

REPORT ON THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 6 NOVEMBER 2012

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This report presents results and analysis of the Presidential, Senate and House elections held on 6 November 2012. It also has a look at the 2014 and 2016 elections.

PRESIDENT RESULTS TABLE (Popular Votes in Millions, [details page 2](#))

2008 Results			2012 Results			Swing				
	Votes	% Vote	EVs		Votes	% Vote	EVs	Votes	% Vote	EVs
Obama, D	69.50	52.9%	365	Obama, D	65.90	51.1%	332	-3.60	-1.9%	-33
McCain, R	59.95	45.7%	173	Romney, R	60.93	47.2%	206	0.98	1.6%	33
Others	1.86	1.4%	0	Others	2.24	1.7%	0	0.38	0.3%	0
Totals	131.31	100.0%	538	Totals	129.07	100.0%	538	-2.24		

Barack Obama won the 2012 election by 4.97 million popular votes, or 3.9%, a 3.4% change in margin from his 2008 triumph. Obama won the electoral vote easily by winning 9 of the 10 swing states. Given the economic troubles during Obama's first term, this was a very good result for him. Turnout was down from 62% in 2008 to 59%; it fell more in the non-swing states, where the electoral vote system means there is less motivation to vote.

EXIT POLLS ([details page 4](#))

Obama lost the white vote by 20%, but made up for this by winning blacks by 87% and Hispanics by 44%. The white share of the electorate was 72%, down from 74% in '08 and 87% in 1992. When Bush snr won the white vote by a similar margin to Romney in '88, it was a Bush landslide, while Romney was convincingly defeated.

SENATE: **DEMOCRATS 55 (+2), REPUBLICANS 45 (-2)** ([details page 6](#))

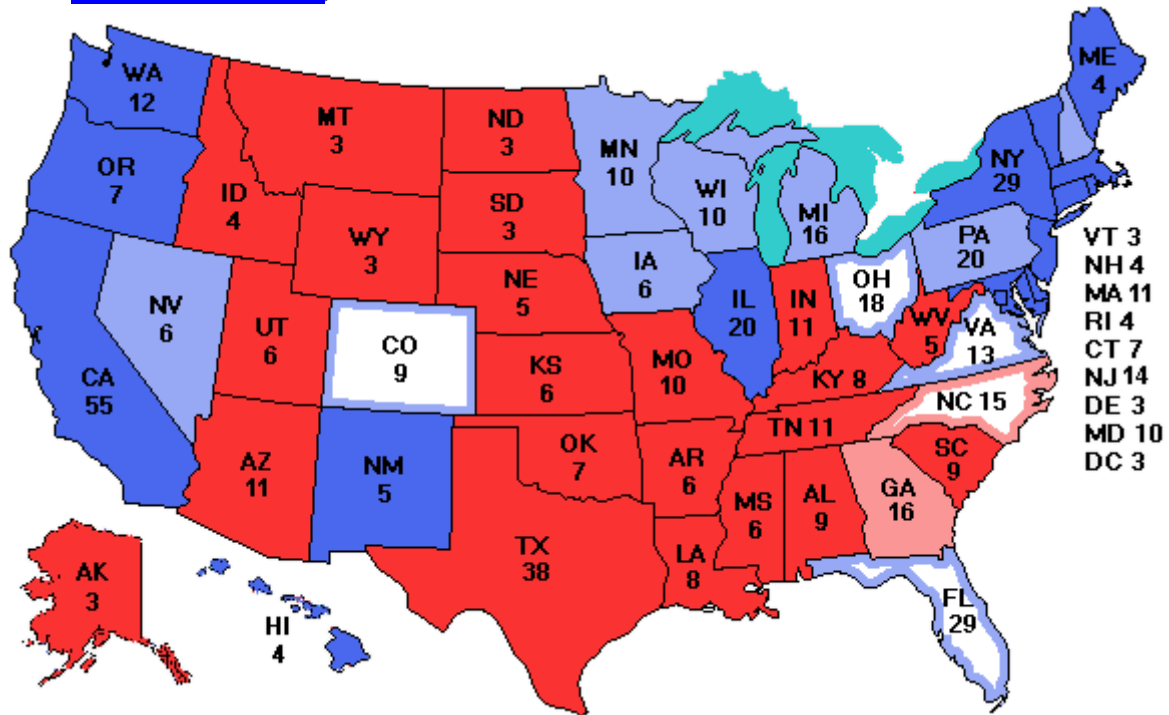
The Senate has 100 members elected for 6 year terms, with each state having 2 Senators. 1/3 of the Senate is up for election every 2 years, and the Democrats won the 33 Senators elected in 2012 by 25-8. This was a very good result for the Dems as they were defending 23 seats, while the GOP was defending 10. The GOP would have done better if not for dreadful comments on pregnancies resulting from rape from two of its candidates.

HOUSE: **REPUBLICANS 234 (-8), DEMOCRATS 201 (+8)** ([details page 8](#))

All 435 House seats are up for election every 2 years. After the 2010 disaster, the Democrats recovered some seats in the House, and actually won the House popular vote. Blue states returned stronger Dem delegations, and red states stronger GOP delegations. However, the Dems' failure to gain ground in the big presidential swing states meant that the GOP easily retained control. The biggest explanation for this failure is that, after 2010, the GOP had full control of redistricting in the big swing states, and was thus able to draw maps that favoured GOP candidates heavily. This is shown by the Dems winning the overall House vote across 5 big swing states by 0.5%, yet losing the House by 51-21 across these 5 states.

Notes: (1) GOP = Grand Old Party = Republican. (2) CD = Congressional District, a single member district for House elections. (3) Vote changes recorded here are double Aus election swings. (4) Electoral Votes (EVs) decide the Presidency; each state's EVs are the sum of that state's House members and Senators (always 2), so the minimum EVs for a state is 3.

PRESIDENT RESULTS MAP: OBAMA 332 EVs (-33), ROMNEY 206 EVs (+33)
(from ElectoralVote.com)



Dark colour – margin 10%+, light colour – margin 5-10%, border – margin 0-5%

Romney gained North Carolina and Indiana; these were carried by Obama in 2008. Romney also gained the Nebraskan 2nd CD. Nebraska and Maine award their EVs by CD, while all other states give all their EVs to the statewide winner. Romney's gains thus total 27 EVs, and the other 6 EVs were gained because the 2010 census gave more EVs to states like Texas, taking away from north-eastern states, due to population shifts.

Note that this map, and the Senate map, are based on returns soon after the election. Some shadings should have changed based on the final results.

The 10 battleground states at this election were thought to be Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wisconsin and N Carolina. Obama won the electoral vote easily by claiming 9 of these 10 battleground states, with Romney only winning N Carolina. While Ohio was meant to be the key state in winning the election for either Obama or Romney, Obama performed as expected given his polling in Ohio, but outperformed his polling elsewhere, and the two key states that put Obama over the 270 vote line were Pennsylvania and Colorado, which he carried by 5.4%. Obama also won Virginia by more than he won Ohio. Although Obama's margins were somewhat reduced from 2008, he still won Nevada, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Colorado and New Hampshire by margins exceeding 5%. Romney was unable to win very much outside the South and some of the Mountain and Prairie states in the West.

The swing towards Romney was modest in the Obama '08 states, with only Indiana recording a double-digit change in vote, while New Jersey, New York and Maryland swung a little to Obama. Obama's vote held up well in all states he won in '08 by less than 10%, except for Indiana. The biggest swings to Romney came in Utah and West Virginia, 2 states that were already solidly Republican. While Montana and the Dakotas also recorded double digit changes in vote, Obama still did better in these three states than Kerry in '04. Alaska was surprisingly the state that swung most to Obama from '08.

FULL PRESIDENT RESULTS

The following table sorts the states in descending order by the winning candidate's 2012 percentage victory margin (2nd column). The 3rd column has the number of electoral votes for that state, and the 4th column shows the cumulative number of EVs won by winning all states above and including the particular state on the table. Finally, the 5th column shows the change in vote from 2008 (R = toward Republicans, D = toward Democrats). Orange in the Romney states are the states he gained. Colorado and Pennsylvania are bolded, as they were virtually tied in giving Obama the decisive 270th electoral vote. Thus, Obama's popular vote margin in the states that gave him 270 EVs was 1.5% greater than his national popular vote margin.

Obama States					Romney States				
State	2012 Margin	EVs	Cum EVs	Change from '08	State	2012 Margin	EVs	Cum EVs	Change from '08
Washington DC	84%	3	3	R+2	Utah	48%	6	6	R+20
Hawaii	43%	4	7	R+3	Wyoming	41%	3	9	R+9
Vermont	36%	3	10	R+1	Oklahoma	34%	7	16	R+2
New York	28%	29	39	D+1	Idaho	32%	4	20	R+6
Rhode Island	27%	4	43	None	West Virginia	27%	5	25	R+14
Maryland	26%	10	53	D+1	Arkansas	24%	6	31	R+4
Massachusetts	23%	11	64	R+3	Kentucky	23%	8	39	R+6
California	23%	55	119	R+1	Alabama	22%	9	48	R+1
Delaware	19%	3	122	R+6	Nebraska	22%	5	53	R+7
New Jersey	18%	14	136	D+2	Kansas	22%	6	59	R+7
Connecticut	17%	7	143	R+5	Tennessee	20%	11	70	R+5
Illinois	17%	20	163	R+8	North Dakota	20%	3	73	R+11
Maine	15%	4	167	R+2	South Dakota	18%	3	76	R+10
Washington St	15%	12	179	R+2	Louisiana	17%	8	84	D+1
Oregon	12%	7	186	R+4	Texas	16%	38	122	R+4
New Mexico	10%	5	191	R+5	Alaska	14%	3	125	D+8
Michigan	9.5%	16	207	R+7	Montana	14%	3	128	R+11
Minnesota	7.7%	10	217	R+3	Mississippi	11%	6	134	D+2
Wisconsin	6.8%	10	227	R+7	South Carolina	10%	9	143	R+1
Nevada	6.7%	6	233	R+6	Indiana	10%	11	154	R+11
Iowa	5.8%	6	239	R+4	Missouri	9.4%	10	164	R+9
New Hampshire	5.6%	4	243	R+4	Arizona	9.1%	11	175	R+1
Pennsylvania	5.4%	20	263	R+5	Georgia	7.8%	16	191	R+3
Colorado	5.4%	9	272	R+4	North Carolina	2.0%	15	206	R+2
Virginia	3.9%	13	285	R+2					
Ohio	3.0%	18	303	R+2					
Florida	0.9%	29	332	R+2					

NATIONAL PRESIDENTIAL EXIT POLL: 26,565 RESPONDENTS

The 3rd column of the table below gives the proportion of the 2012 electorate each population characteristic made up. The 4th column gives the 2012 winner of that characteristic, and the percentage margin of victory (O = Obama, R = Romney). The 5th column gives the change in vote for that characteristic from 2008 (D = toward Democrats, R = toward Republicans).

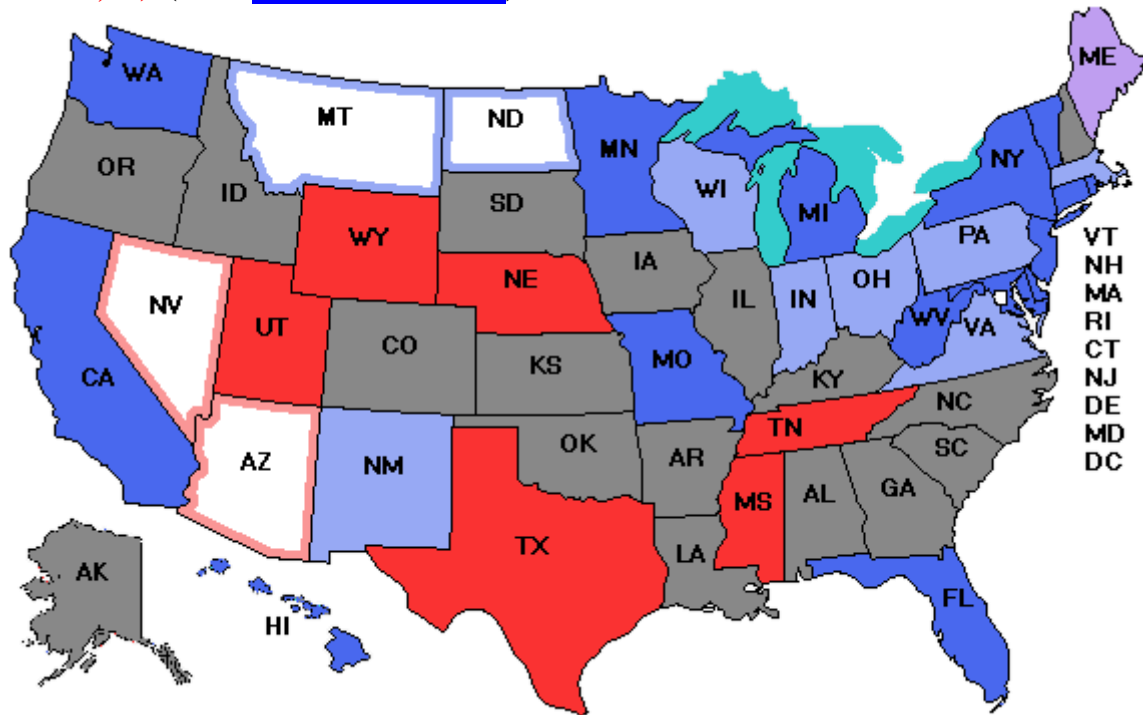
		2012 % of Voters	2012 Winner and Margin	Change from 2008
Sex	Men	47%	R+7	R+8
	Women	53%	O+11	R+2
Age	18-29	19%	O+23	R+11
	30-44	27%	O+7	D+1
	45-64	38%	R+4	R+5
	65+	16%	R+12	R+4
Party ID	Democrat	38%	O+85	D+6
	Republican	32%	R+87	R+6
	Independent	29%	R+5	R+13
Race	White	72%	R+20	R+8
	Black	13%	O+87	R+4
	Hispanic	10%	O+44	D+8
Income	Under \$50k	41%	O+22	None
	\$50k-\$100k	31%	R+6	R+6
	Over \$100k	28%	R+10	R+10
Ideology	Liberal	25%	O+75	R+4
	Moderate	41%	O+15	R+6
	Conservative	35%	R+65	R+7
Religion	Protestant	53%	R+15	R+6
	Catholic	25%	O+2	R+7
	Other	7%	O+51	None
	None	12%	O+44	R+8
White Evangelical?	Yes	26%	R+57	R+7
	No	74%	O+23	R+3
Size of Place	Urban	32%	O+26	R+2
	Suburban	47%	R+2	R+4
	Rural	21%	R+20	R+12

Obama's vote held up well from 2008 in the cities, and among poor people and women, and he actually got swings in his favour with Democrats and Hispanics. Romney's biggest swings were with Independents (13%), rural voters (12%), young people (11%) and the well-off (10%). Despite Romney winning Independents by 5%, the Democrats' partisan advantage of 6% over the Republicans was able to carry Obama to his win. Most voting proportions were similar to 2008, though the white vote was down 2% to 72%, and has fallen steadily from 87% in 1992. These voting proportions were very different in the 2010 mid-term elections, when the electorate was older, whiter and more conservative than in either the 2008 or 2012 Presidential elections.

More on the Exit Poll:

- 54% approved of how Obama is handling his Presidency, and 45% disapproved. For Romney, 47% had a favourable opinion, and 50% an unfavourable one.
- The proportion of all votes for the Democratic Presidential candidate that are non-white has risen from 21% in 1992 to 44% in 2012. In contrast, non-whites made up only 11% of Romney's 2012 vote.
- In 1988, Bush snr won whites by a similar margin to Romney, and won that election in a landslide, with 426 electoral votes out of 538.
- 59% of all voters in 2012 thought abortion should be legal always or most of the time. 36% thought it should be illegal most of the time, including 13% always illegal.
- 21% supported the tea party movement, and 30% were opposed, with the rest neutral.
- 59% thought the economy was the most important issue, and voted for Romney by 4%. Obama made this up with the 18% who said health care was most important, winning this group by 51%.
- Despite high unemployment, Obama won the 38% who rated unemployment as their biggest economic problem by 10%.
- 26% think the 2010 Health Care law should be expanded, 24% want it partly repealed, 25% want it fully repealed, and only 18% want it kept as is.
- 60% said income tax rates should be increased, either for everyone or for those earning over \$250k. Only 35% said tax rates shouldn't be increased at all.
- 65% said illegal immigrants should be offered legal status, and 28% said they should be deported.
- Romney only won the overall question on who would be best able to handle the economy by 1%. Obama won the "who would best handle Medicare" question by 8%.
- 51% said the government is doing too much while 43% say it should be doing more.
- Only 23% say the US economy is currently good, but 39% say it's getting better, 30% worse, and 29% say it's staying much the same.
- 53% said Bush was more to blame than Obama for the current economic problems, while 38% said Obama was more to blame.
- 55% say the US economic system favours the wealthy, and 39% say it's fair to most Americans.
- 53% said Romney policies would favour the rich, and 34% said they'd favour the middle class.
- 49% said same sex marriage should be legal in their state, and 46% said it shouldn't.
- 42% said Obama's response to Hurricane Sandy was an important factor in their vote, and 54% said it was not an important factor; those who said Obama's response was important voted for him by a 37% margin.

SENATE RESULTS MAP: DEMOCRATS 25 (55 TOTAL, +2), REPUBLICANS 8 (45 TOTAL, -2) (from ElectoralVote.com)



A grey colour means there was no Senate race in that state in 2012.

Counting the Maine Independent as a Democrat, the Dems gained Maine, Massachusetts and Indiana, while Nebraska was the lone GOP gain, so the Dems gained a net 2 seats. The Dems had 30 Senators not up for election, to 37 for the GOP, and won the 33 Senators elected in 2012 by a 25-8 margin, for an overall Dem majority of 55-45. All 2012 Senate elections were for full 6-year terms.

The Dems performed well in their north-eastern base, regaining Ted Kennedy's old Massachusetts seat, while a friendly Independent won Maine after a popular GOP incumbent retired. Dem candidates won decisive victories in presidential swing states Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Virginia and Florida, with the GOP holding Nevada mainly due to a poor Dem candidate. More surprising was the Dems' performance in holding onto red states Montana and North Dakota, especially as North Dakota was an open seat, with no incumbent. West Virginia had the greatest difference between Presidential and Senate results, with Obama getting crushed by 27% there, while popular Dem incumbent Joe Manchin won by 24%.

The GOP should have won in both Missouri and Indiana. If GOP veteran Richard Lugar had not lost the Indiana GOP primary to Richard Mourdock, Indiana would have been a sure GOP hold. In both Missouri and Indiana, the very conservative GOP candidates, respectively Todd Akin and Mourdock, made some dreadful remarks about pregnancies resulting from rape. These remarks handed clear victories to their Dem opponents, who would very probably have otherwise lost in these conservative states.

FULL SENATE RESULTS

In the following table (I) denotes incumbent; incumbents have considerable advantages in Senate races. Only 2 Senate incumbents out of 23 were defeated in 2012: Richard Lugar, who lost the Indiana GOP primary, and Republican Scott Brown in Massachusetts. Brown had won a big upset victory in a special Senate election held in January 2010 after Democratic incumbent Ted Kennedy died in office.

State	Democrat	%	Republican	%	Status
Arizona	Carmona	46.2%	Flake	49.2%	GOP Hold
California	Feinstein (I)	63%	Emken	37%	Dem Hold
Connecticut	Murphy	55%	McMahon	43%	Dem Hold
Delaware	Carper (I)	66%	Wade	29%	Dem Hold
Florida	Nelson (I)	55%	Mack	42%	Dem Hold
Hawaii	Hirono	63%	Lingle	37%	Dem Hold
Indiana	Donnelly	50%	Mourdock	44%	Dem Gain
Maine	King (Ind)	53%	Summers	31%	Ind Gain
Maryland	Cardin (I)	56%	Bongino	26%	Dem Hold
Massachusetts	Warren	54%	Brown (I)	46%	Dem Gain
Michigan	Stabenow (I)	59%	Hoekstra	38%	Dem Hold
Minnesota	Klobuchar (I)	65%	Bills	31%	Dem Hold
Mississippi	Gore	41%	Wicker (I)	57%	GOP Hold
Missouri	McCaskill (I)	55%	Akin	39%	Dem Hold
Montana	Tester (I)	48.6%	Rehberg	44.9%	Dem Hold
Nebraska	Kerrey	42%	Fischer	58%	GOP Gain
Nevada	Berkley	44.7%	Heller (I)	45.9%	GOP Hold
New Jersey	Menendez (I)	59%	Kyrillos	39%	Dem Hold
New Mexico	Heinrich	51%	Wilson	45%	Dem Hold
New York	Gillibrand (I)	72%	Long	26%	Dem Hold
North Dakota	Heitkamp	50.2%	Berg	49.3%	Dem Hold
Ohio	Brown (I)	51%	Mandel	45%	Dem Hold
Pennsylvania	Casey (I)	54%	Smith	45%	Dem Hold
Rhode Island	Whitehouse (I)	65%	Hinckley	35%	Dem Hold
Tennessee	Clayton	30%	Corker (I)	65%	GOP Hold
Texas	Sadler	41%	Cruz	56%	GOP Hold
Utah	Howell	30%	Hatch (I)	65%	GOP Hold
Vermont	Sanders (I)	71%	MacGovern	25%	Dem Hold
Virginia	Kaine	53%	Allen	47%	Dem Hold
Washington	Cantwell (I)	60%	Baumgartner	40%	Dem Hold
West Virginia	Manchin (I)	61%	Raese	37%	Dem Hold
Wisconsin	Baldwin	51%	Thompson	46%	Dem Hold
Wyoming	Chesnut	22%	Barrasso (I)	76%	GOP Hold

HOUSE RESULTS: REPUBLICANS 234 (-8), DEMOCRATS 201 (+8)**House Results Table**

	2010 Results			2012 Results			Swing		
	% Vote	Seats	% Seats	% Vote	Seats	% Seats	% Vote	Seats	% Seats
Republicans	51.4%	242	55.6%	48.0%	234	53.8%	-3.4%	-8	-1.8%
Democrats	44.8%	193	44.4%	49.2%	201	46.2%	4.4%	8	1.8%
Others	3.8%	0	0.0%	2.8%	0	0.0%	-1.0%	0	0.0%
Totals	100.0%	435	100.0%	100.0%	435	100.0%			

Dem and GOP net gains by state (per [CNN](#)):

Dem gains: 2 Ariz, 4 Cal, 3 Flor, 4 Ill, 1 Md, 1 Minn, 1 Nev, 2 NH, 2 NY, 1 Texas, 1 Wash

GOP gains: 1 Ark, 1 Georgia, 1 Ind, 1 Iowa, 1 Kent, 3 NC, 1 Okla, 1 Penn, 1 SC, 1 Utah

Despite winning the overall House popular vote by over 1%, the Dems failed to make many inroads into the GOP's 242-193 House majority that was earned after the 2010 election. The Dems did make a large number of gains in blue states Illinois and California, but these were partially offset by GOP gains in red states Arkansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma and South Carolina, with the Dems now having a total of 2 seats out of 22 across these 4 states. The 3 GOP gains in North Carolina were a result of gerrymandering, discussed below. The 2010 census also made it more difficult for the Dems by moving seats from the solidly Dem northeast to faster growing states such as Texas. There are three major reasons why the Dems lost the House so clearly despite winning the popular vote:

1. **Incumbency:** After the GOP's 2010 landslide, they had new incumbents in marginal seats. In the election after being first elected, incumbents tend to get a "sophomore surge". This sophomore surge probably helped GOP incumbents stave off Dem challengers despite the overall swing to the Dems. Incumbency is a major advantage in US elections, with 353 of 390 House incumbents who ran being re-elected, an incumbent re-election rate of 90%.
2. **Vote wasting:** The Dems do very well in the big cities, and particularly with black voters. However, winning districts with over 70% of the vote means that a lot of Dem votes are wasted in these districts. Even without partisan gerrymandering, the Dem vote is not efficiently distributed, and they would be more likely to lose when the overall vote is close than the GOP. A good example of vote wasting is New Jersey, where the Dems won the overall House vote by 11%, but the 12 CDs were evenly split 6-6. Since the Dems controlled the NJ legislature, NJ would not have had a GOP gerrymander, and NJ's GOP governor would have vetoed a Dem gerrymander.
3. **Gerrymandering:** 2010 was the year of the once-a-decade US census. The congressional district (CD) boundaries are based on this census, and require an approximately equal number of people per CD. However, this allows boundaries to be deliberately drawn for political advantage. At the 2010 mid-term elections, the GOP seized complete control of important state governments such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan and N Carolina. Boundaries in these states have been redrawn to advantage the GOP. The Dems did well in Illinois because this was the one big state where they had complete control after 2010, while California's nonpartisan commission drew boundaries that made Californian CDs competitive, and the Dems won the competitive races. In the 5 presidential swing states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina and Michigan, the combined representation was **51 GOP to**

21 Dems, even though the Dems won the overall House popular vote across these 5 states by 0.5%. The gerrymandering looks even worse at the Presidential level; Obama won the popular vote across the 5 states above by 4%, but carried at most one more CD than House Democrats. In my opinion, partisan gerrymandering is a blight on the US system. The Australian Electoral Commission is independent, and has complete authority to draw boundaries in Australia.

Overall, the Dem gains in blue states like California, Illinois and New York were cancelled out to some extent by GOP gains in red states. Florida was the only big presidential swing state where the Dems gained seats, with the GOP holding up well in all other big presidential swing states. The Dems must win more seats in the big swing states to win the House majority. Without gerrymandering, I still think the GOP would have won a smaller majority, due to reasons (1) and (2) above; in this case, I think the GOP would have between 220 and 225 seats.

There are huge regional differences in the distribution of House seats. In the strong Dem north-east, the Dems won all 21 seats in the New England states of Conn, Mass, RI, NH, Vermont and Maine, 8 of 9 seats in Maryland and Delaware, and 21 of 27 in New York. In the strong GOP south and plains states, the GOP won all 18 seats in Idaho, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Arkansas, while the Dems only have one seat in each of Utah, Kentucky, W Virginia, S Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. In the 4 deep south states previously listed, the 1 Dem seat will be a black majority district, with the GOP winning white majority districts easily.

Since states report their statewide results by county, and not by CD, determining which Presidential candidate won each CD can be difficult. Dave Wasserman, who reported the popular vote for both the Presidency and the House, says that Romney definitely won 225 CDs, Obama 206, and 4 are to be determined. Given that Obama won the overall popular vote by 3.9%, this is yet more evidence of how partisan gerrymandering has skewed the House results. In 2008, Obama won 242 CDs to McCain's 193. Wasserman also says that only 15 Republicans sit in certain Obama districts, and 9 Democrats sit in certain Romney districts; the number of House members in CDs won by the opposite party's Presidential candidate is much less than in 1992, indicating greater polarisation.

STATE RESULTS

3 states (Maine, Maryland and Washington) approved gay marriage at referenda, while Minnesota quashed a proposed ban on gay marriage – these states are the first to vote for gay marriage at referenda. California voted in favour of a tax increase on the wealthy. Washington and Colorado became the first states to vote to legalise marijuana.

In state legislative elections, Democrats recovered somewhat from their shellacking in 2010, and now have complete control over the legislative process in Minnesota and Colorado after gaining legislative chambers in those states. If they choose, Democrats could thus gerrymander these states as they wish. In California, the Democrats now have a 2/3 supermajority in both houses of the state legislature. However, the GOP still has full control over the big presidential swing states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Florida, North Carolina, Virginia and Michigan. Governors in most big states will not be up for election until 2014. In order to impose their own gerrymander, the Dems would need to gain full control of these states; this means winning the governorship, and both houses of the state legislature. Otherwise, districts will not be redrawn until after the 2020 census.

A LOOK AT THE 2014 AND 2016 ELECTIONS

Despite winning the House popular vote in 2012 by over 1.3 million votes, Democrats only won 201 of 435 seats. What's more, according to US election analyst Nate Silver, the Dems lost just 11 races by 5% or less, meaning that even if the Dems had done 5% better in each CD, they would have won 212 seats, 6 short of a majority. The president's party tends to lose seats in mid-term election years, and minorities don't turn out as strongly, so the Dems are unlikely to win the House in 2014. Because gerrymandering confines minorities to very safe Dem seats, the Dems need to do much better with the white vote to win back the House.

In 2008, the Dems won the 33 Senate races 20-13; this means that Dems will have 7 more seats to defend in 2014 than the GOP. Only 1 GOP seat looks at all vulnerable: Susan Collins in Maine, with other GOP seats in strong GOP states. On the other hand, Dems have vulnerable Senators in Arkansas, Louisiana, Alaska, Montana and S Dakota. In a big GOP year, the Dems could lose many Senate seats. The best hope for the Dems is that the GOP selects very conservative opponents who self-destruct, as has happened in at least 4 races in the last 2 cycles.

In 2016, there will not be an incumbent President running for re-election, so both parties' nominations will be hotly contested. Given the continuing demographic shifts, if the economy has improved by 2016, the Dem candidate should be favoured. Ohio and Florida are must-win states for the GOP, and their best chance of winning the White House would then be to win either Virginia and one other state, or Pennsylvania. However, Virginia is leaning more Dem, as the DC suburbs expand, and Obama won Pennsylvania by over 5%.

There is some hope for the GOP in Penn, as, relative to the national popular vote, it has trended to the GOP over the last 8 years. In '04, Kerry won Penn by 2.5%, while losing nationally by the same margin, but in '12, Obama won Penn by 5.4%, while winning nationally by 3.9%, so the gap between national and Penn vote has narrowed from 5% to 1.5%. However, the south-western states of Nevada, New Mexico and Colorado, which were Bush states in '04, all went for Obama by 5% or more margins. With the Hispanic population in these states continuing to increase, these states are unlikely to go to the GOP except in a GOP landslide.

Senators elected in 2010 will also be up for election in 2016; in 2010, the GOP won the 34 full Senate term elections 24-10. As 2010 was such a huge GOP year, the Dems would be expected to make Senate gains in a Presidential election year.

US STATE ABBREVIATIONS

A full list of 2-letter US state abbreviations (used on the Senate map) can be found here:

<http://www.stateabbreviations.us/>

Less obvious ones:

AL – Alabama, AK – Alaska, AZ – Arizona, AR – Arkansas, CT – Connecticut, IA – Iowa, GA – Georgia, KS – Kansas, KY – Kentucky, ME – Maine, MD – Maryland, MA – Massachusetts, MI – Michigan, MN – Minnesota, MS – Mississippi, MO – Missouri, MT – Montana, NE – Nebraska, NV – Nevada, PA – Pennsylvania, TN – Tennessee, TX – Texas, VT – Vermont, VA - Virginia

SOURCES

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Nate Silver on House polarisation

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