

U.S. General Election 2006: Overview for the Great Lakes

The Great Lakes region delivered results on Election Day that were very similar to the rest of the country. For example, the Great Lakes turned out 45 percent of the voting-eligible population compared to nearly 40 percent nationwide (see below).

Preliminary Voter Turnout Estimate Among Voting-eligible Population (VEP)

VAP: Voting Age Population, includes non-eligible voting-age persons (e.g., prison population)

VEP: Voting Eligible Population, includes only those legally eligible to vote

Vote for Highest Office (Projection): Actual vote numbers, where available as of 5am, Wednesday, November 8, are used and, where necessary, are supplemented with projections of the outstanding number of ballots counted after Election Day based on previous year elections.

GREAT LAKES VOTING RATE: MN > WI > MI > ~GL~ > OH > PA > ~US~ > IL > IN > NY

Average Voting Rate for Great Lakes States = 45.3%

State	VAP	VEP	Vote for Highest Office (Projection)	VEP Rate
United States	226,357,772	206,963,852	82,114,000	39.7%
Illinois	9,584,796	8,753,912	3,450,000	39.4%
Indiana	4,711,595	4,550,417	1,650,000	36.3%
Michigan	7,619,793	7,284,029	3,750,000	51.5%
Minnesota	3,959,945	3,698,428	2,225,000	60.2%
New York	14,780,774	12,858,883	4,400,000	34.2%
Ohio	8,738,438	8,479,549	3,800,000	44.8%
Pennsylvania	9,671,002	9,364,945	4,000,000	42.7%
Wisconsin	4,292,427	4,097,390	2,175,000	53.1%

Ref: http://elections.gmu.edu/Voter_Turnout_2006.htm

GOVERNORS and STATE LEGISLATURES

GOVERNORS

Democratic gubernatorial candidates gained in two states previously under GOP gubernatorial control — OH and NY (see below). Republican governors are now reduced to two: IN and MN. In anticipation of the 2008 election, governors can heavily influence how much their state does or does not support presidential candidates. It is worth noting that Democratic governors now control states that carry 295 electoral votes, much more than the 270 needed to win the presidency. Thus, they could provide major to whichever Democrat emerges from the 2008 primaries.

Another important result from last Tuesday's gubernatorial elections could come in how states interact with Washington. Governors of both parties have many grievances from heavy-handed policies of the Bush administration on such state-centric policy issues as healthcare, K-12 education and immigration. But this election leaves the Democrats now solidly in control of Congress, most governors' offices and a strong majority of statehouses. Hence, the White House may show willingness to cooperate and consider state perspectives on a range of issues.

LEGISLATURES

Prior to Nov. 7, 2006, Republicans held majorities in both chambers of five state legislatures: IN, MI, OH, PA, WI and Democrats controlled both chambers in one: IL. The statehouses were split between the parties in MN and NY. The 2006 election saw party control switch from **Republican** to **Democrat** in the House chamber of three states: IN, MI, MN and in the Senate chamber of one state: WI.

Democrats now control both chambers in two states: IL, MN while control by Republicans has been reduced to one: OH. Four statehouses remain split: IN, MI, NY, and WI. In PA, the House is split equally, with one seat still to be decided, while the Republicans control the Senate.

Shifts in party control could produce major changes in IL and MN over the course of the 2007 legislative season due mainly to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June granting states the power to redraw political districts whenever they wish, instead of only after each decennial census.

2006 POST-ELECTION PARTISAN COMPOSITION OF STATE LEGISLATURES

(AS OF NOVEMBER 9)

Party: **Democrat** **Republican**

State	Change in Control	Senate				House			
		Total Seats	Dem	Rep	Un-Decided	Total Seats	Dem	Rep	Un-decided
Illinois	None	59	37	22	0	118	66	52	0
Indiana	House	50	17	33	0	100	51	49	0
Michigan	House	38	17	21	0	110	58	52	0
Minnesota	House	67	44	23	0	134	85	49	0
New York	None	62	27	34	1	150	105	45	0
Ohio	None	33	12	21	0	99	46	53	0
Pennsylvania	House Tied	50	21	29	0	203	101	101	1
Wisconsin	Senate	33	18	15	0	99	46	53	0
Great Lakes Totals		392	193	198	1	1013	558	454	1
Total Change*			+18	-18			+55	-48	

* Eight vacant House seats in the last session.

U.S. SENATE and HOUSE ELECTIONS

The Senate races contributed two seats to the six-seat majority pickup for the Democrats nationwide (see below). In Minnesota, Amy Klobuchar (D) will be replacing Mark Dayton (D) who is retiring. Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH) lost his re-election bid to Sherrod Brown (D). The Senate delegation from Great Lakes states will now have a large majority of 12 Democrats to four Republicans which contrasts significantly with the near balance of 51 (including two independents) to 49 for the entire Senate.

One statistic that may be indicative of voter preferences for party candidates is the percentage by which the incumbents were re-elected. Across all of the districts in the Great Lakes, Democrat House incumbents received an average of 75 percent of the vote in their particular district (with a range of 62 – 80 percent). Republicans received on average 58 percent of the district vote (with a range of 55 – 62 percent).

Across the U.S. 90 percent of House incumbents were re-elected to their federal seats. The same result was seen in Great Lakes states where 112 of 125 districts re-elected their representatives. The **net change of 13 Great Lakes seats** resulted from Republican incumbents or open races going to Democrat candidates (see below). In addition, the turn over in the House seats is proportionally greater than for the U.S. as a whole. The Great Lakes districts are slightly more than 28 percent of the 435 seats in the House. However, the 13-seat shift contributed 46 percent of the **net 28 seat change** which occurred nationally and thus was notably concentrated in the Great Lakes region. Also, the majority of Democrats may change again because two races in Ohio are still undecided. In the 2nd District of Ohio Rep. Jean Schmidt (R) was ahead of Democrat Victoria Wulsin by about 2,800 votes and a count of provisional and absentee ballots will begin next week (November 19). Also, in the 15th District of Ohio Rep. Deborah Pryce (R) has a lead over Democrat Mary Jo Kilroy of about 3,500 votes. The count of provisional ballots in Ohio is being delayed in deference to the Ohio State-Michigan football game on November 18.

2006 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION RESULTS by STATE-PARTY AFFILIATION

	SENATE		HOUSE		
STATE	Elected	Party Change	Democrat	Republican	Party Change
IL	(none)		10	9	none
IN	Lugar (R)	none	5	4	3 R >> D
MI	Stabenow (D)	none	6	9	
MN	Klobuchar (D)*	none	5	3	1 R >> D
NY	Clinton (D)	none	23	6	3 R >> D
OH	Brown (D)	R >> D	7	11	1 R >> D
PA	Casey (D)	R >> D	11	8	4 R >> D
WI	Kohl (D)	none	5	3	1 R >> D
TOTAL	6D, 1 R	2 R >> D	72	53	13 R >> D

* color indicates new member

Open House races contributed to the shift in power in three states (see below). The 24th district in New York was open due to the retirement of Sherwood Boehlert (R) and was won by Democrat Michael Arcuri. The 18th district in Ohio was open because Bob Ney resigned after pleading guilty to corruption charges; this district was won by Zack Space (D). In Wisconsin, Mark Green gave up his seat in the 8th district to run against Governor Doyle, and Steve Kagen (D) won the race giving the Democrats another House seat.

STATE	Dist.	Party Change	OPEN HOUSE RACES		% Votes
			Republican	Democrat	
IL	6	None	Roskam (Hyde)		51
				Duckworth	49
	17	None		Hare (Evans)	57
			Zinga		43

MI	7	None	Walberg (Schwarz)		51
				Renier	46

MN	5	None		Ellison (Sabo)	56
			Fine		21
	6	None	Bachmann (Kennedy)		50
				Wetterling	42

NY	11	None		Clarke (Owens)	89
			Finger		8
	24	R >> D		Arcuri	54
			Meier (Boehlert)		45

OH	4	None	Jordan (Oxley)		60
				Siferd	40
	6	None		Wilson (Strickland)	62
			Blasdel		38
	13	None		Sutton (Brown)	61
			Foltin		39
	18	R >> D		Space	62
Padgett (Ney)				38	

WI	8	R >> D		Kagen	51
			Gard (Green)		49

Of all the House seats turned over by the Republicans, the incumbent candidates lost the major share to Democrats: a total of ten. Indiana incumbents lost three and Pennsylvania turned over four (see below).

STATE	Dist.	Party Change	INCUMBENT HOUSE RACES		% Votes
			Republican	Democrat	
IN	2	R >> D		Donnelly	54
			Chocola (i)		46
	8	R >> D		Ellsworth	61
			Hostettler (i)		39
	9	R >> D		Hill	50
Sodrel (i)				46	
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MN	1	R >> D		Walz	53
			Gutknecht (i)		47
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NY	19	R >> D		Hall	51
			Kelly (i)		49
	20	R >> D		Gillibrand	53
			Sweeney (i)		47
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PA	4	R >> D		Altmire	52
			Hart (i)		48
	7	R >> D		Sestak	56
			Weldon (i)		44
	8	R >> D		Murphy	50
			Fitzpatrick (i)		50
10	R >> D		Carney	53	
		Sherwood (i)		47	

GREAT LAKES TASK FORCE

The Task Force will review their membership in December, invite new ones and select co-chairs for the next session of Congress. The House co-chairs are presently balanced in party representation. With the current membership, there is a field of only two candidates for the Senate Republican co-chair. It remains to be seen if Senator Levin will continue to co-chair the Task Force given possible new responsibilities as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee which will oversee the war in Iraq; demands on his time will no doubt be considerable. Similarly, Congressman Dingell will assume the chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and his availability may be limited. In short, there may be changes in leadership of the Task Force in January.

Great Lakes Task Force – Senate and House

State	Co-Chairs	Senate	Co-Chairs	House
IL		Richard Durbin (D)	Mark Kirk (R)	Melissa Bean (D)
		Barack Obama (D)		Rahm Emanuel (D)
				Bobby Rush (D)
IN		Evan Bayh (D)		Peter Visclosky (D)
MI	Carl Levin (D)	Debbie Stabenow (D)	John Dingell (D)	Dale Kildee (D)
			Vernon Ehlers (R)	Sander Levin (D)
				Thaddeus McCotter (R)
				Candice Miller (R)
				Michael Rogers (R)
				Bart Stupak (D)
				Frederick Upton (R)
MN		Norm Coleman (R)		
NY		Hillary Clinton (D)	Louise Slaughter (D)	Maurice Hinchey (D)
		Charles Schumer (D)		John McHugh (R)
OH				Sherrod Brown (D)*
				Steven LaTourette (R)
				Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D)
PA		Arlen Specter (R)		
WI		Herb Kohl (D)		Ron Kind (D)

* Won Senate election in Ohio

COMMITTEE CHAIR ASSIGNMENTS

With a shift in party control of both the Senate and House come opportunities to guide the priorities of the decision agenda in Congress. This week both parties are selecting their leadership; shortly after this they will set about deciding who will chair the various committees. If a seniority system is followed as in the past when Democrats were in the majority, then the chairs of committees important to Great Lakes stakeholders will be:

PROSPECTIVE SENATE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Committee	Senator	Comments	Previous Service as Committee Chair
Agriculture	Tom Harkin (IA)	Will guide rewriting the expiring farm bill which is expected to feature regional issues over subsidies; Harkin authored the Conservation Security Title of the 2002 Act.	Yes
Appropriations	Robert Byrd (WV)	Expected to tightly control war spending and advocate strongly for Congress' role as coequal branch of government.	Yes
Commerce, Science and Transportation	Daniel Inouye (HI)	Will seek to regulate on issues under the jurisdiction of this committee.	Yes
Energy and Natural Resources	Jeff Bingaman (NM)	Will seek to reduce oil consumption and boost renewable fuel use.	Yes
Environment and Public Works	Barbara Boxer (CA)	Expected to address global warming, and strengthen the Endangered Species Act, Clean Air Act, and Clean Water Act.	No

PROSPECTIVE HOUSE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Committee	Congressman/woman	Comments	Previous Service as Committee Chair
Agriculture	Collin Peterson (MN)	Will be a key player in reauthorizing the farm bill.	No
Appropriations	David Obey (WI)	Will apply vast knowledge of federal programs to strategies for funding them (or not).	Yes
Energy and Commerce	John Dingell (MI)	May resurrect an aggressive oversight and also push for business friendly initiatives; has a strained relationship with Pelosi.	Yes
Resources	Nick Rahall (WV)	Follows a loyal party line.	No
Science	Bart Gordon (TN)	Known to follow centrist political agenda.	No
Transportation and Infrastructure	James Oberstar (MN)	Been a bulwark of nonpartisanship in serving member's local projects, while also seeking to expand federal programs	No