

# WASHINGTON POLITICAL WATCH

No. 96

December 4, 2010

## THE 2010 ELECTION AND THEN SOME

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### THE RESULTS

(Details follow the summary)

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### LEADING UP TO THE ELECTION

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### WHAT HAPPENED

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### LOOKING AHEAD TO 2012

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### FOOD (Grocery Stores)

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#### Republicans picked up

- 6 U.S. Senate seats
- 63 U.S. House seats
- 5 Governors
- 695 state legislators
- 13 state assemblies
- 6 state senates
- 11 additional states in which they control both legislative bodies
- 10 additional states in which they control governorship and both legislative bodies

#### U.S. Senate

##### Republicans picked up 6 Senate seats.

- Before the election – 57 Democrats, 41 Republicans, 2 Independents
- After the election - 51 Democrats, 47 Republicans, 2 Independents
- 2 Democratic senators who stood for re-election lost
- 0 Republican senators who stood for re-election lost
- 

#### U.S. House

##### Republicans picked up 63 House seats

- Before the election – 256 Democrats, 179 Republicans
- After the election - 193 Democrats, 242 Republicans

##### Of the Democratic House seats that flipped,

- 37 were won by John McCain in 2008

63 Democratic House members who stood for re-election lost

2 Republican House members who stood for re-election lost

This is the largest number of seats to move from one Party to the other since the Democrats picked up 75 seats in 1948. Notably, the Republicans had picked up 55 seats in 1946. There were only 4 elections before 1948 in which a greater number of seats changed political hands than changed hands in 2010.

- 1938 Republicans picked up 81 seats
- 1932 Democrats picked up 97 seats
- 1922 Democrats picked up 76 seats
- 1894 Republicans picked up 130 seats in a Congress of 357 seats

Using “The Cook Political Report’s” Partisan Voting Index (PVI) as the comparison device, 50 of the seats lost by the Democrats had a Republican PVI; 2 were rated as even; and 11 were rated Democratic. The 3 Republican-held seats that flipped had a Democratic PVI.

Looking back at the last 50 years, including 2011-12, this is the largest margin that Republicans have enjoyed in the House during the 7 cycles (of 27 cycles during the period) in which they have had control.

### **Governors**

Republicans picked up 5 Governorships

An Independent picked up 1 Governorship

- Before the election – 26 Democrats, 24 Republicans
- After the election - 20 Democrats, 29 Republicans, 1 Independent
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### **State Legislatures**

(Nebraska legislature is unicameral and non-partisan  
and therefore is not included below)

Republicans picked up 695 state legislators

- Before the election – 4,037 Democrats, 3,238 Republicans, 70 other
  - After the election – 3,360 Democrats, 3,933 Republicans, 73 others
- [Note: 16 races undecided]

Republicans picked up control of 13 State Houses

- Before the election – 32 under Democratic control  
16 under Republican control  
1 Split
- After the election – 19 under Democratic control  
29 under Republican control  
1 Split

Republicans picked up control of 6 State Senates

- Before the election – 28 under Democratic control  
20 under Republican control  
1 Split
- After the election – 22 under Democratic control  
26 under Republican control  
1 Split

Republicans picked up control of 19 legislative bodies (total 99)

- Before the election – 60 under Democratic control  
36 under Republican control  
1 Split
  - After the election – 41 under Democratic control  
55 under Republican control  
1 Split
- Control of both Houses of a State legislature in 11 additional States
- Before the election – Democrats controlled 27 state legislatures  
Republicans controlled 14 state legislatures  
8 Split
  - After the election – Democrats control 16 state legislatures  
Republicans control 25 state legislatures  
7 Split  
(NY Senate pending)

Control of both houses of a State legislature and the Governorship of that State in an additional 10 States

- Before the election
  - Democrats controlled the legislature and Governor in 15 States
  - Republicans controlled the legislature and Governor in 8 States
- After the election
  - Democrats controlled the legislature and Governor in 11 States
  - Republicans controlled the legislature and Governor in 18 States

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### **LEADING UP TO THE ELECTION**

Unemployment was 9.6%. Under-employment (including unemployed) was 16.8%.

23 States were experiencing increases in unemployment, while 13 States were experiencing increases in employment.

71% said the country was on the wrong track. (WP/ABC)

65% said America was in a decline. (NBC/WSJ)

73 % had a great deal of confidence in the military; 13% had confidence in the news media; 12% in health insurance companies; and 9% in Congress.

75% believed that Federal workers get better pay and benefits than people doing similar work outside of government. (NBC/WSJ)

74% disapproved of the job being done by Congress; 52% disapproved of the job being done by the President; and 55% disapproved of the job he was doing on the economy specifically. (WP/ABC)

46% thought the healthcare reform legislation was a bad idea (NBC/WSJ), even though 62% think the overall quality and coverage of healthcare in America is excellent/good, and 82% think the quality of their own healthcare is excellent/good. (Gallup)

30% of the electorate described themselves as Tea Party supporters.

46% of the whole electorate, 66% of Republicans, 49% of Independents, and 21% of Democrats, thought the Federal government is a threat to rights and freedoms. (Gallup)

By 45% to 41% likely voters thought the Republicans would do a better job of coping with the country's main problems over the next few years. (WP/ABC)

92% thought the economy was "not so good/poor." (WP/ABC)

When asked in late October what message they wanted to send with their votes in the coming election, 21% said "focus more on improving the economy and creating jobs." Only 6% mentioned the President's healthcare legislation, and half of them were supportive of the legislation. (NBC/WSJ)

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## **WHAT HAPPENED**

For two years President Obama and the Democratic Congress said to the American Public: "We know what is best for you and the country."

On election day 2010 American voters responded, saying, "Oh, no you don't."

There are as many "reasons" proffered for the election results as there are persons offering opinions on the subject. Here are some selected pieces of information that probably affected the result.

In February 2009, with unemployment at 8.2%, 44% said the country was on the wrong track; 26% disapproved generally of the job that Obama was doing; and 31% disapproved specifically of the job he was doing on the economy.

When unemployment hit 10.1% in October 2009, 52% said the country was on the wrong track, 42% disapproved of the job Obama was doing, and 46% disapproved of his performance on the economy.

By March 2010, unemployment was down to 9.7%, but the wrong track number hit 59%. 47% disapproved of Obama's job generally, and 50% of his work on the economy.

In June 2010, unemployment was 9.5%, the wrong track number hit 62%, disapproval of Obama's job performance edged up to 48%, and on the economy it hit 50%.

By October 2010, with unemployment at 9.6%, the wrong track number was at 59/60%, Obama's general job performance was at 49/50%, and his performance on the economy was at 59/60%. (Unemployment data BLS, NBC/WSJ: see chart at end of Watch)

The Congress came to the 2009-10 cycle with 63% disapproving of the job it was doing in February 2009. In June 2010 Congress was at 70% disapproval. By October 2010, 76% disapproved its work. (NYT/CBS)

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Looking back over the last quarter century, as this election took place the percentage of voters who described themselves as ideologically conservative had reached a high of 42%. The number describing themselves as moderate reached a 25-year low of 38%. 20% described themselves as liberal, a touch below the high of 22% reached in 2008.

Over the same period, the number of people identifying themselves as Independent went from a high of 30% in 1990, to a low of 22% in 2002, and back up to 29% in 2010.

Equal numbers, 35%, identified as Republicans and Democrats in 2010. For the Democrats this was a 25 year low. Democrats represented a high of 40% of the voting electorate in 1986, 1996, and 2008. For the Republicans this number (35%) was up from 33% in 2008, and down from its 25 year high of 40% in 2002.

In 2006 conservatives were 32% of the electorate and 78% voted Republican. In 2008 they represented 34% of the electorate and 78% voted Republican. However, in 2010 conservatives represented 42% of the electorate and 84% went Republican.

18-29 year olds represented 12% of the electorate in 2006; 60% voted Democrat. They represented 18% of the electorate in 2008 and 66% went Democratic. But in 2010, when they represented 12% of the electorate, only 56% voted Democratic.

In 2008, only 15% of the electorate was 65 years of age and older; 53% went Republican. In 2006 they represented 19% of the electorate and they split their vote 49%-49%. Then, in 2010 they were 21% of the electorate and 58% voted Republican.

Independents represented 29% of the electorate in 2008 and 2010. However, in 2008 they voted 52% Democratic, and in 2010 they delivered 55% of their vote to Republicans.

In 2008, 75% said the country was going in the wrong direction and 62% voted Democratic. In 2010, the number of those choosing wrong direction was down to 61%, but 75% voted Republican.

Those making less than \$50,000 per year were 40% of the electorate in 2006, and delivered 60% of their vote to Democrats. In 2008 they were 38% of the electorate and

went Democratic by 60%. In 2010, 36% of the voters were in this category and 54% went Democratic.

In 2006 those making \$50,000 or more represented 60% of the electorate and split their vote 49%-49%. Those in this financial group were 62% in 2008 and again split their vote 49%-49%. However, in 2010 they represented 63% of the vote, but went for the Republicans by 55%.

In 2006, 21% of the electorate came from families that had at least one union member. 64% voted Democratic. In 2010 the participation level was 17% and 61% voted Democratic.

If you were among the 63% of 2010 voters who thought the economy was the single most important issue facing the country, you voted 54% for Republican candidates. If you were among the 18% who thought healthcare was the most important issue, you voted 51% for Democratic candidates.

32% of 2010 voters thought that life for the next generation would be better than life today; they voted 60% for Democrats. If you were among the 39% who thought life would be worse, you voted 64% for Republican candidates.

A quarter of 2010 voters were positive about the way the Federal government is working and 81% supported Democrats. However, if you among the other three quarters (73%) who are negative about the way the government is working, you went Republican by 65%.

Democrats won in the East, tied with Republicans in the West; and lost the Midwest 53-44% and the South by 61-37%.

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And then there is the money. Which side actually spent the most remains to be seen. But one thing is clear. The money spent on behalf of Republican candidates was particularly well spent.

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## **LOOKING AHEAD TO 2012**

As the 2012 election cycle begins, 61% are positive about the election results, while 33% are negative. 48% are positive and 27% are negative about the Republican takeover of the House. 68% voted hoping that things would change over the next two years. 66% supported a particular candidate with a goal of cutting Federal spending, while 49% voted in support of repealing the healthcare reform law. [NBC/WSJ 11/15/10]

The 2012 House elections could well be volatile, if not quite as volatile as 2010. In 2010, 25 House races (13 Democrats and 12 Republicans) were decided by 3% or less.

56 Democrats and 52 Republicans won with margins of 56% or less. (Source – Mark Gersh)

Redistricting could cost the Democrats a dozen or more seats.

Senate Democrats will be defending 23 seats, while only 10 Republicans will be seeking re-election.

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Both Parties would be well served to think about a lesson that Speaker O'Neill taught, quoting the famous Mayor Curley. "Over the years hundreds and hundreds of people will come to ask for favors. Some will be great, some will be small, some will be important, some trivial, some easy and some difficult. The one thing you need to remember is it is important to the person who comes to you. If they could take care of themselves they would—so treat them all alike—no matter how big or small." Folks on the Hill have forgotten that simple lesson of politics. It has become more about politics and less about solving problems together.

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## **FOOD**

Ordinarily the last section of the Watch is about restaurants. But this edition will be different. It is about grocery shopping. So if you have no interest in where I shop and what I like about each place at which I shop....stop reading now.

These are the stores at which I regularly shop. At least three of them are available at many locations around Washington and the country other than the location at which I shop.

### Safeway (known as the Georgetown Social Safeway)

1855 Wisconsin Avenue N.W.

Washington, DC

202-333-3223

Open – 24 Hours per day

The store is somewhat unique in that the entire store is on the second floor of the building that opened within the last year. It replaced a more traditional Safeway that had been at the same location for years.

Short of showering and sleeping, there is little that one cannot do at the new 24-hour Safeway. There is a Starbucks, pharmacy, dry cleaner, bank, coin sorter, video rental, wine store, dental and shaving products, flower shop, pizza stand, sandwich shop, delicatessen, ice cream stand, bakery, fresh sushi bar, substantial cheese station, and, oh yes, a very large grocery store.

They have just about every brand of most any canned, boxed or bottled goods, food, frozen and room temperature, along with the usual assortment of dairy products. There is a large selection of fresh and frozen meats and fishes. If you buy a whole fresh bread and want it sliced, you can select one of a dozen different thickness for the slices.

If you are a peanut butter devotee, there are about 6 different kinds of peanuts that you can grind on your own to make fresh peanut butter from any one or some combination of nuts.

There are a fair number of prepared entrees, vegetables and starches. They are okay.

The salad bar is quite limited and not special. The fruit is okay, but not quite the best overall. And the pieces of pre-cut fruit are on the large size, and therefore there is not quite as much in each container as there could be. This has no impact on the price because it is sold by the pound.

The flower selection is by far and away the best of the choices and assortments available in any of the other stores.

Checkout can be done in the conventional way, waiting in line for a clerk who handles one customer at a time. However, there are a number of self checkout stations.

Parking is a breeze. There is substantial parking in an outside lot on the second floor and a large amount of parking on the main floor under the store. It is easy to push your cart with your purchases to your car in the outdoor parking lot. And there are several locations at which to leave your cart in the parking lot. There is an elevator on which you can take your goods down to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, if that is where you parked or if you walked to the store from the surrounding neighborhood, or to catch a bus that stops right outside.

It is a great convenience to be able to shop at midnight or 6 a.m. It has become the equivalent of the corner grocery store of old.

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Whole Foods  
2323 Wisconsin Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C.  
202-333-5393  
Open 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

This is a food store with an emphasis on natural and organic foods. Don't look here to find various brands of diet soda. It does not carry most brand name canned goods that you will find in the Safeway. There is the equivalent of a house brand and a large number of specialty providers of canned goods.



The various forms of produce are of high quality. The raw meat and fish counters seem to be endless, and the prepared foods counter is extensive and quite appetizing-looking, as well as being pretty tasty. There is a pizza station and an extensive sushi area. Both tend to be more interesting and tasty than the equivalent stations in the Safeway. The special foods of various holidays are usually available. Currently, in recognition of Chanukah, the offerings include chopped liver and potato latkes. The breads and rolls are very good. And the cheese offering is extensive and interesting. There is also a fresh peanut butter station, but it is not as extensive as the Safeway. There is a large selection of wines. (Again it is not as substantial as in the Safeway.) If you happen to like olives and various pickled products in bulk form you will do much better at the Whole Foods than at the Safeway.

The flower selection is adequate but not overwhelming.

There is a nice little café as you enter the store from Wisconsin Avenue. There are a sufficient number of traditional checkout stations. Parking is all underground. There is an excellent system for moving your groceries down to the garage if that is your choice. You drive your car to a station near the entrance to the garage and an individual loads your groceries into your car.

Prices are generally higher than at the Safeway.

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Trader Joe's  
1101 25<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington DC  
202-296-1921  
Open 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Trader Joe's is a relatively recent addition to my food shopping list. It has now become a part of my regular routine.

This store is different than all of the others in a number of ways. Just about all of their pre-packaged foods, room temperature, chilled or frozen, are their own brand or brands that do not show up in other stores. And for some reason that I can not quite identify, the different products seem more interesting than at other stores. It may well be because there are no brand with which I am familiar.

My favorite new product, that I find only here, is frozen oatmeal. There are two portions to a package. Each portion is wrapped in plastic, quickly prepared using a microwave. The other characteristic that is quite attractive are the portion sizes of various meats, fish, fruit and other products. They have been prepackaged in quantities just about right for a single portion at a given meal. I have not been disappointed by the quality of any of the foods that I purchased there. There is a pretty decent flower selection, but it does not quite match up to that at Safeway.

Another style that struck me is the handling of fruit and produce. There are no plastic bags around the store in which you might put a half a dozen apples or 3 bananas or a couple of oranges. Everything goes in your basket and goes from the basket to your bag at the checkout counter.

Various staff members working on the floor are particularly solicitous if it appears that a customer seems the least bit uncertain about where to find a given product. Staff members at the other grocery stores are also solicitous, but I would say these folks are the most forth coming, followed by those at Whole Foods.

I was particularly taken by the checkout system. There are 13 checkout stations. The number of stations that are active at any one time seems to be determined by the number of folks waiting to checkout. There is a single line of those waiting to checkout rather than having to look around to see which line you think will move most quickly. There is a kind of hustle to the whole operation that is not as evident at the other stores.

One person directs people at the head of the line to each station as it is available. On one visit I was 55<sup>th</sup> in line and it took about 11 minutes until I was on my way out of the store.

I have yet to find the bathroom, but then I have not had occasion to really go looking.

There is something earthy about the store that is quite appealing.

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Wagshal's Delicatessen

4855 Mass Avenue NW

Washington, DC

202-0363-5698

Open 8:00 – 8:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Saturday

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Sunday

Wagshal's Market

4845 Mass Avenue NW

Washington, DC

202-363-0777

Open 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Monday – Friday

10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Saturday

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Sunday

These two stores are under common ownership and general management and in the same small shopping center.

The deli has many fresh salads. My favorites are the shrimp salad, the tomato and onion salad, and the stuffed half potato. There is an array of sandwiches,

numbering in the dozens. If you are a beef eater you owe it to yourself to try the brisket sandwich. Various deli meats, cut to order, are also sold by the pound, etc.

The roast chickens (whole or half) are the best in town. The dressing that comes with them is excellent. There are also a number of meat and vegetable pies. There are pre-cooked and chilled meals, a decent cheese section, and a selection of smoked fish. There are dairy products and a variety of soft drinks. It is the only place where I can regularly find Dr. Brown's Diet Cream Soda. The bakery and pastry section is quite good. There is a substantial wine selection.

If you are a devotee of old style dill pickles and tomatoes, this is the place to go. There is a large barrel next to the deli counter loaded with both. If you would like to get more than one or two pieces (as I do) bring along your own larger size Ziploc bag. The bags provided with the pickles are just too small.

The downside at the deli is that around the noon hour, and sometimes early evening, it is very crowded. The line to order a sandwich, etc. is right next to the line for the cash registers and the two get a bit mixed up. (You can call in an order which will usually be ready when you arrive.)

The "market" is centered by terrific fresh meat and fish counters. The selections might not be as broad as you will find at Whole Foods or Safeway, but the cuts are first rate. There is a great array of homemade sausages. And standing around watching how the store operates, I am struck by the fact that not only can you get terrific food, but you can get simple instructions about how to cook it.

There is a selection of fresh vegetables and fruits. At least the vegetables appear to come from local growers.

During the summer months there is often a garden fresh produce stand just outside the door to the market, and each year a tent is erected and there are cooking demonstrations done in the open air.

Between 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. each day you can order, and get freshly made, the best turkey burger in town, as well as a hamburger, a veggie burger, and a quarter pound hotdog.

There is also a small salad bar, and a limited supply of soft drinks and juices, and a few small bouquets of flowers.

It is never crowded.

*Mike*

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| Date  | Unemployment* | Wrong Track | Obama Disapproval | Disapproval on Economy |
|---|---------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Feb-09                                      | 8.2           | 44          | 26                | 31                     |
| Apr-09                                      | 8.9           | 43          | 30                | 37                     |
| Jun-09                                      | 9.5           | 46          | 34                | 38                     |
| Jul-09                                      | 9.4           | 49          | 40                | 44                     |
| Sep-09                                      | 9.8           | 48          | 41                | 42                     |
| Oct-09                                      | 10.1          | 52          | 42                | 46                     |
| Dec-09                                      | 10            | 55          | 46                | 51                     |
| Jan-10                                      | 9.7           | 54/58 **    | 43/44 **          | 49/49 **               |
| Mar-10                                      | 9.7           | 59          | 47                | 50                     |
| May-10                                      | 9.7           | 56          | 44/45 **          | 46                     |
| Jun-10                                      | 9.5           | 62          | 48                | 50                     |
| Aug-10                                      | 9.6           | 58/61 **    | 48/49 **          | 52/56 **               |
| Sep-10                                      | 9.6           | 59          | 49                | 54                     |
| Oct-10                                      | 9.6           | 59/60 **    | 49/50             | 53                     |
| Nov-10                                      |               | 58          | 47                | 54                     |
| *Unemployment rates are seasonally adjusted |               |             |                   |                        |
| ** 2 polls conducted in that month          |               |             |                   |                        |