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Moore Insight: Washington State Election Overview

November 2006

The Democrat wave that rolled across the country on Election Day hit Washington State as well, helping to secure Maria Cantwell's victory in the U.S. Senate race and increasing Democrat margins in both the State Senate and House. National exit polling showed a higher than normal turnout among Democrats, and Independents widely favoring Democrats in races for U.S. Senate and House. These national trends were also evident in Washington State.

In fact, exit polling in Washington showed that among people who voted on November 7th, Democrats had a ten-point edge over Republicans. Fully 39% of those who voted consider themselves to be Democrats, 29% Republicans and 32% Independents. This is the widest margin for Democrats over Republicans dating back to at least 1992. By contrast, in the 2004 election, Democrats enjoyed a four-point edge over Republicans (36-32%) and in 2000 the Democrat edge was 8% (37-29%).

Washington State Exit Polls

	Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Net GOP over DEM
2006	39%	29%	32%	-10%
2004	36%	32%	33%	-4%
2002*	34%	34%	32%	--
2000	37%	29%	34%	-8%
1998	34%	30%	36%	-4%
1996	33%	31%	36%	-2%
1994	31%	37%	32%	+6%
1992	33%	35%	32%	+2%

**Moore Information estimate, no exit polls in 2002*

Another big plus for Democrats, Independents voted more widely for Democrats this year than has been typical. For example, VNS exit polls in the U.S. Senate race, Independents voted for Cantwell over McGavick by a 57-39% margin – an 18-point edge for the Democrat. By contrast, in the 2004 gubernatorial race, exit polls showed Independents favored Democrat Christine Gregoire over Republican Dino Rossi by a 53-44% margin – a nine-point edge for the Democrat. That race was so close because Rossi performed better with Democrats (16-82%) than Gregoire did among Republicans (8-92%).

The anti-GOP sentiment among Democrats and Independents was driven in large part by complaints about President Bush's management of the Iraq war, followed by concerns about congressional scandals. Nationally, more than 80% of Democrats and 70% of Independents believe going into Iraq was a bad idea. At the same time, an October Moore Information poll of Washington voters found that 92% of Democrats and 54% of Independents had an

unfavorable opinion of the President. Typically, national issues do not play as large a role in non-presidential years as they do during presidential elections, but exit polls this year showed that 60% of voters considered national issues more important in their vote, while 32% said state issues were more important.

***President Bush Image in Washington State
(October 15-16, 2006)***

	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
Favorable	6%	84%	34%
Unfavorable	92%	10%	54%
No opinion	2%	6%	11%

Our own polls also showed clear evidence of deflated interest levels among GOP voters. Among likely voters (those who have voted in at least two of the four last primary and general elections) the Democrats had a 4% margin statewide over Republicans, while among those most interested in the election this year, Democrats had a 12% margin over Republicans. This is greatly at odds with history – historically, GOP voters turnout in higher percentages than Democrats.

What will 2008 bring for Democrats and Republicans? That will largely depend on the presidential nominees of the parties – stay tuned for another memo on that.

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