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The 2012 Elections

President Barack Obama was re-elected on Tuesday, November 6, 2012, following one of the most expensive presidential election campaigns ever run. This was evidenced by the fact that nearly \$1 billion was spent by the Obama and Romney campaigns alone. President Obama received some 303 electoral votes compared to Governor Romney's 206, with Florida's 29 electoral votes not decided, but leaning towards Obama. Overall, President Obama received 50 percent of the popular vote and Governor Romney received 48 percent. As of 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 7, 2012, all the states had been called except Florida, where President Obama held a 45,000 vote lead.

President Obama was able to secure victory by holding on to the same coalition of young, African American, and Hispanic voters he originally built in 2008. Voters aged 18-29 made up 19 percent of the total electorate this year; in 2008 they made up 18 percent. President Obama carried the 18-29 year-olds by 24 points, and received 71 percent of the Hispanic vote. Women comprised 53 percent of the total national vote, the same number as they did in 2008. President Obama won the women's vote by 11 points. Another element of President Obama's victory was the fact that he won every "swing state" except North Carolina, with Florida undetermined.

"In the coming weeks and months, I am looking forward to reaching out and working with leaders of both parties to meet the challenges we can only solve together: reducing our deficit; reforming our tax code; fixing our immigration system; freeing ourselves from foreign oil. We've got more work to do," said President Obama in his acceptance speech early Wednesday morning.

As for the Senate, the Democrats will hold 53 seats, 55 if you include re-elected Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Senator-elect Angus King (I-ME), who are both anticipated to caucus with the Democrats, compared to 45 seats for the Republicans. Some pundits believed Republicans may have had an opportunity to take control of the Senate in this election, given the fact that Democrats were defending 23 seats to only 10 for Republicans. Republicans were unable to gain the majority because they lost races in states some expected them to win – Indiana, Missouri, and North Dakota. Republicans also lost seats they previously held in Maine and Massachusetts.

In the House of Representatives, Republicans held on to their majority by winning 234 seats compared to 193 for the Democrats. As of 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 7, 2012, the Washington Post was reporting eight House races were still undecided.

The following is the latest news on the eight House races that have not yet been called. In Arizona's 1st District, Democrat Ann Kirkpatrick was leading Republican Jonathan Paton by 7,354 votes with 99.4% of the precincts reporting. In Arizona's 2nd District, Republican Martha McSally was leading Democrat Ron Barber by slightly over 1,300 votes, with all precincts reporting. In Arizona's 9th District, Democrat Kyrsten Sinema held a 2,101 vote lead over Republican Vernon Parker, with all precincts reporting. In

California's 7th District, incumbent Republican Dan Lungren was trailing Democrat Ami Bera by approximately 188 votes, with all precincts reporting. In California's 52nd District, Democrat Scott Peters was leading incumbent Republican Brian Bilbray by 685 votes, with all precincts reporting. In Florida's 18th District, Democrat Patrick Murphy was leading incumbent Republican Allen West by 2,400 plus votes, with all precincts reporting. In Utah's 4th District, incumbent Democrat Jim Matheson was leading Republican Mia Love by 2,646 votes with all precincts reporting. Lastly, in North Carolina's 7th District, Democratic incumbent Mike McIntyre was leading Republican David Rouzer by 378 votes with all precincts reporting.

The take away from this election, by many of the pundits on both sides of the aisle, was the Republican Party needs to broaden and expand its appeal, as the 2012 election marked the first time ever that Hispanics accounted for at least 10 percent of the overall electorate. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), an up-and-coming star in the Republican Party, said early Wednesday morning the Republican Party needs to be more inclusive of "minority and immigrant communities who are trying to make it."

Ironically, when all the shouting was done late Tuesday (early Wednesday), the American people basically voted for the status quo by re-electing President Obama, reaffirming Republican control of the House, and Democratic control of the Senate. Yes, the ratios may have shifted a bit and there will be a few new faces in Washington, but overall many of the same individuals, who have made it difficult to move legislation, and have repeatedly put partisanship above service, still remain. And while the excitement of Election Day has passed, and thank goodness the relentless onslaught of accompanying campaign materials as well, the tough legislative issues are all still on the agenda. So, we can all take a little bit of a breather and then it's on to the lame duck session of this Congress – complete with sequestration, appropriations (maybe), re-writing the tax code, the fiscal cliff, etc., etc.

Congress returns to session next week. It should definitely be an interesting period of legislative activity between now and the end of the year!

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