



South Carolina 2014 Election Overview

November 5, 2014

The GOP made a clean sweep of statewide offices beginning with incumbent Governor Nikki Haley defeating Senator Vincent Sheheen with 55.96% of the vote. This was a much more substantial margin of victory than the 51% of the vote she achieved during their first match up in the 2010 election. Additional Republican incumbents that were victorious include Attorney General Alan Wilson winning with 60.30%, Comptroller General Richard Eckstrom winning with 59.85% of the vote, Secretary of State Mark Hammond winning with 59.55% of the vote, and Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers winning with 79.67% of the vote. Republicans also successfully retained the office of the Lieutenant Governor as well as the Superintendent of Education, both left open by incumbents choosing not to run for reelection. Former SC Attorney General Henry McMaster defeated former Representative Bakari Sellers winning 58.78% of the vote to become SC's Lieutenant Governor, and Republican Molly Spearman defeated the Democratic candidate Tom Thompson winning 56.98% of the vote to become the new SC Superintendent of Education. Republican incumbent Adjutant General Bob Livingston and State Treasurer Curtis Loftis both ran unopposed.

In regards to the U.S. Offices, South Carolina's representation in DC will be the same. Republican incumbent U.S. Senators both defeated opposition and will retain their current seats. Senator Tim Scott, who was appointed in 2013 by Governor Haley to fill the seat vacated by Jim DeMint, defeated Democratic and third party opposition by winning 61.16% of the vote. Winning 54.27% of the vote, Senator Lindsey Graham defeated Democratic SC Senator Brad Hutto, as well as Independent candidate Thomas Ravenel, who, as a member of the Republican Party, previously served as SC's Treasurer. In spite of facing opposition, all seven of SC's Congressional seats will be retained by incumbents. The lone exception is District 1, where Republican incumbent Mark Sanford, former Governor of SC, was not challenged. Not surprisingly, Democratic incumbent Jim Clyburn (District 6) defeated opposition winning 72.74% of the vote, and Republican incumbents Joe Wilson (District 2), Jeff Duncan (District 3), Mick Mulvaney (District 5), and Tom Rice (District 7) each defeated Democratic opposition by a substantial margin in each race.

As a result of the last SC House elections in 2012, the South Carolina House membership was made up of 78 Republicans and 46 Democrats during the 2013-2014 legislative session. Even before yesterday's general election, a great deal of change had already occurred in the SC House of Representatives. For example, two Republican incumbents were defeated in primary elections. Specifically, in District 8 incumbent representative Don Bowen was defeated by Jonathon Hill, and in District 104, incumbent Representative Tracey Edge was defeated by Gregory Duckworth. Neither Hill nor Duckworth faced opposition in the general election held yesterday. Additional change



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resulted from four seats held by Democrats and five seats held by Republicans standing open at the primary due to several members on both sides of the aisle choosing not to run for reelection. District 54, previously held by Democratic Representative Elizabeth Munnerlyn, was won by Democrat Patricia Henegan, who faced no Republican opposition in yesterday's election. District 3, previously held by Republican Representative B.R. Skelton, was won by Judge Gary Clary of the same party, who also faced no opposition in the general election. District 58, previously held by Republican Representative Liston Barfield, was won by Republican Jeff Johnson, who also faced no Democratic opposition yesterday. District 5, previously held by Republican Representative Phil Owens, was won by Republican Neal Collins, who, again, faced no Democratic opposition in the general election. District 123, previously held by Republican Representative Andy Patrick, is now held by Republican Jeffrey Bradley, who did not face opposition in the primary or the general election. Districts 90, 61, and 53, previously held by Democratic Representatives Bakari Sellers, Lester Branham, and Ted Vick, were left open by incumbents, but were actually decided in yesterday's general election, as was the seat in District 84, previously held by Republican Representative J. Roland Smith.

Another major change occurred with the indictment of Speaker Bobby Harrell. As part of his plea agreement he was forced to withdraw from the election for his seat where he was slated to face Democratic opposition in yesterday's general election. By the time the agreement was made, however, early voting and absentee voting was already underway with his name on the ballot. With the threat of this strongly Republican seat potentially going to the Democratic candidate by default, Republicans challenged the issue in court requesting a special election in order to replace Speaker Harrell on the ballot. The Supreme Court ultimately ruled that the election would continue as planned yesterday and that any votes cast for Speaker Harrell would not count. Thus, Democrat Mary Tinkler is now the Representative of this very Republican District in the heart of Charleston.

Heading into yesterday's general election, there were 33 true contested races; only 29 of those 33 races were contested by major party candidates and only 8 or so of the 29 were actually considered in play. Of the open seats referenced above, the Republican party was successful in retaining the seat previously held by incumbent J. Roland Smith, and after defeating Democratic opposition House District 84 will now be held by Chris Corley, who won with 64.39% of the vote. The Democrats were working to maintain the seats in Districts 53, 61, and 90, which were previously held by Representatives Vick, Branham, and Sellers respectively. In District 61, Democrats managed to hold on to the seat with Roger Kirby defeating Republican opposition winning 63.05% of the vote. While Democrats



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ultimately did manage to hold on to District 90, Justin Bamberg defeated Republican candidate by a much narrower margin winning only 50.52% of the vote. The third open seat, District 53, previously held by Vick ultimately turned Republican with Richie Yow defeating the Democratic candidate by earning 59.28% of the vote.

Beyond the open seats, several republican incumbents faced competitive opposition, which caused the Democratic Party to hope for potential turnover. Despite this opposition, however, Republican incumbent Representatives Craig Gagnon (District 11), Samuel Rivers (District 15), Kirkman Finlay (District 75), and Stephen Goldfinch (District 108) each managed to retain their House seats winning by considerable margins. Democratic incumbent Representative Walt McLeod also faced what was consider by some to be serious Republican opposition in District 40, and again, the incumbent was victorious with Representative Walt McLeod wining winning with 60.12% of the vote. Ultimately the composition of the South Carolina House of Representatives will remain the same with 78 Republicans and 46 Democrats for the 2015-2016 legislative session.