

REDMAP 2012 Summary Report

REDMAP

How a Strategy of Targeting State Legislative Races in 2010 Led to a Republican U.S. House Majority in 2013

On November 6, 2012, Barack Obama was reelected President of the United States by nearly a three-point margin, winning 332 electoral votes to Mitt Romney's 206 while garnering nearly 3.5 million more votes. Democrats also celebrated victories in 69 percent of U.S. Senate elections, winning 23 of 33 contests. Farther down-ballot, aggregated numbers show voters pulled the lever for Republicans only 49 percent of the time in congressional races, suggesting that 2012 could have been a repeat of 2008, when voters gave control of the White House and both chambers of Congress to Democrats.

But, as we see today, that was not the case. Instead, Republicans enjoy a 33-seat margin in the U.S. House seated yesterday in the 113th Congress, having endured Democratic successes atop the ticket and over one million more votes cast for Democratic House candidates than Republicans. The only analogous election in recent political history in which this aberration has taken place was immediately after reapportionment in 1972, when Democrats held a 50 seat majority in the U.S. House of Representatives while losing the presidency and the popular congressional vote by 2.6 million votes.

To be sure, the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) built on its strong recruitment and successful strategy that gave them a Republican majority in 2010 by going on offense over Democratic cuts to Medicare and by linking their Democratic opponents to President Obama's most unpopular policy proposals.

However, all components of a successful congressional race, including recruitment, message development and resource allocation, rest on the congressional district lines, and this was an area where Republicans had an unquestioned advantage.

Today, nearly two months after Election Day, and one day after the 113th United States Congress took the Oath of Office on Capitol Hill, the Republican State Leadership Committee (RSLC) is releasing this review of its strategy and execution of its efforts in the 2010 election cycle to erect a Republican firewall through the redistricting process that paved the way to Republicans retaining a U.S. House majority in 2012.

...

2010 State Elections: REDMAP's Execution

As the 2010 Census approached, the RSLC began planning for the subsequent election cycle, formulating a strategy to keep or win Republican control of state legislatures with the largest impact on congressional redistricting as a result of reapportionment. That effort, the REDistricting MAjority Project (REDMAP), focused critical resources on legislative chambers in states projected to gain or lose congressional seats in 2011 based on Census data.

The rationale was straightforward: Controlling the redistricting process in these states would have the greatest impact on determining how both state legislative and congressional district boundaries would be drawn. Drawing new district lines in states with the most redistricting activity presented the opportunity to solidify conservative policymaking at the state level and maintain a Republican stronghold in the U.S. House of Representatives for the next decade.

To fund the initiative, the RSLC raised more than \$30 million in 2009-2010, and invested \$18 million after Labor Day 2010 alone. Specifically, the RSLC:

- Spent \$1.4 million targeting four New York State Senate seats, winning two and control of the New York State Senate. (-2 Congressional seats).
- Spent nearly \$1 million in Pennsylvania House races, targeting and winning three of the toughest races in the state. (-1 Congressional seat).
- Spent nearly \$1 million in Ohio House races, targeting six seats, five of which were won by Republicans. Notably, President Obama carried five of these six legislative districts in 2008. (-2 Congressional seats).
- Spent \$1 million in Michigan working with the Michigan House Republican Campaign Committee and Michigan Republican Party to pick up 20 seats. (-1 Congressional seat).
- Spent \$750,000 in Texas as part of an effort that resulted in 22 House pick-ups. (+4 Congressional seats).
- Spent \$1.1 million in Wisconsin to take control of the Senate and Assembly.
- Committed resources to Colorado (more than \$550,000) and North Carolina (more than \$1.2 million).
- The RSLC also invested more than \$3 million across a number of other states including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oregon, Tennessee and Washington. (Five of these eleven states gained or lost Congressional seats).

Election Day 2010 proved to be a “wave” election nationally, in both REDMAP targeted states and others across the country. Prior to Election Day 2010, Democrats controlled 60 state legislative chambers to the Republicans’ 36. After the 2010 elections, Democrats controlled 40 chambers, Republicans controlled 55 chambers, and two remained tied. In all, Republicans took control of 21 legislative bodies and moved one from Democratic control to being evenly divided. After Election Day 2010, Republicans held majorities in both legislative chambers in 25 states – and, in most cases, control of redistricting – up from 14. The result can clearly be seen in the following chart showing partisan control over redistricting from 1980 to 2010:

Year	Republican	Democrat	Split	Commission	At Large	Total
1981	53	225	149	2	6	435
1991	5	172	240	11	7	435
2001	98	135	161	34	7	435
2011	193	44	103	88	7	435
<i>Change from 2001</i>	<i>+ 95</i>	<i>-91</i>	<i>-58</i>	<i>+ 54</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

* Source: Republican National Committee, December 2, 2010

...

2012 Congressional Elections: REDMAP’s Impact

President Obama won reelection in 2012 by nearly 3 points nationally, and banked 126 more electoral votes than Governor Mitt Romney. Democratic candidates for the U.S. House won 1.1 million more votes than their Republican opponents. But the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives is a Republican and presides over a 33-seat House Republican majority during the 113th Congress. How? One needs to look no farther than four states that voted Democratic on a statewide level in 2012, yet elected a strong Republican delegation to represent them in Congress: Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Michigan

The effectiveness of REDMAP is perhaps most clear in the state of Michigan. In 2010, the RSLC put \$1 million into state legislative races, contributing to a GOP pick-up of 20 seats in the House and Republican majorities in both the House and Senate. Republican Rick Snyder won the gubernatorial race, and with it Republicans gained control of redrawing Michigan's 148 legislative and 14 congressional districts. The 2012 election was a huge success for Democrats at the statewide level in Michigan: voters elected a Democratic U.S. Senator by more than 20 points and reelected President Obama by almost 10 points. But Republicans at the state level maintained majorities in both chambers of the legislature and voters elected a 9-5 Republican majority to represent them in Congress.

Ohio

Ohio once again proved to be the national bellwether, voting to reelect President Obama to a second term in the White House by almost two points. On the statewide level, Ohioans also elected a Democrat to the U.S. Senate by more than five points. But the Republican firewall at the state legislative and congressional level held. In 2010, REDMAP allocated nearly \$1 million to Ohio House races, resulting in a Republican take over of the House and increasing the GOP majority in the Senate. With the election of Republican John Kasich to the governor's mansion, the GOP controlled the redrawing of 132 state legislative and 16 congressional districts. Republican redistricting resulted in a net gain for the GOP state House caucus in 2012, and allowed a 12-4 Republican majority to return to the U.S. House of Representatives – despite voters casting only 52 percent of their vote for Republican congressional candidates.

Pennsylvania

A REDMAP target state, the RSLC spent nearly \$1 million in Pennsylvania House races in 2010 – an expenditure that helped provide the GOP with majorities in both chambers of the state legislature. Combined with former Republican Attorney General Tom Corbett's victory in the gubernatorial race, Republicans took control of the state legislative and congressional redistricting process. The impact of this investment at the state level in 2010 is evident when examining the results of the 2012 election: Pennsylvanians reelected a Democratic U.S. Senator by nearly nine points and reelected President Obama by more than five points, but at the same time they added to the Republican ranks in the State House and returned a 13-5 Republican majority to the U.S. House.

Wisconsin

In 2010, the RSLC spent \$1.1 million to successfully flip both chambers of the Wisconsin legislature. With the election of Republican Governor Scott Walker, the GOP gained control of the redistricting process and gave Wisconsinites and all of America a firsthand look at what bold conservative leadership looks like. In mid-2012, Democrats were able to regain control of the Wisconsin Senate, albeit for a period of time when the chamber was out of session. In November 2012, however, running on lines redrawn after the successes of 2010, Republicans were able to retake the Senate and add to their margins in the House. On a statewide level, in 2012, Wisconsin voters elected a Democratic U.S. Senator by nearly six points and reelected President Obama by nearly seven points, but still returned a 5-3 Republican majority to Congress, including the GOP vice presidential nominee, Representative Paul Ryan.

...

Conclusion

After REDMAP's success on Election Day 2010, Republicans held majorities in 10 of the 15 states that gained or lost U.S. House seats and where the legislature played a role in redrawing the state legislative and congressional district map. In the 70 congressional districts that were labeled by National Public Radio as "competitive" in 2010, Republicans controlled the redrawing of at least 47 of those districts; Democrats were responsible for 15, and a non-partisan process determined eight.

REDMAP's effect on the 2012 election is plain when analyzing the results: Pennsylvanians cast 83,000 more votes for Democratic U.S. House candidates than their Republican opponents, but elected a 13-5 Republican majority to represent them in Washington; Michiganders cast over 240,000 more votes for Democratic congressional candidates than Republicans, but still elected a 9-5 Republican delegation to Congress. Nationwide, Republicans won 54 percent of the U.S. House seats, along with 58 of 99 state legislative chambers, while winning only 8 of 33 U.S. Senate races and carrying only 47.8 percent of the national presidential vote.

State elections can have a big impact on a political party's performance in future federal elections, not only by building a strong "bench" and strengthening party infrastructure, but also through the decennial redistricting process. As the largest caucus of Republican state-level officeholders, the RSLC understands the importance of this. The REDMAP effort implemented during the 2010 election cycle focused resources on critical state-level races in states projected to gain or lose congressional seats in reapportionment, and realized enormous success on Election Day in 2010. The RSLC's vision and foresight in undertaking such an effort was further validated in 2012 by remarkable Republican success in down-ballot races, thereby allowing a Republican House of Representatives to return to Washington as an important check and balance of power in our nation's capital.