

Never Saw It Coming

Written by Lou Gehrig Burnett
Wednesday, 14 November 2012 08:02 -

Margin of Obama Victory Took Many by Surprise



The Republican Party – and the pollsters – never saw it coming. In what was supposed to be a nail-biter of an election, Democratic President Barack Obama wound up scoring a convincing win and earned a second term in the Oval Office.

The final tally: Obama 332 electoral votes and 50.5 percent of the popular vote to 206 electoral votes and 47.9 percent of the popular vote for Republican Mitt Romney. Obama won all of the key battleground states except North Carolina, where he lost by a narrow margin.

The president scored a resounding victory despite the fact that his resume included a weak economy, a high national debt, and high unemployment. But all the Super PACs and all the king's men could not put it together for Romney.

How did Obama do it? The Democratic Party used cutting edge technology, social media, and boots on the ground to rally the troops and get them to the polls. The Republicans, meanwhile, were using outdated campaign strategy, which depended primarily upon capturing the white and wealthy votes.

Both the Republican Party – and the pollsters – underestimated the minority share of the vote. In 2008, 26 percent of voters were non-white. That increased to 28 percent in 2012.

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Hispanics, who now make up 17 percent of the U.S. population, voted for Obama by a 71-17 percent margin.

Blacks, now 12 percent of the population, went for Obama 93-6 percent.. The president also captured 67 percent of the vote from single women.

Romney did do well with white voters, garnering 59 percent, which included 62 percent of the vote from white men. He also got 53 percent of the vote of married women and 62 percent of the vote of whites without a four-year college degree.

Exit polls revealed that Obama won a slight majority of Catholic voters, thanks to strong support from Latino Catholics, but Romney won the white Catholic vote by almost a 20 percent margin.

Among evangelicals, 80 percent voted for Romney, while black Protestants and Jews went overwhelmingly for Obama. Those who said they are not affiliated with any religion were Obama's biggest share of the faith coalition vote.

Scott Rasmussen of the polling firm Rasmussen Reports, noted that young voters cast ballots for Obama in larger numbers than they did in 2008. At the same time, senior citizens, usually faithful voters, did not turn out as well as they did in 2008.

Rasmussen summed up the election this way: "One of the strangest aspects of Election 2012 is that voters were demanding change, but didn't change politicians. They left Republicans in charge of the U.S. House, elected an even more Democratic Senate, and re-elected President Obama."

So, while voters seemed unhappy with the status quo, they left the political status quo in place.

Interestingly, 9.1 million fewer voters went to the polls in 2012 compared with the 2008 election. Obama received about 7.7 million fewer votes than he did in 2008, and Romney received about 1.4 million less votes than Republican U.S. Sen. John McCain in 2008.

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To further add to Republican woes, Democrats picked up two Senate seats, giving them a 55-45 majority when two Independents caucus with them. In the House, the Democrats picked up at least seven seats. Some races are still too close to call.

Rasmussen said his organization's polling reveals that 55 percent of voters wants Republicans to work with the president.

Obama captures Caddo

President Barack Obama won nine Louisiana parishes while losing the state, as expected, to former Gov. Mitt Romney by a 58-41 percent margin. The voter turnout statewide was 67.2 percent.

Caddo was one of the nine Obama carried, as he did in the 2008 presidential election, receiving 52 percent of the vote. Here is how area parishes voted for president:

Caddo – Obama 52 percent, Romney 47 percent. Voter turnout was 67.8 percent.

Bossier – Romney 72 percent, Obama 27 percent. Voter turnout was 67.7 percent.

DeSoto – Romney 56 percent, Obama 43 percent. Voter turnout was 71.9 percent.

Webster – Romney 62 percent, Obama 37 percent. Voter turnout was 69.8 percent.

Claiborne – Romney 54 percent, Obama 45 percent. Voter turnout was 71.6 percent.

The other eight parishes won by Obama were East Baton Rouge, East Carroll, Iberville, Orleans, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, and Tensas.

Runoff for Bossier-Webster judge

There was no primary winner, as expected, in the race to fill the vacancy on the 26th Judicial District Court, which includes Bossier and Webster parishes.

Assistant District Attorney Mike Nerren will be in a runoff on December 8 with Bossier City attorney Whit Graves. Both are Republicans.

Nerren finished first in the primary with 40 percent of the vote. Graves had 31 percent. The third candidate in the race, Springhill City Court Judge John Slattery, also a Republican, came in with 29 percent.

Slattery did carry Webster Parish, but the other two candidates got a bigger vote out of Bossier Parish to propel them into the runoff.

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Here is the tale of the tape:

Overall Results

Mike Nerren – 23,154 votes (40 percent).
Whit Graves – 18,141 votes (31 percent).
John Slattery – 16,878 votes (29 percent).
The overall voter turnout for this race was 59.3 percent.

Results By Parish

Bossier Parish

Mike Nerren – 17,101 (41 percent).
Whit Graves – 15,454 (37 percent).
John Slattery – 9,271 (22 percent).
Voter turnout in Bossier Parish was 58.3 percent.

Webster Parish

John Slattery – 7,607 (47 percent).
Mike Nerren – 6,053 (37 percent).
Whit Graves – 2,687 (16 percent).
Voter turnout in Webster Parish was 62 percent.

The runoff between Nerren and Graves is expected to be a spirited and close race. No word yet on whether Slattery will endorse either runoff candidate.

Landslide for term-limits

Area School Board members can't be feeling too loved after voters overwhelmingly approved term-limits in last Tuesday's election.

Not to worry, though. Term-limits kick in on January 1, 2013, and incumbents still have three terms ahead of them before they are term-limited.

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That's the limit the proposition imposed. A School Board member can serve three consecutive four-years terms. Some politicians were hoping that the term-limit feature would have been more restrictive and not allow another three terms for current School Board members, but no such luck.

Here is how area parishes voted:

Caddo – 79 percent for term limits, 21 percent against.

Bossier – 82 percent for, 18 percent against.

DeSoto – 78 percent for, 22 percent against.

Webster – 76 percent for, 24 percent against.

Claiborne – 80 percent for, 20 percent against.

Lou Gehrig Burnett is a seasoned veteran of national and local politics. He publishes Fax-Net Update, a weekly political newsletter.