



August 27, 2008

*Building the  
2009-2010 Florida Legislature*

## Florida House Republicans Struggle to Maintain Their Numbers



*Florida is a political moving target. The August Primary Election provides early insight into the composition of the 2009-2010 Florida Legislature. Today, the state is trending to the middle.*

*by Rheb Harbison*

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**F**loridians are a little bluer these days. They aren't very happy. Policy-wise, nearly half believe the state is moving in the wrong direction. Many are hurting economically. It's very personal.

These bad feelings and a charged presidential campaign have given the Florida Democratic Party renewed energy. So much so that the Democrats have added 170 thousand registered voters to their rolls since the last election, mostly at the expense of the Republicans who have simultaneously lost over 11 thousand folks.

### 2008 Voter Registration Analysis

	Oct 2006	July 2008	+/-
<b>Dem</b>	<b>4,219,531</b>	<b>4,389,698</b>	<b>170,167</b>
%	40%	41%	4.0%
<b>Rep</b>	<b>3,935,675</b>	<b>3,924,081</b>	<b>(11,594)</b>
%	38%	37%	-0.3%
<b>Other</b>	<b>2,278,643</b>	<b>2,304,740</b>	<b>26,097</b>
%	22%	22%	1.1%
<b>All</b>	<b>10,433,849</b>	<b>10,618,519</b>	<b>184,670</b>

Floridians registered independent of either major party continue growing at twenty-two percent of the electorate, a voting bloc large enough to turn tables.

The Democrats turned out to vote in the state’s January Presidential Preference election with enthusiasm and in numbers not seen in many years. The potential for a similar high turnout in November, coupled with an opportunity to capitalize on a general unrest and woo unhappy independent voters, bodes well for blue performance in November making 2008 one of the state’s more interesting elections of late.

It’s true Floridians still love their Republican Governor. Nonetheless, this new Democratic dynamic has made the 2008 elections particularly challenging for the state’s Republicans who have maintained a solid bloc of rule over both the legislative and executive branches for the last ten years. And while the GOP will likely protect its majority in the State Legislature, it will not come without some political loss.

The political behavior of some Florida legislative districts is trending to a “swing” status. This is particularly noticeable in the Sarasota and Palm Beach regions.

Presidential coattails will be a political boon in the swing districts for the party that turns out the vote. Let’s call it a “jump ball” in those districts and perhaps some other districts that have heretofore “leaned” Republican.

The political bottom line is that the Democrats have at least a shot at eroding the decade-long Republican stronghold, particularly in the House of Representatives, *but they will have to turn out and vote in November.*

**On the 2008 Ballot**

- **Presidential**
- **25 Congressional Seats**
- **141 of 160 Legislative Seats**
- **7 Constitutional Amendments Proposed by the Tax & Budget Reform Commission**
- **2 Constitutional Amendments Proposed by the Florida Legislature**

**“I’m Not Happy”**

What exactly is worrying the state’s voters? That answer seems to be a moving target. As recently as February, property taxes, property insurance, and energy and gas costs topped the list of big anxieties, and in that order. Today, those are eclipsed by bigger worries about Florida’s declining economy and its highly personal impact on the voter. Economically related energy and gas costs trail close behind at number two; property tax and property insurance are now a more distant third and fourth.

**Most Important State Issues**

February	Today
1) <b>Property Tax</b>	1) <b>Economy</b>
2) <b>Property Insurance</b>	2) <b>Energy &amp; Gas</b>
3) <b>Energy &amp; Gas</b>	3) <b>Property Tax</b>

Florida has been trending more toward the political middle in the most recent elections. Republicans will likely lose House seats in the Florida 2009-2010 Legislature, but will maintain their majority over that chamber, albeit by a smaller margin.

Pundits will say that it's a long time from today until November, but the results of the state's August 26 Primary do provide a glimpse of what's to come.

<b>Effect of 8-year Term Limits in 2008</b>			
	<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>House</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Senate</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>141 of 160 seats being elected</b>			

Here's a look inside the making of Florida's new 2009-2010 Legislature:

**Discussion of the House**

A political party must occupy 61 seats in the Florida House to hold a majority. The Republicans have held the majority in the House since 1996.

<b>Majority Leadership in the House</b>	
<b>Simple Majority</b>	<b>61+ of 120</b>
<b>3/5ths Majority</b>	<b>72+ of 120</b>
<b>2/3rds Super Majority</b>	<b>80+ of 120</b>

In fact, until recently they held a "Super Majority" for many of those years. Super Majority rule essentially means one party completely controls the chamber's political agenda by controlling the procedural rules of the chamber. It often yields hard-line partisan policy.

A simple majority is that space between 61 votes and a 3/5ths majority. Simple majorities tend to produce more bi-partisan effort and work products. The Republicans

currently hold a 3/5ths majority in the House. The big question in November is whether the House Republicans will maintain a 3/5ths majority or slip to simple majority status.

**Political Analysis of the House**

An analysis of the remaining House races indicates the following minimal outcome after the November General Election. Republicans will again control the House, but will likely do so by a lesser margin.

<b>Florida House</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>Now Elected</b>	<b>Projected 2009-10</b>
<b>Dem</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Rep</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>In Play</b>			<b>12</b>
	<b>120</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>120</b>

**Partisan Battleground House Races in November**

Dist. 3	Lumon May	D
	Clay Ford*	R
Dist. 5	John McDaniel	D
	Brad Drake	R
Dist. 9	Michelle Rehwinkle-Vasalinda	D
	Peter Boulware	R
Dist. 10	Leonard Bemby	D
	Don Curtis	R
Dist. 21	Linda Myers	D
	Charles Van Zant	R
Dist. 28	William Smalley	D
	Dorothy Hukill*	R
Dist. 29	Wes McCarvill	D
	Ralph Poppell*	R
Dist. 30	Amy Tidd	D
	Ritch Workman	R
Dist. 48	Carl Zimmerman	D
	Peter Nehr*	R

Dist. 52	Bill Heller*	D
	Ross Johnson	R
Dist. 65	Bob Hagenmaier	D
	John Wood	R
Dist. 71	Betty Gissendanner	D
	Ken Roberson	R
Dist. 81	Adam Fetterman	D
	Michael DiTerlizzi	R
Dist. 83	Bryan Miller	D
	Carl Domino*	R

\* Denotes Incumbent

### 42 Representatives Now Elected

The following representatives were either elected without opposition or were elected at the August 26 Primary.

Dist. 4	Ray Sansom	R
Dist. 6	Jimmy Patronis	R
Dist. 7	Marti Coley	R
Dist. 13	Jennifer Carroll	R
Dist. 15	Audrey Gibson	D
Dist. 16	Charles McBurney	R
Dist. 22	Larry Cretul	R
Dist. 25	Alan Hayes	R
Dist. 34	Chris Dolworth	R
Dist. 37	Scott Plankon	R
Dist. 39	Geraldine Thompson	D
Dist. 41	Steve Precourt	R
Dist. 43	Ron Schultz	R
Dist. 45	Tom Anderson	R
Dist. 50	Ed Hooper	R
Dist. 53	Rick Kriseman	D
Dist. 58	Michael Scionti	D
Dist. 61	Will Weatherford	R
Dist. 62	Rich Glorioso	R
Dist. 63	Seth McKeel	R
Dist. 66	Baxter Troutman	R
Dist. 68	Bill Galvano	R
Dist. 74	Gary Aubuchon	R
Dist. 76	Tom Grady	R
Dist. 78	Kevin Rader*	D
Dist. 84	Pricilla Taylor	D
Dist. 88	Mark Pafford	D
Dist. 90	Kelly Skidmore	D

Dist. 92	Gwyn Clarke-Reed	D
Dist. 94	Hazelle Rogers	D
Dist. 96	Ari Porth	D
Dist. 98	Franklin Sands	D
Dist. 100	Evan Jenne	D
Dist. 103	Oscar Branyon	D
Dist. 104	Yolly Roberson	D
Dist. 105	Joe Gibbons	D
Dist. 108	Ronald Brise	D
Dist. 109	James Bush III	D
Dist. 114	Anitere Flores	R
Dist. 115	Juan Carlos Planas	R
Dist. 116	Marcello Llorente	R
Dist. 118	Dwight Bullard	D

\* Recount likely.

### Discussion of the Senate

The Senate Republicans have been operating with a 3/5ths majority and occupy 26 of the 24 seats necessary to hold that status; however they have been unable to obtain a Super Majority, although they have come very close. That status could change in 2009-2010.

#### Majority Leadership in the Senate

<b>Simple Majority</b>	<b>21+ of 40</b>
<b>3/5ths Majority</b>	<b>24+ of 40</b>
<b>2/3rds Super Majority</b>	<b>27+ of 40</b>

### Political Analysis of the Senate

An analysis of the remaining Senate races indicates the following minimal outcome after the November General Election.

Republicans will again control the Florida Senate and have a shot at achieving a Super Majority status pending the outcome of two heated partisan races, one in the

Sarasota area, and the other in the Space Coast region.

<i>Florida Senate</i>	<i>2008-2009</i>	<i>Now Elected</i>	<i>Projected 2009-10</i>
<i>Dem</i>	14	8	12
<i>Rep</i>	26	17	25
<i>In Play</i>			3
	40	26	40

**Partisan Battleground Senate Races in November**

Dist. 23	Morgan Bentley	D
	Nancy Detert*	R
Dist. 24	Kendall Moore	D
	Thad Altman	R

\* Recount Likely

**6 Senators Now Elected (in 2008)\***

The following senators were elected without opposition.

Dist. 13	Dennis Jones	R
Dist. 15	Paula Dockery	R
Dist. 21	Mike Bennett	R
Dist. 33	Frederica Wilson	D
Dist. 37	Garrett Richter	R
Dist. 39	Larcenia Bullard	D

\* With the exception of one election necessary to fill a resigned seat, only odd numbered Senate seats are up for election in 2008.

**Congressional -- US House of Representatives**

The following United States Representatives were elected without opposition.

Dist. 3	Corrine Brown*	D
Dist. 17	Kendrick Meek*	D

**Contested US House of Representatives**

Dist. 1	Jim Bryan	D
	Jeff Miller*	R
Dist. 2	Allen Boyd*	D
	Mark Mulligan	R
Dist. 4	Jay McGovern	D
	Ander Crenshaw*	R
Dist. 5	John Russell	D
	Ginny Brown-Waite*	R
Dist. 6	Tim Cunha	D
	Cliff Stearns*	R
Dist. 7	Faye Armitage	D
	John Mica*	R
Dist. 8	Alan Grayson	D
	Ric Keller*	R
Dist. 9	Bill Mitchell	D
	Gus Bilirakis*	R
Dist. 10	Bob Hackworth	D
	Bill Young*	R
Dist. 11	Kathy Castor*	D
	Eddie Adams, Jr.	R
Dist. 12	Doug Tudor	D
	Adam Putnam*	R
Dist. 13	Christine Jennings	D
	Vern Buchanan*	R
Dist. 14	Robert Neeld	D
	Connie Mack*	R
Dist. 15	Stephen Blythe	D
	Bill Posey	R
Dist. 16	Tim Mahoney*	D
	Tom Rooney**	R
Dist. 18	Annette Taddeo	D
	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen	R

Dist. 19	Robert Wexler*	D
	Edward Lynch	R
Dist. 20	Debbie Wasserman-Schultz*	D
	Margaret Hostetter	N
Dist. 21	Raul Martinez	D
	Lincoln Diaz-Balart*	R
Dist. 22	Ron Klein*	D
	Allen West	R
Dist. 23	Alcee Hastings*	D
	Marian Thorpe, Jr.	R
Dist. 24	Suzanne Kosmas	D
	Tom Feeney*	R
Dist. 25	Joe Garcia	D
	Mario Diaz-Balart*	R

\* Denotes Incumbent

\*\* Recount Likely



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### Florida Political and Legislative Dates

- Tuesday, November 4, 2008:  
*General Election*
- Tuesday, November 18, 2008:  
*2009-10 Florida Legislature Organizational Session*
- December 2008 (TBA):  
*Legislative Committee Meetings*
- January 2009 (TBA):  
*Legislative Committee Meetings*
- February 2009 (TBA):  
*Legislature Committee Meetings*
- March 3, 2009:  
*First Day of 2009 Legislative Session*
- May 1, 2009:  
*Last day of the 2009 Legislative Session, if work is completed in 60 days.*



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*Rheb has 28 years of progressive senior level experience in lobbying, public affairs, communications, media relations, and marketing in both the public and private sectors. Rheb counsels clients on political action strategy and is also responsible for fund-raising and the activities of the Firm's political action committee, which supports the election of local and state candidates for public office.*

*Since May he has participated in more than 160 interviews with legislative candidates.*

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