

# DCCC



# Battleground Brief

The government shutdown has produced a seismic shift in the 2014 battleground, as the chaos and dysfunction of this Republican Congress boiled over, putting middle class families at risk and putting the focus squarely on House Republicans. The Republican government shutdown to satisfy Tea Party demands and defund the Affordable Care Act has reshaped the national climate against Congressional Republicans, fueled a surge in Democratic recruitment and will allow us to drive deeper into Republican territory in 2014.

The DCCC held Republicans accountable for their reckless shutdown throughout the crisis—and will not let them off the hook now—and posted more record-breaking fundraising numbers. And it was House Democrats who stood united against Republicans' antics.

## DCCC ACTIVITY:

### **DCCC Shatters Fundraising Records**

The DCCC continues to break fundraising records, raising what Politico called an “eye-popping” \$8.4 million in September, in the lead-up to the shutdown – the best September ever for an off-year and almost double what the DCCC raised in August of 2013.

That total is more than the DSCC and NRSC raised combined.

### **DCCC Leaders Reach Out to Business Community**

“At a time when the business community’s ties to congressional Republicans have been strained by recent fiscal crises, Democratic political operatives are trying to move into the breach,” the Wall Street Journal [writes](#). Chairman Israel and DCCC National Finance Chair Rep. Jim Himes sent a letter this week to more than 1,000 business leaders around the country to remind them that “it was House Democrats who worked with business leaders to reopen the government and meet our obligations, and it was House Republicans who turned their backs on business in favor of the radical demands of the Tea Party.”

Read the full letter [here](#).

### **After #GOPShutdown, New Wave of Democratic Recruits**

House Republicans' failed strategy has been a boon to Democratic recruiting efforts. With the chaos in Washington reaching new heights and vulnerable Republicans voting to harm their own constituents by continuing the shutdown, Politico [writes](#) that, “[m]ore than a half-dozen blue-chip Democratic candidates

who had been uneasy about running — or flatly declined to do so — are now jumping headlong into top-flight races. And they’re citing the ugly spectacle on Capitol Hill as a big reason.”

Chairman Israel [told the Washington Post](#) that, “[i]n a number of districts we had top-tier, all-star potential candidates who several months ago didn’t see a path to victory. They reopened the doors. These are competitive districts. They tend to be moderate and have large concentrations of independent voters. Those voters are now seeing the Tea Party implement their agenda.”

- “Republicans’ issues give Democratic recruiting boost” [Politico, [10/21/13](#)]
- “Dem says shutdown helping recruiting” [The Hill, [10/14/13](#)]
- “GOP shutdown shenanigans giving Dems a big recruiting boost?” [Washington Post, [10/8/13](#)]

### **#GOPShutdown Reshapes Battlefield**

In the wake of the disastrous Republican shutdown, analysts are acknowledging that more seats are now in play and that the battlefield is moving in Democrats’ direction. [The Cook Report called it](#) the “shutdown shift,” and moved their competitiveness ratings of 14 districts to be more favorable to Democrats. David Wasserman of [the Cook Report wrote](#):

“The GOP’s brand has been awful for years, and sustained more damage this month. Yet the biggest boost for House Democrats isn’t the downturn in the GOP’s brand (NBC News/Wall Street Journal surveys showed negative views of the Republican Party surging from 44 percent in September to 53 percent in October). It’s that the shutdown forced voters to actually focus on the House GOP as ‘the problem’ in DC, something Democrats simply could not do amid the noise of the 2012 presidential election.”

### **Chairman Israel Discusses Republican Dysfunction**

DCCC Chairman Steve Israel made numerous TV appearances during the shutdown, urging House Republicans to stop caving to Tea Party demands, stop hurting the middle class and reopen the government. As we look toward the future, Chairman Israel appeared on CNN with Ashleigh Banfield to emphasize that there are two solutions to the continued budget fight: “One is: one side or the other has to win the Republican Civil War so we know who to negotiate with. The other is House Democrats have to win the majority in 2014 so that we can move this country forward and not go from cliff to cliff.”

Take a look:



## **DCCC On Offense:**

### **DCCC Radio Ads Expose House Republicans for Putting Their Own Health Care Ahead of Constituents**

The DCCC launched radio ads against 10 House Republicans who voted to give themselves taxpayer-funded health insurance for life, while engineering their government shutdown so they could take away their constituents' benefits under the Affordable Care Act.

- “Ad by national Democrats attacks Reed over Obamacare” [Corning Leader, [10/15/13](#)]
- “Government shutdown ads target GOP lawmakers” [Politico, [10/15/13](#)]

### **DCCC’s Paid Grassroots Campaign to Urge Republicans to End Shutdown**

The DCCC launched paid grassroots campaigns in more than 60 districts to connect Americans to their Member of Congress to end their manufactured shutdown, and also launched phone calls against Republican challengers who would be part of the problem in Washington.

- “House Dems target Republicans on eve of debt limit deadline” [CNN, [10/16/13](#)]
- “Dems make it Easy to Call GOP to Complain About Shutdown” [Roll Call, [10/16/13](#)]
- “Democrats target three N.C. House members in shutdown fight” [Charlotte Observer, [10/1/13](#)]

### **DCCC Launches Website and Video Highlighting Shutdown Impact**

During the shutdown the DCCC released a video and web site sharing the faces and stories of the Republican shutdown. The website included a petition, signed by over a million Americans, demanding that House Republicans end their irresponsible shutdown.

Take a look at the video:



### **Despite being in the minority, the DCCC outraised the NRCC by more than \$3 million in September, \$10 million for the cycle, and has \$6 million more cash-on-hand.**

The DCCC has crossed the \$20 million cash-on-hand mark (\$21.6M), making it the first political party campaign committee ever to have more than \$20 million this early in the election cycle.

- “DCCC chair cites fiscal fight in record September haul” [Politico, [10/18/13](#)]
- “Democratic Fundraising Committee Has Wildly Successful Fundraising Month, Trouncing GOP Counterpart” [Huffington Post, [10/21/13](#)]
- “Dems rake in cash on GOP’s shutdown antics” [MSNBC, [10/21/13](#)]
- “Democrats sweep September fundraising” [Washington Post, [10/21/13](#)]
- “Government Shutdown Fuels House Democratic Fundraising” [National Journal, [10/21/13](#)]

# RELEVANT NEWS

- **Nancy Pelosi: ‘I’m here on a mission’** “Nancy Pelosi isn’t going anywhere. While many thought the California Democrat would step down as House minority leader after this Congress, Pelosi confidants now believe she will remain atop House leadership through 2016 and maybe even longer... “I’m not here on a shift. I’m here on a mission — and when my work is done, that’s when I will leave,” Pelosi said in a recent interview with POLITICO... One thing is for sure — Pelosi’s power and influence among her colleagues has returned to levels not seen since she served as speaker. Her position in the Democratic caucus — already strong — was further bolstered during the recent government shutdown and debt ceiling crises.” [Politico, [10/22/13](#)]
- **For GOP, the Damage Is Undeniable** “The political fallout from the confrontation is very real. Republicans got almost nothing out of the deal to re-open the government and raise the debt ceiling except, of course, that they lost another 10 percentage points in their favorable rating and looked less like an organized political party and more like a disorganized, confused rabble. Republican operatives are worried that the showdown will improve Democratic House recruiting considerably for 2014, and it could well damage GOP fundraising, both among small-dollar donors and the party’s bigger hitters.” [Roll Call, [10/16/13](#)]
- **Handicappers: Shutdown Puts House Majority in Play** “The government shutdown and debt crisis has made 14 House seats more winnable for Democrats, according to new independent ratings released Thursday from *The Cook Political Report*. There are now—for the first time this cycle—more Republican seats "in play" than the 17 Democrats would need to win in order to take the majority in 2014.” [National Journal, [10/17/13](#)]
- **Gridlock Has Cost U.S. Billions, and the Meter Is Still Running** “Even with the shutdown of the United States government and the threat of a default coming to an end, the cost of Congress’s gridlock has already run well into the billions, economists estimate. And the total will continue to grow even after the shutdown ends, partly because of uncertainty about whether lawmakers might reach another deadlock early next year... [E]conomists said that the intransigence of House Republicans would take a bite out of fourth-quarter growth, which will affect employment, business earnings and borrowing costs.” [New York Times, [10/16/13](#)]
- **GOP shutdown failure gives Dems 2014 optimism** “The shutdown standoff created a tsunami of outrage against the GOP. And Dems are hoping to ride the wave all the way into a House majority in 2014. ‘What’s happened over the past two weeks or so is a sea change,’ Rep. Steve Israel of New York, who chairs the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, told *Hardball* on Thursday night. ‘...This shutdown may have improved our prospects toward winning the House.’” [MSNBC, [10/18/13](#)]
- **Republicans Could Be Weakening Their Party’s Future** “There is no question that the Republican Party’s brand is experiencing grievous damage. In fact, you would be quite believable if you were to suggest that the GOP has been making an active, masochistic effort to isolate itself from moderate, independent, and swing voters, further exacerbating all the problems with target constituencies that cost Mitt Romney the presidency and the GOP a national popular House vote victory.” [National Journal, [10/7/13](#)]
- **Business Voices Frustration With GOP** “Many business executives say they were dismayed that some Republicans didn’t heed their warnings that closing the government and risking default would hurt the U.S. economy. Others expressed disgust with Washington politics in general. All said the crisis could have been averted with a more pragmatic approach.” [Wall Street Journal, [10/16/13](#)]

- **Unruly Dems show rare unity** “[House Democrats] credit several factors for the cohesion: strong leadership from the top of their ranks, better outreach from the White House and an overriding sense that they must stick together in the face of what they see as dangerous Republican brinkmanship.” [Politico, [10/10/13](#)]
- **Shutting Down the Government Over Obamacare Is the New Obamacare** “While the more ideological wing of the party forced a confrontation over Obamacare that led to the first government shutdown in 17 years, GOP candidates in more competitive districts want nothing to do with it, even as they feel pressured from the right to avoid disowning the Ted Cruz wing all together. So they’re opting for a duck-and-cover approach instead.” [National Journal, [10/16/13](#)]
- **Nancy Pelosi belongs** “It’s hard to imagine a more deserving inductee to the National Women’s Hall of Fame than House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi. . . .Pelosi, of course, would belong in any gallery of prominent American leaders. . . .For Pelosi, the honor she will receive in Seneca Falls, N.Y., birthplace of the American women’s rights movement, has special meaning. She described herself as ‘in awe’ of the courage of the suffragettes who gathered at the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848.” [San Francisco Chronicle, [10/10/13](#)]

## BY THE NUMBERS:

Voters are making it clear that they want to elect Democrats to Congress in 2014 and Democrats have taken a significant lead in the generic Congressional ballot.

- The latest Fox News Poll shows Democrats leading the generic Congressional ballot by 8 points (45 percent to 37 percent).
- In [CNN’s latest poll](#), Democrats also lead the generic Congressional ballot by 8 points (50 percent to 42 percent).
- In the newest [NBC/WSJ poll](#), voters prefer Democrats in charge of Congress instead of Republicans by an 8 point margin (47 percent – 39 percent). Last month the lead was 3 points (46 percent -43 percent).
- The newest [Quinnipiac University national poll](#) shows Democrats taking the largest lead in the generic ballot so far this election cycle. Democrats have a 9-point lead in the Congressional generic ballot (43 percent to 34 percent).
- [Pew](#) found that Democrats lead the generic ballot by 6 points among registered voters (49 percent to 43 percent), and we are tied among Independents (43 percent to 43 percent.)

The damage the Republican shutdown has inflicted on their brand and image with voters will stay in voters’ minds in the upcoming election and ones to come. The election is just over a year away, so there’s no doubt the generic ballot will fluctuate, but the damage to the Republican brand may be indelible.

In the newest [NBC/WSJ poll](#):

- 70 percent of Americans – and 40 percent of Republicans – say Congressional Republicans are putting their own politics before the good of the country.
- Only 24 percent have a favorable opinion of the GOP, and only 21 percent have a favorable opinion of the Tea Party. Both are “all-time lows in the history of the poll.”



- Speaker Boehner’s net approval rating has hit an all-time low of negative 25 points (17% favorable to 42% unfavorable).

In the newest [CNN poll](#):

- Three quarters (75 percent) of voters say that most Congressional Republicans don’t deserve to be reelected—and that number grows to 79 percent among Independents.
- A majority (54 percent) say that it’s a bad thing for the country that Republicans control the House of Representatives—this is up 11 points since December.
- 63 percent think Speaker Boehner should be replaced—including half of Republicans
- By 19 points, most Americans (56 percent to 37 percent) say the Republican Party is too extreme—by contrast, a majority (52 percent) think that the Democratic Party is “generally mainstream”

[Gallup](#) reported that the Republican Party’s favorability had hit a record low of 28 percent and has fallen 10 percentage points since September. According to Gallup: “This is the lowest favorable rating measured for either party since Gallup began asking this question in 1992.”

## Recruitment Update:

House Republicans’ self-destruction is a boon to DCCC recruiting. As [Chairman Israel said](#), “In many of these districts, potential recruits had closed the door, locked it, blocked it and said they would never take a call from the DCCC again. And now they’re calling us and can’t wait to run against this reckless Republican Congress.”

The DCCC named 3 additional candidates to our [Jumpstart](#) program, which provides DCCC support to our top candidates who are showing early promise. The additions take the total number of candidates in the program to 19—more than the number of seats Democrats need to take back the House.

- “DCCC touts new House recruits amid post-shutdown optimism” [The Hill, [10/24/13](#)]

The following candidates were named to Jumpstart:

**[Sean Eldridge, NY-19](#)** Investor and marriage equality activist Sean Eldridge is already posting big fundraising numbers in this extremely competitive seat that President Obama won in 2012.

- “Eldridge: Shutdown Means New Leadership Needed” [WAMC, [10/16/13](#)]

**[Pete Festersen, NE-02](#)** The Omaha City Councilman had declined a run last summer, but reconsidered after Congressman Lee Terry voted to shut down the government and deny paychecks to hundreds of thousands of workers, while keeping his own because he’s “got a nice house.” Festersen [said of his decision](#), “Like most people, my frustration has grown by the day over the last month, with the government shutdown and the brinkmanship on the debt ceiling. Change is needed. And I felt it was my responsibility to be that change.”

- “Pete Festersen to vie for Lee Terry’s congressional seat in 2014” [Omaha World-Herald, [10/14/13](#)]

**[Amanda Renteria, CA-21](#)** The Central Valley native and first Latina Chief of Staff to a U.S. Senator (Senator Debbie Stabenow) is running against Congressman David Valadao in this district that President Obama won with more than 55 percent.

- “Congressional hopeful Amanda Renteria wants to give Valley ‘a strong voice’” [Fresno Bee, [9/29/13](#)]

Also announcing just this week was **Patrick Henry Hays, AR-02**. The former North Little Rock Mayor announced his bid for the newly-open 2<sup>nd</sup> district seat this week. Congressman Tim Griffin's surprise retirement creates an opening in this district with a history of electing Democrats in down-ballot races.

- "Frustration prompts former NLR mayor to run for Congress" [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, [10/22/13](#)]

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Wednesday, October 30, 2013**  
**DCCC Event with President Obama**  
Boston, MA  
Manjiri Machak, [Machak@dccc.org](mailto:Machak@dccc.org), (202) 741-1846
- **Friday, November 08, 2013**  
**DCCC Luncheon with Vice President Biden**  
Baltimore, MD  
Becca Durr, [durr@dccc.org](mailto:durr@dccc.org), (202) 485-3445
- **Sunday, November 24, 2013**  
**DCCC Event with President Obama**  
Seattle, WA  
Contact: Liz Robertson, [robertson@dccc.org](mailto:robertson@dccc.org), (202) 485-3436
- **Tuesday, December 3, 2013**  
**DCCC Latino Council Reception**  
Washington, DC  
Contact: Johana Borjas, [borjas@dccc.org](mailto:borjas@dccc.org), (202) 485-3419
- **Tuesday, December 10, 2013**  
**DCCC Speaker's Cabinet Holiday Luncheon**  
Washington, DC  
Contact: Becca Durr, [durr@dccc.org](mailto:durr@dccc.org), (202) 485-3445