



## Making Sense of the 2014 Elections

NOVEMBER 2, 2014

The 2014 elections brought a wipeout for Democrats and a romp for Republicans. Turnout was low, especially among Democratic constituencies, at a time when most Americans are disgruntled with the President and Congress and think the nation is on the wrong track. SSN members explore what happened and why – and look ahead to the consequences of this election for government and politics.



[Understanding the Electorate](#) on *MSNBC All In with Chris Hayes*, November 5, 2014

Dorian T. Warren, Columbia University

“Political organizations have to figure out a way to engage people every day, every week, beyond cycles. It cannot be about electoral cycles, it has to be about what are the issues that will keep [voters] engaged.”



[Republicans Taste Victory on Election Day](#) in *Fortune*, November 10, 2014

Daniel Paul Franklin, Georgia State University

“This election needs to be viewed in the context of what usually happens to the party of the president in second term, midterm elections – when, no matter who the president is, their party generally loses and loses badly.”



[After Election Day, New Chairmen on Senate Defense Committees](#) on *ABC 13 News*

*Now/Gannett/Defense News*, November 5, 2014

Craig Volden, University of Virginia

“After Election Day, getting anything done in America’s increasingly polarized Congress will be very difficult, but not all hope is lost. Lawmakers who want to legislate can still be effective. The recipe for success has 3 parts: cultivating a legislative portfolio that builds on their personal interests and experience, building coalitions, and focusing on issues of special importance to their constituents.”



[The Impact of the Midterms at Home and Abroad](#) on *NPR's The Takeaway*, November 5, 2014

Theda Skocpol, Harvard University

"I don't think a great deal will be accomplished over the next two years. But there will be some areas of policy where the president and the Republican Congress can come to some kind of understanding. Now there are a set of fairly extreme new senators to join Ted Cruz in the Senate. A lot of the drama will actually be inside the Republican Party."



[The Democrats Must Stand Up for Health Care Reform](#) in Room for Debate, the *New York Times*,

November 9, 2014

Lawrence R. Jacobs, University of Minnesota

"Polls before Election Day found that seven out of 10 Americans (including over 60 percent of Republicans and independents) actually support the guts of health reform – that is, they support widening Medicare's prescription drug benefit, eliminating out-of-pocket costs for preventive services, supplying subsidies for middle and lower income people to purchase private insurance, widening Medicaid, expanding coverage to children up to age 26 on their parents' insurance and wiping out exclusions based on pre-existing medical conditions."



[Corporate Triumphs, Progressive Victories and the Roadmap for a Democratic Revival](#) in *Moyers &*

*Company*, November 5, 2014

Peter Dreier, Occidental College

"While Democratic candidates were going down to defeat, liberals and progressives won some impressive but little-publicized victories on important issues – including minimum wage hikes – especially in red and purple states."



[How LePage Won a Second Term](#) in the *Bangor Daily News*, November 5, 2014

Amy Fried, University of Maine

"The GOP's approach included softening LePage's image and imposing message discipline. And then there was the Ebola nurse, Kaci Hickox, whom LePage sought to quarantine. While public health officials disagreed, this helped LePage. When people worry about their safety, they want someone to protect them, whether or not the threat is significant or even real."



[New England Delegation Acquires a Tinge of Red](#) in the *New York Times*, November 5, 2014

Jeffrey M. Berry, Tufts University

“Even though this is deep blue New England, we’re still a part of the United States.”



[Prosperity Policy: Four More Years – For What?](#) in *The Journal Record*, November 5, 2014

David Blatt, Oklahoma Policy Institute

“The governor [Mary Fallin] returns to power without a clear and specific mandate for her second term. Yet Oklahoma faces no shortage of opportunities for strong leadership to tackle urgent and long-standing problems.”



[Martinez Campaign Hit on All Cylinders](#) in the *Albuquerque Journal*, November 6, 2014

Gabriel R. Sanchez

“We’ve had Hispanic Republican candidates before, but I think what’s different when you have a Latina running, especially the first [Republican governor], it kind of changes the dynamic a little bit. It allows her to connect with voters in a different way. I think it resonated a lot more than even I expected.”



[A Tipping Point for Ethnic Minorities?](#) in *The Conversation*, November 6, 2014

Paru R. Shah, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

“Although many of the candidates lost tight races, the 2014 elections will go down in history as record making and breaking. South Carolina’s Tim Scott (Republican) became the first African-American senator to win election in the South since Reconstruction. The GOP is sending its first black female legislator – Mia Love – to Congress. Alex Mooney (Republican) is the first Latino Member of Congress from Virginia. And Alma Adam (North Carolina, Democrat) becomes the 100th woman currently serving in Congress.”



[Democrats and Republicans are Getting It Wrong with the Latino Electorate](#) in *The Conversation*,

November 6, 2014

David Cook-Martín, Grinnell College

“Republicans won in the short term, but are losing the long game. Current demographic trends show a phenomenal growth in the number of Latinos.”



[On Voting Rights, Amendments are Too Hard to Achieve and Enforce](#) in Room for Debate, the *New*

*York Times*, November 3, 2014

Heather Gerken, Yale Law School

"I would be delighted if a robust right to vote were already enshrined in the Constitution. I would be just as delighted if I possessed a magic wand and could put one there. But the organizational muscle and resources to push for reform are in short supply, and it would be better to focus those limited resources on reforms that are more discrete but easier to achieve."



[To Guarantee Voting Rights, Enforce the Laws We Have](#) in Room for Debate, the *New York Times*,

November 3, 2014

Richard L. Hasen, University of California, Irvine

"We don't need an amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing the right to vote. What we need is a Supreme Court guaranteeing that right through already existing parts of the United States Constitution, such as the right to equal protection."



[An Initial Assessment of the Impact of Voter ID Laws](#) in *The Conversation*, November 6, 2014

Marcus Hunter, University of California, Los Angeles

"With the upholding of Voting ID laws in midterm battleground states, the midterm election offered the first opportunity to assess the real impact of such laws on turnout."