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THE 2006 ELECTIONS: DEMOCRATS TAKE CHARGE

The Democratic tidal wave predicted last summer by Brookings Scholar and COSSA Annual Meeting Speaker Tom Mann (see story below) occurred on November 7, creating sweeping changes in the make up of the 110th Congress and giving the Democrats the majority in both House for the first time since 1994.

As of November 18, the Democrats have picked up 30 seats in the House, with seven seats still undecided. For the new 110th Congress, at the moment, the Democrats have 231 members and the Republicans 197. Two of the undecided seats are runoff elections in Louisiana and Texas. The Democrats will gain the seat in New Orleans. The seat in Texas and the other disputed seats are all Republican-held and in each the Republicans are ahead.

In the Senate, the Democrats with the help of two independents, Sen. Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) and Senator-Elect Bernard Sanders (I-VT) will control by the slim margin of 51-49. Surprising many, the Democrats managed to defeat six incumbent Republicans and hold on to their own contested seats to take over the Senate.

New House Includes Three Political Scientists

Although its significance seems to have been tarnished by the contest for House Majority Leader, for the first time in its 217 year history, the Speaker of the House of Representatives is a woman. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) will sit behind the President during his State of the Union address. Despite Pelosi's intervention, Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD) will remain the number two person in the leadership as Majority Leader. Rep. James Clyburn (D-SC) becomes the second African American in a major House Leadership role as the new Democratic Whip (Former Rep. William Gray of PA held the position in the 101st and 102nd Congresses.)

Thwarting an attempt by the leaders of the conservative House Republican Study Group, which has led the charge against grants it deemed unworthy of funding at NIH, the new minority in the House kept its current leaders in charge minus current Speaker Rep. Dennis Hastert (R-IL). Hastert did not seek the Minority Leader position, which went to Rep. John Boehner (R-OH), the current Majority Leader. Current Republican Whip Rep. Roy Blunt (R-MO) will remain in that position, only this time in the minority.

The significant difference from the 109th Congress is the turnover in Committee and Subcommittee Chairmen. In the House, Rep. Bart Gordon (D-TN) will replace the retired Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) as head of the Science Committee. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), a key ally of Pelosi, will chair the Education and Workforce panel, which still has the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act to complete and No Child Left Behind on the horizon.

Four members of the Congressional Black Caucus ascend to lead committees: Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) at Ways and Means, which handles tax and welfare policy; Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) at Judiciary; Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS) at Homeland Security; and Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald at Administration. Long-time Reps. John Dingell (D-MI), Henry Waxman (D-CA), and Barney Frank (D-MA) take charge of the Committees on Energy and Commerce, which handles NIH reauthorization, Government Reform, and Financial Services, respectively. Rep. Collin Peterson (D-MN), will head the Agriculture Committee in 2007 during the expected reauthorization of the farm bill.

Rep. David Obey (R-WI) will chair the House Appropriations Committee. The selection of the Subcommittee Chairs, the so-called "Cardinals," await possible switching of the panels' jurisdictions and possible revision of the collapsing of the subcommittees engineered by former Republican Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX). Obey also has to decide if he wants to also chair the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Subcommittee as well as the full panel. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) will take over the House Budget Committee.

Among the 52 new House members are three with political science doctorates. They are: Rep. Chris Carney (D-PA), who was teaching at Penn State Worthington-Scranton, has a doctorate from Nebraska and has consulted on counterterrorism efforts; Rep. Dave Loebsack (D-IA), who was teaching at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, IA, has a doctorate from the University of California at Davis; and Rep. Joe Sestak (D-PA), who has a Ph.D. in political economy and government from Harvard and has spent his career in the Navy and as a national security official. In addition, Rep. Tim Walz (D-MN) is a high school geography teacher and Rep. Harry Mitchell (D-AZ) is a former high school civics teacher. New Rep. Brad Ellsworth (D-IN), a former sheriff, has an M.A. in criminology. New Rep. Carol Shea-Porter (D-NH) has a M.P.A. from the University of New Hampshire and has been a social worker.

The New Senate

The Senate leadership on the Democratic side remains Sens. Harry Reid (D-NV), and Dick Durbin (D-IL), only now they will have majority in front of their titles of leader and whip. On the Republican side, with the retirement of Sen. Bill Frist (R-TN), current whip Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) moves into the Minority Leader slot. In a comeback move, Sen. Trent Lott (R-MS), a former Majority Leader, is the new Minority Whip.

Regarding Senate Committees, Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Joseph Biden (D-DE), and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) return to head the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) panel, the Foreign Relations panel, and the Judiciary panel. Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI) will lead the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has part jurisdiction with the HELP Committee over the National Science Foundation's authorization. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) takes the helm of the Agriculture Committee. In perhaps the most dramatic shift in Senate Committee leadership, Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) takes over as head of the

Environment and Public Works Committee from Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK). Inhofe has called global warming "a hoax." Boxer is more likely to try and confront the problem and seek solutions to it.

Senate longevity champion Robert Byrd (D-WV) will lead the appropriations panel again, with Subcommittee leadership still undecided because of Reid's decision to give up his "Cardinalship." Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND) will head the Budget Committee.

What does all this mean for science policy and the social and behavioral sciences? With the Democrats in charge one key activity will be oversight of the Administration's policies. As already mentioned, there will be a change of focus in the Senate on global change, but stem cell research will return, with another probable Presidential veto in store, and some tweaking of the American Competitiveness initiative. The massive bipartisan Senate bill remains unacceptable to the White House. The reauthorizations of the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, the Higher Education Act, and No Child Left Behind are on some agendas. With the Senate in Democratic hands, presidential nominations for the judiciary, executive branch, and regulatory agencies, will test the promises of bipartisan cooperation. Priorities in appropriations bills may get rearranged, but the Democrats have promised to reduce and end the deficit, so grand new spending initiatives are not probable.

The 110th Congress will include numerous politicians who see themselves sitting in the White House in 2009. This will clearly influence the legislative politics of the next two years as well.

109th CONGRESS RETURNS FOR LAME DUCK LAST HURRAH

With the Democrats basking in their election victory and leadership contests dominating the Washington news, the old Congress came back to town for a lame-duck session on November 13. After a week in which it did not accomplish much, members returned home for Thanksgiving expecting to return on December 4.

The House and Senate enacted a new Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government operating. It replaces the one that expired on November 17. The new CR expires on December 8. The Senate passed the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs appropriations bill, but conservatives in the House blocked the appointment of House conferees to reconcile House-Senate differences. Thus, there are still nine appropriations bills outstanding providing FY 2007 funds for most of the domestic agencies, including the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health.

This week the rumor mill regarding an Omnibus spending bill versus a CR that would go over into the new Congress, moved in favor of the latter. Unhappy Republicans appear willing to dump the FY 2007 spending bills denouement into the new Democratic majorities' laps. Democrats are mostly using the "clean slate" argument to push the responsibility back on the outgoing GOP majority.

The White House and Office of Management and Budget Director Rob Portman would like to see the FY 2007 process completed sooner rather than later. It is difficult, although as we have learned in recent years not impossible, to prepare a new budget without knowing the final figures in the old budget. However, an impediment to completion is the President's insistence on an overall discretionary spending mark of \$873 billion.

Whether any of this gets cleared up when the 109th Congress returns on December 4 is totally uncertain.

LEADERS OF CENSUS BUREAU/NIJ RESIGN

C. Louis Kincannon and Hermann Habermann, director and deputy director respectively of the U.S. Census Bureau, announced their resignations on November 14. Kincannon, a career civil servant who had joined the Bureau in 1963, was appointed by President Bush to succeed Ken Prewitt in 2002. Kincannon said he would stay until a successor was confirmed. Habermann, also at the Bureau since 2002, said he would leave in January.

In his resignation letter to the President, released by the Department of Commerce, Kincannon noted that "shifting priorities make it time for me to retire." He also cited "the need to spend more time with one's family." Although he warned that Washington takes such claims "cynically," some in the statistical community questioned whether these leaders were indeed pushed out.

Kincannon told the *Washington Post* that: "My perception is that I don't have the same level of trust that I did a year or so ago," and there were "different views perhaps about priorities" at the agency among the current Census leadership, Commerce officials, and those with Census oversight responsibilities on the Hill.

One issue that has surfaced in discussions about the resignations is the decennial calls for adjusting the Census numbers for undercounting minorities and immigrants, who tend to vote for Democrats. With almost every recent Census, court cases have arisen on this issue and the Commerce Department has resisted adjustment, including after 2000. Even Kincannon admitted that Congressional Republicans are wary that adjustment may rear its pro-Democratic head again. Another issue reportedly having something to do with the resignations has been the recent disappearance of laptop computers from the Bureau. Kincannon dismissed this allegation.

The announced departures come as the Bureau is ramping up its activities for the approaching 2010 Census count. With the advent of the American Community Survey, the decennial Census will consist of a short-form questionnaire that will be sent to every American in 2010. The Bureau is currently discussing the form's content. Congress needs to review the content next year, so that Census can conduct its dress rehearsal in 2008. The 2010 Census Advisory Committee, of which COSSA is a member, will meet on November 30 to discuss this and other issues in preparation for the upcoming decennial.

Another immediate problem the Bureau faces is its FY 2007 budget. As part of the ramp-up process, the Bureau's budget needs to increase significantly over the next four years. Congress has still not finalized the FY 2007 appropriation and the House and Senate created difficulties for the Bureau by cutting the President's request, including a \$58 million reduction on the House floor (see UPDATE [July 10](#) and [July 24, 2006](#)). In addition, the Bureau has faced hostile oversight hearings on its spending plans and other issues surrounding the Census (see UPDATE [June 12](#), [August 7](#), and [September 11, 2006](#)).

Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), who as a member of the House Government Reform Committee has followed Census activities for many years, reacted to the news of the leaders' resignations with concern suggesting "the accuracy of the 2010 census is absolutely in jeopardy."

NIJ Director Announces Resignation

Another leader of an agency facing budget difficulties for FY 2007 (see UPDATE [July 24, 2006](#)) has also announced his resignation. Glenn Schmitt, who has been Acting Director of the

National Institute of Justice (NIJ), has told his bosses and colleagues that he will leave the agency in December.

Schmitt has been Acting Director since Sarah Hart left NIJ in 2005. He had been serving as NIJ's Deputy Director since 2001. Prior to joining NIJ, Schmitt served as the Chief Counsel to the Subcommittee on Crime of the House Committee on the Judiciary. A reserve officer in the Judge Advocate General's Corps of the United States Army, in October 2004 he was called to active duty for one year in Iraq. Although he ran the agency for over a year, the Administration made no move to remove the Acting from his designation. Schmitt has not publicly announced any future plans.

COSSA HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING: ELECTIONS, SCIENCE POLICY, GENES, AND SECURITY ON AGENDA

COSSA held its Annual Meeting on November 13. Representatives of COSSA's members heard discussions of Science and Science Policy; Genes, the Social Environment and Behavior; and Science and Security. In addition, a session focused on the results of the 2006 elections.

Oy Vay! Maccaca Happens!

Returning to COSSA, where he once served as Chairman of the Executive Committee, Tom Mann, Senior Fellow in Governance Studies at the Brookings Institution, discussed the results of the 2006 election. He began by suggesting the Republicans' lament might be: "Oy Vay! Maccaca Happens," a reference to the difficult problems faced by Republican Senator George Allen in his unsuccessful fight for re-election to the Senate from Virginia.

Mann made clear that congressional elections in the sixth year of a presidential term are retrospective judgments on an Administration. This time the electorate decided that the Bush presidency and the Republican-controlled Congress had failed based on the debacle in Iraq, overall competence - Katrina, Afghanistan and Iraq, and the style, tone, and ethics of government epitomized by the Jack Abramoff and Mark Foley scandals. It was not an election about a Democratic program and Mann noted their candidates succeeded in not getting "lured into a debate about a policy future."

For the first time since 1922 no Democrat in the House or Senate, either an incumbent or in a Democratically-held open seat, lost. There was a substantial swing in the national vote, defined loosely as the total vote for all competitive House seats, of six percent pro-Democratic. Independents and Moderates were the prime movers to the Democratic side in 2006.

Mann, who with Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute, recently wrote a book called *The Broken Branch: How Congress is Failing America and How to Get it Back on Track*, suggested the election reflected some of the arguments in the book. Americans, Mann contended, demonstrated that it was time to "get serious about governing," to put an end to "ugly tribalism," and to end Congress' abdication of institutional responsibility and get back to significant oversight of the Bush Administration's policies.

He praised the electorate for "retaining the capacity for democratic accountability." Mann was also thankful that with one important exception the country avoided a possible "meltdown" in electoral administration. He found it ironic that the exception was a possible undercounting of votes in Katherine Harris' old congressional district in Florida. Harris was the Republican Secretary of State in Florida during the disputed 2000 presidential election.

In looking ahead, Mann warned the science and higher education community that the new Congress may get serious about reducing the use of earmarks. He also saw changes in how the Congress will approach the risks of globalization, the environment, immigration reform, and education, particularly with No Child Left Behind up for reauthorization. He also noted that divided government in the past has provided opportunities for successful policymaking. For 2008, Mann saw opportunities for Democrats to enhance their success because of the strong support they received in 2006 from young voters and Latino voters.

Meeting Marburger's Challenge

At the 2005 Annual Meeting, Presidential Science Adviser John Marburger reiterated his challenge to develop a "new science of science policy." (See UPDATE [November 7, 2005](#)). At this year's meeting, David Lightfoot, Assistant Director for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) at the National Science Foundation (NSF), provided an update on plans to meet Marburger's challenge.

Lightfoot indicated that SBE has developed a program on "The Science of Science and Innovation Policy." The SBE web page has a link to the prospectus for the program: www.nsf.gov/scisip/scisip_prospectus.pdf. A solicitation for funding proposals is expected early in 2007.

The priorities for a Science of Science and Innovation policy according to Marburger were: comprehensive data collection, taxonomy, and stewardship; new metrics, models, and frameworks; interagency collaboration on a roadmap; and international partnerships that promote science and technology advancements. NSF's goals are: to develop usable knowledge and theories; improve and expand science metrics, datasets, and analytical tools; and to coordinate efforts among federal agencies to cultivate a community of experts focus on a science of science and innovation policy.

The program seeks ideas to develop theoretical and conceptual models of scientific discovery and technological innovation, and statistical and econometric tools for estimating returns to science and engineering investments. Also needed are qualitative studies including case studies, ethnographies, retrospective analyses, and cross-national comparisons. The levels of analysis are many, including: cognitive, organizational, cultural, regional, national, and transnational. In particular, the program encourages interdisciplinary and international collaborations. The increasing sophistication of cyberinfrastructure will enhance data extraction and provide opportunities for laboratories - virtual laboratories across disciplinary and geographical spaces.

The ultimate goal, according to Lightfoot, is to create an evidence-based understanding of the impacts of the science and engineering enterprise, based on effective tools, data, and expertise. Another important outcome would be the capacity to better nourish and harness the capabilities of the national science, technology, engineering and mathematics workforce.

'Heredity Deals the Cards and Environment Plays the Hand'

Vivian Ota Wang, senior adviser to the Director of NIH's Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research and a program director of the Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications Program of NIH's National Human Genome Research Institute, addressed the meeting on the connections among genes, the social environment, and behavior. Wang referred to a recent report from the Institute on Medicine (see UPDATE [September 11, 2006](#)) that outlined numerous recommendations to integrate social, behavioral, and genetic research. She emphasized the need to develop priorities for research, workforce issues, and infrastructural needs.

Scientists completed the sequencing of the human genome 2003 and Wang gave the audience a basic introduction to genetics. One important caveat about the genetic side, she suggested, is that there's more within-group difference than between-group difference.

The important point, Wang stated, is how all of this relates to health care and disease prevention. Here, she declared, environmental factors play a significant role in morbidity. We also now know, she stated, that there a lot of diseases that presumably, at one point, were thought to be solely behaviorally or environmentally caused, really do have a genetic factor. Thus, she stressed the importance of integrating the three elements - genes, environment, and behavior.

She also noted that the definition of environment has been expanded from a focus on toxins to include social environments. "The social environment piece is something that's been completely neglected in the gene environment sort of discussion," Wang observed. In examining social environments researchers are looking at issues of social economic status, health insurance, access to healthcare, discrimination, using Census tracks, looking at neighborhoods. And for the behavioral sciences, the issues are acculturation, locus of control, psychosocial stress, cognitive style, physical activity and diet. "This is also," she reminded everyone, "a lifespan issue."

Wang discussed the new \$40 million Gene Environment Initiative that was put into President Bush's FY 2007 budget. The announcement was made on February 8th of this year and Francis Collins, who is the director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, and David Schwartz at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, are coordinating NIH's effort. Basically, they're heading the two components that were designated in the initiative - a genetics program and an exposure biology program. The whole purpose of this initiative is to accelerate understanding the genetic and environmental contributions to health and disease.

She encouraged social and behavioral scientists to look at the initiative and the myriad of opportunities for research in this area. The link is: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-HG-06-033.html>

Wang concluded that to accomplish all this, a paradigm shift may be necessary. "This whole paradigm is very different," she exclaimed, "from the way I was trained as a psychologist." "I remember doing our own studies and protecting our data; we don't like to share it too much." The focus on these relationships among genes, environment, and behavior "is big science, where there is an expectation of data access and data sharing." She feared that unless we have that paradigm shift, "the science is going to lose out on our expertise and we're going to lose out on contributing to something that is very worthwhile."

Protecting the Culture of Science in an Era of Terrorism

The meeting came to an end with a panel on Science and Security. Mark Frankel of the American Association for the Advancement of Science moderated an examination of how science's culture of openness and trust survives in this post 9/11 era. Frankel pointed out that the culture endured for the most part during the Cold War, through scientist exchanges and cooperation. However, in an era of "stateless violence" this has become more difficult.

Karen Cook of Stanford University explained the agenda and goals of the National Academies panel on *A New Government Partnership for Science and Security*, on which she serves. The Committee chaired by Jacques Gansler of the University of Maryland and Alice Gast, now President of Lehigh University, has held a number of meetings in Washington and on university campuses to take testimony regarding the goal of balancing national security concerns with maintaining the U.S. cutting edge research environment so important to the nation's

competitiveness. COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver testified to the panel in January 2006 (see UPDATE [January 30, 2006](#)). The Committee has heard concerns about the dangers of restricting access to information, laboratories, and international collaboration. These are viewed as creating possible long-term negative effects on the U.S. scientific mission and economic growth. In addition, they are seen as “inconsistent with the mission of the university.” Therefore, university-based witnesses told the panel that “restrictions should be rare in these settings.” Cook indicated an increasing role for the social sciences in investigating the sociological nature of the university and the conduct of science and in providing evidence-based decisions on science policy as well as security issues. These sciences could also further study the role of the culture of openness and trust in science. The Committee is expected to make its report in 2007. Comments and suggestions are still welcome. For more information: www8.nationalacademies.org/cp/projectview.aspx?key=177.

Gary LaFree, a criminologist from the University of Maryland and co-Director of the National Center for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), focused on the sticky problem of Sensitive But Unclassified Information (SBU). He noted that the challenges raised by SBU for the social sciences include: the impact on international collaboration, START has overseas collaborators; access of graduate students to the work of the center; limitations of closed data and analysis systems; problems of a “one size fits all” policy; ineffectiveness of “top down” systems; and implementation issues. He compared the SBU dilemma with the Institutional Review Board processes where decisions are made by non-subject matter experts, rapid response research is hindered, and obstacles are created to cross-institution projects. LaFree mentioned that the START Center is trying to convince the Department of Homeland Security to accept SBU procedures in which the Center director in consultation with the university vice president for research would decide when a project falls into the SBU category triggering certain protections for the information. This is still under discussion and part of the problem is that there are numerous definitions of SBU.

Victor Johnson, Associate Executive Director for Public Policy at NAFSA: Association of International Educators, discussed the situation with visas for international students and scholars seeking entry into the United States. He praised the State Department for making it easier for international students to obtain visas. However, difficulties still arise for international scholars because of the risk aversion of individual consular officials and their unwillingness to expedite processing by incorporating pre-screening or pre-certification of students and scholars. Most importantly, from Johnson’s point-of-view, the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security have yet to issue a joint statement that clearly articulates visa policy. Because of this the two agencies are often stepping on each other’s toes and the toes of students and scholars who wish to enter the U.S.

SUSAN CUTTER NAMED NEW COSSA PRESIDENT; MALCOM JOINS BOARD

The COSSA Board of Directors has named Susan Cutter as the next president of the Consortium. Cutter is Carolina Distinguished Professor of Geography at the University of South Carolina, where she also directs the Hazards Research Lab. Her two- year term commences on January 1, 2007. She succeeds Myron Gutmann, director of the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan.

Cutter has been working in the risk and hazards fields for more than twenty-five years and is a nationally- recognized scholar in this field. She has authored or edited eight books and more than 50 peer-reviewed articles. Her most recent book, *American Hazardscapes*, chronicles the increasing hazard vulnerability to natural disaster events in the United States during the last thirty years.

Cutter is also a co-principal investigator of the Department of Homeland Security funded Center of Excellence for Behavioral and Social Research on Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism. She was the President of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) in 1999-2000. Cutter has been a member of the COSSA Board of Directors representing AAG twice; from 1989-92 and since 2001. She is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Prior to her arrival at South Carolina in 1993, she taught at Rutgers University for 16 years. She earned her B.A. from the California State University at Hayward, her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

Joining the Board of Directors as an At-Large Member is Shirley Malcom, the head of the Education and Human Resources Directorate at the AAAS. Malcom has chaired a number of national committees addressing education reform and access to scientific and technical education, careers, and literacy. She served on the National Science Board, the policymaking body of the National Science Foundation, from 1994 to 1998, and from 1994-2001 served on the President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology. Malcom received her Ph.D. in ecology from Pennsylvania State University; a M.S. in zoology from the UCLA; and a B.S. from the University of Washington. She also holds thirteen honorary degrees. In 2003 she received the Public Welfare Medal of the National Academy of Sciences.

Reappointed as At-Large Members were James S. Jackson, director of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, and William Lacy, Vice Provost of University Outreach and International Programs at the University of California, Davis. Gutmann will remain on the Board as Immediate Past President. Rotating off as At-Large Members are Past President Orlando Taylor of Howard University and Cora Marrett, recently appointed as the National Science Foundation's Assistant Director for the Education and Human Resources Directorate (see UPDATE [September 25, 2006](#)).

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is an advocacy organization promoting attention to and federal support for the social and behavioral sciences.

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