

In the last decade, there have been many horrific gun crimes in the US, where at least 10 people have been murdered in the one incident. However, the National Rifle Association has successfully fought all efforts to impose even limited gun control. The NRA's donations to Congressional Republicans are a key reason for this success.

Since the Republicans took control of the US House and Senate in the wave election of November 1994, [Democrats have only controlled the "Trifecta"](#) – Presidency, House and Senate – for the first two years of Obama's first term, 2009-10. In these two years, the Democrats' focus was on health care reform, and Obamacare was passed in March 2010.

After the December 2012 Sandy Hook school massacre, in which 20 children were murdered, [two bills were proposed](#) in the then Democrat-controlled Senate. Although Democrats held a 55-45 majority, an assault weapons ban was defeated 60-40. A bill requiring background checks won 54-46, but failed to get the 60 votes to break the filibuster. Even if this bill had passed the Senate, the Republican-controlled House would have rejected it.

[Analyst Harry Enten](#) says that Republican voters have become far more pro-gun over the last two decades, particularly since Obama's Presidency began; 76% of Republican voters are now in favour of gun rights over gun control. If Trump started to advocate gun control, his base would turn on him, and Congressional Republicans would reject any proposed measures.

The only hope for gun control is that Democrats utterly crush Republicans at some point and take control of the Trifecta, with massive majorities in the House and Senate.

In [FiveThirtyEight's poll aggregate](#), Trump has a 38.1% approval, 56.5% disapproval rating, for a net of -18.4. Trump recovered some ground after the Texas and Florida hurricanes, but has slipped back again, though his current ratings are better than his record lows. At this stage, the Las Vegas massacre has not greatly impacted Trump's ratings.

[FiveThirtyEight gives Democrats](#) a 45.6-37.7 lead over Republicans in the race for Congress. All of the House and 1/3 of the Senate are up for election in November 2018.

Republicans fail to repeal Obamacare before 30 Sept deadline

Under US Senate rules, legislation can be filibustered. It takes a 3/5 majority of the 100 Senators (60 votes) to break a filibuster, and proceed to a vote. This requirement to end filibusters can be overcome using Reconciliation, but this can only apply to one bill per fiscal year. The US fiscal year finished on 30 September.

Senate Republicans hold a 52-48 majority, and had previously tried to pass an Obamacare repeal bill using Reconciliation. Under current Senate rules, 60 votes would now be needed. Republicans want to use Reconciliation to pass tax reform this fiscal year.

Republicans could “nuke” the legislative filibuster on a majority vote (this has already happened for judicial and Cabinet appointments). However, the major problem with Obamacare repeal for Republicans is that they never had 50 votes. In addition, nuking the filibuster would make it far easier for Democrats next time they control the Trifecta.

NZ election final seat result: 56 National, 46 Labour, 9 NZ First, 8 Greens

Final results for the [New Zealand election](#), held on 23 September, were released today. The conservative National won 44.4% of the vote (down 2.6 points on 2014), Labour 36.9% (up 11.8), the anti-immigrant populist NZ First 7.2% (down 1.5) and the Greens 6.3% (down 4.4).

Seats are awarded in proportion to the votes of qualifying parties (parties that win at least 5% of the vote or a single-member electorate). National won 56 of the 120 seats (down 4), Labour 46 (up 14), NZ First 9 (down 2) and the Greens 8 (down 6). The right-wing ACT party won a single-member seat, but with only 0.5% of the vote, did not qualify for a second seat.

The special votes that were counted in the last two weeks favoured the left, with Labour and the Greens each gaining one seat at the expense of National (down 2). Before specials, National and ACT had a 59-52 seat advantage over Labour and Greens, now it is 57-54.

61 seats are required for a parliamentary majority, and NZ First's nine seats will be needed by

either National or Labour. NZ First leader Winston Peters has said he will decide which party [forms government by 12 October](#)

Essential 54-46 to Australian Labor

In this [week's Essential](#), conducted over the last two weeks from a sample of 1840, Labor led by 54-46, a 2 point gain for Labor since last fortnight. Primary votes were 38% Labor, 36% Coalition, 10% Greens, 7% One Nation and 3% Nick Xenophon Team. Additional questions are based on one week's sample.

By 61-32, voters expressed in-principle support for same sex marriage. 47% said they had already voted, and 33% would definitely vote. Yes was winning 64-30 among those who had already voted, with 6% who preferred not to say. Among definite voters, Yes was winning 61-37.

The 47% who have already voted should be at least 58%, as the ABS estimated that [57.5% had returned their form](#) as at 29 September, and this poll's fieldwork was 28 September to 1 October. The 6% who preferred not to say how they voted are probably mostly shy No's, with a few deliberately invalidating their votes. Essential is now asking people how they voted or intend to vote on the actual form, the correct question.

In Essential, the most trusted organisations were Federal police (71%), state police (67%), the High Court (61%) and the ABC (52%). Political parties were at the bottom on 18%, with trade unions (25%), religious organisations (26%) and business groups (28%) above.

58-63% trusted ABC and SBS TV and radio news and current affairs, easily the best, and up 2-4 points since March. Most other media had 40-45% trust, with Internet blogs trailing at just 20% and commercial talkback at 35%.

More ReachTEL details

The [Poll Bludger](#) has more details of this week's ReachTEL poll (53-47 to Labor by respondent preferences). Primary votes were 36.4% Labor (down 0.3 since late August), 34.5% Coalition

No chance of US gun control despite Las Vegas massacre; NZ left gains two seats after special votes

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(steady), 11.0% One Nation (up 0.6) and 10.2% Greens (down 0.1). By last election preferences, this poll would be 54-46 to Labor.

Turnbull led Shorten 51.7-48.3 as better PM, virtually unchanged from 51.6-48.4 in August. ReachTEL's forced choice better PM question is usually better for opposition leaders than other polls.

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Read more <http://theconversation.com/no-chance-of-us-gun-control-despite-las-vegas-massacre-nz-left-gains-two-seats-after-special-votes-85178>