



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on November 4, 2009

Small Government Conservatism Has Strong Ballot Showing

The 2009 elections brought complicated results: Republicans swept both Governor's races, Democrats won both congressional races, and incumbents swept mayoral races. But advocates of small government also won the ballot initiatives.

Democrats: Congressional Races in NY and CA

Democrats won the only two congressional special elections this week, picking up a seat with New York's 23rd Congressional District after the Republican nominee withdrew from the race and endorsed Democrat Bill Owens. Owens narrowly [defeated](#) Conservative Party nominee Doug Hoffman by a 49-45 percent plurality, in a district that had been held by Republicans for more than 100 years. Many Republicans had campaigned for Hoffman because the Republican nominee had taken liberal positions. Democratic Lt. Gov. John Garamendi also easily [won](#) a special election in metropolitan San Francisco, which was seen as a safe Democratic seat. Garamendi will replace liberal Democrat Ellen Tauscher, who was appointed to a State Department arms control position by the Obama White House.



Republicans: Governor's Races in VA and NJ

Republicans swept statewide elections in Virginia, where the GOP took the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Secretary of State posts, the only statewide races this year. The Governor's office had been held by Democrat Tim Kaine. "In Virginia, 55-year-old former state attorney general Bob McDonnell will be the first Republican to win the state's highest office in twelve years," CNN [reported](#) November 4. McDonnell took 59 percent of the vote, compared to 41 percent for the Democrat R. Creigh Deeds. Kaine was ineligible for reelection because of statewide term-limit laws.

New Jersey voters also unseated a sitting Democratic Governor, Jon Corzine. Former federal prosecutor Chris Christie [defeated](#) Corzine with a 49-43 plurality in a wide field of candidates, including former Environmental Protection Agency official Christopher J. Daggett who garnered more than five percent of the vote for his proposal to cut property taxes by 25 percent.

Referenda: Voters Favor Traditional Marriage and Loosening Marijuana Laws



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Maine voters [agreed](#) to a referendum to repeal the state's "same-sex marriage" law, 53-47 percent, after homosexual activists touted this as the state where the homosexual lobby could prevail on the issue. Of the 31 states that have held ballot referenda on so-called "same-sex marriage," voters in all 31 states have rejected redefining marriage away from its traditional meaning of one man and one woman.

Maine voters also [approved](#) a measure to legalize marijuana for medicinal purposes, 59-41 percent, in a statewide ballot. Voters in tiny Breckenridge, Colorado, went a step further, [voting](#) three-to-one to legalize marijuana (73-27 percent). Last year, Massachusetts voters also voted to decriminalize small amounts of marijuana in a statewide initiative question, choosing to invoke a civil fine of \$100 for possession of less than one ounce of the drug. But the issue may be moot for states, as the federal government continues to vigorously prosecute marijuana users. And the U.S. Supreme Court backed up federal bans on medicinal marijuana in the 2005 case of [Gonzales v. Raiche](#).

Incumbent Victories in Mayoral Races

Incumbent mayors had a good day in cities across the United States, where New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg [won](#) reelection after spending an estimated \$100 million of his own money in the race. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino [won](#) reelection to a record fourth term, and voters [reelected](#) incumbents in Detroit and Pittsburgh as well.



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