The 2010 Election and Its Aftermath

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Wisconsin Credit Union League
January 25, 2011
In the words of the President…
A “shellacking”

Presidential Party Seat Change,
US House and Lower Houses in States

United States House

counties' lower house

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The biggest seat swing in over 60 years

Source: Barry Burden, UW-Madison
Why a shellacking?

Bad fundamentals: presidential approval

Early July Gallup presidential approval

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Why a shellacking?

Bad fundamentals: a sluggish economy

GDP growth first half of midterm year

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## Bad fundamentals: a sluggish economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Republican support among voters who said:</th>
<th>House 2010 Vote R</th>
<th>House 2008 Vote R</th>
<th>R Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nation’s economy in poor condition</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family’s financial situation worse</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very worried about economy</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why a shellacking?

Bad fundamentals: many seats up for grabs

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Why a shellacking?

Bad fundamentals: many recently won seats

Seat gain/loss by president's party in previous two elections

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Why a shellacking?

Add the common problems of a party regaining unified control of government

Add a well-mobilized, motivated grassroots opposition

Add a stronger, more experienced pool of Republican candidates

And a shellacking is the result

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Fundamentals at work

Democrats lost vote share in 89 percent of House districts

Nearly every demographic group moved toward the GOP

Source: Eric McGhee
# Strongest Republican supporters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP (SIZE IN ELECTORATE)</th>
<th>PERCENT VOTING FOR REPUBLICAN</th>
<th>PERCENT VOTING FOR DEMOCRAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican (36%)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Tea Party movement (40%)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeal new health care law (48%)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic stimulus program hurt economy (33%)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative (34%)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White evangelical/born-again (25%)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government doing too much (56%)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve of Afghanistan war (40%)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation’s economy in poor condition (37%)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very worried about economy (50%)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The result?

From the most liberal to most conservative House overnight

Source: Adam Bonica, ideologicalcartography.com

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The result?

And the return of divided government…

- Reagan 1981-86 (Rep Senate, Dem House)
- Reagan 1987-88 (Dem Senate, Dem House)
- Bush 1989-92 (Dem Senate, Dem House)
- Clinton 1995-2000 (Rep Senate, Rep House)
- Bush 2001-02 (Dem Senate, Rep House)
- Bush 2007-08 (Dem Senate, Dem House)
- Obama 2011-? (Dem Senate, Rep House)
The result?  
... in a time of historically high party conflict
The result?

Major accomplishments are possible under these conditions, but extremely difficult

- Parties have different priorities, solutions, and electoral incentives
What about *Citizens United*?

The vast majority of ads were still run by candidates and parties in 2010.

Source: Wesleyan Media Project
The wave in the states: five quick facts

GOP holds its most seats in state legislatures since 1928

GOP gained about 700 seats nationally, most by either party since 1966

Over 20 state legislative chamber switches to GOP. To Dems: 0

Republicans control over 55 chambers, their most since 1952

Fifty fewer Democrats ran than in 2008, while 820 more Republicans ran
Republicans in Assembly, Wisconsin
# Largest postwar gains, Wisconsin legislature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Gain</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Gain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>