

# **FOLEY NOTES**

November 2011

## **FIRST DISTRICT CHAIR ASSESSES RESULTS OF 2011 GENERAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS**

- *In 2009*, Virginia Republicans won all three statewide offices (for only the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in history) by massive margins and picked up 6 seats in the House of Delegates.
- *In 2010*, Virginia Republicans defeated 3 incumbent Congressional Democrats and came within a few hundred votes of defeating a fourth, moving the Congressional delegation to 8-3 Republican majority and clearing the way for our own Rep. Eric Cantor to become U.S. House Majority Leader.
- *In 2011*, Virginia Republicans picked up 7 more seats in the House of Delegates and picked up 2 seats in the state Senate. We now have a historic high of 68 seats in the House of Delegates and control of both legislative chambers and the governorship for only the second time since Reconstruction.

None of this would have been possible without your strong support and hard work over the years and guess what - for the next two years as well, since we are already in the presidential /senatorial cycle and jockeying has begun for the 2013 gubernatorial race.

As posted on RPV 's website:

The 2011 votes are counted. The canvass is done, and the dust has settled. What does it all mean? First, let's look at the lay of the land.

### ***House of Delegates***

- \* Republicans picked up 7 seats in the House of Delegates.
- \* Republicans now have a 68 seat caucus in the House, the most in history.
- \* Republicans won 13 of 14 open seats in the House.
- \* Republicans defeated 2 Democrat incumbents in the House.
- \* All 52 incumbent Republicans seeking re-election won.

### **Senate of Virginia**

- \* Republicans have won a working majority in the Senate.
- \* Republicans gained two seats to make it 20-20 with Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling holding the decisive tie-breaking vote.
- \* Republicans won 3 of 5 open seats in the Senate.
- \* Republicans defeated 2 Democrat incumbents in the Senate.
- \* All 15 incumbent Republicans seeking re-election won.

### **So what does it all mean?**

First and foremost, Virginians overwhelmingly voted for a Republican controlled General Assembly.

### **Just look at the numbers:**

House GOP Votes: 757,000, about 61% of all votes cast

House Dem Votes: 419,000, about 33% of all votes cast

Senate GOP Votes: 771,000, about 57% of all votes cast

Senate Dem Votes: 554,000, about 41% of all votes cast

For three years running, the message from Virginia voters has been clear. We expect them to send the same resounding message again in 2012.

Kimberley Strassel's article in the November 11, 2011 Wall Street Journal entitled Obama's Virginia Defeat, offers some additional insight. I will read the whole of the article because it sums things up so very well.

"Of all the noise of this week's state election results, what mattered most for Election 2012 came out of Virginia. It was the sound of the air leaking out of the Plouffe plan.

That would be David Plouffe, President Obama's former campaign manager and current senior strategist, who is focused today on how to cobble together 270 electoral votes for re-election. That's proving tough, what with the economy hurting Mr. Obama in states like Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania that he won in 2008. The White House's response has been to pin its hopes on a more roundabout path to electoral victory, one based on the Southern and Western states Mr. Obama also claimed in 2008.

States like Virginia. Mr. Obama was the first Democrat to win Virginia since 1964; he beat John McCain by seven percentage points; (Foley notes, but not in the First District which went for McCain/Palin) and he did so on the strength of his appeal to Northern Virginia's many white-collar independents. Along with victories in North Carolina, Colorado and Nevada, the Obama Old Dominion win in 2008 inspired a flurry of stories about how Democrats had forever altered the political map.

So the White House is pouring resources into what Tim Kaine, the state's former Democratic governor, now pridefully refers to as Democrats' "New Dominion." The Obama campaign has held some 1,600 events in the state in the last half-year alone. Only last month Mr. Obama hopped a three-day bus trip through Virginia and North Carolina. Obama officials keep flocking to the state, and Tuesday's election was to offer the first indication of how these efforts are succeeding.

Let's just say the New Dominion is looking an awful lot like the Old Dominion. If anything, more so.

Virginia Republicans added seven new seats to their majority in the House of Delegates, giving them two-thirds of that chamber's votes—the party's largest margin in history. The GOP also took over the Virginia Senate in results that were especially notable, given that Virginia Democrats this spring crafted an aggressive redistricting plan that had only one aim: providing a firewall against a Republican takeover of that chamber. Even that extreme gerrymander didn't work.

Every Republican incumbent—52 in the House, 15 in the Senate—won. The state GOP is looking at unified control over government for only the second time since the Civil War. This is after winning all three top statewide offices—including the election of Gov. Bob McDonnell—in 2009, and picking off three U.S. House Democrats in last year's midterms.

Topline figures aside, what ought to really concern the White House was the nature of the campaign, and the breakout of Tuesday's election data. Mr. Obama may have big plans for Virginia, but the question is increasingly: him and what army?

Elected state Democrats—who form the backbone of grass-roots movements—couldn't distance themselves far enough from Mr. Obama in this race. Most refused to mention the president, to defend his policies, or to appear with him. The more Republicans sought to nationalize the Virginia campaign, the more Democrats stressed local issues.

State House Minority Leader Ward Armstrong felt compelled to run an ad protesting that it was a "stretch" for his GOP opponent to "compare me to Barack

Obama." After all, he was "pro-life, pro-gun and I always put Virginia first." (Mr. Armstrong lost on Tuesday.)

Virginia Democrats were happy to identify with one top official: Republican Gov. Bob McDonnell, who is providing a lesson in the benefits of smart GOP governance in battleground states. Criticized as being too socially conservative for Virginia when he was elected in 2009, Mr. McDonnell has won over voters by focusing on the economy and jobs. His approval ratings are in the 60s, and he helped raise some \$5 million for local candidates. He's popular enough that Democrats took to including pictures of him in their campaign literature, and bragging that they'd worked with him.

Mr. McDonnell has been particularly adept at connecting with the independent, white-collar voters Mr. Obama used to win Virginia in 2008. That crowd lives in North Virginia's booming exurb counties of Prince William and Loudoun, and presidential races hinge on their votes. Mr. Obama's 2008 victory in Virginia rested on his significant wins in both Loudoun (8%) and Prince Williams (16%).

Yet Tuesday's results showed the extent to which that support has reversed. Loudoun in particular proved an unmitigated rout for Democrats. Republicans won or held three of four of the county's Senate seats. It swept all seven of the county's House seats. It won all nine slots on the county's Board of Supervisors, and pretty much every other county office. In Prince William, ( Foley notes that PW will represent 25% of the population of the First District- should the House Congressional redistricting plan be passed )the story was much the same. This is what happens when a recent Quinnipiac poll shows Mr. Obama's approval rating among Virginia independents at 29%.

Democrats are now arguing that turnout (about 30%) was too low to prove anything, but then again, the particularly low Democratic turnout suggests that, on top of everything else, the White House really does face an enthusiasm gap. It's still got time to try to remedy that problem, and some other Virginia fundamentals. But going by Tuesday's results, Mr. Plouffe might need to start considering Electoral Plan C."

Speaker Howell ( a resident of the First District) in his Statement of 11/09/11 from Garren Shipley's blog as posted on the RPV website notes:

"Across the board, I am thrilled with our election results and I am very excited to lead an ever-larger House Republican Majority. Alongside our returning incumbents, we are pleased to welcome 15 new members to our Caucus - Delegates-Elect Mark Dudenhefer, Israel O'Quinn, Nick Rush, Randy Minchew, Joseph Yost, Chris Head, Michael Webert, Peter Farrell, Matt Fariss, Rick Morris, David Ramadan, Mike Watson, David Yancey, Keith Hodges and Margaret Ransone. ( Here I must note that 5 of the 15 are from the First District.)

The Speaker concludes: "In these difficult and trying times Virginians demand and deserve elected officials who both understand the issues and have a proven pro-job, pro-growth track record. Simply put, Republicans recognize that times are tough and voters recognized that Republicans have the best ideas for economic development and job creation. Our Caucus is, as always, prepared to tackle Virginia's challenges with the forward-looking, common-sense solutions necessary to keep Virginia heading toward economic recovery and a brighter future."

The First Congressional District Republican Committee congratulates it's re-elected members of the caucus and most especially: Bryce Reeves, Senator Elect; as well as Delegates Elect Mark Dudenhefer, Mike Watson, David Yancy, Keith Hodges and Margaret Ransone. We also congratulate all constitutional officers and local officials elected and re elected under the Republican Banner.

This committee is also most grateful to and congratulates those who put themselves forward carrying our banner but with a less successful outcome. Perhaps next time.

The First District's new line up of the General Assembly will be posted shortly. However, until the congressional redistricting is passed and approved, that list will be subject to change.

**Once again thanks to our candidates, our committees and our many and dedicated volunteers.**