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Associated Press

Chrissy Houlahan nursed a chocolate milkshake at a diner here on her way to a gun-control event and pondered the changing political nature of this Philadelphia suburb (Coatesville), which has been represented in Congress by an uninterrupted chain of Republicans for more than 100 years. "If you had told me 10 years ago, here in Chester County, that we were having a conversation about this issue, I would not have believed you," said Ms. Houlahan, the Democratic candidate for Congress representing Chester County.

Nine of Pennsylvania's 18 House seats could change parties this year, a concentration of competitive races like nowhere else in the country due to the combination of court-ordered redistricting and a broader realignment of suburban voters away from the Republican Party. Of the 63 GOP-held House seats that [the Cook Political Report](#) rates as lean Republican, a tossup or likely or lean Democratic, 31 come from six states. Democrats could run the table in battlefield districts in just four states—Pennsylvania, California, Florida and New Jersey—and capture the net 23 seats they need to seize the House majority without taking a single district anywhere else.

In 2006, Democrats won a House majority with success in rural seats in places like Indiana and North Carolina. Republicans took control in 2010 by wiping out those gains and winning districts held by rural and moderate Democrats. Four Pennsylvania seats changed parties in both 2006 and 2010, making it one of the most politically volatile states in each of the last two wave elections.

This year the [battlefield is in the nation's suburbs](#), districts that have sent Republicans to Congress for generations but are filled with educated women—a demographic that polling shows has fled the GOP more than any other in the Trump era. "The political winds are blowing six swing seats our way," said Rep. Mike Doyle, a Pittsburgh Democrat who is the dean of the Pennsylvania House delegation. "It would not surprise me if our state flips more seats than any state in the country."

In Pennsylvania, Democrats are counting on gains in places like Chester County, the only county in the state that backed both Mitt Romney in 2012 and Hillary Clinton in 2016. The county hasn't sent a Democrat to Congress since the 19th century, said Terry Madonna, a professor at nearby Franklin & Marshall College who is an expert on Pennsylvania politics. "In suburban districts, independent voters and

[Gov. Wolf reports \\$414K in 2017 income, \\$1.3M in charitable gifts](#)

Wilkes-Barre Times Leader
[Op-ed by Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski \(D-Luzerne\): Balance is key to tax fairness in Pa.](#)

women are shifting away from the Republican Party at a pretty significant rate,” said Ken Spain, a former communications director for the House GOP’s campaign committee.

The new political dynamic was evident Friday, when Ms. Houlahan appeared in Coatesville with former Arizona Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, who was shot in the head outside a supermarket in 2011, and her husband Mark Kelly, the former astronaut who now runs Giffords: Courage to Fight Gun Violence, the gun control organization named for his wife. Mr. Kelly and Ms. Giffords are in the midst of a nationwide tour stumping for Democratic candidates who back proposals such as universal background checks for gun purchases.

On Friday, [they appeared with Ms. Houlahan and Mikie Sherrill](#), the favorite to win one of four of New Jersey’s competitive House races. Among those here to support Ms. Houlahan was Nicole Bowman, a marketing writer from nearby Reading, Pa. After the school shooting earlier this year in Parkland, Fla., Ms. Bowman, 37 years old, started a local chapter of Moms Demand Action, the gun-control group backed by former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. More than 100 people attended the first meeting. “For a while it was a helpless feeling here,” Ms. Bowman said. “Now we have overwhelming support.”

Ms. Houlahan, who has raised \$2.8 million, is a heavy favorite to win in November against Republican Greg McCauley, who has raised just \$174,000. After the Pennsylvania Supreme Court installed a new congressional map in February, the incumbent, GOP Rep. Ryan Costello, opted not to seek re-election. The Cook Political Report rates the race likely Democratic. “We go where the opportunities are,” Mr. Kelly said. “This message does play well in certain places and it’s starting to expand.”

He traveled the state Saturday to also hold an event with Democratic Rep. Conor Lamb, who in March [shocked Republicans by winning a special election](#) in a Pittsburgh-area district Mr. Trump carried by 20 percentage points. Redistricting placed him in a district with three-term GOP Rep. Keith Rothfus, in a race the Cook Political Report rates as lean Democratic. Mr. Lamb attributed his success to a hunger from voters for Democrats to engage with them. “We hadn’t fielded candidates to run,” Mr. Lamb said. “I think it’s more about the ground game and getting out there and meeting people.”

His GOP opponent, Mr. Rothfus, said his constituents are happy with the local economy and cast his race against Mr. Lamb as a battle for the future of the Trump presidency. “This race is a kind of bellwether for the country,” he said. “If we have Democrats take over the House of Representatives, you’re looking at impeachment proceedings against the president.” Neither Mr. Lamb nor the House Democratic leadership has endorsed impeaching Mr. Trump.

At Mr. Lamb’s event Saturday at a firehouse in Heidelberg, Pa., Ron Landay, an allergist from nearby Mount Lebanon, said he abandoned the GOP because it stopped nominating moderates. By 2016, he had a Hillary Clinton sign in his front yard. “The Republican Party went too far right wing,” he said. – *Wall Street Journal*

Tim Armstrong, the leader of Verizon Communications Inc.'s media and advertising business, is in talks to depart, according to people familiar with the matter, leaving unfinished the task of building the unit into a digital content giant. Mr. Armstrong, who came to Verizon in 2015 [when it acquired AOL](#) and helped steer [its purchase of Yahoo](#) two years later, had tried to combine the two internet companies to challenge Google and Facebook Inc. in digital advertising. But those efforts so far have failed to generate much growth or make the unit, called Oath, more than a side note in the wireless giant's earnings.

There were recent discussions about whether to spin off the Oath business, the people said, but Verizon has decided instead to integrate some of its operations more closely with the rest of the company. Mr. Armstrong, 47 years old, is in discussions to depart as soon as next month, they said, as are other members of his leadership team. Verizon and Oath executives have disagreed over what some employees within the digital ad unit see as an overly conservative approach to using wireless subscriber data to boost Oath's advertising revenue, people familiar with those discussions say.

Senior executives within Verizon are wary of potentially alienating lucrative wireless customers in the name of adding incremental advertising revenue, these people said. Oath contributed less than \$4 billion in revenue during the first half of the year, compared with the wireless business's \$44 billion. Verizon spent roughly \$9 billion to buy both AOL in 2015 and Yahoo in 2017. Owning two names synonymous with the early days of the internet provided a path for Verizon to become a player in media and advertising even though the companies represented less than 5% of U.S. digital ad revenue.

The largest U.S. carrier by subscribers rolled the two brands into one unit under Mr. Armstrong's leadership, saying it offered a chance to [marry data on more than 100 million wireless customers](#) with roughly 1 billion monthly online visitors to sites like HuffPost, TechCrunch and Yahoo Sports. Verizon agreed to share with Oath anonymous information on subscribers' age, gender, phone language, and data plan size, for example. But people familiar with the matter say the carrier refused to share information on the apps customers used and their web browsing activity unless users explicitly opted in. Only about 10 million subscribers have opted into the "Verizon Selects" program, which offers promotions in exchange for the ability to target ads based on a subscriber's web and app usage, location, and other behavior.

The pool of Verizon subscribers from which Oath could draw data was also smaller than some AOL and Yahoo employees anticipated, the people say. Of Verizon's 116 million subscribers, only about a third were account holders whose identities had been verified. Others were members of family plans or government workers and corporate employees, those people said. Mr. Armstrong informed senior Oath leaders at Yahoo's Sunnyvale, Calif., campus this summer that he was handing his day-to-day responsibilities to K. Guru Gowrappan, a former executive at Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. who joined the unit this spring, according to a person familiar with the meeting.

Mr. Gowrappan is president and chief operating officer at Oath and the most senior executive after Mr. Armstrong. Some top executives that joined Oath earlier this year—the unit's finance chief, Vanessa

Wittman, and communications chief, Natalie Ravitz—are among the senior staff that are also expected to depart, the person said. Half of a roughly \$60 million incentive award given to Mr. Armstrong as part of the AOL acquisition vested in May and the remainder is set to vest next spring, according to a regulatory filing. Discussions about Mr. Armstrong’s future are continuing, the people said.

Mr. Armstrong was president of Google’s Americas operations in the 2000s, a period when search advertising exploded. He left in 2009 to become chief executive of AOL as it was preparing to spin off from Time Warner. With a spree of acquisitions, he **pushed AOL into the ad tech sector**, fended off an activist investor and then sold the business to Verizon for \$4.4 billion. Lowell McAdam, Verizon’s longtime CEO who conceptualized the AOL deal with Mr. Armstrong at a Sun Valley, Idaho, conference in 2014, **retired from the top job at the end of July**. Although Mr. Armstrong was a former public company CEO and high-profile executive, he wasn’t among the final candidates considered by the board to succeed Mr. McAdam, according to people familiar with the process.

Verizon shopped for, but didn’t buy, a large video content provider last year, and has so far eschewed **the transformative mergers** that its phone rivals have pursued. Mr. McAdam’s successor, former Ericsson CEO Hans Vestberg, has said he is focused primarily on building out a faster 5G network, rather than content. Two forays into streaming video in recent years have failed to make Verizon a go-to content provider. Earlier this year Verizon shut down a mobile video app called go90 and sold its stake in AwesomenessTV, which produces short shows. Mr. Armstrong’s boss at Verizon, executive vice president of global media **Marni Waldman, left last October**.

Mr. Armstrong has pressed in recent months for Verizon to better use its retail stores to promote Oath’s services such as the ability to watch NFL football games on Yahoo Sports, the people said. The unit is working to get more Oath apps preloaded in new smartphones, which could boost usage. Oath has also **pitched a service to advertisers** that analyzes more than 200 million Yahoo Mail inboxes and the user data they contain, for clues about what products those users might buy, The Wall Street Journal recently reported.

Meanwhile, executives have tried to quell rumors in recent months that Verizon was contemplating unloading the Oath unit. “There is no intention of spinning out Oath in any particular format,” Mr. McAdam said on his final earnings call with analysts in July. “We see the synergies that we expected to see, and we see the future that we had hoped for.” At an investor conference on Friday, Verizon finance chief Matt Ellis said of Oath: “We still feel very strongly there’s a great opportunity there.” – **Wall Street Journal**



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