Opinion
News



An opponent of President Donald Trump holds a placard in Lafayette Square in Washington Aug. 12 prior to the start of the "Unite the Right 2" demonstration. (CNS/Tyler Orsburn)



by Pat Perriello

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If you have read any of my recent blog posts, you will likely agree that I have become obsessed with President Donald Trump and the Russian investigation. I am also a believer that the congressional elections in November will determine the course our country charts for decades to come.

I remain unconvinced, however, that I know how these elections will turn out. Evidence is growing that suggests a blue wave, but this cannot be guaranteed. Although signs are building from special elections and polls, what do we really know about the state of the electorate and what it will be like in November?

A Quinnipiac poll from last September had some good news for those hoping for a Democratic blue wave. Trump is seen as unfit for office by 56 percent of Americans. Only 36 percent of Americans approve of his performance as president. A total of 63 percent of women see Trump as unfit for office, and 60 percent of all Americans see him as doing more to divide the country than unite it. This data is unlikely to change significantly prior to the November elections.

Yet, Real Clear Politics has consistently had Trump's approval ratings above 40 percent. As of August 13, Trump's average favorability rating is 43.3 percent.

While that percentage should not put him over the top in a presidential election, it is harder to see what it might mean for individual congressional races. It still says a lot of Americans buy in to Trump's message

Electoral success is going to require sustained activism as we saw with the travel ban, racial hostilities in Charlottesville, mass school shootings, and the separation of parents from their children.

There are other issues that deserve equal outrage that have not received as much attention. Some of these are the failure to assist the people of Puerto Rico who are all American citizens, the disturbing and erratic foreign policy moves that endanger our national security, the rampant corruption that seems to have invaded just about

every department of our government, and the evisceration of environmental laws that is placing our very planet in jeopardy.

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The problem is there is so much going on in this administration that it is difficult to be sufficiently outraged at each instance, or to determine which might be the most egregious actions.

It is also important to note that even if everything goes smoothly and Democrats win in November and Trump is gone in 2020, permanent damage has already been done. Dozens of judges have already been appointed and confirmed by this administration who will change the meaning of justice in our country for decades to come. Our relations with allies and enemies around the world have been turned upside down and will not easily be ameliorated. The divisiveness and lack of trust that have intensified under this president will be with us for a long time to come.

So I am obsessed with this administration, and I think you should be too. I know many of you are not focused on what is going on in Washington. I know family issues consume much of your waking hours. You need to put food on the table, address catastrophic illnesses, job losses, etc.

Yet the issues facing our country today are also important. Everyone needs to pay more attention to what is going on. If you think whatever is going on is not so important because "everyone does it," you aren't paying attention. If you think this is a "witch-hunt," you aren't listening.

If you don't think what is going on is unprecedented and poses a real threat to our democracy and our way of life – think again.

Finally, I just have to say that if you haven't figured out who Donald Trump is yet, consider his most recent slight of Sen. John McCain. Trump just signed the defense authorization bill that Congress named for McCain. Trump failed to mention the name of McCain at the signing ceremony. Yet he continues to attack McCain for his vote on the Affordable Care Act. John McCain is a war hero who is fighting against what is likely terminal brain cancer. Who treats a fellow human being that way, let alone one of John McCain's stature?

[Pat Perriello, a retired educator from the Baltimore City Public Schools, served as the coordinator of Guidance and Counseling Services and an associate professor at Johns Hopkins University.]