

# 2008 Election Recap

## A Brief Review of the Races

**FLEISHMAN™**  
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS  
**HILLARD**



Last Updated November 10

## Table of Contents

Election Overview.....	3
President.....	4
Senate.....	6
House.....	8

## Election Overview

The 2008 elections in the United States resulted in a consolidation of the Democratic Party's control of the three branches of the federal government. In many ways, this year's election capped off the gains begun in the 2006 mid-term elections, and has seen the pendulum effect of the American political system fully swing away from the Republican Party. This result was not shocking to those who had monitored national sentiment over the past year. An unpopular war in Iraq, a broadening economic downturn, multiple retirements in the House and Senate, and the general unpopularity of President Bush had devalued the Republican brand during the course of 2008, and on paper appeared to portend a "change" election favoring Democratic gains.

The largest change, of course, is in the White House. President-elect Obama has obtained a mandate with the sheer size of his victory. With one state's (Missouri) electoral votes still up in the air, Obama swung nine states back to the Democratic column away from President Bush's 2004 victory tally. Indeed, upset victories in traditionally-Republican states in the South (Virginia and North Carolina), Midwest (Indiana), and Mountain west (Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico) are seen by some as the manifestation of changing demographics across the country, and a reshuffling of the "Red" versus "Blue" divide. The Obama presidency will no doubt bring a sea change in domestic and foreign policy from the Bush years.

In the Senate, with three seats still too close to call (Alaska, Minnesota, and Georgia), Democrats won 18 of the 35 races, including six upset wins. This net gain of six seats so far will increase the Democratic majority from 51 to at least 57, and will greatly reduce the need for leadership to obtain cross-party votes in order to pass legislation. However, the slim chance for Democrats to obtain 60 seats now appears almost impossible, and they will not be able to break Republican filibusters, which may limit their ability to pass legislation.

Large net gains by Democrats in the House will have long-term effects on policy and politics. A wave of retiring Republican incumbents in the House opened the door for Democrats to pad their majority in the lower house. Pickups were spread across all regions of the country, and Democrats protected many vulnerable freshmen legislators elected in 2006, losing only four seats to Republican challengers. With four seats still undecided, Democrats gained 19 seats to create an 81-seat advantage. Of note, this total represents a larger majority than Republicans maintained at any point during their recent 12-year period of control from 1994-2006.

On the next few pages, we break down the election results in greater detail.

**Notable demographic voting results, based on exit polling**

**President**

With the election outcome certified in every state except Missouri, President-elect Obama has secured a convincing victory over Senator McCain to give Democrats control of all three branches of the federal government. This victory is attributable to the fact that Obama increased the Democratic vote total in most states from 2000 and 2004, including many states that had voted Republican for years, if not decades. A detailed breakdown of votes, state-by-state results, and exit polling follows below.

<b>Obama</b>	364 Electoral Votes
	53% of popular vote
	65,852,092 votes

<b>McCain</b>	163 Electoral Votes
	46% of popular vote
	57,700,353 votes

Demographic	Population %	Obama	McCain	Other
Male	47%	49%	48%	3%
Female	53%	56%	43%	1%
White	74%	43%	55%	2%
African-American	13%	95%	4%	1%
Latino	9%	67%	31%	2%
Asian	2%	62%	35%	3%
Other	3%	66%	31%	3%
18-29	10%	66%	32%	2%
25-29	8%	66%	31%	3%
30-39	18%	54%	44%	2%
40-49	21%	49%	49%	2%
50-64	27%	50%	49%	1%
65+	16%	45%	53%	2%
Less than \$50,000	38%	60%	38%	2%
\$50,000-\$100,000	36%	49%	49%	2%
\$100,000 +	26%	49%	49%	2%
No High School	4%	63%	35%	2%
High School Graduate	20%	52%	46%	2%
Some College	31%	51%	47%	2%
College Graduate	28%	50%	48%	2%
Postgraduate	17%	58%	40%	2%

**States won by Obama, also won by Kerry in 2004, percentage change**

State	Obama win %	Electoral Votes	Net % Change from 2004
California	61%	55	+7
Connecticut	61%	7	+7
Delaware	62%	3	+9
District of Columbia	93%	3	+3
Hawaii	72%	4	+18
Illinois	62%	21	+7
Maine	58%	4	+4
Maryland	62%	10	+6
Massachusetts	62%	12	0
Michigan	57%	17	+6
Minnesota	54%	10	+3
New Hampshire	54%	4	+4
New Jersey	57%	15	+4
New York	62%	31	+3
Oregon	57%	7	+5
Pennsylvania	55%	21	+4
Rhode Island	63%	4	+3
Vermont	67%	3	+8
Washington	58%	11	+5
Wisconsin	56%	10	+6

**States won by Obama, won by Bush in 2004, percentage change**

State	Obama win %	Electoral Votes	Net % Dem gain from 2004
Colorado	54%	9	+7
Florida	51%	27	+4
Indiana	50%	11	+11
Iowa	54%	7	+5
Nevada	55%	5	+7
New Mexico	57%	5	+8
North Carolina	50%	15	+6
Ohio	51%	20	+2
Virginia	53%	13	+7

**States won by McCain, also won by Bush in 2004, percentage change**

State	McCain win %	Electoral Votes	Net % Change from 2004
Alabama	61%	9	-2
Alaska	62%	3	+1
Arizona	54%	10	-1
Arkansas	59%	6	+5
Georgia	52%	15	-6
Idaho	61%	4	-8
Kansas	57%	6	-5
Kentucky	58%	8	-2
Louisiana	59%	9	+2
Mississippi	57%	6	-3
Montana	50%	3	-9
Nebraska	57%	5	-9
North Dakota	53%	3	-10
Oklahoma	66%	7	0
South Carolina	54%	8	-4
South Dakota	53%	3	-7
Tennessee	57%	11	0
Texas	55%	34	-6
Utah	63%	5	-9
West Virginia	56%	5	0
Wyoming	65%	3	-4



## Senate

With the results of three elections still pending, Democrats enjoyed a net gain of at least six seats. While this is a significant increase from the 110th Congress, it still leaves Democrats short of the “magic” number of 60 seats required to break filibuster.

In Alaska the results are still too close to call, while in Minnesota only a few hundred votes separate the candidates and state law requires a mandatory recount. In Georgia, neither candidate secured the minimum required percentage of the vote (state law requires the winner to have at least 50 percent of the total, plus one vote), and a run-off election will be held in early December.

The victory by Senators Obama and Biden ensure that two new Senators will be appointed by the Democratic governors of Illinois and Delaware to replace them in the Senate. Two notable changes in the 111th Congress will be the Chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Biden will relinquish this position to become Vice President) and the Chairmanship of the Senate Appropriations Committee (Senator Robert Byrd will voluntarily relinquish this position due to age, but will still remain in the Senate). Seniority and sub-committee chairmanships on most other committees will also be affected by the election results, and these will be explored below. Other changes in the Senate may occur as a result of appointments to the new Presidential Administration. Committee Chairmanships and assignments will not be known until the new Congress convenes in January.

The twelve returning Democratic Senators are: Max Baucus (MT), Tim Johnson (SD), Tom Harkin (IA), Dick Durbin (IL), Carl Levin (MI), John Kerry (MA), Jack Reed (RI), Frank Lautenberg (NJ), Joe Biden (DE), Mark Pryor (AR), Jay Rockefeller (WV), and Mary Landrieu (LA).

The six new Democratic Senators are: Mark Udall (CO), Jeanne Shaheen (NH), Tom Udall (NM), Kay Hagan (NC), Jeff Merkley (OR), and Mark Warner (VA).

The twelve returning Republican Senators are: Susan Collins (ME), Mitch McConnell (KY), Lamar Alexander (TN), Lindsay Graham (SC), Jeff Sessions (AL), Roger Wicker (MS), Thad Cochran (MS), John Cornyn (TX), Jim Inhofe (OK), Pat Roberts (KS), Mike Enzi (WY), and John Barrasso (WY).

The two new Republican Senators are: Jim Risch (ID), and Mike Johanns (NE).

## Senate Committee departures (An asterisk denotes Chairman or Ranking Member)

- Committee on Agriculture and Forestry: No change
- Committee on Appropriations: Pete Domenici (NM), Larry Craig (ID), Wayne Allard (CO)
- Committee on Armed Services: John Warner (VA), Elizabeth Dole (NC), Chuck Hagel (NE), Wayne Allard (CO)
- Committee on the Budget: Pete Domenici (NM), Wayne Allard (CO)
- Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Gordon Smith (OR), John Sununu (NH)
- Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Pete Domenici\* (NM), Larry Craig (ID), Gordon Smith (OR)
- Committee on Environment and Public Works: John Warner (VA), Larry Craig (ID)
- Committee on Finance: Gordon Smith (OR), John Sununu (NH)
- Committee on Foreign Relations: Joe Biden\* (DE), Chuck Hagel (NE), Barack Obama (IL)
- Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Wayne Allard (CO), Barack Obama (IL)
- Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs: Pete Domenici (NM), John Warner (VA), John Sununu (NH), Barack Obama (IL)
- Committee on the Judiciary: Joe Biden (DE)
- Committee on Rules and Administration: Chuck Hagel (NE)
- Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship: Elizabeth Dole (NC)
- Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Larry Craig (ID), Barack Obama (IL)
- Committee on Indian Affairs: Pete Domenici (NM), Gordon Smith (OR)
- Select Committee on Ethics: No change
- Select Committee on Intelligence: John Warner (VA), Chuck Hagel (NE)
- Special Committee on Aging: Gordon Smith\* (OR), Larry Craig (ID), Elizabeth Dole (NC)

## House

Four seats are still too close to call, but as of print, Democrats have gained at least a net increase of 19 seats in the House of Representatives. If the remaining seats split evenly between the parties, Democrats will enjoy a roughly 60 percent working majority. Democrats picked up 22 seats in New York, Florida, Michigan, New Mexico, Ohio, Virginia, Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Republicans picked up four seats in Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, and Texas. A special election will be held in two Louisiana districts (2 and 4) on December 6.

Districts with races too close to call are: Alaska At-Large, California 4, Ohio 15, and Virginia 5.

House leadership positions are expected to remain largely intact in the 111th Congress. Nancy Pelosi is expected to remain as Speaker of the House, and John Boehner as Minority Leader. But, House Minority Whip Roy Blunt announced he will step down as the Minority Whip (the second-ranking House Republican) and a disputed inter-party fight is expected between several contenders. Rahm Emanuel's appointment to White House Chief of Staff may also touch off an intra-party fight for Chairmanship of the Democratic Caucus (the fourth-ranking House Democrat).

This year's House election results are notable in that they consolidated Democratic control of the Northeastern districts (Democrats now control every seat in New England) and much of the Southwest. In addition, the sizeable working majority means legislation with Democratic backing will have an easier route to passage, while Republican-sponsored legislation will require significant Democratic co-sponsors for passage.

Thirty-five Representatives retired or passed away in this Congress, so multiple changes will occur at the committee and subcommittee level. While these changes are too voluminous to detail here, notable departures are listed below:

- Duncan Hunter (R-CA): Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee
- Tom Davis (R-VA): Ranking Member, House Committee on Oversight & Government Reform
- Steve Chabot (R-OH): Ranking Member, House Committee on Small Business
- Jim McCrery (LA-4): Ranking Member, House Committee on Ways and Means