

[November 1986]

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

ELECTIONS RESULTS TALKING POINTS

Compared to history, the results were good.

- o Republicans won 41% of the Senate elections, compared to a "6th-year" average of 34%.
- o The party in power has never gained governorships in a modern off-year election; Republicans gained 8.
- o The House loss of 5 seats marked only the second time in a half century that the White House party held its losses to single digits and represents the smallest 6-year loss since 1866.

The Senate: It was a matter of close elections.

- o 6 elections decided by 2% or less, Republicans lost every one. (AL, CA, CO, GA, ND, WA.)
- o In the last 4 elections, Republicans have won almost every close election; the breaks evened out this time around. A switch of 29,000 votes would have kept the Senate Republican.

The President was a positive factor in the election.

- o He lifted a number of candidates from the low 40's to the high 40's. Symms came from behind and went over the top; Santini came from -13% to -6%; Zschau from -8% to -2%; Broyhill from -7% to -4%.
- o He ended the campaign with virtually the highest approval ratings of his Presidency. (67% in NY Times late Oct. poll -- within one point of the highest in his presidency.)
- o The Democrats' #1 campaign tactic was to avoid any argument with the President: no tax increases, pro-SDI, etc.

Realignment is real.

- o The Republican won a "Sun Belt sweep" in governors races, providing an edge for 1988 and a chance to build a strong Republican party in many states (Alabama, South Carolina, Florida) for the first time.
- o Republicans expanded this total statehouse control from 16 to 24 states, and from 38% to 51% of the population.

- o Identification with the Republican party has risen sharply since 1980, and per NY Times poll in late Oct., now is at 47-47 parity with Democrat support.
- o The President has raised Republican strength in every category from its pro-1980 levels: from 41 to 45 Senate seats, from 19 to 24 governors, from 159 to 176 seats in the House, where the Republicans base was kept virtually intact.

The elections were local, personal contests.

- o There was no "farm revolt." Republicans won 7 of 10 Senate races in the farm belt, and 6 of 7 governors races, losing only a photo finish in Idaho. Republicans took away a Senate seat in Missouri and Democratic statehouses in Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Oklahoma.
- o Republicans held 7 of their 9 Senate seats in the "heartland;" the Senate was lost on the coasts, where the economy is generally good (California, Washington, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Nevada, Maryland.)

FARM BELT STATES

- * Indiana
- * Kansas
- North Dakota
- South Dakota
- * Wisconsin
- * Idaho
- * Oklahoma
- * Iowa
- * Illinois
- * Missouri

* GOP won statewide races in 8 of 10