



Texas Election Update

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Texas is still GOP Big, but....

Regardless of what happened on the national scene, Texas is still GOP Big. However, the democrats delivered a few surprises on Election Day and may have reason to feel optimistic about the future.

Most every political pundit (including myself) assumed that the results in local Texas elections would mirror the results of the presidential election. In other words, if Romney or Obama won in a particular legislative district, the legislative candidates would do about the same, no matter how well or badly they ran their own races. And that is what happened in most cases. There were very few candidates who “bucked the presidential trend.” In Fort Worth Senate District 10, even though the legislature made the district more republican during redistricting and Romney won that district, incumbent democrat Wendy Davis overcame the odds and won reelection by an impressive margin. In House District 23 located in the Galveston and Chambers County communities; Rep. Craig Eiland was able to overcome the trend as well. Both wins can be explained by their individual popularity and impressive campaigns.

The bigger surprise was that when Texas was given four new congressional districts to spread around, and the republican controlled legislature drew those districts to advantage republican candidates, three of the four seats were won by democrats.

As for the bigger picture, the democrats still don't hold a single statewide or judicial office, but the “supermajority status” of 102 House republicans has been reduced to just a *really large majority* of 95 republicans to 55 democrats for the 2013 legislative session.

Is there a “Latino Problem” for Republicans in Texas?

Certainly there is a perception of a problem for the GOP nationally with Latinos. That was born out with an estimated 28% Latino support for Governor Romney, but here in Texas things are not as bad. There is an active organization; Hispanic Republicans of Texas whose mission is to recruit and support republican Hispanics running for office, and just this week, George P Bush, nephew of President George W. Bush and son of Governor Jeb Bush filed the necessary paperwork to run for an unnamed office in 2014. It is being reported that the republican leadership has heard the alarm and recognizes that as the population trends in Texas continue to predict a Latino majority very soon; their political success will depend on whether they can convince the Hispanic community that they share certain values.

New Faces, newer faces.....

In 2010, observers thought that the voters were angry by the fact that following a round of nasty town hall meetings the voters turned out an unprecedented number of incumbents. The Texas House would

welcome 36 new legislators to the 2011 legislative session. Well.... In 2012, they did it again and this time the voters will send 45 new members to the new session starting in 2013. That means that for the first time in my memory, OVER 50% OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES will be Freshmen or Sophomore legislators.

What about the 2014 elections.....

After these last two elections, we should know better than to try to predict what will happen, but there are a few indications to consider. Mid-Term elections are always interesting. These are the elections held midway through a presidential term and often reflect how people are feeling about their previous vote for president. If things are going well, no problem – but if the economy is still in trouble and people are discouraged, they often show it in their votes for congress and the legislature. We will also have to see what the long-term impact of the Texas Tea Party will be after this election. Republicans may have started to notice that when the primary elections produce the most conservative candidates, they have a tougher campaign in the General Elections. I also see an electorate frustrated with those office holders who proudly claim that they will not compromise with the opposition. Pendulums have a tendency to swing....