

TO: Board of Supervisors, County of Santa Barbara

FROM: Cliff Berg, Legislative Advocate
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County of Santa Barbara

DATE: November 29, 2012

RE: November 2012 Board Report

General Overview of the Elections

With the beginning of November we had a very important election, with many propositions and over two-thirds of the legislature turning over due to both term-limits and the redistricting. One very big victory is the passage of Prop. 30 passed overwhelmingly. This is huge for California and the hope is that the state will be able to more easily balance their budget. This also allowed for the constitutional protections that the Governor promised to counties when he worked with them to implement the realignment in this budget year.

Other election items of interest are the many upsets in the legislative races. Not only did we see those termed-out seats, but also some incumbent members that were heavily protected by the Speaker and the Democratic Caucus in the Assembly, ultimately lost their seats. The other big surprise is that the Democrats now have a "super majority" which means they have more than two-thirds vote power in each house, keeping in mind that they also have all of the constitutional offices as well. With this comes great power and the Democratic leaders have committed that they will exercise great restraint with this vote count.

In the Senate there are two Democratic members who won congressional seats so once they leave the Governor will need to call a special session to fill their seats, there is also one member who plans to run for the Los Angeles City Council and has a very good chance of winning. Should his bid be successful, the Governor will need to call a special election for that senate seat as well. With all of this there is still a super majority in the Senate with the Senator Cathleen Galagini (Central Valley) seat being called in favor of the Democrat earlier this week. The three potential open seats are slated to go to Democrats, however in the 2014 election there is speculation that the Republicans will pick-up some seats the way those districts are drawn.

Also, with many of the newly elected members, they are all able to serve a 12 year term with the new term-limits, so this is a real game changer and one that hopefully stabilizes the state and the state budget. We anticipate that the current leadership will stay in place through this next year but given that they are term-out in 2014, it will be time to elect new leadership. This will give the new members a chance to get to know one another and see who might be the best choice to lead the houses. The

interesting aspect is whom they elect could be leaders for a number of years given the new term-limits.

What all of this means is that there will be many opportunities to educate the new members on the issues that are important to the county. We have a very strong delegation, but we always need to work with other members on various vote counts and jockeying on the floor.

We have some important deadlines coming up; they will be sworn-in on Monday, December 3, 2012. They will leave for the remainder of December and return on January 3, 2012 to begin the two-year session. We anticipate committee assignments to be released in early February as well as some key committee chairs, such as local government. Once these are released it will provide us the road map on how to move forward with our legislative platform.

We will continue to keep you updated as the landscape continues to change in Sacramento as well as update our list of key legislators for the counties priorities. As always, please let us know if you or your staff have any questions or would like additional information.