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Utah Government Affairs 2018 Election Update

Insight — 11/07/2018

Utah Federal Update:

U.S. Senate: Mitt Romney (R)

- Former Massachusetts Governor and Hero of the 2002 Olympic Games, Mitt Romney becomes the junior senator for Utah. Romney replaces retiring Senator Orrin Hatch who represented Utah for the past 40 years. This race was decided early with returns showing a Romney win with 62.4% of the vote.

Utah 1st Congressional District: Rob Bishop (R)

- Incumbent Congressman Rob Bishop won his reelection races easily. The biggest surprise was not his victory, but the better-than-expected returns for Eric Eliason from the United Utah party who managed to secure 11 % of the vote for a 3rd party candidate. Bishop still won with 62.8% of the vote.

Utah 2nd Congressional District: Chris Stewart (R)

- Incumbent Congressman Chris Stewart found himself in a much closer election than he expected against challenger Shireen Ghorbani. He was still victorious with 57.9% of the vote.

Utah 3rd Congressional District: John Curtis (R)

- Incumbent Congressman John Curtis has been on the campaign trail constantly since being elected in a special election in 2017. He beat challenger James Singer with 66.9%

Utah 4th Congressional District: ***To close to call**

- Currently Democratic Salt Lake County Mayor Ben McAdams leads Rep. Mia Love 51.4% to 48.6% for this seat. McAdams leads Love by more than 5,000 votes but that lead could shrink depending on how votes come in over the next few days. There are reportedly many uncounted ballots in Salt Lake and Utah counties. One key county for Love, Utah County, reported having people in line to vote at midnight on election night. Utah County is heavily Republican and could boost Love's numbers. This has been the most bitter race of the 2018 election cycle in Utah. Both sides went negative early in the campaign season. McAdams supporters hit Love often about issues she had with her campaign finance filings with the FEC and her votes on health care issues. Love supporters tried to tie McAdams to Nancy Pelosi and criticized him for raising taxes in the county.

Utah Legislative Update:

State Senate:

- 29 Total Seats: 23 Republican, 6 Democrat
- Democrats look like they will pick up 1 seat to give the minority party 6 seats now in the Utah Senate.
- Freshman senators: 7 Freshman (2 Democrats, 5 Republicans). 3 previously served in State House.

State Senate Key Races:

- Senate District 8: Kathleen Riebe (D) 56.1% Brian Zehnder (R) 41.6%
- Challenger Democrat Kathleen Riebe is a current member of the state school board and leads Republican incumbent Brian Zehnder by 4,000 votes. That amount is likely to
- high for Zehnder to make up as additional votes are counted.
- Senate District 12: Daniel Thatcher (R) 51.6% Clare Collard (D) 44.3%
- Republican incumbent Sen. Daniel Thatcher appears to have squeaked out a victory for a third term in the Utah Senate. Thatcher was trailing early as election results started to come in. He now leads by 1,544.

State House:

- 75 Total Seats: 59 Republican, 16 Democrats ***may change on final canvass**
- Democrats appear to have picked up 4 seats giving them 16 now in the Utah House.
- Freshman representatives: 17 Freshman (5 Democrats, 12 Republicans)

State House Key Races:

- House District 8: Deanna Froerer (D) 50.1% Steve Waldrip (R) 49.9% ***To close to call**
 - This is an open seat and the race is separated by 25 votes. If the Democratic candidate wins, it would out be a seat flip.
- House District 10: Lou Shurtliff (D) 54% Lorraine Brown 45%
 - This is an open seat, though Shurtliff held the seat previously before retiring in 2008. The candidates are separated by a 617-vote margin, which is likely to hold through the canvass and represents a seat flip.
- House District 32: Suzanne Harrison (D) 56% Brad Bonham (R) 42%
 - This is an open seat and is a seat flip for Harrison. The results are unlikely to change on final canvass with a 1,710-vote margin although in the 2016 election this race was

decided by a 3-vote margin.

- House District 33: Craig Hall (R) 53% Ira Hatch (D) 46%
 - A perennial swing seat, incumbent Republican Craig Hall fended off his challenger with a 400-vote margin that could narrow on the final canvass. In 2016 this race was decided by 119 votes.
- House District 43: Cheryl Acton (R) 48% Diane Lewis (D) 45%
 - Incumbent Republican Cheryl Acton is hanging onto a narrow 244 victory that could thin with the final vote canvass and change the outcome of this race.
- House District 44: Andrew Stoddard (D) 54% Bruce Cutler (R) 45%
 - This is a seat flip for Democratic challenger Andrew Stoddard in a district that has changed party control several times in recent decades. The 1,001-vote margin is likely to provide enough cushion for Stoddard to retain the victory in the final canvass.

Utah Amendments:

- Amendment A: Property Tax Exemption Fix for Military Deployment: Approved 78% voted in favor
- Amendment B: Property Tax Exemption for Leased Government Property: Failed 72% voted against
- Amendment C: Legislature calls itself into Special Session: Approved 63% voted in favor

Utah Ballot Questions:

- Proposition 2: Medical Marijuana: Approved 53% voted in favor.
 - A compromise announced ahead of the election by the Governor, Legislative Leadership, opponents and proponents of his proposition means that the results are likely moot as a Special Session is expected to be called in December to implement the Medical Marijuana compromise instead.
- Proposition 3- Medicaid Expansion: Approved 54% voted in favor (increases statewide sales tax by 0.15%)
- Proposition 4- Independent Redistricting: Approved 50.29% voted in favor.
 - The outcome could still change as additional ballots are counted. About 4,000 votes separate the vote and that could narrow as provisional and mail-in ballots are counted.

Non-Binding Voter Question:

- Gas Tax Increase for Public Education: Failed 66% voted against

*Prepared Wednesday, Nov. 7th, 2018 with preliminary election results

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