

Election 2010: What just happened?

If you thought you felt a tremor or two on Tuesday, you just may have. Call it an earthquake, a tidal wave or yes, even a tsunami - November 2, 2010 will go down in political history as one of the biggest repudiations of a specific party on record. Thank you, Mr. President. Volumes will be written about the 2010 election and we will leave that for others to tackle. Here, as briefly as possible, are some of the things worth noting about yesterday's results:

The Tea Party: It is for real. Whether organized or unorganized, the enthusiasm, anger, or interest created by the emergence of the "tea party" movement played a highly significant role in Tuesday's results. The GOP was the benefactor of this wave of voter engagement to be sure, but we believe that this was as much or more about a vote against the Democrats than it was "for" Republicans. The GOP leadership must remember this, or face its own backlash in two years. In other words, it must deliver. The TP folks don't have much patience, or willingness to compromise. It is hard to pass anything in DC or at the state level when you approach it that way. We're just saying.....

US Senate: (Democrats – 49, GOP 46)

As expected, the GOP did not manage to take control of the Senate. Why? Simply put, some of the best "general election" candidates did not make it through the GOP primaries. Losses in Colorado, Alaska, Delaware, Nevada and Washington State could have been avoided, we believe, if the GOP candidates there had offered more mainstream appeal. While Palin and DeMint are "rock stars" in the TP community, they are anything but that in DC with Senate Leaders and staffs. Of course it is great to win in Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Arkansas and Wisconsin, but many feel DeMint's support of the Republican losers was, at best, short sighted. We are pretty sure that he "frankly, doesn't give a damn", but we are also pretty sure no one in the Senate will lift a finger to help DeMint on anything right now, and that isn't good for SC.

US House: (GOP 239, Dems 196)

As expected, the Republicans will be in the Majority in the US House of Representatives, netting 60 seats, and meaning Rep. John Boehner of Ohio will be elected Speaker and there will be new committee chairmen throughout Congress. Many states will have very different federal delegations now, with multiple changes. Overall, there will be 92 freshmen in Congress in 2011. There will be new chairmen as the GOP takes over and there may be a bit of a tussle for the #3 slot between Bachmann of Minnesota and McCarthy of California. The latter being the Speaker-elect's choice.

Governors and State Legislatures

The GOP wins at the state level were most impressive. Gov. Haley Barbour, head of the Republican Governors Association, was the big winner on Tuesday with the GOP picking up 11 new governorships under his leadership. Along with over 500 new state house members and over another 100 plus new state senators, the GOP will be in position to lead on a number of important policy matters ranging from tax policies to how each state pays for the resulting cost of “healthcare reform”. No where was the rebuke of Democrats more evident than at the state level. It is almost unfathomable that such a monumental change could occur overnight, but it did. The dust is still settling with five chambers undecided at this writing. The GOP now controls 54 chambers, the Democrats control 38, with one chamber tied. At least 19 legislative bodies moved to GOP control:

- AL House
- AL Senate
- CO House
- IA House
- IN House
- ME House
- ME Senate
- MI House
- MN House
- MN Senate
- MT House
- NC House
- NC Senate
- NH House
- NH Senate
- OH House
- PA House
- WI Assembly
- WI Senate

What is important to note is the timing of this GOP takeover and the affect it will have on what is known as reapportionment or redistricting. Winning means that these GOP controlled state legislatures will be the ones redrawing a host of congressional seats. You can bet those will be drawn in a manner that will make it very tough for the Democrats to take Congress back over any time soon (think 2020 Census and 2022 Elections).

Note: The GOP is in control of the Minnesota Senate for the first time ever, in control of the Alabama Legislative for the first time since 1870, and in North Carolina since 1876.

There is still a lot of dust to settle in the coming weeks, but for now this “shellacking” as President Obama called it, has rejuvenated the GOP. No doubt it was done on the backs of the Tea Party activists and how long that honeymoon ride lasts is the real question at hand.