



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 10, 2022

Tennessee Democrats “Facing Extinction,” Says Outgoing Democrat

After announcing his retirement from the House of Representatives in December, Representative Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.) [told the Nashville Scene](#): “The Democratic Party in Tennessee is basically facing extinction ... we’ve been on a long downhill slide for a long time.”

And that slide is likely to continue, said the retiring congressman:

As usual, Democrats are not alert to future dangers.

The biggest danger we face in an off-year election after we won the White House is the 100-year trend toward the other party.

[Our success in] redistricting [to favor Democrats] is small potatoes compared to that historical trend.



AP Images
Jim Cooper

Reversal of that 100-year trend isn’t likely to happen in 2022, either:

Most of the rhetoric you hear [from Democrats] is: “Let’s double down. Let’s force it down their throats.”

That’s not the way to win votes.

Gallup, the polling organization that has been tracking political preferences and issues for more than a quarter of a century, was surprised by that trend showing up so dramatically in 2021.

When their audience of 12,000 U.S. adults was asked repeatedly in 2021, “In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an independent.... Do you lean more to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?” A year ago, Democrats held a commanding nine-percentage-point lead over Republicans: 49-40.

Beginning in April, the shift to Republicans began, and caught Gallup off guard:

A dramatic shift [took place], from a nine-percentage point Democratic advantage in the first quarter to a rare five-point Republican edge in the fourth quarter.... [These] are among the largest Gallup has measured for each party in any quarter since it began measuring party identification and leaning in 1991....

By the third quarter, those Democratic gains evaporated as Biden’s job approval declined.



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The political winds continued to become more favorable to Republicans in the fourth quarter, giving the GOP an advantage over Democrats larger than any they had achieved in more than 25 years.

There are other contributing factors in Biden's, and his party's, astounding fall from grace: 1) the price of gas and groceries hitting new highs, with inflation being reported at seven and a half percent year over year on Thursday; 2) the generic ballot as recorded by RealClear Politics, which has traditionally favored Democrats over the years, now favors Republicans by four percentage points; and 3) the direction of the country, with nearly two out of three adults declaring they think it has been run off the rails under the Biden administration.

There is one other factor that mitigates against any chance that Biden or his handlers could turn things around in time to avoid cataclysmic disaster in November: a total and complete blindness by the people in charge to recognize that the party is in deep trouble and in danger of extinction.

Representative Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) is head of the House Democratic Caucus. He laughed off any concerns that his party is in trouble. Back in November, he said,

I don't believe [these polls have] anything to do with our prospects in 2022.

We're going to hold the House, and we're going to grow a majority.

We're going to do it because of extraordinary leadership.

A month later, nothing had changed for the Democratic leader, who declared, "I think we're on track to hold the House." And during a press briefing on Tuesday, he remained blind to the impending disaster, declaring that "job creation is up, wages are up, unemployment is down, and the Mild Omicron variant is in retreat." These are all issues that he hopes Democrats will use to expand their majority in the House in November.

Representative Jim Cooper from Tennessee is the 29th Democrat to announce his retirement. And it's only February.

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