



Republicans Win U.S. House, But Will There Be Change?

Republicans swept into a majority hold on the U.S. House of Representatives, with at least a 60-seat pick-up, and narrowed the Democratic margin in the U.S. Senate in the November 2 midterm elections. Democrats retained control of the U.S. Senate, 51-47, with the Washington and Colorado Senate races having yet to be decided by press time. Republicans also picked up 10 or more governorships and majorities in 17 state legislative chambers. And California voters defeated a ballot measure, Proposition 19, to legalize recreational use of marijuana.

The U.S. House GOP sweep represents the biggest swing since 1948, when Democrats picked up 75 House seats on the Republicans.

The election results also confirmed the power of the Tea Party movement, though it remains to be seen what exactly the Tea Party movement means. Tea Party favorite Rand Paul of Kentucky ran a winning campaign on a relatively non-interventionist foreign policy, while other Tea Party candidates such as Utah's new Republican Senator Mike Lee [campaigned](#) on positive interventionist policies that criticized President Obama for being soft on terrorism. Most Tea Party candidates campaigned on behalf of tax cuts and spending cuts, but failed to specify during the campaign which federal programs would be cut. How those campaign pledges shake out into legislative votes and program cuts remains to be seen.

Tea Party support was no guarantee of victory, however. Tea Party candidates [Christine O'Donnell](#) of Delaware and [Sharron Angle](#) of Nevada lost their races for U.S. Senate after winning surprise primary victories over GOP establishment favorites. It is unclear if Tea Party favorite and Republican nominee Joe Miller was successful in his bid to unseat incumbent Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski, who waged a write-in campaign after losing the Republican nomination.

The move to hammer the Tea Party victors into line with the Washington, D.C., establishment GOP has already begun. "We don't need a lot of Jim DeMint disciples," establishment Republican and former Senator Trent Lott [told](#) the *Washington Post* back in July. "As soon as they get here, we need to co-opt them." The Republican Party establishment's [Pledge to America](#) promised vague smaller government without specifying a single government program that should be cut.

Photo: House Republican leader John Boehner of Ohio celebrates the GOP's victory that changes the balance of power in Congress and will likely elevate him to speaker of the House, during an election night gathering hosted by the National Republican Congressional Committee at the Grand Hyatt hotel in Washington, Nov. 2, 2010.: AP Images



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