

MAPPING THE GOP FUTURE

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Even though the Fall 2006 elections fell into a historical pattern and were thus somewhat predictable, the sweeping Democratic victories were impressive. Not only did Democrats win control of Congress and thousands of offices on the state and local level, the data suggest a trend that may make them the dominant political force for quite some time. Although conservatives tasted some victories on the gay marriage issue and Affirmative Action, Democrats appear to be appealing increasingly to the people who will control elections in the future. This thesis can be documented by the following *New York Times* voter analysis.

Eighty-nine percent of the African-American vote went for the Democrats. Blacks are apparently continuing to vote for government favors and preferences. Moreover, there is evidence, such as the nearly 70 percent out-of-wedlock birth rate, suggesting that many blacks feel more comfortable with the flexible moral directions espoused by Democrats. (Read Juan Williams on what he calls “the culture of failure.”)

Eighty-eight percent of Jewish voters came out for the Democrats. While their numbers

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are small, their influence, of course, is considerable, especially in the media.

Seventy-five percent of the “gay, lesbian, or bisexual” vote went to Democrats. We may expect to see more sympathetic legislation by Democratic judges and legislators, challenging the traditional family and a whole range of historic moral principles. Hillary Clinton’s recent endorsement

of the homosexual agenda illustrates the power of this tiny but vocal minority within the Left.

Seventy percent of Hispanics voted for Democrats. Their numbers are growing at such a rate, of course, that they may dominate the politics of several states in the future. Despite President Bush’s highly sympathetic attitude toward Hispanics, Republicans are correctly associated with efforts to quell illegal immigration. As Hispanics become more prosperous, they may move toward the GOP, but that is mere speculation. Fifty-two percent of people of all colors with annual incomes between \$75,000 and \$99,000 went for the Democrats, and the wealthy (over \$100,000) split almost evenly between the parties.

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Sixty-one percent of young people, ages 18 to 29, voted Democratic. (They were highly instrumental in electing Democrats in Wisconsin.) The Left would contend that this reflects higher educational attainment. But it also surely reflects the leftist indoctrination experienced in the classroom from kindergarten through graduate school.

Fifty-six percent of Catholics voted for Democrats.

The booming West Coast (56%), the powerful and influential East Coast (64%), and the Midwest (53%) voted Democratic. In California, the Republican governor won reelection only by creating a coalition with Democrats, which is another way of saying that his GOP principles are negotiable.

At least for the near future, Democrats appear to be in excellent shape. Owning the nation's schools, the major media, and the minorities makes a huge difference, and population trends are highly encouraging.

Still, of course, the GOP continues to have considerable authority. We need not be gloomy about its future. For one thing, there are more conservatives in this country than liberals. And the Right has a considerable number of brilliant and thoughtful observers, eager to do what is necessary to win elections. The setbacks of 2006 were in part caused by the four-year-old Iraq war, which also helps account for the president's very low popular rating. Still, GOP leaders must make adjustments that will revive the Right, appeal to the center, and insure the party's prosperity. Here are several specific lessons one hopes that Republicans learned in their recent drubbing.

1. Corruption has no place in the GOP. New leadership should sweep the party clean. The recent Libby conviction is yet more evidence of a moral breakdown in Washington under Republican rule.
2. Social conservatives should be embraced, not shunned. Their commitment to high moral principles on such subjects as abortion and the traditional family did not bring about the disasters of 2006. As

Ramesh Ponurru pointed out in the *National Review*: "[W]inning Republican candidates have owed their elections to social conservatives for the last generation. Social conservatism is an asset to Republicans, and economic conservatism a liability."

3. Traditional enemies cannot be appeased, so do what is right. Support Israel even if Jewish voters go overwhelming for the opposition; help blacks economically (ending welfare) and educationally (vouchers and No Student Left Behind) even though you know they will resent your concern and reject you at the polls. Do not expect African-Americans to be grateful for attempting to end demeaning racial preferences and stereotypes by eliminating Affirmative Action and treating all Americans equally.
4. Continue to support the War on Terror, explaining Wilsonian idealism and self-preservation patiently and repeatedly. If the Left prefers appeasement, argue the position respectfully and historically. And continue to make every effort to create a democratic and economically stable Iraq. Treat the military with the utmost respect and keep it fully funded.
5. Conservatives must create a world class daily newspaper in this country, and perhaps two formidable cable television networks in order to provide some sort of balance to the one-sided leftist line that pours forth from the media. This is a world dominated by the media, and both sides of the political spectrum should be heard. The shouting matches featured on the Bill O'Reilly and Hannity & Colmes programs on Fox News should serve as models of what serious and responsible discussion should not be.
6. Republicans should keep the screws on schools at all levels, not only to produce better test scores but to present alternative views, not just left wing interpretations. The most valuable sort of diversity is intellectual diversity. The GOP should under-

stand the limits of academic freedom and boldly defend their principles in the struggle for the minds of young people.

7. Support meaningful and dramatic tax reform and be unhesitatingly pro-business.
8. Nominate a presidential candidate who has high personal character, a long track record of defending the highest principles in the culture war, and a determination to

defend freedom abroad. He or she should make it clear that the GOP is not the party of the Clintons, Barney Frank, Al Sharpton, Ted Kennedy, and Hugh Hefner. Give the voters a clear choice about the future and great numbers of them may respond affirmatively. In any case, the party will be on firm moral ground, ready to campaign effectively as the times call for their leadership.