



Illustration by Cristiano Siqueira

EDITOR'S NOTE

Introducing the Politico 50 Issue

Our annual list of the ideas driving American politics right now—and the people behind them.

By **STEPHEN HEUSER** | September/October 2018



IN THE THICK OF AMERICA'S DAY-TO-DAY POLITICAL

conversation—surrounded by the anger, anxiety, vitriol and trivia—it's easy to forget that this is still a profoundly creative nation, one rich with new thinking and with a deep reservoir of talent to generate it. At POLITICO, we track the dogfights as closely as anyone. But we also try to trace the larger arcs of politics, and our annual POLITICO 50 list is your guide to that part of the national story: how America got here, and where it's going next.

We've been publishing the POLITICO 50 issue for five years, and it's possible we've never had such a wide-open landscape of ideas to talk about. Trumpism has matured from an impulse to a governing agenda, though one still at war with more established forces in its own party—a new third pole in American politics. On the left, the restless progressive energy that fueled Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign is beginning to drive real policy and open new legal fronts. And despite Washington's logjam, we're seeing policy experiments across the board, from a “universal basic income” trial in one California city to a promising nationwide approach to local development buried in Donald Trump's otherwise not very innovative tax bill.

In the following pages you'll meet the people—famous, obscure and just plain interesting—shaping this moment. There's Trump, the one true father of the Trumpist wing of the GOP. There's Ryan Coogler, whose *Black Panther* served up a thoughtful alternative vision of race relations that also happened to draw a billion dollars at the box office. You'll meet the once-fringe economist now driving the American trade agenda, and the legal wonk who may have crafted a road map to dismantling tech powerhouses like Amazon and Google.

How do new ideas like these take root? POLITICO MAGAZINE senior writer Michael Kruse recreates one extraordinary example in the birth of the Federalist Society: a three-day weekend at Yale that galvanized a group of isolated right-leaning law students into a movement that would go on to reshape the legal landscape in which we live now. Chief political correspondent Tim Alberta looks at the Republican Party with House Speaker Paul

democracy: The center is quickly being blasted out, leaving precious little common ground to forge whatever comes next.

We also asked nine thinkers from a range of fields—technology, foreign policy and the newly relevant democracy studies—for the most important insights we’ve gleaned in 2018 and how they should guide our thinking now. These essays are scattered throughout the issue, labeled as “big ideas.” As you’ll see, it’s possible to appreciate this moment as a golden age of ideas in American politics, one of those rare inflection points when our assumptions shift and new possibilities open up—the ones that will define our next era, for better or worse. Choose carefully.

Bob Packwood. O.J. Simpson. Rush Limbaugh. Roy Moore. Bill Cosby. Harvey Weinstein. Donald Trump. For more than 40 years, the media-savvy lawyer Gloria Allred has represented women accusing powerful men of mistreatment—in high-profile cases, often involving celebrities and usually deploying her signature tactic: getting her clients to tell their stories in news conferences that alternate between defiant and weepy.

For her work, Allred has been parodied on “Saturday Night Live” and “The Simpsons,” accused of caring more about shock-and-awe publicity than fair treatment under the law. But after a year in which the #MeToo movement blew open case upon case of sexual misconduct, it became clear just how shrewd a tactic the 77-year-old Allred had pioneered. Many victimized women don’t feel comfortable coming forward until years after the statute of limitations has expired on sex crimes; Allred’s news conferences offer another way to hold abusers to account. “In the court of public opinion, there is no statute of limitations,” she has said.

Allred isn't just a godmother of the #MeToo movement—she's a key player. This year, she represented 33 women who accused Cosby of drugging and assaulting them. After he was found guilty in one case in April, Allred, surrounded by clients at (yes) a news conference, declared, "Finally, we can say women are believed!" It was all in keeping with her lifetime of fighting for women who are wronged. "I do think that the accused have a right to be represented," she told *Politico Magazine*

(<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/04/28/lisa-bloom-harvey-weinstein-gloria-allred-me-too-218011>) earlier this year—but that is not what she does. "Anybody is entitled to have an attorney. Everybody is not entitled to have me."

—Margaret Slattery

Q & A

What's surprised me most about Donald Trump as president is... That he is a serial and chronic liar of a magnitude that was completely unexpected.

Is America in 2018 still "a city on a hill" for the rest of the world to look up to? No. President Trump has inflicted serious damage on the reputation of the United States. In the eyes of the leaders of many countries, Trump cannot be trusted as an ally or as a leader who advocates for democracy and for the principles and values for which this country once stood.

Ten years from now, what issue in American politics will we regret not paying more attention to today? Elimination of the Electoral College, climate change and equal rights for all.

If you could singlehandedly repeal one constitutional amendment, what would it be? And if you could ratify one? I would repeal the Second Amendment and ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

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POLITICO 50: Gloria Allred

Who's your 2020 dream presidential candidate? Almost any Democrat who chooses to run.

Photograph by Jesse Dittmar for Politico Magazine. Portrait illustration by Cristiano Siqueira.