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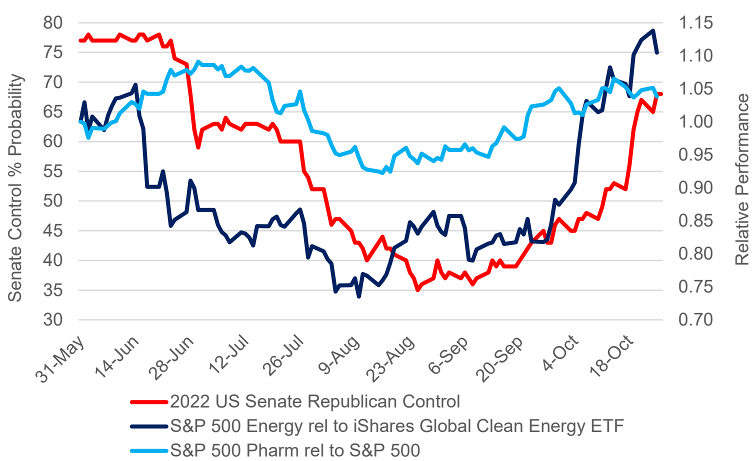
Road to the Midterms: Part 3

- The signs favor the Republicans flipping the house and possibly the Senate too on November 8.
- Pharma stocks versus the S&P 500 and traditional energy stocks relative to clean energy stocks have been tracking the GOP's Senate control odds in recent months (Figure 1).
- The key Senate states to watch now are GA, WI, NV, AZ, PA, NH, NC, WA, CO, OH, and FL.
- On average, equities have performed poorly during the first three quarters of midterm election years, and much better in the three quarters that follow. In 2022, the S&P 500 has returned -24.8% through September 30 and 7.6% since that date.
- If this bounce continues, we plan to view it as being counter-trend. The Fed raising rates into a slowing economy poses a significant challenge for the market in the months ahead, in our opinion. We see 70% odds of a recession. As a result, we remain invested but in a defensive, late-cycle manner.

2022 Midterms: The Final Stretch

As the election draws near, it seems as though undecided independents are following a familiar pattern and breaking towards the party not occupying the White House. While the betting site, PredictIt, has given the Republicans high odds of flipping the House all year, the odds of the GOP taking the Senate dropped in July and August for reasons covered in Road the Midterms: Part 2, before mounting a meaningful comeback. In 2022's Inflation Reduction Act, Democratic lawmakers passed legislation that allows Medicare to negotiate lower some drug prices while also encouraging the transition towards clean energy. Not too surprisingly, pharma stocks have followed the GOP's prospects relative to the S&P 500 in recent months, as have traditional energy stocks relative to clean energy stocks (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Pharma and Traditional Energy Stock Relative Performance vs. PredictIt GOP Senate Control Odds

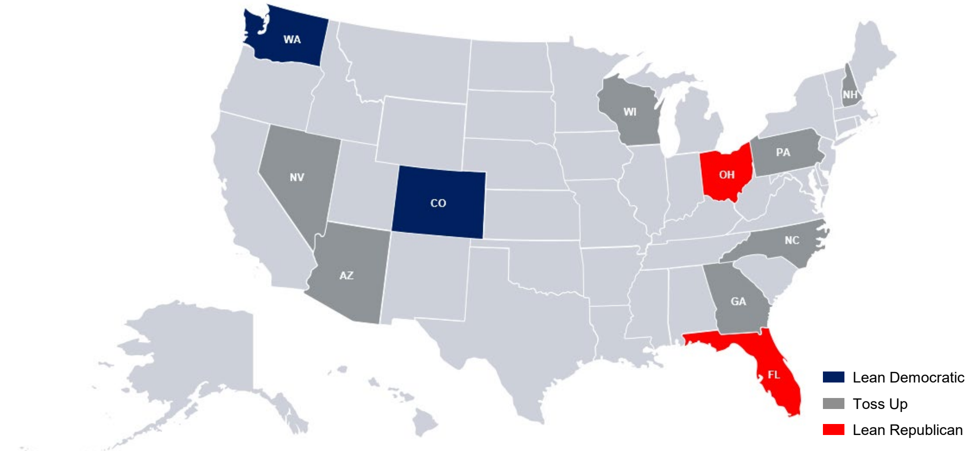


Source: Bloomberg of Oct 25, 2022. Implied probabilities are calculated using data offered by PredictIt, the contracts are independent, and their values may not add up to 100 percent. Indices are unmanaged. An investor cannot invest directly in an index. They are shown for illustrative purposes only and do not represent the performance of any specific investment. Index returns do not include any expenses, fees or sales charges, which would lower performance. For illustrative purposes only. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Real results may vary

The Final Stretch

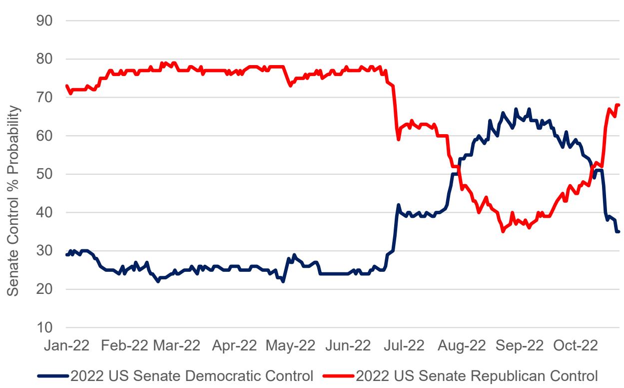
Heading into the final stretch, the key Senate races to watch now are in GA, WI, NV, AZ, PA, NH, NC, WA, CO, OH, and FL. (Figure 2). In early September, the Democrats had a roughly two-thirds chance of controlling the Senate but now the Republicans do, according to PredictIt (Figure 3). FiveThirtyEight sees the Senate outlook as a coin toss now after months of the Democrats having a slight edge while RealClearPolitics projects the GOP picking up 3 seats to control the Senate 53-47. By contrast, the Republicans have had relatively strong prospects for flipping the House all along (Figure 4).

Figure 2: 2022 Senate Election States to Watch



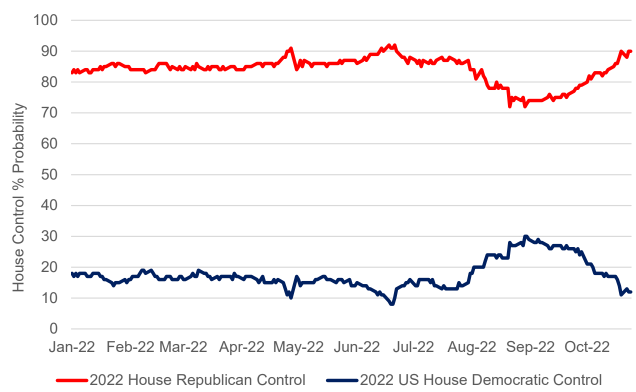
Source: Citi Global Wealth Investments (CGWI) and RealClearPolitics as of October 25, 2022

Figure 3: US PredictIt 2022 Senate Party Control



Source: Bloomberg of Oct 25, 2022. Implied probabilities are calculated using data offered by PredictIt, the contracts are independent, and their values may not add up to 100 percent. Real results may vary.

Figure 4: US PredictIt 2022 House Party Control



Source: Bloomberg of Oct 25, 2022. Implied probabilities are calculated using data offered by PredictIt, the contracts are independent, and their values may not add up to 100 percent. Real results may vary.

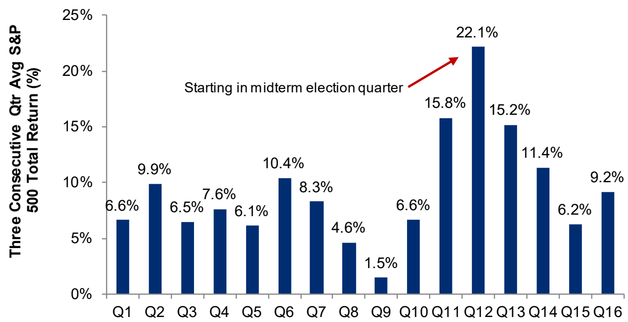
Markets and Midterms

As we highlighted in our Road to the Midterms: Part 1, market leadership has tended to be defensive heading into the midterms and “risk on” afterwards. Until now, the stock market’s poor year-to-date performance is in keeping with its seasonal pattern where, on average, the first three quarters of a midterm election year (Q9 in Figure 5) have produced the most subpar returns of the Presidential cycle. The Fed’s rapid policy tightening to arrest inflation this year has been a key driver in the market’s poor showing, in our view.

Looking ahead, returns in the next three quarters (red arrow in Figure 5) of the election cycle, on average since 1946, have been quite robust. What’s more, if the Republicans pick up enough seats, no single party will hold the keys to the White House and both chambers of Congress. In the past, stock market returns have been higher when power is split in Washington rather than united (Figure 6).

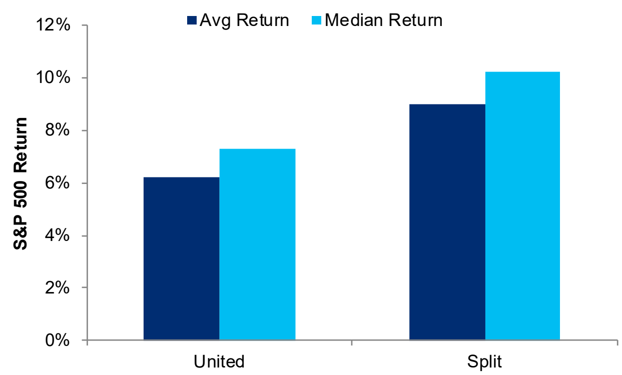
However, the next leg of the historical election pattern runs afoul with the aggressive Fed tightening underway that has led us to lift our recession odds to 70%. Normally, the market bottoms in the middle of a recession not before it happens. As a result, should the market rally in the near term, we would view it as a counter-trend move. We remain fully invested but defensively so, with an eye towards high-quality income generating assets and unstoppable trends consistent with a long-term investor mindset. To read about our current asset allocation positioning please see Quadrant.

Figure 5: Stock Returns Across the Presidential Cycle (since 1946)



Source: Haver Analytics as of Oct 25, 2022. Indices are unmanaged. An investor cannot invest directly in an index. They are shown for illustrative purposes only and do not represent the performance of any specific investment. Index returns do not include any expenses, fees or sales charges, which would lower performance. For illustrative purposes only. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Real results may vary

Figure 6: Average S&P 500 performance during United and Split Government (Since 1928)



Source: Bloomberg and Factset as of Oct 25, 2022. Indices are unmanaged. An investor cannot invest directly in an index. They are shown for illustrative purposes only and do not represent the performance of any specific investment. Index returns do not include any expenses, fees or sales charges, which would lower performance. For illustrative purposes only. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Real results may vary.

Bonus Section: The 10 Most Historically Consequential Midterms

While not as studied as US presidential campaigns, midterm elections can be pivotal as a referendum on a presidency and its policies. The Smithsonian cites the following midterm elections as being among history's most consequential:

1. 1826 where the 1815-1825 "era of good feelings" gives way to the "era of Jackson" following a bargain that gives the presidency to John Quincy Adams in 1824 ahead of vote leader Andrew Jackson. The Federalist Party collapses and the Democratic-Republican party splinters.
2. 1858 where the issue of slavery allows a Republican party formed just four years earlier to take over the House of Representatives. Many prominent southerners vow to leave the Union if a Republican wins the Presidency which happens in 1860 with the election of Abraham Lincoln.
3. 1874 where scandals in the White House, a financial panic and issues related to post-Civil War governance of southern states cost Republicans control of the House they gained in 1858.
4. 1894 where a severe depression, a railroad strike and an army of jobless workers demonstrating in Washington for relief leads to the largest loss of House seats (116) ever for President Cleveland who in 1892 became the only president to be elected, defeated, then elected again.
5. 1910 where incumbent President Taft alienates previous Republican President Teddy Roosevelt's progressive wing of the Republican party over tariffs, land conservation, workers' rights and other issues, splitting the Republican party ahead of the 1912 general election which hands Woodrow Wilson the White House with just 42 percent of the popular vote.
6. 1930 where one year into the Great Depression a perception of inactivity in Washington nearly costs Republicans both Houses of Congress and sets the stage for the New Deal agenda that follows and dominates American politics for decades.
7. 1946 where Republicans take control of both Houses of Congress for the first time since 1928 on an early perception that President Truman is a weak heir to President FDR who dies in 1945.
8. 1966 where voters realign following the passage of Medicare, voting rights, civil rights and an escalation in the Vietnam War, bringing Richard Nixon back to the national stage in 1968.

9. 1994 where Republicans take control of both houses of Congress for the first time since 1952 after President Clinton falls short in attempts to overhaul health care, lift a ban on gays and lesbians serving in the military, and struggles with his first two attorney general nominations.
10. 2002 where Republicans take both Houses after 9/11 on homeland security concerns.

Asset Allocation Definitions

Asset classes	Benchmarked against
Global equities	MSCI All Country World Index, which represents 48 developed and emerging equity markets. Index components are weighted by market capitalization.
Global bonds	Barclays Capital Multiverse (Hedged) Index, which contains the government -related portion of the Multiverse Index, and accounts for approximately 14% of the larger index.
Hedge funds	HFRX Global Hedge Fund Index, which is designed to be representative of the overall composition of the hedge fund universe. It comprises all eligible hedge fund strategies; including but not limited to convertible arbitrage, distressed securities, equity hedge, equity market neutral, event driven, macro, merger arbitrage and relative value arbitrage. The strategies are asset-weighted based on the distribution of assets in the hedge fund industry.
Commodities	Dow Jones-UBS Commodity Index, which is composed of futures contracts on physical commodities traded on US exchanges, with the exception of aluminum, nickel and zinc, which trade on the London Metal Exchange (LME). The major commodity sectors are represented including energy, petroleum, precious metals, industrial metals, grains, livestock, softs, agriculture and ex-energy. The Thomson Reuters / Core Commodity Index is designed to provide timely and accurate representation of a long-only, broadly diversified investment in commodities through a transparent and disciplined calculation methodology.
Cash	Three-month LIBOR, which is the interest rates that banks charge each other in the international inter-bank market for three-month loans (usually denominated in Eurodollars).

Equities	
Developed market large cap	MSCI World Large Cap Index, which is free-float adjusted and weighted by market capitalization. The index is designed to measure the equity market performance of the large cap stocks in 23 developed markets. Large cap is defined as stocks representing roughly 70% of each market's capitalization.
US	Standard & Poor's 500 Index, which is a capitalization-weighted index that includes a representative sample of 500 leading companies in leading industries of the US economy. Although the S&P 500 focuses on the large cap segment of the market, with over 80% coverage of US equities, it is also an ideal proxy for the total market.
Europe ex UK	MSCI Europe ex UK Large Cap Index, which is free-float adjusted and weighted by market capitalization. The index is designed to measure large cap stock performance in each of Europe's developed markets, except for the UK.
UK	MSCI UK Large Cap Index, which is free-float adjusted and weighted by market capitalization. The index is designed to measure large cap stock performance in the UK.
Japan	MSCI Japan Large Cap Index, which is free-float adjusted and weighted by market capitalization. The index is designed to measure large cap stock performance in Japan.
Asia Pacific ex Japan	MSCI Asia Pacific ex Japan Large Cap Index, which is free-float adjusted and weighted by market capitalization. The index is designed to measure the performance of large cap stocks in Australia, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Singapore.
Developed market small and mid-cap (SMID)	MSCI World Small Cap Index, which is a capitalization-weighted index that measures small cap stock performance in 23 developed equity markets.
Emerging market	MSCI Emerging Markets Index, which is free-float adjusted and weighted by market capitalization. The index is designed to measure equity market performance of 24 emerging markets.

Bonds	
Developed sovereign	Citi World Government Bond Index (WGBI), which consists of the major global investment grade government bond markets and is composed of sovereign debt, denominated in the domestic currency. To join the WGBI, the market must satisfy size, credit and barriers-to-entry requirements. In order to ensure that the WGBI remains an investment grade benchmark, a minimum credit quality of BBB–/Baa3 by either S&P or Moody's is imposed. The index is rebalanced monthly.
Emerging sovereign	Citi Emerging Market Sovereign Bond Index (ESBI), which includes Brady bonds and US dollar -denominated emerging market sovereign debt issued in the global, Yankee and Eurodollar markets, excluding loans. It is composed of debt in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. We classify an emerging market as a sovereign with a maximum foreign debt rating of BBB+/Baa1 by S&P or Moody's. Defaulted issues are excluded.
Supranationals	Citi World Broad Investment Grade Index (WBIG)—Government Related, which is a subsector of the WBIG. The index includes fixed rate investment grade agency, supranational and regional government debt, denominated in the domestic currency. The index is rebalanced monthly.
Corporate investment grade	Citi World Broad Investment Grade Index (WBIG)—Corporate, which is a subsector of the WBIG. The index includes fixed rate global investment grade corporate debt within the finance, industrial and utility sectors, denominated in the domestic currency. The index is rebalanced monthly.
Corporate high yield	Bloomberg Barclays Global High Yield Corporate Index. Provides a broad-based measure of the global high yield fixed income markets. It is also a component of the Multiverse Index and the Global Aggregate Index.
Securitized	Citi World Broad Investment Grade Index (WBIG)—Securitized, which is a subsector of the WBIG. The index includes global investment grade collateralized debt denominated in the domestic currency, including mortgage - backed securities, covered bonds (Pfandbriefe) and asset-backed securities. The index is rebalanced monthly.
Municipal	Bloomberg Barclays Municipal Bond Index is a broad-based benchmark that measures the investment grade, US dollar-denominated, fixed tax-exempt bond market. The index includes state and local general obligation, revenue, insured, and pre-refunded bonds

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High quality (very strong)	Aa	AA	AA
Upper medium grade (Strong)	A	A	A
Medium grade	Baa	BBB	BBB
Not Investment Grade			
Lower medium grade (somewhat speculative)	Ba	BB	BB
Low grade (speculative)	B	B	B
Poor quality (may default)	Caa	CCC	CCC
Most speculative	Ca	CC	CC
No interest being paid or bankruptcy petition filed	C	D	C
In default	C	D	D

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