

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

The South Becomes More Red: The Republican Party Scores an Historic Victory

During the last few months, political polls began to show a significant shift in voting preference among voters nationwide. Democrats braced for the mid-term elections with the possibility of a Republican landslide on the horizon.

The mid-term elections proved to be as significant as Democrats had feared and the nation moved from a mix of “blue/Democrats” and “red/Republicans” to almost wholly red. The South had already begun that shift with the 2008 presidential election and the 2010 election brought Congressional offices and state offices into play as many SECA states shifted to more conservative voting patterns.

The shift in control of statehouses may have a major effect on what happens to public policy in the South because of different political philosophies about the role of government.

Prior to the 2010 election, the statehouses in **Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina** were controlled by the Republicans. **After the election**, the states of **Alabama and North Carolina** joined that group, with control of the statehouse switching from Democrat to Republican. **Eight of the fourteen SECA states now have statehouses controlled by Republicans.**

Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and West Virginia

maintained Democratic control of their statehouses.

Kentucky and Virginia maintained divided statehouses.

The issue becomes more complicated as you look at the states with one party in the Governor’s office and another party in control of the legislature. These SECA states have different parties in each position: **Louisiana, Mississippi, Kentucky, Virginia and North Carolina.** This division increases the opportunity for gridlock.

For more information go to http://www.ncsl.org/documents/statevote/2010/Legis_and_State_post.pdf.

Ballot Initiatives in 2010

In states across the country, voters expressed their displeasure with deficits and spending plans by putting constraints on state government. Voters chose to make it more difficult to raise taxes and backtracked on some legislative initiatives to relieve budget deficits. Other actions will make it harder to balance budgets in

states with significant budget deficits.

Florida voters defeated a measure that would have allowed larger class size requirements (more students with fewer teachers) with an estimated cost of \$2.9 billion this year. Keeping the state’s constitutional class size requirement is estimated

to cost \$40 billion over the next 10 years.

Oklahoma voters approved measures to block federal health care reforms, make English the official language of the state and prohibit courts from using Sharia and international law in making decisions.

Source: www.ncsl.org

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SECA Welcomes Six New Governors

With the election of 2010, six new governors were elected in the states of **Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Tennessee.**

Check out pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter to meet the six new Governors in our region. All information is quoted from their campaign websites and links are provided for more info.

Meet Alabama Governor-elect Robert Bentley (R)

Dr. Robert Bentley is a native of Columbiana in Shelby County, Alabama and a resident of Tuscaloosa.

He was commissioned as a captain in the Air Force during Vietnam and is a physician and founding partner of Alabama Dermatology Associates.

Dr. Bentley put himself through the University of Alabama, majoring in chemistry and biology. He graduated



from the University of Alabama School of Medicine in 1968 and joined the Air Force in 1969, serving as a general medical officer.

In 2002, he was elected to the Alabama State House of Representatives and established a record fighting for fiscal conservatism, strong traditional family values and limited government. During the 2010 session, Dr. Bentley sponsored a Constitutional Amendment proposing that no individual health care provider or business in

Alabama be required to take part in a national health care system.

Dr. Bentley has signed the *No New Taxes Pledge by the Americans for Tax Reform*.

He believes in: 1) growing the economy and creating jobs without increasing taxes or spending and 2) more transparency and accountability in Alabama's government. He is a pro-life, pro-marriage and pro-second amendment conservative. He follows Governor Bob Riley (R)

Source: www.robertbentley2010.com

Meet Florida Governor-Elect Rick Scott (R)

Richard Scott is known as an innovator in business, health care and politics and has developed a reputation in the health care industry for providing affordable, high quality services through a patient-centric approach to cost and care. He is the founder of two health care providers, Columbia Hospital Corporation and Solantic Corporation, which builds and operates urgent care facilities throughout Florida. He also founded Conservatives for Patients' Rights, an organization dedicated to defending free market prin-

ciples in health care that successfully helped to defeat the government-run public option in health care.

He earned a law degree from Southern Methodist University.

In the campaign, he introduced *Rick Scott's Plan to Turn Florida Around: 7 Steps. 700,000 New Jobs and 7 Years*. His seven steps included: 1) accountability and budgeting, 2) reduce



government spending, 3) regulatory reform, 4) focus on job growth and retention, 5) world class universities, 6) reduce property taxes and 7) eliminate Florida's business tax over 7 years.

He follows Governor Charlie Crist (I) who lost a race for the U.S. Senate. For a copy of the plan go to

www.rickscottforflorida.com

Meet Georgia Governor-Elect Nathan Deal (R)

Nathan Deal was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Democrat in 1992 before switching to the Republican Party in 1995. On March 1, 2010, Congressman Deal announced his plans to resign from Congress to run for Governor of Georgia.

In Congress, Deal voted for all four articles of impeachment for President Clinton and since 1996 has consistently garnered ratings of 90 or higher

from the American Conservative Union (ACU).



He also introduced H.R. 698, the Citizenship Reform Act, which would eliminate birth-right citizenship in the U.S. He earned a Law

degree from Mercer University School of Law and served as a member of the Georgia State Senate from 1981-1993.

He served in the United States Army from 1966-1968 and as judge of the juvenile court of Hall County, Georgia from 1971-1972.

He follows term-limited Governor Sonny Perdue (R).

Source: <http://bioguide.congress.gov>

Meet Oklahoma Governor-elect Mary Fallin (R)

Mary Fallin is a lifelong conservative with more than 20 years of public service. Before entering office, Ms. Fallin was a regional manager of a national hotel chain. She was honored as a manager of the year for her leadership and managerial performance.



job for 12 years.

During her tenure as Lieutenant Governor, she waged an aggressive campaign to bring more jobs to Oklahoma and lead the efforts to reform the state's workers' compensation system.

- Improving the quality of life in Oklahoma.

She received the "True Blue" award from Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council as well as the "Spirit of Enterprise" award from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. She has a lifelong score of 96 (out of 100) from the American Conservative Union, the highest of any congressman in the Oklahoma delegation.

She follows Governor Brad Henry (D).

Source: www.maryfallin.org

In 1990, Ms. Fallin was elected as an Oklahoma state representative and was named "Legislator of the Year" for her work in the Oklahoma House.

In 1995, she became the first woman and first Republican Lieutenant Governor in Oklahoma's history and held that

In 2006, she was elected to the U.S. Congress as an Oklahoma representative to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Her campaign platform focused on:

- Job growth
- Education

Meet South Carolina Governor-elect Nikki Haley (R)

Nikki Haley, one of the strongest fiscal conservatives in state government, was first elected to represent the 87th District in Lexington County in 2004, when, as a virtual unknown, she beat the longest serving state legislator in a Republican primary.



Governor Haley in Blue

by conservative leadership. She has fought wasteful spending at every turn, pushed for smaller, more efficient government and led

in 2009 by the S.C. Association of Taxpayers and a "Taxpayer Hero" in 2005 by Governor Mark Sanford. She has lifetime "A" ratings from the SC Club for Growth, the Palmetto Family Council and the National Rifle Association.

She is a daughter of Indian immigrants who went on to graduate from Clemson University. She follows Governor Mark Sanford (R).

Source: www.nikkihaley.com

Her time in Columbia has been marked

the fight for accountability and transparency.

She was named "Friend of the Taxpayer"

Meet Tennessee Governor-elect Bill Haslam (R)

A successful and popular mayor of Knoxville, Tennessee, Bill Haslam was elected on a platform of:

- balancing the state's budget,
- getting education on the right track, and
- helping businesses expand and recruit good companies.

Haslam was in his seventh year as mayor of Knoxville and has reduced the city's

debt, set property taxes at the lowest rate in more than 50 years, and achieved the highest credit rating for Knoxville in the history of the city. During his tenure, Knoxville has been repeatedly named as one of the top 10 metropolitan areas for business and expansion.

Bill began his professional career with Pilot Travel Centers, a company that has grown to more than 300 locations in 39



states with more than 14,000 employees.

Haslam has been actively involved in many faith-based organizations over the years, including Young Life.

Haslam succeeds Phil Bredesen (D).

Source: www.billhaslam.com

Southern Early Childhood Association

1123 S. University, Ste 255
Little Rock, AR 72204
PO Box 55930
Little Rock, AR 72215-5930

Phone: 800-305-SECA
Fax: 501-227-5297
E-mail:

info@southernearlychildhood.org

Southern Early Childhood Association



"A Voice for Southern
Children"

We're on the Web!
www.southernearlychildhood.org

How to Use This Newsletter

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.

Redistricting: The Potential Impact of the 2010 Election

Every ten years, legislative district lines for the U.S. Congress are re-drawn to balance population for demographic changes revealed by the census. During this process, states may lose or gain seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, depending upon population trends in that state.

Redistricting is a process that can be manipulated by political parties to draw boundaries that are favorable to their party, and the recent elections in which Democratic seats at the state level were lost to Republicans could be significant. Will the shift to Republican controlled legislatures in some Southern states benefit Republicans in the redistricting effort? Will the new districts be representative of

the populations contained within that district or state?

How redistricting occurs is different in every state. For example,

In **Arkansas**, the plan is drawn by a Commission that consists of the Governor, Secretary of State and the Attorney General and is due by February 1, 2011.

In **Mississippi, Oklahoma** and **Texas**, the redistricting effort is left to the state legislatures with back-up Commissions that go to work if the legislatures fail to agree upon a plan. These back-up Commissions are open-ended with no specified deadline, so the effort can be extended and lengthy. Source: www.ncsl.org

The Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute have joined forces to develop principles for transparency and public participation in redistricting. These principles are designed to give the public access to a process which is usually conducted out of the public arena.

The principles state that "all redistricting plans should include sufficient information so the public can verify, reproduce and evaluate a plan. " Additionally, states should promote public participation in the process through use of software and tools that are accessible to the public.

Source: www.brookings.edu