Summary

Despite the intense counterattack from Republicans, Democrats seem even more likely to control the House than they did a month ago. They also have at least a 50/50 chance of Senate control. Democratic control of Congress would be a restraining influence on Trump.

A month ago, I took a preliminary look at the state of the race. Since then, Trump has been on the campaign trail, and Republicans have spent hundreds of millions on ads. Elon Musk alone has set a record for campaign spending. Nevertheless, unless the experts are haywire, Democrats will control the House, and their odds in the Senate are at least 50/50.

Since I'm not a political expert, I rely on two political websites, Cook and Sabato, for guidance. Let's start with the U.S. House. If you averaged their predictions and assume toss-up races split evenly, you'd predict that the Democrats will have a 15-20 seat majority in the House and would flip enough Republican seats to win 51-52 Senate seats if they hold Michigan.

These predictions do not take into account a last-minute *NY Times* poll strongly favoring Democrats in the Senate races, which has led Nate Silver to up their chances of flipping the Senate. Silver was one of the few to give Trump a substantial chance of victory the day before the 2016 election, which gained him credibility in my eyes, This has left me with somewhat more confidence than the Cook/Sabato predictions themselves would warrant.

The House. A month ago, Sabato saw the House leaning toward the Democrats, who needed to wind only a quarter to the toss-up races to flip control of the House. Cook thought they would need to win about half the toss-ups. These weren't bad scenarios for Democrats, but the need to rely on toss-up races meant that even a small polling error could leave them out in the cold.

Today, prospects for control of the House seem clearer. Even if the Democrats don't win any toss-up states, Sabato and Cook agree that they would still have a small House majority, with Cook seeing the smaller Democratic edge. Winning half the toss-ups would take the Democrats to a 10-15 seat majority. Winning all the toss-ups would take the Democrats to roughly a 25-seat majority.

The Senate. What about the Senate? A month ago, North Carolina was leaning Democratic, giving the Democrats a likely pickup. One big difference between the forecasters was that Cook considered two Democratic states (Michigan and New Hampshire) to be toss-ups, while Sabato thought they leaned Democratic. Both agreed that if the Democrats held those states, they'd need to win about half the toss-ups states held by Republicans.

What do the Senate races look like today? Cook now agrees with Sabato that Minnesota and New Hampshire lean Democratic. Cook and Sabato also agree that Kansas has become a toss-up.

Sabato is a little more optimistic about Democratic chances than Cook. He sees Michigan and Alaska as leaning Democratic, so Democrats would need to win only two of five toss-up races for Senate control. In Cook's count, Democrats need to hold Michigan and pick up three Republican-held toss-up seats out of six or else grab a lean-Republican state and two-tossups.

The upshot. How these races come out will matter tremendously for the next two years. They will have important repercussions for environmental policy. A Democratic Congress could restrain some of Trump's anti-environmental efforts. Stepping back a little way, it's a bit mind-boggling that

states like Texas, Kansas, and Iowa are now considered toss-ups in the first place. Maybe there's been a major polling error and states will lock into their usual partisan blocs. Or maybe something deeper is happening politically. We'll find out next Tuesday.