

It's Not Just the Economy, Stupid

Note to loyal Trump supporters: It's not just the economy, stupid. If it were, there might actually be the "red wave" the president sees coming. But there's a dark cloud on the horizon. And his name is Donald Trump.

As the Wall Street Journal puts it, "The President's persona is trumping positive policy results among voters, and without some intervening news or a change in strategy the result is likely to be a national left turn."

It's precisely what his most passionate supporters love – the way he ruthlessly goes after his critics, the way he tells fans at rallies how wonderful he Donald J. Trump is, his non-stop assault on so-called fake news – that repels moderate Republicans and independent voters his party needs to win.

One current indication of the GOP's potential problems: While Republicans appear to have won a special House election in Ohio – (absentee ballots haven't been counted yet) – the GOP candidate is ahead by less than 1 percentage point. And that's in a heavily Republican district. This screams weakness, not strength.

"The ominous news for Republicans is that they hold about 68 House seats that are less Republican than the Ohio district," the Journal reports.

Forgive the cliché, but making predictions is hard, especially when they're about the future. So there'll be no predictions here. November, by political standards, is still a long way off. Anything can happen between now and then.

But there is one thing we can be sure of. Donald Trump isn't going to change the way he operates. He'll continue to rev up

his relatively small hard-core base even though it comes at the expense of turning off a much bigger group – those moderates and independents the GOP desperately needs. The Trump math doesn't add up.

And if they sit home in November, or vote for the Democratic candidate, the red wave the president wants to take credit for will be no more than wishful thinking. Even a booming economy won't be enough to salvage the midterms.