

Election Upheaval Led by Youth Vote

by Anita Gallagher

Democrats rode a nationwide wave of fervid rejection of the Bush-Cheney policies on Iraq, the economy, and the disastrous “war on terror” to a 29-seat majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, and a 51-49 dominance of the U.S. Senate, as of Nov. 10. The electorate’s anger was taken out nationally against Republicans, with nearly 79 million Americans voting—a 40.4 % turnout of eligible voters, the largest turnout in a midterm election in 24 years. This turnout was spearheaded by an increase of 2 *million* voters in the 18-29 age group—a bloc which is now poised to become the most important force in U.S. political life.

The Democratic victories also extended to a pick-up of six state governorships from Republican incumbents, and winning the majority in nine state legislative houses while losing none. The rejection of Bush-Cheney was ubiquitous: In historically 66% Republican Kansas, the Democrats picked up a Congressional seat; and in Indiana, a 60% Republican state in 2004, the Democrats picked up three. Independent voters (not registered as Democrats or Republicans), comprising 26% of the national electorate, voted for Democrats by a 59-37% margin.

However, American statesman Lyndon LaRouche has pointed out that despite the dimensions of the Democratic victory, even more could have been won without the subservience of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), and others, to financier interests like Felix Rohatyn, who arranged the financial destruction of swathes of U.S. auto, steel, and other industry. And, that the Democratic mandate is to change every disastrous policy of Bush-Cheney, now. Exit polls showed high disapproval of the current Congress—Democrats and Republicans.

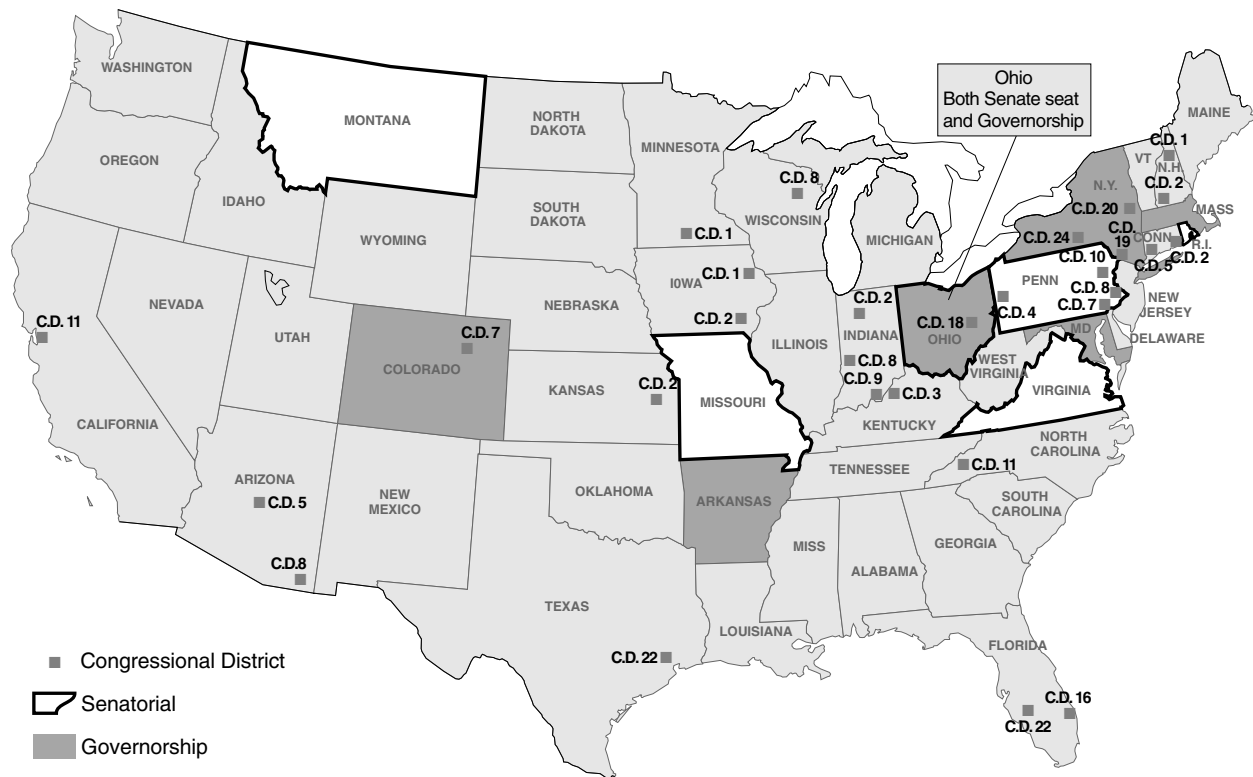
The Youth Vote Is the Future

Thirteen of every 100 voters on Nov. 7 were younger than 30. In House races, 61% of the youth voters voted for Democratic candidates—the highest proportion of any age group, according to Peter Levine, the director of the Center for Information and Research on Civil Learning and Engagement. CIRCLE has tracked the youth vote since the U.S. voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1971, and found that despite that reduction of the voting age, voting among 18-24-year-olds even in Presidential elections *dropped* by 13% from 1972 until 2000.

The 2 million increase in turnout of the youth vote reflects

FIGURE 1

Where Democrats Took Senate and House Seats, Governorships



2006, compared to the last midterm election in 2002. “At 42 million strong, this generation will only grow in importance as more and more vote in each election,” said Heather Smith, Director of Young Voter Strategies.

About 24% of *eligible*—and thus a higher percentage of registered voters under 30—voted Nov. 7. The youth vote was larger in Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Montana than the national average turnout.

The LaRouche Youth Movement has been highly active at universities in the recent period in Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and Connecticut, exposing a campus gestapo operation that was set up by Lynne Cheney under the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) in 1994. In Michigan and Missouri, the youth vote made up a full 17% of the total vote. Besides the East Coast and Midwest, the LYM organized campuses in California and the entire West Coast, and registered voters. With many close races nationwide, the LYM’s energizing of the political environment around campuses, and its voter registration efforts, may have been the deciding factor.

It is lawful that youth-dense precincts near universities in eight states showed even greater voter turnout than other areas, demonstrating the effect of making political issues part of the social environment. The 2006 analysis of the Young

Voter Battleground Poll, which focussed on 36 precincts near universities in Ohio, Connecticut, Michigan, and Colorado, where there were voter registration drives, showed that in these precincts, voter turnout numbers *increased by 157%* from the 2002 turnout. This increase was six times the national average increase in voting by young adults.

Furthermore, the youth vote increased in 2006 not because of new campaign tactics, like Internet campaigning on YouTube or MySpace websites, but because of the oldest approach on record: Somebody asked the youth to vote, either in person, or by phone, according to Ed Goeas of Young Voter Strategies.

The bipartisan Young Voter Strategy Poll found that 40% of young voters identify with Democrats; 30% with Republicans, and 23% with Independents. On Nov. 7, half reported they voted for Democrats, and 61% voted for Democratic Congressional candidates. This is the second consecutive election in which the youth vote has gone to Democrats. Some studies show that if a youth votes for a party three times in a row, he or she will identify with that party for life. But the real implication for U.S. political life is, as LaRouche has often said, “These youth will be the ones who inhabit this planet for the next 50, 60 years. And they will kick the Democratic Party into shape. They will demand a future.”



EIRNS/Finn Hakansson

The LaRouche Youth Movement organizing in Hartford, Connecticut, Nov. 5, 2006. The LYM played a crucial—possibly decisive—role in many areas, in turning out the youth vote.

A Huge Vote Against Free Trade

No “fair trade” Congressman lost a seat, while 27 U.S. House seats and six U.S. Senate seats flipped from free-traders to fair-traders, according to a Nov. 8 report compiled by Lori Wallach, Director of Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch, and reported on a conference call on “The Role of Trade Issues in the 2006 Campaign.” Rep. Joe Donnelly, the Democrat who defeated Republican free-trader Chris Chocola in Indiana’s 2nd C.D. (northwest Indiana), said that Delphi Corp.’s bankruptcy and shipment of auto parts jobs overseas was decisive in his win, citing the effects of the Delphi shutdown in Kokomo. Delphi workers were earning \$21/hour with benefits; they were told they would have to work for \$9/hour and no benefits, and “learn to compete” with China. Though this area is predominately rural, virtually every family had a Delphi worker. “We never carried Hamilton County by a larger plurality than this year,” said Donnelly; it was the fair-trade issue that drove rural counties to vote for Democrats. Victorious Ohio Democratic Senate candidate Sherrod Brown concurred, noting that Democratic Presidential candidate John Kerry carried 18 of Ohio’s 88 counties in 2004, while the Democrats carried 51 on Nov. 7, with most of these counties being rural areas opposed to free trade.

Democratic Congressman-elect Heath Shuler from North Carolina’s 11th C.D. said, “My stump speech began and ended with fair trade. My opponent [Rep. Charles Taylor (R)] didn’t vote on CAFTA [Central American Free Trade Agreement], while North Carolina lost 78% of its textile industry to unfair trade agreements.”

Leo Gerard, the president of the Steelworkers union, reported that steelworkers lost 50,000 jobs over the last six years because of unfair trade agreements.

The battle against free trade, and the financial predators like Felix Rohatyn, Wilbur Ross, and Lashmi Mittal, who are buying up entire industries and shipping production overseas, has been led by Lyndon LaRouche. The rest of the Democratic Party, at the urging of DLC Democrat Al Gore, supported NAFTA. In 2006, LaRouche’s Political Action Committee proposed “The U.S. Economic Recovery Act of 2006” to save the auto industry, and hundreds of trade union leaders and elected official called on the U.S. Congress to pass it. This was a huge issue in Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, and Missouri, which is a major part of the anti-“free trade” vote.

‘Single Issues’ Merge as the Economic Issue

AFL-CIO head John Sweeney, in a Nov. 8 conference call, termed the vote “a referendum on the Bush agenda. The voters combined what pollsters try to keep as ‘single issues’ into a working people’s agenda.” Sweeney claimed that “union voters” drove the vote overwhelmingly against Bush. Hart Opinion Researcher Guy Molineaux said 74% of union members voted for Democrats. The AFL-CIO worked hard to get “drop-off” voters—voters who vote in Presidential years, but don’t come out for midterm elections—to vote, and cited a survey showing that 79% of those voted. In the 12 AFL-CIO battleground states, union members voted 73-27 for Democrats, compared to 55-45% among all voters. The union voters in all categories (white men, women, married women, weekly churchgoers, etc.) voted above the non-union averages for these demographic groupings.

Statewide referenda on raising the minimum wage passed in all six states where they were on the ballot. Gerald MacEntee, President of the 1.4 million member AFSCME municipal workers union, reported that all ballot measures to limit spending at some fixed amount, including proposed Constitutional amendments in Oregon, Nebraska, and Maine, failed to pass because voters now understand that these result in cuts in necessary services.

The AFL-CIO anticipates early Congressional action to raise the minimum wage; restore collective bargaining principles; stop jobs from going overseas, fix Medicare, and restore college tuition funding for the lower 80%.

Democrats gained new majorities in nine state legislative chambers: Houses in Indiana, Minnesota and Michigan, and Oregon; the Wisconsin Senate; and both House and Senate in New Hampshire and Iowa. For the first time in 40 years, Democrats control the governorship, and the State House and Senate in Iowa.