



Capitol Network News

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REPUBLICANS GAIN THREE SEATS IN STATE LEGISLATURE

Shifts Cement GOP Control of Veto in House, Moves Nearer in Senate

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The results were nowhere near early predictions, but after the last vote from Tuesday's general election was finally counted — sometime shortly before dawn Wednesday — Oklahoma Republicans could begin bragging: They had picked up three seats in the state legislature.

The wins were not enough to give the state GOP control of either legislative body, but they were enough to more firmly cement the party's control of the veto in the House of Representatives and to endanger the Democrats control of the veto in the Senate, where two Democratic incumbents fell to Republican challengers.

In the House, where Republicans trailed Democrats by a 64-36 margin with one vacancy at the end of the 45th Legislative session, Republicans managed a one seat gain, amidst races that saw two GOP incumbents defeated. Republicans lost the services of two Tulsans, District 74's John Smaligo and District 78's Flint Breckinridge. Political newcomer Phil Ostrander captured the District 74 seat, while fellow newcomer Mary Easley, mother of Sen. Kevin Easley, D-Broken, won the District 78 seat.

In exchange, the GOP gained the District 77 seat, where Mark Liotta defeated Democratic incumbent Gary Stottlemire, and District 34, where Republican Terry Ingmire defeated Bernice Mitchell in the race for the right to succeed Rep. Calvin Anthony, D-Stillwater, who left the House to pursue a career in Washington, D.C.

Three other House races bear mentioning because of the closeness of their results:

- District 23, where Democratic incumbent Betty Boyd retained her seat by less than 150 votes over Republican challenger Jon Mullican;
- District 41, where Democratic incumbent Sean Voskuhl retained his seat by only 11 votes over GOP challenger Curt Roggow; and
- District 45, the seat vacated by Ed Crocker, where Democrat Wallace Collins notched a victory over Republican Steve

Byas by less than 200 votes, with Libertarian candidate Randy L. Boyd bringing up the rear.

In the Senate, Republicans moved closer to the 17 votes needed to control gubernatorial vetoes by picking up two seats, bringing the balance of power to 33 to 15 in favor of Democrats. How those results will play with Governor Frank Keating, who has repeatedly said he would like to see what he called more "pro-growth Democrats" in the legislature, particularly in the Senate, is unclear. With the exception of the two Democrat incumbents who went down in defeat, established lawmakers held on to the bulk of seats in the upper legislative body.

The Democrat's losses came in District 19, where incumbent Ed Long fell to Republican challenger Robert Milacek, and in Dis-

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PHILOSOPHIES CLASH IN ELECTION'S WAKE

By Shawn Ashley
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■(GIT) The dust had barely settled from Tuesday's general election when it became apparent the state's chief executive and legislative leaders were doing more than simply standing on different sides of the political aisle.

"There are two sides to every story," John Cox, press secretary for Governor Frank Keating said. "While the legislative leadership likes to think the glass is half-full, the governor thinks it's half-empty and that there are things we can do to fill it.

"It's a difference of philosophies, of political, business and economic development philosophies."

The governor's philosophy, Cox said, included improving Oklahoma through efforts such as right-to-work, workers' compensation reform and tax cuts, consistent issues of Keating's administration.

Keating, Cox and other members of the governor's administration were "ecstatic,"

the governor's press secretary said, over the results of the general election which saw the Republican Party flex its muscles and gain some ground on state Democrats.

Despite the excitement and the potentially new found power that comes with having one's party completely control the state's congressional delegation, pick up two important seats in the state Senate, maintain its control of the veto in the state House and win a spot on the Corporation Commission in the most hotly contested race in the state, Cox said, "We're ready to put politics aside and begin working again to move Oklahoma forward."

That goal was shared by Senate Speaker Pro Tempore Stratton Taylor, D-Claremore, who warned, "Governor Keating's penchant for name-calling and his endless bad-mouthing of our state will have to come to and end if we're going to work together and move Oklahoma forward."

Taylor said Keating took his best shot at taking over the legislature, but failed, and

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