over for Democratic Presidents

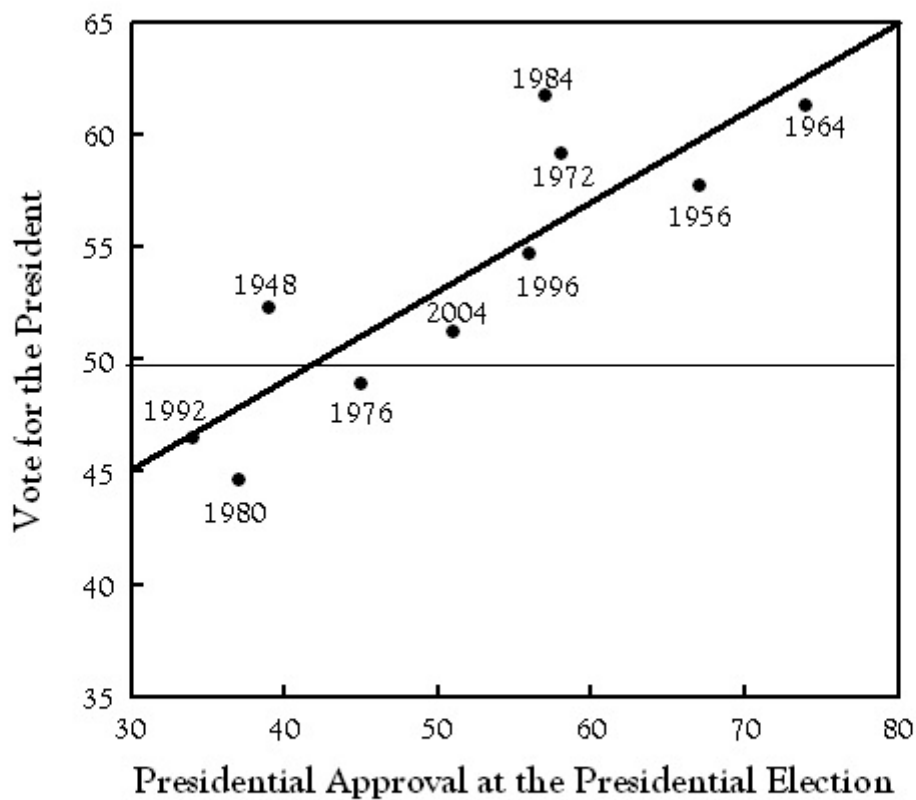
points under for Republican Presidents

Figure 2A. Presidential Approval and Midterm Seat Change for the President's Party, 1946-2006



Note: The correlation is .69.

Figure 2B. Presidential Approval and the Vote for Presidents, 1948-2004



Note: The correlation is .87. With successor candidates included, the correlation drops to .81. In several years (1948, 1964, 1972), the last Gallup pre-election presidential approval was in June of the election year.

The Forecast Equations

A Hybrid Model of
a Micro-Level Analysis by Experts
of Individual Districts
and
a Macro-Level Statistical Analysis
of Seat Change History

Table 2. The Seats in Trouble Forecasting Equations of Seat Change*Dependent variable: Democratic Seat Change in the U.S. House*

<i>Predictor Variables</i>	<i>(1.)</i>	<i>(2.)</i>	<i>(3.)</i>
Seats in Trouble (44 in 2010)	-1.14*** (.16)	-1.04*** (.13)	-.83*** (.18)
Lagged Democratic Seats (257 in 2010)	–	-.21* (.08)	–
Presidential Approval Index (-21 in 2010)	–	–	.61* (.24)
Constant	-.04	48.48	-2.09
Adjusted R ²	.84	.90	.90
Standard Error of Estimate	8.85	6.98	6.94
Median Absolute Error	8.78	5.43	5.37
Durbin-Watson	2.21	2.84	2.23
2010 Forecast	-50	-52	-51

The Forecast

The point forecast: Democrats are likely to lose 51 or 52 seats.

The House would have 205 or 206 Democrats and 229 or 230 Republicans, a 12 or 13 seat GOP majority.

The odds are quite favorable for a new Republican majority in the House.