

A Historical Perspective
**Challenges No Greater Than Those
the Pro-Life Movement Has Met and Overcome Before**

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The election results were certainly not what we had worked and prayed for. The new Congress, with its pro-abortion Democratic leadership, definitely poses new and difficult challenges. However, a historical perspective and analysis of how Americans voted shows that these challenges are no greater than those the pro-life movement has met and overcome before. (See story, page one.)

While there are still absentee and provisional ballots being counted and possible recounts expected in some very close races, it appears the Democrats will control the House of Representatives in the 110th Congress with approximately the same margin, 30 seats, with which the Republicans controlled the chamber during the 109th Congress.

Unfortunately, as has been the case historically, the leadership and most members of the Democratic caucus are strongly pro-abortion.

For the 22 years following Roe (1973 thru 1994), the Democrats consistently controlled the U.S. House with a margin that ranged between 50 and 149 seats. In fact, the Democratic margin during 1993 and 1994 was 82 seats. The Republicans regained control of the House in the 1994 elections—the first time since losing it in 1954.

With a gain of six seats, the Democrats regained control of the U.S. Senate by the slimmest possible margin (51-49). Since 1973, the Democrats have controlled the U.S. Senate for a total of 16 years with margins ranging between 10 and 23 seats when there was also a Democratically controlled House. In addition, during most of 2001 and all of 2002, the Democrats controlled the Senate but not the House.

During these periods of Democratic control of Congress, with leadership and committee chairmen generally hostile to our cause, the pro-life movement continued to make gains and thwart pro-abortion initiatives. In the period between 1992 and 1994, when pro-abortion Democrats controlled both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, we succeeded in stopping both the radically pro-abortion "Freedom of Choice Act" (FOCA) and the Clinton Health Care Rationing Plan.

All of this is not to say that the next two years will be easy. They won't. But we've been there before. The same kind of hard work and determination that led to past pro-life successes and advances in the face of a hostile Congress can and will be in evidence again.

The Outlook in the 110th Congress

According to NRLC Legislative Director Douglas Johnson, on abortion-related issues, the pro-life side "lost approximately four votes in the Senate and 12 votes in the House, although the number will vary depending on the exact issue." The difference between the pro-life loss in the

House and the Republican loss of approximately 30 seats is because (a) some pro-abortion Republicans were defeated by pro-abortion Democrats and (b) some pro-life Republicans were defeated by Democrats who labeled themselves as pro-life, as discussed further below. Also, one pro-abortion Democratic open seat was filled by a pro-life Democrat.

The pro-life vote will vary according to the specific issue. For example, Johnson estimates that on the issue of the performance of abortion in U.S. military medical facilities, the pro-life side in the House has lost approximately 12 votes, and would probably still narrowly prevail. On some other issues the loss will be greater, especially on procedural votes where there will be a strong inclination for freshman Democrats to vote with their pro-abortion leadership.

The pro-abortion Democratic leadership in both houses will no doubt seek to keep pro-life measures from coming to the floor, and pro-lifers will have to work hard to see that past pro-life gains are not eroded.

Pro-Life Democrats

Approximately 20-24 Democrats who were re-elected to the House usually or consistently vote pro-life. It is a testament to past pro-life political successes that an increased number of Democratic challengers labeled themselves "pro-life" to run this year. However, some of the "pro-life" Democrats did not respond to the NRLC candidate questionnaire and others indicated opposition to the NRLC position on specific issues.

(It should be noted that all of the "pro-life" Democrats who ran against an incumbent Republican ran against a pro-life Republican. There was no instance in which the Democratic Party ran a "pro-life" Democrat candidate against a pro-abortion Republican.)

It remains to be seen how many of these newly elected first-term "pro-life" Democrats will vote pro-life and how many used the label as political cover. Our movement will judge them on their votes, not their label. Of course each of them is expected to vote for pro-abortion Democratic House leadership.

The most egregious example of seeking to use the pro-life label as political cover was Congressman Harold Ford, Jr. (D), who ran for the open Tennessee Senate seat. Ford called himself pro-life, despite the fact that he had accumulated an 87% voting record against the positions of National Right to Life during his time in the U.S. House. Fortunately, his duplicity was exposed by NRL PAC and pro-life Republican Bob Corker was elected.

In Pennsylvania, Democrat Bob Casey, Jr., took the pro-life label, which helped him defeat 100% pro-life Republican Sen. Rick Santorum. National Right to Life received only an unsigned, e-mailed candidate questionnaire sent by a staffer for Casey. In it Casey disagreed with NRLC on several pro-life issues.

Even more troubling are statements that were made by pro-abortion Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY). They concerned assurances she said were given to her regarding Casey by Democratic Senate Campaign Committee chairman, pro-abortion Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY). It remains to be seen if, and to what extent, Bob Casey, Jr., will keep his word to the pro-life voters he wooed in Pennsylvania in his successful effort to defeat Sen. Santorum.

The Future

The losses the pro-life movement suffered were real, they hurt, and they should not be understated. At the same time, the wins we had and the losses we prevented should not be understated or forgotten either. (See both stories on page one.)

It is very encouraging that the pro-life increment held firm in a very, very difficult environment. National Right to Life and NRL PAC will continue examining what is working to further improve on successful projects and, at the same time, will test new tools to enhance our effectiveness.

Generally speaking, National Right to Life PAC was most effective where there was a strong grassroots volunteer base working cooperatively with NRL PAC. Jacki Ragan and the State Organizational Development Department are already at work seeking to develop new strategies to enhance the chapter and grassroots base.

To all the pro-lifers who worked so very hard, let me offer a most sincere thank you. You did make a difference. You will make a difference. You will succeed.