



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 3, 2010

Gubernatorial Victories for GOP a Big Deal

The 2010 midterm elections promised to be dramatic, and they certainly did not disappoint, particularly for the Republican Party. Among the notable GOP winners yesterday are 10 new Republican gubernatorial victors. As Republicans have taken back the majority of governors' mansions on Tuesday, they are now in the powerful position of delegating the process of partisan redistricting for the next 10 years.



USA Today reports, "Several races are too close to call hours after the polls closed. But the GOP won at least 20 governorships in addition to six Republican governors not on the ballot."

Ten of the GOP gubernatorial victories were in seats held by Democrats.

In Ohio, Republican congressman John Kasich defeated Democratic Governor Ted Strickland.

Iowa voters chose Republican Terry Grandstad, who served as Iowa's governor 12 years ago, over Democratic challenger Chet Culver. Culver's defeat makes him the first incumbent Iowa governor to lose an election since 1962.

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Pennsylvania's Republican attorney general, Tom Corbett, maintained a generous edge over his Democratic challenger Dan Onorato, Allegheny County executive.

In Kansas, Republican Senator Sam Brownback defeated Tom Holland, information technology company holder.

In Michigan, Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero fell to Republican businessman Rick Snyder. The Democratic challenger had a difficult time convincing Michigan voters that he could rescue them from the state's high unemployment and foreclosures.

Likewise, Republican Bill Haslam defeated Democratic beverage distributor Mike McWherter in Tennessee.

Former Republican U.S. Attorney Matt Mean accepted the gubernatorial position in Wyoming after defeating Democratic Party chief Leslie Peterson — a major victory in a state whose last four governors have been Democrats.

In Wisconsin, conservative Republican Scott Walker defeated Democrat Tom Barrett after promises to cut taxes and spending in the state.

Additionally, three states elected their first female governors — Mary Fallin in Oklahoma, Susana Martinez in New Mexico, and Tea Party favorite Nikki Haley in South Carolina — all of whom are Republicans. The governorships in both Oklahoma and New Mexico had been held by Democrats.



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Commenting on the Republican gubernatorial victories, Mississippi Republican Gov. Haley Barbour remarked, "Four years ago, Republicans controlled just 22 governorships. The fact that we've already reached a majority tonight is a testimony to the four-year plan our governors and staff developed and executed."

More GOP victors may emerge pending the results of elections that are currently too close to call.

One such contest is the race for Illinois governor between Democratic incumbent Pat Quinn and Republican challenger Bill Brady, who are currently separated by a mere 10,000 votes with about 99 percent of the vote counted. *St. Louis Today* reports that Quinn is "on the winning end of that gap, but there's no sure way to know how that remaining 1 percent will fall."

Another race whose winner has not yet been projected is that of Oregon's governor. A local ABC News affiliate in Eugene, Oregon advised, "Republican Chris Dudley leads Democrat John Kitzhaber by just over 13,000 votes, but there are still 153,468 uncounted votes statewide as of 9 a.m. Wednesday."

Up until a few hours ago, the Florida gubernatorial race was also too close to call; ultimately, however, Republican businessman Rick Scott maintained an extremely slight edge over Democrat Alex Sink, who conceded to Scott early Wednesday morning. Scott's victory means that the Florida governorship will remain in GOP control, as it is currently served by Republican-turned-independent Charlie Crist.

As for the Democrats, the defeat of Republican CEO Meg Whitman in California's gubernatorial campaign by state Attorney General Jerry Brown is notable, as Whitman spent more than \$140 million of her own money on the campaign, the most expensive non-presidential race ever. Brown's victory is a Democratic pickup, as the governorship is currently held by Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Most of the other Democratic gubernatorial victories were no surprise, as they were seats held by incumbents which were expected to remain Democrat, including those in Arkansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York.

Republican Governors Association Chairman Haley Barbour asserts that Tuesday's governors' races were an indication of the way things are going in Washington.

A Republican majority of governorships is worth more than just bragging rights, too.

USA Today writes, "The elections coincided with a 20-year cycle in which two-thirds of the nation's governors are elected the same year as the decennial Census. That's important because governors will help draw congressional districts based on population changes — a process that could give a partisan advantage where one party controls the legislature and the governor."

A redistricting expert and associate professor at George Mason University explains:

The Republican wins in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Texas — where incumbent Rick Perry beat a challenge by former Houston Mayor Bill White, a Democrat — put the GOP in a good position to redraw the map for the next decade.

Likewise, with Republican majorities in both houses in Indiana, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Alabama, Michigan, and Wisconsin, they have guaranteed control over the redistricting process.

In GOP-controlled Florida, however, a measure that institutes non-partisan redistricting passed yesterday, though the Republicans won in the passage of a similar measure in Democratic-controlled California.

Overall, Republicans find themselves in the powerful position of redrawing the political landscape for



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elections to come.

Photo: The Florida Governor's Mansion



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