

# News

## Republicans Take Control of Senate

By Clayton Lyons '17  
News Editor

For the first time since 2006, the Republican Party has taken control of the Senate, gaining eight seats in the states of North Carolina, Colorado, Iowa, West Virginia, Arkansas, Montana, and South Dakota. The results will have momentous political bearings, as the Republicans also increased their lead in the House of Representatives, causing many to worry that the upcoming 114th Congress will be more divisive and unproductive than ever.

Despite being widely predicted that the Republican Party would gain at least a small majority in the Senate, the extent of their victory came as a surprise to Republicans and Democrats alike. Elections that were predicted to be close wins for Republicans, were blowouts; elections that were predicted to be close wins for Democrats, went to Republicans. The greatest of such surprises is said to have occurred in North Carolina, where incumbent Senator Kay Hagan lost both a lead thought to be permanent and her seat in the Senate to Republican challenger Thom Tillis.

The reason for the GOP's domination depends on who is talking. According to Republicans it's a nationwide indictment of President Obama and the Democratic Party. Reince Priebus, chairman of the Republican National Committee, attested to this, saying, "Barack Obama has our country in a ditch, and many of his lieutenants running for the Senate were right there with him. The punishment is going to be broad, and it's going to be pretty serious."

Predicated on discontent with a sputtering economic turnaround and a disdain for the Obama administration

after perceived shortcomings in both the Ebola and ISIS crises, the Republican take on the will of the American people assumes a distinctly favorable rating for the Republican Party. Yet that is not necessarily true. After the election, The New York Times reported that of those who voted for Republicans, one in four viewed the party unfavorably. Moreover, as was one of the reasons for the results given by many Democrat supporters, the turnout for the 2014 midterm elections was the lowest in 72 years.

According to analysis by Michael McDonald of the University of Florida, only 36.5 percent of eligible voters came to the polls, down from the 40.9 percent that voted in 2010. Many of those absentees are said to be young people, minorities, and women, all of whom have typically voted more favorably for Democrats in recent elections.

### 2014 U.S. SENATE ELECTION RESULTS

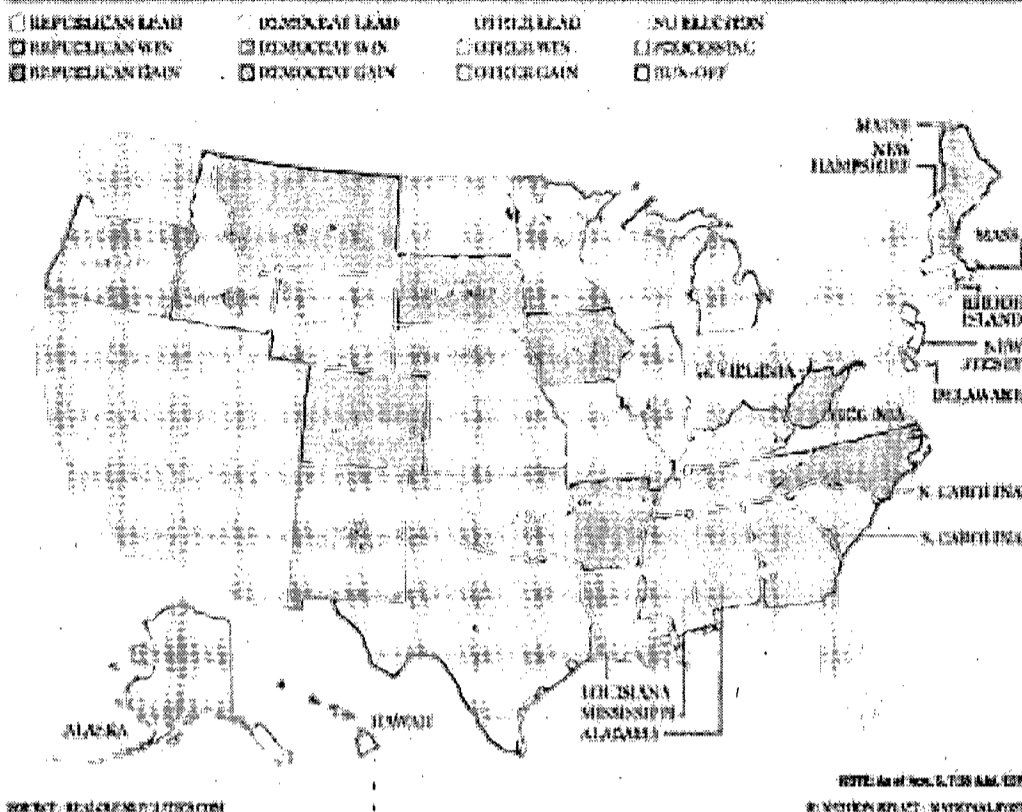


Photo Courtesy of news.nationalpost.com

A map showing the distribution of red and blue states on Wednesday morning Nov. 5 after election Tuesday. The Republicans gained now control both the House and the Senate

Regardless of turnout rates, one thing is clear and that is that the American public wants their legislature to come together and take action. Soon-to-be Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky spoke to this in his victory speech, saying, "just because we have a two-party system doesn't mean we have to be in perpetual conflict." Similarly, after the election results were in, President Obama invited party leadership on both sides to come to the White House and discuss how they can work together. Whether or not such bipartisan coalition comes to fruition, however, remains to be seen. With only two years left in office, President Obama must be willing to work with a new look Congress and that Congress must not be content with waiting out the current presidency.

## Protests At Seneca Lake Gas Storage Facility

By Joseph Gleason '15  
Herald Contributor

A series of protests is aimed at stopping the storage of compressed gas next to Seneca Lake.

Recently, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved the building of a compressor station that would allow methane or natural gas to be stored across the street from Seneca Lake in the Schuyler County town of Reading.

The proposed facility would fill empty salt caves with compressed methane and other gases. Opponents of this method of gas storage consider it to be especially dangerous for Seneca Lake because the lake

intersects the salt layer where the gas is stored. Consequently, any sort of mistake at the gas storage facility would have a direct, underground line to the waters of Seneca Lake.

The aim of the protests is to stop access to the facility so that the compressor needed to move methane into the facility cannot become operational. Protesters also oppose Houston-based Crestwood Midstream's plans to store liquid propane and butane in salt caverns near the west shore of the lake, which is under the jurisdiction of the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

A total of 25 protesters have been arrested after blocking the facility's gate, 10 people were charged with trespass and disorderly conduct on Oct. 29 and 15 were charged with trespass on Nov. 3, according to the Finger Lakes Times.

Some aspects of the plan have yet to be approved by the state DEC, which has set a public hearing for Feb. 12, 2015, on the storage of liquid propane and butane in the salt caverns, according to published reports.

More protests were expected. Anyone wishing to learn more about the protests may go to the website gasfreeseneca.com.



Photo and caption courtesy of ecowatch.com

More than two dozen people in a last-resort protest to stop a major gas storage expansion project on the shore of Seneca Lake

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