



Nevada Senate Race: Washington Clout versus Hometown Values

During the last sixteen years, the leaders of majority parties in the houses of Congress have been defeated twice: Speaker Foley in Washington in the 1994 election and Senate Majority Leader Daschle in the 2002 election. Senator Reid from Nevada may be the next member of Congress to discover that clout in Washington does not reflexively translate into electoral victory back home.? “Bringing home the bacon,” the ability of senior members of Congress to raid the public fisc for dubious projects back home, has long been considered a key advantage of incumbency (regardless of whether the member of Congress is a Democrat or a Republican.)?



Incumbency has long been considered a priceless advantage in seeking re-election. Pork project and projection for interests in the federal legislator’s home state or district rank high on the list of incumbent advantages. Name recognition from an endless series of flattering photo-opportunities in one’s home constituency, which is worth countless millions of free publicity, is another advantage of incumbency. Each member of Congress also possesses a veritable army of aides who do “constituent service,” usually meaning advocating a constituent’s interests against an officious and indifferent federal bureaucracy.

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The crown jewel of these special advantages of an incumbent in Congress is leadership of one’s own party in one of the Houses, and this is even more priceless when that party controls a house of Congress. What can a Senate Majority Leader or a Speaker do? The entire agenda of that branch of Congress is in that legislator’s hands. Absent extraordinary procedural moves, no bill comes to the floor of that house of Congress unless the majority party’s leader allows it. That amounts, almost, to the “Veto” or “I forbid” of the Roman tribunes.

Why, then, should Harry Reid be in trouble in Nevada?? Why, in particular, should Reid be in trouble in a race against Sharron Angle (above left), a relative political unknown? Senator Reid flouts his ability to use the advantage of his office to help Nevada with special favors. Yet, more and more, Americans seem to be rejecting the old mantra “I’m from the government. I’m here to help you.” Federal “help” is seen as the toxic which is, bit by bit, destroying the Republic.? More and more citizens appear to be viewing this sort of immediate fix as just that — the fix of narcotic high experienced by an addict. And politicians like Harry Reid are the pushers.

The sincerity of politicians who really mean it when they oppose rampant and growing statism seems, more and more, to matter. Sharron Angle has had a very brief career as an elected official — three



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on August 20, 2010

terms in the lower house of the Nevada Legislature — and acquired such a reputation of lone opposition to dubious, but often popular, bills that some votes were sometimes called a “41 to Angle” vote. The list of her “politically incorrect” positions on issues is impressive: Withdraw from the United Nations, privatize Medicare and Social Security, abolish the Department of Education, repeal the Internal Revenue Code, and strictly uphold the Second Amendment.

Reid ought to have everything in his favor. The national establishment media works overtime to make Sharron Angle appear strange. As Majority Leader, Reid can pump many different wells of campaign “contributions.” He is better known than Angle. Yet all the traditional advantages of incumbency and power seem inadequate this election year. Rasmussen on August 18 had Angle at 50 percent and Reid at 48 percent, surely very big trouble for a lavishly funded powerful Washington insider. Americans may be fed up with Washington Clout, and they may — Sharron Angle will be a big bellweather — be embracing, again, the Hometown Values on which our republic is based.



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