



STATE OF OREGON

INTEROFFICE MEMO

TO: Gerry Thompson

DATE: March 2, 1982

FROM: Bob Oliver *BO*

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send copy  
to Sharon  
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SUBJECT: Political Musings

Although my own political views are ambivalent at best, I have had a long-time fascination not only with the political process, but with election returns.

After Ronald Reagan's triumph in November 1980, and the turnover of 12 seats in the United States Senate, Republicans were understandably euphoric. Many were claiming that Phillips' Republican majority finally was emerging, having only been temporarily delayed by Watergate. There were predictions that the party would henceforth be predominant at national and local levels. The purpose of this memorandum is to express my view that it would be highly premature for any candidate to proceed on that assumption this year. Senator Packwood expressed similar sentiments this morning, as reported in the Statesman-Journal.

There have been at least two other occasions when similar sanguine forecasts were expressed.

The first was in 1946, when war-weary voters tossed the Democrats out of Congress in droves. Some compared the situation to that of 1920, which initiated a decade of Republican prominence. As things turned out, two years later the Republicans lost nine Senators and 85 members of the House.

In 1952, Dwight Eisenhower enjoyed the first of two smashing personal victories. He brought a Congress along as the Senate emerged 48 to 46 Republican, with two others; and the House 221 to 213 Republican, with one independent. There were massive defections from Democratic ranks among Southerners, farmers, labor and Blacks. Eisenhower spoke of "remaking the Republican Party", and many believed he could turn it into the majority institution.

Eisenhower's popularity held throughout his tenure -- it is quite likely he could have been elected for a third term, had his talk of repealing the 22nd Amendment assumed reality. But by 1958, as his Administration was drawing to a close, it had become clear this was not going to happen. In elections that year, the Democrats won the Senate 54 to 34, and the House 283 to 153. Here in Oregon, it was the year Bob Holmes won an upset victory, and the Democrats captured firm control of the Legislature.

There are substantial differences between Eisenhower and Reagan. Such political philosophy as Eisenhower had was fuzzy, and adaptable, whereas Reagan's views on economic and social issues



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are sharp and dogmatic. There are substantial similarities. Each, by virtue of chronological age, held almost the status of elder statesman on Inauguration Day. Each made public statements that shocked ordinarily well-informed persons (e.g., Eisenhower referred to the Prime Minister of India as "Mr. Nero," and Reagan said how shameful it is that Vietnam veterans do not receive GI benefits). Each came into office with an immense personal popularity -- Eisenhower held on to his, and Reagan probably will hold on to his. And, like Eisenhower, Reagan and his supporters talk of a fundamental change in America's political alignment in favor of the Republican party.

An examination of statistics from the 1980 election convinces me that the triumph of the Republican Party, though broad, did not run all that deep.

Figures and individual races are illuminating. In Idaho, Symms squeaked past Church by 218,701 to 214,439. In Indiana, Quayle ousted Bayh by 1,182,414 to 1,015,962; in Wisconsin, Kasten edged out Nelson by 1,106,311 to 1,065,487; in New York, D'Amato squeaked past Holtzman by 2,699,652 to 2,618,661 -- while Javits polled 664,544, most of which surely would have gone to Holtzman had he not been in the race. Finally, in Arizona Goldwater barely hung on against Schulz by 432,371 to 422,972.

The Republican Party should be proud of its gains in the Senate in 1980 -- but it should remember that, despite Reagan's monstrous landslide, margins of victory in most of those upset races were exceedingly close. And, the Democrats still hold a majority in the House of 242 to 190.

Senatorial elections were held in 35 states in 1980. Reagan carried all but three of these states. The following table lists these states. In the first column, Reagan's percentage of the total (including Anderson and others) is listed. In the second column, there is listed the percentage of the total vote for U.S. Senator won by the Republican candidate (a "minus" sign means the Republican candidate ran behind Reagan). In the third column, the same percentage is listed for Republican candidates for the House of Representatives. In the fourth column, the same percentage is listed for the Republican candidates for Governor in those states where a gubernatorial election was held.

	<u>Reagan</u>	<u>Senate</u>	<u>House</u>	<u>Governor</u>
ALA	50.9	-0.8	-15.7	
ALASKA	54.6	-0.7	19.2	
ARIZ	60.6	-1.1	-3.8	
ARK	48.1	-7.2	30.8	3.8
CALIF	52.7	-9.2	-1.6	
COLO	55.1	-5.4	-1.2	

	<u>Reagan</u>	<u>Senate</u>	<u>House</u>	<u>Governor</u>
CONN	48.2	-4.5	-0.4	
FLA	55.5	-3.8	-14.3	
GA	41.0	9.9	-12.9	
HAW	43.7	-21.5	-36.6	
IDA	66.5	-16.8	-10.4	
ILL	49.7	-5.7	4.4	
IND	56.0	-2.2	-5.8	1.7
IOWA	51.3	2.5	-2.3	
KANS	57.9	5.9	-1.8	
KY	49.0	-14.1	-8.1	
LA	51.2	(D unop- posed)	-17.7	
MD	44.2	22.0	-5.9	
MASS	41.9	-11.2	-8.3	
MO	51.2	-3.2	-4.3	1.4
NEV	63.6	-4.3	-26.8	
NH	57.8	-5.6	-6.5	-17.1
NY	46.7	-1.8	1.6	
NC	49.3	0.8	-5.0	-11.9
ND	64.3	6.0	-21.7	-10.7
OHIO	51.5	-20.3	2.5	
OKLA	60.5	-7.0	-19.1	
OR	48.4	-0.5	-8.7	
PA	49.6	0.9	0.4	
SC	49.6	-20.0	-1.5	
SD	60.5	-2.3	-14.8	
UTAH	72.8	0.9	-25.3	
VT	44.5	5.3	34.5	14.3
WA	49.7	5.5	-0.9	5.9
WISC	47.9	2.3	1.6	6.5

It is comforting to note that in six of nine gubernatorial elections, Republican candidates actually read ahead of the President.

The other figures are not comforting. In virtually every part of the country, Republican candidates for Senator tended to run considerably behind the President. This tendency is even more pronounced in the case of House candidates. This is not the stuff of which emerging political majorities are made.

I didn't attempt to compile statistics, but an examination of the 1981 Republican Almanac will reveal that the party did not make any striking gains in state legislatures in 1980.

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It is particularly sobering to recall that Reagan will not be on the ballot this November, and that the economy has been getting progressively worse under Republican leadership. Even stalwarts such as Bob Dole are questioning the President's economic policies, and one wonders how long the average voters will continue to "have faith."

I do not suggest that our Governor condemn the President during his campaign, but I am reasonably certain Republican state and local candidates who identify with Reagan will have no better luck than those who identified with Eisenhower.

cc: Denny Miles