

<https://www.courant.com/opinion/op-ed/hc-op-marcus-trump-drags-ct-gop-down-20181128-story.html>

12-1-18



Edward Marcus: Trump keeps state GOP away from victory

Edward L. Marcus

Can a Republican ever win the governorship in Connecticut? A U.S. Senate seat?

The answer to that is yes — and no. As long as [Donald Trump](#) remains president and continues his tweets and vocal faux pas, the [Republicans](#) have no chance to take control of any statewide office in Connecticut. The fact is, in the recent election, Republican Bob Stefanowski turned out to be a pretty good candidate who kept his cool, did well in the debates and developed strong support across the state. But he could not overcome the Trump effect.

When you look at a voting map of the Connecticut gubernatorial race right after the election, the state looked just about all red meaning it went Republican except in a few towns and in the large cities. The Democratic cities delivered the knockout blow on behalf of Gov.-elect [Ned Lamont](#).

Delete the Trump factor and it would have been much more of a tossup. Trump buried the Republicans in the crucial last 10 days before the election with his irrational pounding of the “immigrant caravan” as an attempted invasion, clearly abusing his powers as commander in chief by sending regular troops to police the border.

There’s no telling what they can accomplish when creativity is at their fingertips. Help them play, learn and grow with Mega Bloks®.

I believe this was the straw for many otherwise GOP voters as well as a good number of independent voters who might otherwise have gone for Stefanowski.

There was nothing nuanced about Trump’s actions. They were very visible, clear and understandable to the electorate. Many, I believe, rushed to the polls to make Trump pay for his abuse of power.

The invasion tactic turned the tide, and when accompanied by Trump's trade war with our allies as well as with China, our largest trading partner, it was the final blow to the state's generally middle-of-the-road Republicans and independents.

The good news for the Republicans was that Bob Stefanowski, a political unknown, who ran a mostly unconventional campaign for a large part of the election cycle, had a very solid showing despite the heavy weight of Trump and an opponent, Lamont, who engaged in an expensive self-funded campaign, during which he threw in everything but the kitchen sink.

If Trump runs for re-election in 2020, the Republicans can expect a blood bath in Connecticut. The loss of just four incumbent Republican state senators, which happened in this cycle, will seem like minor damage.

I believe the majority of Connecticut voters are sick and tired of Trump and all of his lies, grandstanding and attempts to control the news day after day. If the truth doesn't flatter his ego, he dubs it fake news.

Trump misdeeds occur so rapidly that major transgressions are really not written or talked about for more than a few days because they are always quickly replaced with new truly stupid and irrational comments or a despicable personal attack against a new or old target.

It is clear — so long as Trump holds or runs for office no Republican will win statewide in Connecticut. Even on the local level, many in the GOP will have a tough time capturing a majority of votes.

Without Trump the Republicans have a shot — a good shot. A repeat by Bob Stefanowski in 2022 or a run by someone like Len Fasano, the Republican Senate minority leader, could have a positive result for the Republicans. A large part of whether the Republicans can claw their way back, of course, depends on how Ned Lamont handles himself, the state budget and any crisis that may arise.

Bottom line: All is not lost. Connecticut is still a state in play without the overhang of Trump. With Trump, the Republicans have no chance. So long as Trump is around the real fight will be in the Democratic primaries.

Edward L. Marcus of Branford is former chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee and former state Senate majority leader.