

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

What a Difference a Month Makes!

It's finally over and the results are in. The majority party has shifted in the U.S. Senate and the U. S. House has become more Republican.

With that shift comes a shift in leadership with Senator Mitch McConnell taking over the reins as leader of the majority party in the Senate. Representative John Boehner maintains the Republican leadership in the House.



As Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) so eloquently described the historic losses by con-

gressional Democrats ...“This is a real ass-whuppin.” Democratic losses “started at the White House and this administration and it went all the way to leadership...I think that people felt that the Democrats didn’t work, did not reach out, basically played politics all the way

through.” *Source: Post Politics, Joe Manchin on Election Results, 11/5/14, www.washingtonpost.com/blogs*

With the election concluded, we’ve seen these changes in the South.

- **Republican Tom Cotton** replaced **Democratic Senator Mark Pryor** in Arkansas. The congressional delegation from the state is now all Republican.
- **Democratic Senator Jay Rockefeller** of West Virginia retired and has been replaced by **Republican Shelley Moore Capito**.
- In North Carolina, **Democratic Senator Kay Hagan** lost to **Republican Thom Tillis**.
- **Democratic Senator Mary Landrieu** is in a run-off with **Republican challenger Bill Cassidy**. The run-off is scheduled for December 6th and Senator Landrieu is projected to lose the run-off.

- **Democratic Senator Mark Warner of Virginia** held on by a slim margin over challenger **Republican Ed Gillespie**.
- **Republican Mitch McConnell** handily defeated his **Democratic challenger, Alison Lundergan Grimes** in Kentucky.

The GOP majority in the U.S. House is the highest since the 1928 election. As Larry Sabato of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia stated, *“The Democrats’ road to a future House majority is steep, because their last redoubts in the Deep South and Appalachia are now gone....Previous House majorities featured a fair number of seats from conservative districts but those kinds of Democrats are all but extinct now.”* *Source: Yup, It Was a Wave, Sabato’s Crystal Ball, 11/16/14, www.centerforpolitics.org*

November 2014

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Inside this issue:

<i>Insights on the Mid- Terms</i>	2
<i>Meet the New Governors</i>	3
<i>Meet the New Senators</i>	3
<i>Reauthorization: Finally!</i>	4

What Now?

With a few exceptions, the South is now solidly “red” or Republican, reflecting a conservative cultural perspective and a major shift in party affiliation. This change, from Democratic to Republican, has essentially occurred in a generation and shows little signs of changing in the foreseeable future.

How will this impact your advocacy strategies and how you frame the discussion?

They Missed the Mark: Some Insights on the Mid-terms

As you're surely recognizing by now, much of the information that we're providing to you concerning elections and politics is being provided by the Center for Politics of the University of Virginia. This group is recognized nationally and internationally for their analysis and insights into American elections and the politics that drive those elections.

We're going to share with you their insights into what happened during the 2014 midterms. Entitled, *14 from '14: Quick Takes on the Mid-term*, this article provides 14 "bite-sized observations" after reviewing the election results. Here are some of their "takes".

⇒ **The polls really were worse than usual.** After predictions of contests such as that between Kentuckians **McConnell** and **Grimes** as being "a dead heat", the final result in Kentucky was an election margin of



McConnell & Grimes

220,000 votes.

The margin in the Arkansas race of Pryor and Cotton was even more unexpected. Cotton took the contest by double digits.

⇒ **Republicans still ride roughshod in Appalachia.** In the 2014 statewide races, Democrats won only 45 of 428 Appalachian counties, a complete turnaround from the 1970's.

⇒ **With some exceptions, Democrats remain dominant in urban areas.** These counties in the South include Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Hillsborough and Orange in **Florida**; Harris, Dallas, Tarrant, Bexar and Travis in **Texas**; Wake and Mecklenburg in **North Carolina**; Fulton in **Georgia** and Fairfax in **Virginia**.

⇒ **Who dominates Governor's mansions?** "Democrats once held control over Southern governorships by default, and now the reverse is true with Republicans dominating much of the South....Republicans had a surprisingly strong night in governor's races, winning statehouses in blue states like Illinois, Massachusetts and Maryland." With term limited **Governor Mike Beebe (D) of Arkansas** on his way out, a **Republican, Asa Hutchison**, took the gubernatorial contest.

⇒ **Outside groups didn't buy the election.** In spite of millions of dollars in media funding from outside groups, the attack ads and media blitz had little effect on the outcome of the election.

⇒ **Best 2014 candidates, blowout category.** **Shelley Moore Capito** of West Virginia crushed her Democratic opponent in an easy

victory. She replaced retiring **Democratic Senator Jay Rockefeller**, a Washington fixture in the Senate.

⇒ **Incumbents roll once again.** Being an incumbent carries distinct advantages in running for re-election and this election was no different. Of 389 incumbent **House** members who were running, 372 won re-election (96%). Of 27 incumbent **Senators**, 23 won re-election (85%). Of 27 **Governors**, 24 won re-election (89%). All incumbent Governors in the South who were running for re-election won.

These are only a few of the "quick takes" that were included in the article but we felt that these were the most revealing ones as they relate to the Southern region.

"It might not have been 1994 or 2010, but 2014 was a wave all its own: A late-breaking surge that lifted Republicans to some surprisingly strong performances across the country."

Notably, though, the argument for this election being a "wave" has more to do with the House and gubernatorial races, as opposed to the main event, the Republican Senate takeover."

In Senate terms, 2014 turned out to be a classic sixth-year itch election, with a loss of probably eight or nine seats for the president's party (depending on the runoff in Louisiana)." Source: Yup, It Was a Wave, Sabato's Crystal Ball

If you'd like to review all of the "quick takes" go to www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball

Meet the New SECA Governors

The SECA states have two new Governors, both Republicans.



Governor-Elect Greg Abbott

was raised in Duncanville, Texas. He received a law degree from Vanderbilt

University and

served as a state trial judge in Houston in the 129th District Court. In 1995, he was appointed to the Texas Supreme Court and in 2006 was elected as the 50th attorney general of Texas. He was re-elected to that position in 2010.

“We have the power to build a Texas that is better, brighter and stronger than any point in the last 200 years. With a quality education system as the foundation of the Bicentennial Blueprint, we will guarantee our children born today are prepared for the jobs of the future...And with the critical pillars of job creation, fiscal responsibility, and health and safety, opportunity and prosperity will define the Texas of tomorrow.” Governor Abbott’s *Bicentennial Blueprint*

Governor-Elect Asa Hutchinson

was raised on a farm in a small rural commu-



nity in Arkansas. He spent the majority of his career in the private sector as a small business owner, lawyer and entrepreneur. He also has a significant background in public service having served as United State Attorney for the Western District of Arkansas, U.S. Congressman from 1996 to 2001, director of the Drug Enforcement Administration and the first under secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

“Arkansas can lead our region in job creation and economic growth. We can take the lead nationally in technology education. All it takes is a plan, hard work and faith in the future.”

Asa’s Plan for Job Creation

Meet the New SECA Senators

The South is sending a new Republican group of members to the U.S. Senate in 2015. Some are moving from the U.S. House to the Senate but others will be new to the job. **Tom Cotton of Arkansas** and **Shelly Moore Capito of West Virginia** are moving to the Senate from the House. Both are replacing Democratic Senators as part of the “midterm wave”.

Thom Tillis of North Carolina and **David Perdue of Georgia** will join Cotton and Capito in the Senate. These two will be new to service at the federal level. Tillis is replacing a Democrat, having defeated incumbent Senator Kay Hagan. David Perdue won over his Democratic opponent for the seat being vacated by retiring Senator Saxby Chambliss, a Republican.

Although he was earlier appointed to fill out an unexpired term, **Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina** will return as a duly elected Senator from the state. He will be the first African American elected to the Senate from a former Confederate state since Reconstruction.

All are Republicans and are a part of the election “wave” that is remaking the U.S. Senate power structure.



Left to Right
Cotton (AR)
Capito (WV)
Tillis (NC)
Perdue (GA)
Scott (SC)

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"A Voice for Southern
Children"

How to Use Public Policy Notes

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you... You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

This monthly newsletter is produced by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director.

SECA strives to provide non-partisan and non-biased information

that is of interest to early childhood educators. Sign up at

http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/policy_newsletter_sign.php

to receive notice of its availability each month.

Reauthorization: Finally!

On Monday, November 17, 2014, the U.S. Senate passed a reauthorization of the **Child Care & Development Block Grant**. This was the first time in 18 years that the Block Grant had been reauthorized and the bill is now on its way to the President's desk. The next battle will be the appropriations process to secure sufficient funding to support the provisions in the bill.

The *Child Care and Development Block Grant of 2014* amends the current CCDBG statute and is a description of what must be included in the state plan to receive and spend these federal funds. It includes these features:

- A focus on parent choice, information access and protection from a loss of benefits (eligibility redetermination) and enhanced information about eligibility and access to other programs for which a family may qualify.
- Professional development/training and the components of that system.
- The authority of the state and the federal government in regard to development and implementation of these plans.
- Licensing enforcement and the qualifications of licensors.
- Prohibition for use of these funds to develop a children's assessment that will be utilized to penalize providers or assess program effectiveness tied to

compensation.

- Disaster preparedness.

There are, of course, many other components of the bill that include payment practices, allocation of funds, etc. If you would like to view the Press Release from the **Education & The Workforce Committee**, go to <http://edworkforce.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=393281>

You'll find at the bottom of the press release a link that will take you directly to the full text of the final bill.

Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and **Richard Burr (R-NC)** were a driving force in the design and passage of the bill.