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TO: NATIONAL COUNCIL SSMA OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE

RE: Legislative Report #36

The dramatic center-stage events among Hill Republicans following last week's elections may seem over-reactive, given the overall status-quo outcome of the elections themselves: only 11 House and Senate incumbents were defeated. Of another 11 "open" seats, the Democrats took six previously held by Republicans and Republicans took five previously held by Democrats. In the Senate, the number of Republicans (55) and Democrats (45) is unchanged. While the Democrats picked up five seats in the House of Representatives, the Republicans maintained their majority and will continue to run the show for the next two years. While several State governorships changed parties, state elections, too, were strikingly status quo. Twenty-eight states returned to office their entire Congress without a single change.

Moderate and conservative Republicans alike felt strong disappointment that Democrats did not seem to pay a price at the polls over the inquiry into impeachment of President Clinton or the alleged campaign finance abuses of the Vice President and other Democratic fundraisers. Republican concern was not primarily over the loss of five House seats this year, but fear for their ability to retain control of the House and Senate in the elections of 2000. They saw the Democratic plan to take back the House at that time advanced by the recent elections. Many moderate and conservative House Members coalesced either to blame Rep. Gingrich outright or to decry the Republican campaign's anti-Clinton focus rather than the development of a clear Republican agenda on national issues of importance to Americans, for which Gingrich has the primary responsibility. It was this firestorm of criticism and Gingrich's inability to identify supporters to assist him in retaining the Speakership, which led to his unexpected announcement last Friday that he would step down as Speaker and resign his seat in Congress.

There was a brief attempt by numerous Republican factions to recruit Rep. Archer of TX, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, to make a bid for Speaker. He announced publicly on Saturday that he declined to run. Subsequently, one contender for the job, Rep. Cox of CA also announced that he would not seek the Speaker's position and agreed instead to back Rep. Livingston of LA, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee who had declared immediately following the elections that he would oppose

Gingrich for the position. The assumption now is that Livingston will be elected Speaker on November 18. A special election will be held in Gingrich's Georgia district to fill his seat for the 106th Congress.

Other leadership changes in Congress are uncertain at this time. House Majority leader Arney of TX has also come under attack, and Rep. Largent of OK is making a bid for that position. Majority Whip DeLay of TX, a friend of Livingston, appears headed to retain his position non-controversially.

The impact of Republican leadership changes is unknown. There is speculation that things may become more bi-partisan in the House, with better relationships between Congress and the Administration, once more moderate Republican agenda-setters take control. On the other hand, there is also speculation that if the Republicans successfully forge a more unified agenda and stop factionalization among their ranks, they will become a more powerful force for the Administration to deal with.

Congressional committee changes will be minimal in the 106th Congress, although several will affect issues of concern to NCSSMA:

1) **Senate Governmental Affairs Committee:** With the retirement of Sen. Glenn, Sen. Carl Levin of Illinois will step up to become Ranking Minority member of the full Committee. This Committee has not initiated much civil service legislation during the past Congress, choosing to take the position of dealing only with bills which clear the House and therefore are forced upon them, so we have had few dealings with Levin's staff. However, we previously had the support of Sen. Levin and a closer working relationship with his staff, such as when EEO reform bills were moving and Senator Levin joined Senator Stevens in helping NCSSMA advance additional due process protections for federal managers. We can look forward to renewing that working relationship now that Levin will have a Minority leadership role on the Committee.

2) **House Civil Service Subcommittee:** Chairman Mica of FL has publicly stated that he would like to give up the Chair of this Subcommittee. Whether this will be possible depends on whether other Government Reform and Oversight Committee members are interested in making changes. Rep. Pappas, who served as Vice Chair of Mica's Subcommittee, was defeated in New Jersey, so is not a candidate for the Chairmanship. Although Rep. Morella of Md. is next in line, she is unlikely to give up her position as Chair of the Science Subcommittee to become Civil Service Chair. We'll have to wait and see if there is any change for Mica.

3) **House Social Security Subcommittee:** We lost both the Chairman, Rep. Bunning -- who won his bid to become one of Kentucky's Senators by only a 1% margin! -- and the Ranking Democrat, Rep. Kennelly -- who made an unsuccessful run for Governor of Connecticut. Rep. Houghton of NY is next in line for the Chairmanship, and Rep. Neal of MASS could become Ranking Minority if Rep. Sander Levin (of ILL, brother of Sen. Carl Levin) retains his Ranking position on the Human Resources Subcommittee rather than take this position on the SS Subcomm. There are a number of variables at work, as always with the Ways and

Means Chairmanships, and we will most likely not know all the outcomes until January or early February.

**On the federal employee front,** Republican leadership changes will not bring an end to the anti-government rhetoric or a reduction in the press for a more flexible federal workforce with greater emphasis on temporary employees and contracting out. Federal pay and benefits will receive even greater scrutiny during the 106th Congress as reports on comprehensive compensation comparability are finalized by OPM, as OPM pushes its human resource management flexibility proposals (the last two Congresses have freed the FAA and IRS from most personnel constraints -- the 106th can be expected to follow suit), and as Congress holds hearings on non-implementation of FEPCA and the implications that may hold for reform of the pay system.

**On the Social Security front,** program reform is definitely in the air. In his first post-election news conference, Rep. Gingrich mentioned it four times as something Congress should have focused on last year (in terms of making a concrete proposal) and something Republicans in the 106th will take up immediately. President Clinton reportedly is committed to being the President who fixed the system, and he is reportedly expressing willingness to support some form of individual accounts if that's what it takes to come to a consensus with Congress. If the Administration gets behind the individual account idea, which already has many supporters within both parties in Congress, reform plans could move along more quickly than previously anticipated. Plans for the December 8-9 White House Conference on Social Security, less than a month away now, are not finalized, but the President hopes to make a bold statement laying out the Administration's proposal for reform during his State of the Union Address in January.

NCSSMA will continue working to obtain the interest of Social Security oversight committees in service delivery, resource allocation, and restructuring issues even as the overwhelming interest of those committee remains in programmatic reform. Congressional interest will continue in the Government Performance and Results Act, with its strategic and performance plan components, and in the need for improvements in the disability process, SSI fraud, etc. We will continue to hook our concerns to that, as well as to GAO studies and other vehicles, in order to engage Congressional interest in NCSSMA concerns.

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