

It's a Blue Wave From Sea to Shining Sea by Tom Schuler, District Leader

A gigantic blue wave washed over the nation on Election Day, giving Democrats control of both houses of Congress, and a majority of the nation's governors. From New Hampshire and Indiana, to Arizona and California, and all states in between, Democrats captured six Senate seats, 29 House seats, and 6 governors' offices.

After 12 years of near-total Republican control of Congress (Democrats had control of the Senate for 18 months in 2001 and 2002), voters sent a clear message that the current state of affairs in Washington could no longer stand. Six incumbent Republican senators were defeated: Chaffee of Rhode Island, Santorum of Pennsylvania, DeWine of Ohio, Burns of Montana, Talent of Missouri, and Allan of Virginia. These six losses gave the Democrats control, something no political pundit in either party was predicting before the election.

The House of Representatives saw many long-time Republican members defeated, including Nancy Johnson of Connecticut, Clay Shaw of Florida, Ann Northup of Kentucky, Sue Kelly of New York, and Richard Pombo of California. Pombo was chair of the House Resources Committee, which oversees environmental regulations, and he has long worked to gut many of the nation's clean air, water, and endangered species laws, so his defeat was especially pleasing. The new House will have 232 Democrats and 203 Republicans, and is set to elect the first woman Speaker when it convenes in January. How fitting that she will be a Democrat!

New Democratic governors will now occupy the highest offices in the states of Ohio, New York, Maryland, Massachusetts, Colorado, and Arkansas. This brings the total number Democratic governors to 28. Ohio, Colorado, and Arkansas will be critically important in the 2008 presidential election, so having the chief executives in place in these states is vital. To complement these new governors, Democrats also saw significant gains in state legislative races nationwide. Democrats now control 56 of the 99 legislative bodies (Nebraska has a one-house legislature) and have complete control—governor's office as well as both legislative chambers—in 16 states, compared to just 10 for the Republicans. This is a significant improvement for Democrats, and will become even more important as the process of redistricting seats in Congress and state legislatures gets underway later this decade.

The election results were historic in many respects: NO incumbent Democratic governor, senator or congressperson was defeated. This is astonishing; even in the momentous 1994 mid-term elections, Democrats picked up a few house seats and saw only two incumbent senators lose. This time, Democrats won in some very red areas of the country, including a congressional seat in Kansas and the Senate seats in Virginia and Missouri. Now it's time to get to work and clean up the Republican mess!

UPCOMING GENERAL MEETINGS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2006
7:00 P.M.

Location to be Determined
Nomination for 2007 Club Officers and
Executive Committee

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2007
7:00 P.M.

Location to be Determined
Annual Meeting; Club Elections

The following letter was unanimously adopted by the CRDC Membership on November 16, 2006.

Hon. Howard Dean, Chairman
Democratic National Committee
430 South Capitol Street SE
Washington DC, 20003

Dear Gov. Dean:

As members of the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club in New York City, we wanted to congratulate you and your colleagues on the success of the 2006 election. We believe that your 50 state strategy proved to be a winning strategy because it included voters from all parts of the country in the electoral process. We hope that you and the Democratic National Committee will continue to build on the gains that were made in this election.

We urge you to continue the 50 state strategy which not only elected Democratic members to Congress but changed statehouses to Democratic governance throughout the country. This approach gives our party greater hope for the 2008 presidential election.

With best wishes,

FOR THE CHELSEA REFORM
DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Carla Nordstrom
CRDC Secretary

It's a Near Tidal Wave in New York

by Tom Schuler, District Leader

Democrats swept all statewide offices as the blue wave that washed over the nation on Election Day became a near tidal wave in New York. Eliot Spitzer garnered more than 70% of the vote, carrying every region of the state and putting the Governor's office back in the Democratic column for the first time in 12 years. Hillary Clinton, Andrew Cuomo, and Alan Hevesi all won their races by overwhelming margins as well. Democrats now hold every statewide elected position.

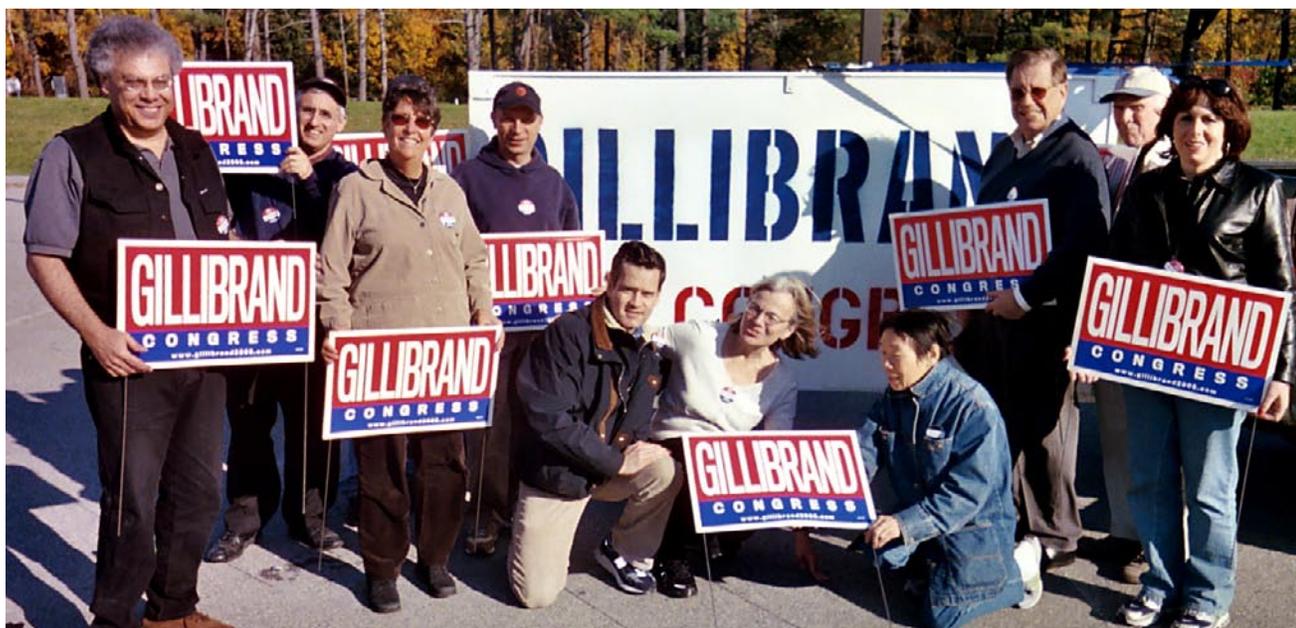
But the wave did not end there, Democrats picked up three congressional seats in New York: John Hall defeated Sue Kelly for a seat in the lower Hudson Valley, Mike Accuri won the seat of retiring Sherwood Boehlert in the southern tier, and Kirsten Gillibrand defeated John Sweeney for an upstate seat. In fact, once Kirsten's victory was ascertained on Election Night, the network news organizations began proclaiming that the Democrats had taken control of the House of Representatives, garnering the 15th seat needed (we eventually won 29). The New York Congressional

delegation is now 23 Democrats to 6 Republicans. It's important to note that fewer than 10,000 votes would have seen two more Republicans defeated, putting those seats at the top of the list for pick-ups in 2008.

Gains were made in the state legislature as well; Democrats won three seats in the State Assembly, bringing their total to a historic 108 seats, compared to 42 for the Republicans. Democrats are now three seats away from control of the State Senate. Andrea Stewart Cousins defeated longtime Republican Senator Nick Spano of Yonkers. Her victory, along with that of Senator David Valseky, Democrat of Syracuse, whom the Republicans targeted for defeat, sets the stage for critical legislative elections in 2008.

Other notable Democratic victories included the supervisor of Islip in Suffolk County, further eroding what was once Republican dominance on Long Island; control of the Broom County Legislature, a first in more than a decade; and several county positions, particularly judicial races in the Hudson Valley and upstate, cementing earlier Democratic victories and bringing brighter prospects for the future.

In the next issue we'll have a complete analysis of the election returns from our district.



CRDC Part of the Gillibrand Victory

Last month many CRDC members joined VID and GLID members for a jointly sponsored us trip to Hyde Park to campaign for Kirsten Gillibrand who was running for Congress. We were thrilled that she won and will be a part of the new Democratic majority in Congress. Word in DC is that Congressional staffers are already calling her the "dragon slayer" for defeating incumbent John Sweeney, who was a powerful member of the House Appropriations Committee.

City Rules for Trump and Against Neighborhoods

by Andrew Berman, CRDC Member

In a tremendous blow to efforts to stop overdevelopment, prevent illegal luxury high-rises, preserve blue-collar jobs and industries, and maintain neighborhood character, the City has decided to allow Donald Trump and partners to build the first-ever “condo-hotel” in a manufacturing zone, ruling that long-understood prohibitions against such development in these neighborhoods do not apply to condo-hotels. As a result, expect to see many more of these luxury high-rises, which largely house “pieds-a-terre” for wealthy jet-setters, to appear in neighborhoods zoned for manufacturing where they had never been before, such as parts of western and southern Chelsea, western Hell’s Kitchen, the Garment Center, the Flatiron, the Meatpacking District, the Far West Village south of Barrow Street, and elsewhere in Lower Manhattan, Brooklyn, and western Queens (see www.gvshp.org/TrumpCB2zoning.htm#map).

That the City would do this, in spite of clear prohibitions against this type of development, and specific promises made to the Chelsea and Hell’s Kitchen neighborhoods after 2005 rezonings that their remaining manufacturing zones would be protected, is appalling. These types of far-reaching changes are ONLY supposed to result from zoning changes, which require public hearings, review of environmental impacts, and public votes by Community Boards, the City Council, and the City Planning Commission. Instead, this was an entirely closed-door process which the public was shut out of, though it is the public – and especially neighborhoods in and around Chelsea – that will be most affected.

The City is trying to make this look less egregious by offering to have Trump and co. voluntarily sign a “restrictive declaration.” But from everything we know about the agreement they are negotiating, it does not go far enough, its enforceability is questionable, it will not apply to other condo-hotels that follow in Trump’s footsteps, and it may be used by the City to try to defend their decision against a legal challenge. And it’s no substitute for the City enforcing the law and keeping its word to our neighborhoods.

For more information, see www.gvshp.org/trump.htm.

The Proper Use of the Majority

by Steven Skyles-Mulligan, CRDC President

Now that the giddiness of the election is finally starting to wear off, I’m looking forward to observing our newly-elected majorities in action. Of course I want them to reign in an administration that is clearly ill-equipped to deal with the realities of our world. I’d also like to see them try to enact progressive legislation to create better living and working conditions for all Americans, stronger protections for the environment and bring about an end to the reprehensible torture bill. And I’m looking forward to speeches on the floors of both houses that call us back to our true values, not the made-up, hatred-filled trumpety that we’ve had to endure so much of during the last twelve years.

What I am most interested in, though, is how our new majorities treat the Republican minority, particularly in the House. During their forty years in the wilderness, the Republicans complained mightily that the Democrats treated them unfairly. Once they won the majority in 1994, however, the Republicans forgot their earlier concerns about fairness. They slashed funding and staffing for the minority, tightened control to stifle debate and even began holding committee meetings in secret.

Unfortunately, this is not surprising; two of the most authoritarian and abusive occupants of the Speaker’s chair were Republicans: Thomas B. “Czar” Reed at the end of the nineteenth century and “Uncle” Joe Cannon in the early twentieth. Reed was the first Speaker to truly restrict the rights of debate, particularly on the minority side. An intelligent man and author of the rules then in use (Speakers used to chair the Rules Committee), Reed once responded to a Democrat who used the written rules to challenge a ruling from the chair by saying, “I must have been mistaken when I wrote that.” Cannon was famous for appointing and removing committee chairs on a whim, among other things. Gingrich and Hastert have merely been lesser sons of a rotten line.

With the gavel comes power, but also responsibility. That includes ensuring that the rules are applied evenly, that debate is open and that the majority does not trample on the rights of the minority. In

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Proper Use of the Majority *cont'd from pg 3*

tems based on the English one, this is taken so seriously that the Speaker severs all party ties in order to represent the entire House. I don't know that I would go that far, certainly not at this point. But while I would like to see the Republicans punished and forced to live under their own rules, I think I would much rather see our side do what's right and make us once again an example for all the world.

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Join CRDC Today!

It's Never
Too Early
To Pay Your
2007 Dues

If you haven't already, become a 2007 member of CRDC, New York City's most progressive Democratic club. Just fill out this form and return it to us.

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