



## **WHG Post-Midterm Elections Brief**

On Tuesday, November 6, a record number of voters flocked to the polls, with early voter turnout topping 35 million votes ahead of the mid-term election day – far more than the roughly 20 million recorded in the 2014 mid-term election.<sup>1</sup> Below is a brief overview of the implications of the latest election relative to the makeup of congressional leadership; key committees with healthcare jurisdiction; and the topline takeaways of gubernatorial elections, including the outcome of state Medicaid expansion ballot measures.

### ***New Makeup of the Chambers***

In the House, all 435 seats were on the ballot. Democrats needed to gain at least 25 seats to take control of the chamber, and Republicans could not lose more than 18 seats to maintain control. Heading into the mid-terms, Democrats were poised to take the House and they did. About 20 seats are still undecided at the time of writing – seats that will ultimately determine the size of the Democratic majority.<sup>2</sup>

In the Senate, 35 seats were up, with 2 additional states (Mississippi and Minnesota) having both seats on the ballot due to special circumstances. Democrats faced an uphill climb to capture the necessary net gain of +2 seats to flip the chamber, whereas Republicans could only afford to lose less than 2 seats (net -1) to maintain control. Republicans were largely favored to maintain control over the upper chamber and, as the final votes would have it, at the time of writing, Republicans are poised to net at least a 2-seat gain in the Senate.

Among some of the most closely-watched Senate races, key Democratic losses (flipping Republican) included Senators Heidi Heitkamp (ND), Claire McCaskill (MO), and Joe Donnelly (IN). Senators Jon Tester (MT), Bill Nelson (FL), and Kyrsten Sinema (AZ) are trailing at the time of writing but not yet called. Democratic challenger Jacky Rosen (NV), a first-term representative, ultimately secured the contested seat of Nevada from incumbent Senator Dean Heller (R). Long-time Republican Representative Marsha Blackburn (TN) ultimately clinched the Tennessee seat from former state Governor Phil Bredesen (D) and Senator Ted Cruz (R) was able to maintain his Texas senate seat, despite an aggressive campaign levied by Beto O'Rourke (D).

### ***Key Healthcare Committee Leadership Changes***

Chair and Ranking Members of key committees of health care jurisdiction will be turning over next Congress. Several Senators and Representatives are retiring at the end of the term, leaving committee Chair/Ranking Member positions open for new leadership.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/11/05/massive-early-voting-numbers-point-to-record-turnout-for-midterms.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/06/us/elections/results-house-elections.html?action=click&module=Spotlight&pgtype=Homepage>

In the Senate, Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT) announced his retirement in January and leadership must decide who is to fill the position. The notable defeat of Senators McCaskill (D-MO) and Dean Heller (R-NV) leave open those seats on the committee, and other seats like Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) remain too close to call at the time of writing.

Representative Sandy Levin (D-MI), current Ranking Member of the Health Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee is retiring. Of note, Chairman of the Health Subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee Peter Roskam (R-IL) ultimately failed to hold on to his seat in a tight election against Democratic challenger Sean Casten, presenting an opening for another Republican to take the helm of the panel chairmanship.

Representative Gene Green (D-TX), current Ranking Member of the Health Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee is retiring. In addition to several additional retirements on the full Committee, presenting several openings, other noteworthy openings include that of Representative Leonard Lance (R-NJ) who failed to secure his seat.

### ***Highlights of Gubernatorial Elections; Medicaid Expansion Ballot Measures***

Across the country, Democrats picked up approximately seven governorships and otherwise performed well in state-level races. Ballot measures in three Red states to expand Medicaid pursuant to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) were passed in Idaho, Utah and Nebraska. However, funding to expand Medicaid via an increase in the tobacco tax was ultimately defeated in Montana.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/07/utah-idaho-and-nebraska-approve-medicaid-expansion-ballot-measures.html> and <https://nyti.ms/2Da3Hi3?smid=nytcore-ios-share>