TODAYS TRENDS ON CAPITOL HILL

NOVEMBER 13, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



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POST-MIDTERM DEMOCRATIC RESURGENCE CONVERGES WITH GEOPOLITICAL SCANDALS AND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE VULNERABILITIES

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

Following a decisive Democratic shift in the 2026 midterm elections, the political landscape is characterized by a "blue tsunami" that has upended traditional strongholds in Mississippi, Texas, and Ohio. This domestic realignment is occurring simultaneously with a massive national security and corporate scandal involving the resignation of **NVIDIA** CEO Jensen Huang following revelations of an affair with a suspected Chinese spy and potential violations of U.S. export laws regarding AI chips. The convergence of these events suggests a mandate for "economic populism" and aggressive corporate accountability as the newly empowered Democratic majority prepares for the 120th Congress.

The administration’s foreign policy is under intense scrutiny, particularly regarding the **War in Iran**, which is increasingly linked by voters to high gasoline prices and domestic financial hardship. Leadership dynamics within the Democratic party are also in flux, as Senator Chris Van Hollen formally challenged Senator Chuck Schumer for Senate Majority Leader, running on a platform of ending the Iran conflict and prioritizing healthcare affordability. Meanwhile, critical infrastructure faced a major test with a nationwide **FAA groundstop** attributed to a telecommunications outage, highlighting systemic vulnerabilities despite administration assurances that it was not a cyberattack.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

1. 2026 Midterm Election Realignment

- Democrats achieved a "wipeout" victory, flipping 12 state legislative chambers and securing at least 55 Senate seats.
- The election of **Scott Colom** in Mississippi marks the first Black Senator from the state since Reconstruction, signifying a major demographic shift in the Deep South.
- Young voters (18-29) swung 35 points toward Democrats, primarily motivated by economic concerns and opposition to the War in Iran.

2. NVIDIA Corporate and Security Crisis

- CEO **Jensen Huang** resigned following reports of multiple affairs, including one with a woman believed to be a Chinese spy.
- Attorney General Todd Blanche confirmed investigations into the diversion of video chips to China, potentially violating U.S. export laws.
- Lawmakers are demanding classified briefings to determine the extent to which national security has been compromised by the leak of AI technology.

3. Democratic Leadership Challenge

- Senator **Chris Van Hollen** announced a challenge to **Chuck Schumer** for Majority Leader, citing the need for generational change and a more aggressive legislative agenda.
- Van Hollen's platform includes defunding the War in Iran, raising the minimum wage to $15, and pursuing universal healthcare.
- Internal caucus polling suggests Van Hollen has an initial floor of 10 Senators, with many freshmen refusing to commit to Schumer.

4. National Infrastructure and Security Incidents

- DHS Secretary **Markwayne Mullin** reported a nationwide FAA groundstop due to a telecommunications outage, grounding all domestic and incoming international flights.
- An active shooter incident in **Washington D.C.** resulted in one death and four injuries; perpetrator **Matt Wade Lambert** engaged in a dispute with a homeowners association over black mold.
- A major ship collision in the **Mississippi River** involving a tanker and a cruise ship led to the capsizing of the cruise vessel, though 32 passengers were rescued without critical injuries.

5. Global Health and Biosecurity Initiatives

- HHS Secretary **RFK Jr.** announced new investments in PTSD research, focusing on ibogaine and psychotropic drugs for veterans.
- The Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense issued a report on biological attribution, warning that AI allows for the creation of pathogens without genetic fingerprints.
- The U.S. has lost its **measles elimination status** due to declining vaccination rates and shifting public health policies.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- The **War in Iran** remains the primary driver of disapproval for the current administration, with 23 service members killed since February 2025.
- Incoming Democrats are signaling a "power of the purse" strategy to Defund the conflict if the President does not pursue peace.

Tech Sovereignty & AI

- The concept of **Super Intelligence (SI)** was highlighted as the new frontier of global competition, with China actively targeting U.S. advancements.
- Data centers are facing significant **bipartisan opposition** at the local level due to concerns over energy consumption and environmental impacts.

Critical Infrastructure Security

- The FAA groundstop revealed that the current telecommunications architecture for air traffic control is vulnerable to single-point failures.
- DHS continues to investigate potential **SI issues** (Super Intelligence/AI related errors) as a cause for infrastructure instability.

macroeconomics & Trade

- The administration's **tariff policies** were rebuked by voters who view them as a tax on consumers, contributing to higher prices.
- Median household income has allegedly gained $2,500 above inflation since 2025, though this remains a point of intense partisan debate.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The End of "Washington" Labels

A dominant theme of the 2028 Democratic strategy conference is the abandonment of traditional **Moderate vs. Progressive** labeling. Leaders like **Elissa Slotkin** and **Ruben Gallego** argue that voters are primarily concerned with material well-being and "economic security." This "Big Truck Populism" seeks to bridge the gap between rural and urban disaffection by focusing on tangible results like housing production and lowering grocery costs rather than ideological purity tests.

Institutional Distrust and the "Trump Trap"

Political analysts note that the GOP midterm losses represent a total repudiation of MAGA as a governing philosophy. However, a significant "trust deficit" remains among the public, where 92% of voters believe Washington has power but only 43% believe it uses it positively. This distrust has fostered a "non-voter" class that is more disapproving of Trump than voters are, but remains disengaged from the Democratic alternative due to perceived corruption.

AI as a Dual-Use Threat

Technical and defense discussions have shifted from general AGI concerns to **recursive self-improvement**. The risk that AI can be used by non-state actors (like Boko Haram) to troubleshoot chemical weapons or build bombs is no longer theoretical. The Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense suggests **watermarking** biological design systems as a necessary, but possibly insufficient, safeguard against AI-enhanced bioterrorism.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

The United States is experiencing acute domestic tension following the midterms. Partisan polarization remains entrenched, with half of party members believing the opposing side "lives in a different world". This polarization is being weaponized at the federal level, as seen in **Attorney General Blanche's** threat to investigate Democratic lawmakers if they use oversight powers to probe the administration's alleged corruption. Within the Democratic party, a generational insurgency led by figures like Van Hollen and RO Khanna is challenging the "Washington establishment" represented by Schumer and Jeffries, reflecting a broader public desire for "complete upheaval" of the governing system.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The international system is framed as increasingly chaotic and hostile. The **NVIDIA scandal** highlights the fragility of U.S. tech sovereignty in the face of Chinese espionage. The administration's pull-back of **JD Vance** from Iran peace talks suggests a defensive retreat into domestic priorities, while the continuation of the blockade indicates a

reliance on **economic statecraft** to achieve regional goals. In the **United Kingdom**, Prime Minister Andy Burnham is facing similar domestic pressures over defense spending and the cost of living, reflecting a global trend where domestic economic anxiety is constraining foreign policy maneuverability.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The U.S. economy presents a paradoxical picture of high construction activity and low poverty rates alongside extreme individual financial stress. Household debt has reached record levels, and many citizens feel "the game is already rigged against them."

Key Economic Vectors:

- **Inflation:** CPI for October reinforced voter anger; inflation is still outpacing wage growth for many.
- **Consumer Debt:** Americans total credit card debt hit 1.29 trillion, a $22 billion rise in the last quarter.
- **Energy Prices:** Oil is at $86 a barrel; gas prices are the primary shorthand for the economy.
- **Labor/Wages:** Median household income is up $2,500, yet average hourly wages have fallen.
- **Manufacturing:** 160,000 construction jobs were added; investment in U.S. Steel to total $10.8 billion by 2028.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The day was marked by high-profile resignations and appointments that signal shifting tactical priorities for both major parties.

- **Jensen Huang:** Resigned as CEO of NVIDIA after admitting to an affair with an alleged Chinese spy; his departure creates a vacuum in the global AI chip industry.
- **Stephen Miller:** Appointed as Chief of Staff, signaling a "quadrupling down" on aggressive immigration and executive power tactics.
- **Chris Van Hollen:** Challenging Chuck Schumer for Senate Majority Leader; he has the backing of Senator Bernie Sanders.
- **Hakeem Jeffries:** Positioned as the presumed incoming Speaker of the House with a historic 260-seat majority.
- **Scott Colom:** Newly elected Senator from Mississippi; his win is viewed as a "miracle" that breaks local racial and political barriers.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

C-SPAN’s hierarchy prioritized the **Democratic resurgence** and the **NVIDIA/China scandal** as lead stories. The emotional tone was a mix of **reassurance** regarding the midterm outcomes for the left and **fear-induction** regarding AI and biosecurity threats. High airtime was given to the **2028 Democratic Leaders Conference**, effectively casting the results of 2026 as the foundation for the next presidential cycle. **Conspicuous Omissions** include detailed reporting on the tactical status of the War in Iran, which is frequently alluded to but rarely shown from the front lines, and the specific names of corporations involved in the alleged "Golden Share" government equity arrangements beyond U.S. Steel.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

Global actors are increasingly characterized by their relationship to the American domestic crisis and tech competition.

COUNTRIES and LEADERS

- **China:** Portrayed as a predatory actor using "honey pot" scams and espionage to steal AI infrastructure.
- **United Kingdom (Andy Burnham):** Characterized as struggling with stability and seeking a ten-year plan to reverse "40 years of neoliberalism."
- **Iran:** Framed as a "rogue regime" with a nuclear program not fully obliterated despite previous claims.
- **Nigeria (President Tinubu):** Portrayed as failing to protect citizens and complicit in a "culture of denial" regarding Christian persecution.

NON-STATE & CORPORATE ACTORS

- **NVIDIA:** Framed as an agent of innovation now compromised by poor personal/ security judgment.
- **United Bodegas of America:** Characterized as the beating heart of New York communities, successfully lobbying for SNAP rule extensions.
- **Fulani Militias:** Portrayed as radicalized militants carrying out genocidal murders with government toleration.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

- **Narrative Seeding:** The concept of "Super Intelligence" (SI) is being seeded by the administration to replace "AI" and focus on national security threats.
- **Disinformation:** The Trump administration claims no Americans have died in Iran in five months, a claim directly contradicted by reports of 23 deaths.
- **Censorship Concerns:** NYT Publisher A.G. Sulzberger warned that the atomization of the web and AI bubbles are making truth expensive and misinformation free.
- **Lobbying Propaganda:** Allegations that lobbying groups are paid $9 million to conceal religious persecution in Nigeria.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Democratic Fracture:** The Van Hollen vs. Schumer fight will likely intensify in December, potentially leading to a more populist, anti-war Senate leadership that clashes with the President.
- **GOP Rebranding:** Having faced a "spanking," the GOP may see a move toward isolationism as leaders like JD Vance question the electoral viability of current foreign policies.
- **Tech Regulation:** The NVIDIA scandal will likely accelerate bipartisan legislation on export curbs and AI safety, ending the era of corporate self-regulation.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect further arrests from **Operation Tornado** Dark Web

sweeps. Legislative friction will peak as the December 11 government funding deadline approaches, with Democrats threatening a shutdown over Iran war funding.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The 120th Congress will likely pass a $15 minimum wage and initiate a wave of anti-corruption investigations into the Trump family's business deals and **NVIDIA's** export violations.

Long Term (1-5 Years): A structural shift in the **electoral college** may be permanent if Democrats can sustain their 42-point gain among youth voters through 2028. Resource states like Alaska will become central to U.S. energy and minerals security in a multipolar world.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- **Bioterrorism Escalation:** AI-assisted design and drone delivery could enable localized, high-impact pathogen release. Triggers: Non-state actor access to frontier AI models. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Catastrophic. Mitigations: Universal watermarking and public verification labs.
- **Geopolitical Conflict Escalation:** The blockade of Iran could spark a direct naval engagement if the U.S. Navy is challenged by IRGC forces. Triggers: Retaliatory strike for the July military official killing. Likelihood: High. Impact: Extreme. Mitigations: Immediate diplomatic de-escalation channels.
- **Financial Instability:** Record credit card debt of $1.29 trillion combined with 9% inflation (historical peak) creates a systemic risk of consumer defaults. Triggers: Continued high interest rates. Likelihood: High. Impact: Moderate-Severe. Mitigations: Federal debt relief programs and interest rate cuts.
- **Infrastructure Vulnerability:** The FAA groundstop confirms that U.S. aviation relies on an unstable telecom grid. Triggers: Systemic maintenance failure or AI-led bug. Likelihood: High. Impact: Moderate. Mitigations: Modernization of IP networks and decentralization of grid controls.
- **Political Violence:** Active shooter incidents linked to civil disputes and heightened political rhetoric. Triggers: Partisan "lawyer up" messaging and perceived corruption. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Low-Moderate. Mitigations: Strengthening community policing and mental health services.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **Iran War Frontlines:** Transcripts lack direct reporting on the current flight operations or naval engagements in the Gulf, relying instead on official DHS/DOD obfuscation.
- **Golden Share Specifics:** The extent of the government's equity position in the "40 companies" mentioned is not detailed, masking potential state-corporate conflicts.
- **Huang's Successor:** While **Tim Cook** is mentioned as a potential replacement for Huang, there is no verification that Apple or Nvidia has engaged in such talks, leaving the tech market in limbo.

- **Nigerian Militia Intelligence:** Experts admit the U.S. does not know much about the FULANI militia's leadership, hindering effective policy designation.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **The "Managed" Scandal:** The Nvidia scandal and Huang's resignation could be an **intentional government-orchestrated liquidation** of a corporate titan to facilitate the "Golden Share" state ownership model under the guise of national security.
- **Democratic Pyrrhic Victory:** The "blue tsunami" might actually **constrain Democrats** by forcing them to manage a diverse, unstable caucus of blue-collar populists and urban radicals, leading to legislative gridlock that helps the President's "legacy hunting."
- **Black Swan Event:** An AI "recursive self-improvement" error crashes the global semiconductor supply chain, leading to a sudden, catastrophic de-industrialization of the West.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Immediately implement the Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense's attribution protocols to detect AI-designed pathogens.
- **Economic:** Leverage the SNAP extension model to provide temporary inflation relief for small businesses without triggering long-term deficit spikes.
- **Diplomatic:** Re-evaluate the CPC status of Nigeria based on field de-escalation of FULANI militias rather than central government promises.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Prepare for the Raise the Wage Act ($15 minimum wage) which is likely to be a priority item in January.
- **Supply Chain:** Diversify away from reliance on **NVIDIA** proprietary architectures as the Golden Share model likely leads to increased federal oversight and restricted trade lanes.
- **Safety Standards:** Industrial sectors should adopt the U.S. Steel retail mindset for safety management, utilizing AI for visual compliance to reduce liability.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Congressional activity is dominated by the **Lame Duck** transition and preparation for the 120th Congress. Hearings on campus gambling and Nigerian persecution highlight ongoing social and human rights concerns.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Raise the Wage Act:** Proposed to increase the federal minimum wage to $15 per hour.
- **PRO Act:** Aimed at empowering labor unions, a priority for the incoming caucus leadership.
- **Bio Security Innovation Act:** Requires screening for synthetic DNA customers to prevent illicit bio-design.
- **Clean Air Act (Re-named):** Proposed to ban lobbying for countries designated as Countries of Particular Concern.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Sports Betting Hearing:** House subcommittee discussed problem gambling among college students and the failure of the CFTC to regulate prediction markets.
- **Nigerian Persecution Hearing:** Witness testimony on the slaughter of Christians and the government's culture of denial.
- **Confirmation Hearings:** Commerce committee reviewed nominees for **DOT, FCC, and NASA**, focusing on press freedom and the moon landing schedule.
- **Impeachment Briefing:** Rep. Al Green announced plans to impeach President Trump for the unauthorized War in Iran.

KEY STORIES

- **Operation Tornado:** A massive international drug raid resulting in 350 arrests and the seizure of six metric tons of fentanyl and meth.
- **NVIDIA Scandal:** Resignation of CEO Jensen Huang amid an affair with a Chinese spy and AI chip export investigations.
- **FAA Groundstop:** A nationwide telecom outage forced the grounding of all U.S. flights, sparking 9/11-style fears.
- **Mississippi River Capsizing:** A tanker collision near the Port of New Orleans sank a cruise ship; all passengers accounted for.
- **Van Hollen vs. Schumer:** A high-stakes Senate leadership battle emerging as Democrats secure their majority.
- **Scott Colom Win:** Historic victory for a Black prosecutor in a plus-23 Trump district in Mississippi.
- **PTSD Ibogaine Research:** HHS Sec RFK Jr. backing psychedelic treatments for veterans in a shift from traditional mental health policy.
- **DC Active Shooter:**Matt Wade Lambert killed a building manager in a mold-related dispute before taking his own life.
- **Starship Flight 15:** SpaceX successfully completed a 360-degree heat shield inspection in orbit and deployed 26 satellites.
- **VA Reform:** VA Sec Doug Collins implemented a "retail mindset" to slash disability claim backlogs by 70%.
- **SNAP Bodega Extension:** NYC Mayor Mamdani and President Trump agreed to a 90-day extension for small businesses to comply with new SNAP rules.
- **Alaska Gas Pipeline:** Governor Dunleavy promoted a massive project to supply natural gas to Asian allies for 60 years.
- **UK Political Crisis:** Prime Minister Andy Burnham faced parliament over delayed spending reviews and defense funding gaps.
- **Christian Persecution in Nigeria:** Reports of 100,000 deaths and systematic failure of the Nigerian government to protect Christian farming communities.
- **NCAA Sports Betting Hearing:** Discussion of students using financial aid to place bets and the rise of player harassment.
- **Ben Stiller "Got it Done" Controversy:** Republicans criticized the actor for a tweet misinterpreted as being about the Trump assassination attempt when it was about a Knicks game.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Trends On Capitol Hill is a public interest experiment in applying deep trend analysis to the daily business of the United States Congress to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists, scholars and Congressional staff better understand the overarching legislative trends, themes and patterns of Congress.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's Congressional activity to tease out its overarching themes and trends into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original source material, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the legislative themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

This inaugural report is based on deep analysis of CSPAN, CSPAN2 and CSPAN3 coverage in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive. It is currently limited to the Congressional business covered on those three CSPAN channels and thus may not include all major Congressional business, may include activity from previous days that aired on a later date, and/or may include other major federal, state and local governmental business. We will continue to refine this report to incorporate a growing array of Congressional information sources. This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

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