

Bill Kaplan: Don't let Trump win in 2020

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Political pundit Larry Sabato opined: “The economy got Nixon, Reagan and Bush reelected. It could do it for Trump, too.” Why? U.S. unemployment is 3.7 percent, while Wisconsin’s rate is 2.8 percent. Moreover, Trump now has the powers of an incumbent, a united GOP behind him, unwavering base voters and a fundraising juggernaut. And, the “Democratic Party may inadvertently boost Trump if it gets carried away with an impeachment frenzy that prompts a voter backlash” (Sabato). In addition, if the Democratic presidential candidate runs too far to the left, Trump could win again.

However, there are barriers to Trump’s reelection, Unlike in 2016, Trump is no longer the change candidate. All the smoke and mirrors, glitter and razzle-dazzle can’t hide the chaos, contempt for democratic values and scandals of the Trump White House. On Friday, Labor Secretary Alex Acosta resigned “amid the mushrooming Jeffrey Epstein investigation” (Washington Post).

But the basic facts about the Epstein sex crimes case (underage girls) and his sweet plea deal were known when the Senate confirmed Acosta. Wisconsin Democratic Senator Tammy Baldwin voted no, while Wisconsin GOP Senator Ron Johnson, oblivious to facts, voted to confirm. Acosta presented explosive problems for Trump. A tycoon (Epstein) in a sex scandal, getting off with a slap on the wrist. Then there was Trump’s having called Epstein a “terrific” guy who liked them “young”. Acosta had to go. Meanwhile, Trump is moving ahead with his reelection agenda: trade wars and bashing immigrants. But voters are catching on.

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On Friday, Acosta imploded, then Trump came to Wisconsin for a fundraiser and photo-op. But the American Dairy Coalition rained on Trump's reelection parade: "Trump has displayed a willingness to play hardball in order to secure concessions. Nonetheless, he has reached a point of rapidly diminishing returns and everyday (as) unnecessary tariffs remain in place, more and more of the very people he claims to be fighting for - American dairymen and farmers - are being pushed into bankruptcy. A good general knows when the day is won and when to remove his troops from harm's way. If Trump can't learn the same lesson, he may find few farmers willing - or able - to stand behind him".

Similarly, the Washington Post found weakening support for Trump: "estimates show that between 5 percent and 15 percent of voters who picked Trump in 2016 had voted for Obama in 2012, or as many as 9.2 million voters. These Obama-Trump voters are one of the only voting groups to have had a significant change in their view of ... Trump: In 2016, 85 percent of them held a 'favorable' view ... — a rate that fell to 66 percent this year" Likewise, Craig Gilbert, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, found many Obama to Trump voters in rural Wisconsin. Democrats, pay attention!

Finally, Wisconsin Public Radio reports: "Some Wisconsin dairy leaders worry increased scrutiny around immigration is having an impact on the immigrant labor force the industry depends on". Trump may not get a free ride in Wisconsin.

-Kaplan wrote a guest column from Washington, D.C. for the Wisconsin State Journal from 1995 - 2009.