

Partisan Statewide Office Election Results State of Washington 2004

Source: Secretary of State, State of Washington, November 17, 2004

By Norman E. Kjono

The below data tables are compiled from the Secretary of State, State of Washington, databases for eight statewide partisan races for general elections in years 2000 and 2004. The nonpartisan Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is omitted. Graphics at bottom of page for Republican and Democrat illustrations are derived from the tables. See pages 2 to 4 of this .PDF for analysis comments. This data is based on original results as published by the Secretary of State before a recount for the Governor's race, to be completed November 24, 2004. While a recount for the Governor's race may change who is Governor-elect it will not materially change the data and patterns discussed in this analysis.

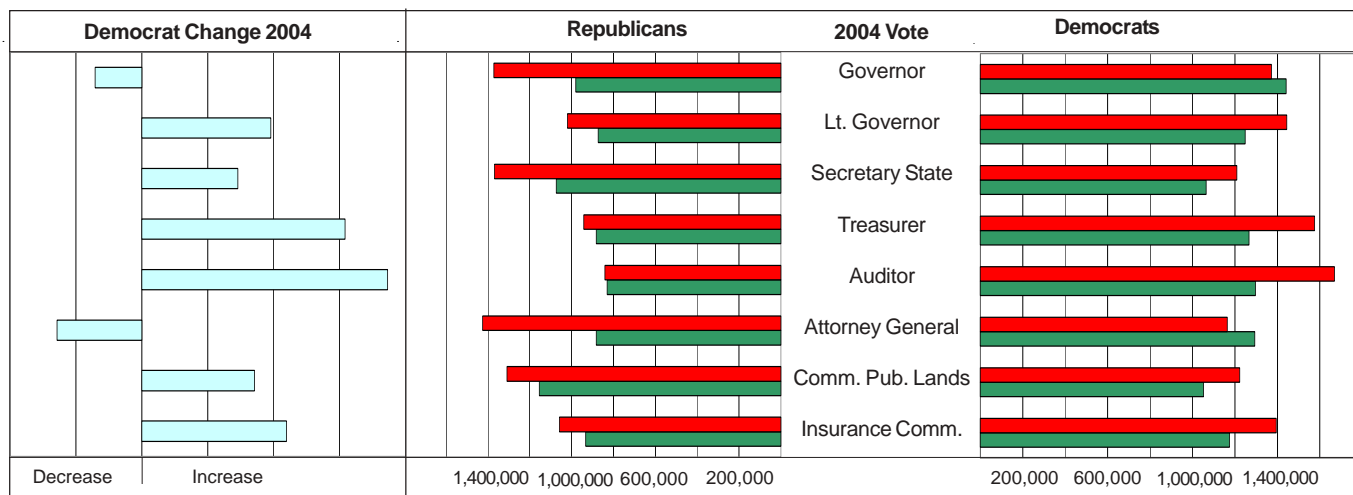
2004 Statewide Partisan Office General Election Votes

Office	Democrat		Republican		Libertarian		Green		Total	Increase From 2000
Governor	1,371,153	48.87%	1,371,414	48.88%	63,346	2.26%	0.00%		2,805,913	336,061
Lt. Governor	1,443,505	54.39%	1,019,790	38.43%	117,147	4.41%	73,328	2.76%	2,653,770	353,512
Secretary of State	1,209,299	45.45%	1,369,421	51.47%	82,097	3.09%	0.00%		2,660,817	429,015
Treasurer	1,575,499	60.29%	941,754	36.04%	96,114	3.68%	0.00%		2,613,367	344,087
Auditor	1,668,575	63.89%	841,772	32.23%	101,161	3.87%	0.00%		2,611,508	363,247
Attorney General	1,163,964	43.27%	1,425,368	52.98%	56,792	2.11%	44,020	1.64%	2,690,144	423,314
Comm. Public Lands	1,223,207	46.67%	1,309,441	49.96%	88,171	3.36%	0.00%		2,620,819	326,234
Insurance Comm.	1,393,764	54.45%	1,058,583	41.36%	107,295	4.19%	0.00%		2,559,642	359,850
Totals:	11,048,966	52.08% *	9,337,543	44.01% *	712,123	3.36% *	117,348	0.55%	21,215,980	2,935,320
Average:	1,381,121		1,167,193		89,015				2,651,998	366,915
Std. Dev.:	179,754		226,696		20,940				73,542	38,560

2000 Statewide Partisan Office General Election Votes

Office	Democrat		Republican		Libertarian		Green		Total	Democrat Change 2004
Governor	1,441,973	58.38%	980,060	39.68%	47,819	1.94%	0.00%		2,469,852	(70,820)
Lt. Governor	1,247,838	54.25%	872,853	37.95%	179,567	7.81%	0.00%		2,300,258	195,667
Secretary of State	1,063,689	47.66%	1,073,911	48.12%	94,202	4.22%	0.00%		2,231,802	145,610
Treasurer	1,266,969	55.83%	905,401	39.90%	96,910	4.27%	0.00%		2,269,280	308,530
Auditor	1,295,745	57.63%	829,458	36.89%	123,058	5.47%	0.00%		2,248,261	372,830
Attorney General	1,292,887	57.04%	883,002	38.95%	90,941	4.01%	0.00%		2,266,830	(128,923)
Comm. Public Lands	1,052,366	45.86%	1,154,048	50.29%	88,171	3.84%	0.00%		2,294,585	170,841
Insurance Comm.	1,174,039	53.37%	933,568	42.44%	92,185	4.19%	0.00%		2,199,792	219,725
Totals:	9,835,506	53.80%	7,632,301	41.75%	812,853	4.45%	-	0.00%	18,280,660	1,213,480
Average:	1,229,438		954,038		101,607				2,285,083	151,683
Std. Dev.:	129,415		110,190		37,590				81,515	172,677

Gregoire 2000/2004: 1,600,493 57.04% 1,092,903 38.95% (Indicated 2004 result, applying 2000 percentages to 2004 voter numbers.)



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Top Bar = 2004 Bottom Bar = 2000

Washington 2004 Statewide Office Election Overview

Election Data Overview

336,061 more votes were cast for Governor in 2004 than in 2000. On average, 366,915 more Washington citizens voted for statewide offices in 2004 than in 2000, a 16 percent increase. Part of that increase may be due to population growth, however it also appears that there was greater public interest in voting this year, too. The Secretary of State reports an 82 percent turnout of registered voters. This election produced the closest race for Governor in the history of the state, with Republican Dino Rossi winning (before the recount for Governor) over Democrat Christine O. Gregoire by a molecule-thin edge of 261 votes, 2,805,913 being cast for that office.

Of the total votes cast for eight statewide offices 52.08 percent were for Democrats, 44.01 percent for Republicans, and 3.36 percent Libertarian. Democrats percent of the voted *declined* from 53.80 in 2000, Republicans *increased* from 41.75 in the past Gubernatorial general election year, and Libertarian's share *reduced* from 4.45. Those figures represent a decline of -1.72 for Democrats, an increase of +2.26 for Republicans, and a reduction of -1.09 for Libertarians.

The number of votes and election turnout increased substantially this year. The standard deviation (a measure of variance) of the number of votes for a particular party in each statewide race sharply rose. For example, in the 2000 election 7,632,301 individual votes were cast for Republicans in eight statewide races with a standard deviation of 110,190. Persons voting Republican for specific offices varied plus or minus about 110,000 votes around an average of 954,038 votes for each office. The standard deviation for Democrats in 2000 was 129,415. The variance of votes for Republicans doubled to 226,696 in 2004, perhaps indicating more crossover votes from Democrats in races such as Governor. Democrats experienced about a 40 percent increase in standard deviation to 179,754 this year.

In a perfect political world we would expect to see neatly defined party lines with Republicans and Democrats voting their party's candidates and producing small standard deviations. In contrast, 2004 election data show that party lines are increasingly less sacrosanct and voters will support or vote against candidates based on other criteria. That is a healthy sign. It says that candidates' credibility and controversial issues are equally or more important to voters than political party. Voters are increasingly demonstrating their inclination and ability to apply their personal criteria to a vote. Political party leaders would be well advised to seriously consider what those increasing standard deviations portend. A new, expanding and more diverse flexible middle is clearly establishing itself between party lines. The increasing number in that flexible middle shows that voters can and do consider many issues about candidates other than those defined by party bosses and campaign themes. In today's world of Internet access and E-Mail trees a vast amount of relevant information about candidates now flows outside the controlled scope of party planks, agenda promotion, and mainstream media endorsements. The effect of that much broader scope of information is observed through the growth of an new and vibrant flexible middle.

The voting tallies for 2004 Washington elections strongly indicate that voters are candidate and issue sensitive first and party loyal second. The data say that many voters will respond to policy

issues and candidate performance or credibility regardless of party affiliation. Voters will consider their perceived interests before political party. Where a candidate or office is not controversial voters tend to vote according to party affiliations, when a candidate has enjoyed positive news or exhibited credible job performance voters increase support for them regardless of party affiliation, and when a candidate has created public controversy or has diminished credibility voters will cross party lines, to strongly move away from them.

Illustrative Races For Office

For example, we first examine three offices regarding noncontroversial and positive-performance candidates.

Lt. Governor: Few offices are less conspicuous than Lt. Governor. Washington's Lt. Governor, Democrat Brad Owen, has not been publicly controversial and easily won reelection by a Democrat 54.39 to Republican 38.43 margin. Mr. Owen won election by a margin of 54.25 to 37.95 in 2000. The Democrat-Republican vote for that office moved less than one-half of 1 percent in each case from the 2000 election to the 2004 election. The only significant movement in party voting for that office in 2004 was the Libertarian vote, which reduced from 7.81 percent in 2000 to 4.41 percent in 2004. The absence of controversy appears to assure reelection along party lines.

Secretary of State: Republican Sam Reed was elected to office in 2000 by a less than one-half of one percent Democrat-Republican margin (47.66 to 48.22.) In 2004 he enjoyed a substantial increase in voter support, gathering 295,510 more votes and increasing his margin substantially (51.47 to 45.45.) Based on those figures it is clear that he enjoys positive voter ratings and public support. Mr. Reed has been diligent in his work as Secretary of State and has competently managed a controversial new primary election procedure prior to the 2004 vote. Consequently, he enjoyed broad public support in the polls. Credible performance equals increased voter support.

State Auditor: Democrat Brian Sonntag was often in the news in 2004, principally about his audits identifying deficiencies in the Pierce County's City of Tacoma, Washington. Those news reports said to voters that our state auditor was on the job and looking after the interests of taxpayers. Mr. Sonntag gathered 1,668,575 votes for reelection, the largest number of votes in 2004 statewide races. Sonntag increased his margin from 2000's Democrat 57.63 to Republican 36.89, receiving a margin of 63.89 to 32.23 in 2004. Neither a candidate nor a political party could wish for a stronger voter endorsement than that. Positive credible news equals increased voter support.

Controversial agendas and lack of candidate credibility also have a discernible effect on voters' choices in Washington:

Secretary of State: Mr. Reed's Democrat opponent for this office was state representative Laura Ruderman, who wrested her seat from Republican Backlund in 1998 by a 50.9 to 49.09 margin (726 votes.) Ms. Ruderman increased her margin, up 53.73 to 46.26, in 2000. She was last elected in 2002 53.37 to 46.62. Ms. Ruderman has consistently supported controversial anti-tobacco initiatives such as a statewide smoking ban, programs to "denormalize" tobacco use (and to therefore ostracize persons who smoke), opposing legisla-

tion adverse to pharmaceutical or tobacco control agendas. In Washington tobacco control has been the subject of significant controversy in 2001 (I-773's 60 cents per pack new state taxes) and 2004 (smoking ban in Pierce County and statewide smoking ban Initiative 890, which failed.) Rep. Ruderman's previously-increasing margin leveled off to remain constant in 2002 and she lost the statewide election for Secretary of State by 160,122 votes (margin of Democrat 45.45 to Republican 51.47.) It should be acknowledged that Ms. Ruderman was confronted with a strong incumbent, Sam Reed, and that this was her first statewide election. But considering that Ruderman lost to Reed by a similar vote spread (6.02 percent) as she was reelected in 2002 (6.75 percent) the point as to controversial special-interest agendas is made: Supporting "Anti-Mentality" programs are a political kiss-of-death and can reverse political fortunes. When citizens vote for a new candidate the implicit assumption is that the status quo will change if that candidate is elected. When, as in Rep. Ruderman's case, it becomes evident that the new representative supports the same special-interest status quo voters respond accordingly, regardless of the office sought or party affiliation.

Attorney General: Democrat and former Washington Insurance Commissioner Deborah Senn ran for this office against Republican Rob McKenna, a Seattle-King County Council member. Christine Gregoire campaigned for Governor as Washington's Attorney General, which is one of two offices occupied by Democrat incumbents that *lost* Democrat votes in 2004. Despite an increase of 423,314 votes for Attorney General Democrats received 70,820 *fewer* votes for that office in 2004 than in 2000. While Ms. Senn was a controversial candidate for Attorney General due to policy decisions she made as Insurance Commissioner, the extent to which special-interest political actions by Attorney General Gregoire may have irreparably raised the bar for other Democrat candidates for that office must be considered. Regardless of the final decision on that subject, a loss of 70,280 Democrat votes for an office that received 423,314 more votes in 2004 is a serious matter. Such performance cannot be credibly attributed exclusively to the current candidate.

Governor: Washington Attorney General, Democrat Christine O. Gregoire, ran for Governor against Republican State Senator Dino Rossi in 2004. Mr. Rossi is the current Governor-Elect by 261 votes, with 2,805,913 cast for that office. A recount is to be completed November 24, 2004. The apparent loss of that race for Governor by Ms. Gregoire, as well as her molecule-thin edge if she wins on recount, should be deeply troubling for Democrats. The last Republican Governor was elected in 1980 and the current two-term Democrat incumbent won reelection in 2000 with a vote of 58.38 percent to Republican's 39.68 percent. Had candidate Gregoire merely held the margin by which she was reelected as Attorney General in 2000 (57.04 to Republican's 38.95) there would not be a recount, she would have decisively beaten Senator Rossi by a vote count of 1,600,493 to 1,092,903. A vote spread of 507,950 votes would have been an impressive win, though merely similar to Governor Locke's victory by 461,913 votes in 2000.

To what do we attribute Christine O. Gregoire's apparent 507,950 vote loss of grace with Washington voters? A defining variable is that Ms. Gregoire has acted as Attorney General and campaigned as an opportunistic promoter of tobacco control. Gregoire's campaign advertisements emphasized Washington's \$4.5 billion economic "gift" from the 1998 tobacco Master Settlement Agreement,

for which she was a lead negotiator; she publicly supported the smoking ban in Pierce County in a letter to the county health board, saying that her office would not support anyone who opposed that ban; the American Legacy Foundation (created with tobacco settlement funds), which she chaired at the time, provided a \$500,000 grant to support Pierce County enacting its smoking ban; the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which members of her tobacco control task force recommended state policy be coordinated with, awarded \$1 million to Washington Breathe to support a statewide smoking ban; and she included in her campaign a plank to expand the Pierce County smoking ban statewide. Christine O. Gregoire is the quintessential stereotype of politicians who apply the blunt instrument of out-of-state special-interest grant money, coupled with reprehensible campaigns to "denormalize" tobacco use through negative labeling and unfavorable stereotypes of "Target Group" consumers, to impose self-serving mandates on citizens and small business owners. By doing so Gregoire has richly earned the moniker "Christine, Queen of Nicotine." Our current Governor-Elect Rossi stated that he did not believe a statewide smoking ban was necessary and ran a campaign based on his belief that it was "time for a change." Change appears to have been on voter's minds.

Washington voters saw things quite differently than Gregoire, by about 507,000 votes compared to her 2000 election results. Candidate Gregoire finds herself grubbing through ballot bins in King County to find at least 262 votes so she can claim the people's mandate. Perhaps an unemployed hostess from a Pierce County casino recognized how devastating it will be for working folks if Gregoire's anti-tobacco agenda is expanded statewide. Persons who smoke in Washington may have finally become disgusted with anti-tobacco's Junk Science vilification campaigns that stereotype tobacco consumers as killers of their own children and coworkers with second-hand smoke, to "justify" smoking bans. It is also transparent to anyone who purchases a pack of cigarettes today that tobacco control's \$206 billion settlement is funded by picking the pockets of consumers 45 cents at a time, to recycle those revenues through Gregoire's Master Settlement Agreement laundering facility. That reality makes characterization of \$4.5 in tobacco settlement payments to Washington as a "gift" at once false and self-serving, at best. And the possibility exists that responsible taxpayers understood that the statewide smoking ban advocated by Gregoire can lead to new property tax increases because through smoking bans hospitality business revenues migrate from taxpaying non-tribal establishments to tax-exempt and smoking-ban-exempt tribal venues.

Several facts present themselves through Christine O. Gregoire's campaign for Governor of the State of Washington:

1. Candidate Gregoire is and has been a nationally prominent and aggressive supporter of tobacco control for several years.
2. In place of a comfortable, several-hundred-thousand vote margin win, similar to the reelection of incumbent Democrat Governor Locke in 2000, Gregoire now finds herself scrounging for a *few hundred* votes to claim victory.
3. The two statewide offices that received *fewer* votes for Democrats in 2004 than in the 2000 election (Attorney General -70,820 votes, and Governor -128,923 votes) are directly, immediately, and personally associated with candidate Gregoire.

4. Three of four statewide races lost by Democrats (Governor, Attorney General, and Secretary of State) had anti-tobacco Democrat candidates (Gregoire, and Ruderman for Secretary of State) directly associated with them.

Based on those observations it appears that candidate Gregoire is more akin to Typhoid Mary for Democrats than Joan of Arc. If she wins election to the Governor's office through recount Gregoire now has a diminished voter mandate, political stature, or credibility to provide strong Democratic party leadership. Considering Gregoire's legacy of a 10 percent *reduction* in Democrat votes for a new Attorney General (-128,923 vs. 1,292,887 votes cast in 2000), despite an increase of 423,314 votes for that office, it seems that Democrats should be praying with uncommon fervor that Gregoire fails to win election as Governor. *Can Democrats imagine a similar decline of votes for their party in 2008, should Gregoire's legacy expand statewide through her performance as Governor?*

A Few Conclusions About Election 2004

The number of votes cast for statewide offices in Washington increased by about 16 percent. Neither Democrats nor Libertarians enjoyed an advantage from that increase, their percent of the overall vote declined. Even though Democrats captured the majority of Washington votes in 2004 they suffered the most significant setbacks in statewide races. Analysis of individual races shows that Democrat losses are uniquely focused on Gubernatorial candidate Gregoire. All incumbent Democrat members of Congress returned to office with increasing margins in 2004 and our state voted Democrat for President by a large margin. Two Democrats in state office (Treasurer and Auditor) showed record returns. Yet Democrat votes for Governor and Attorney General reduced compared to 2000.

The preceding information is good news for we the people, voters who research campaign issues, honest policy advocates, and political parties. Washington election data point the way to a healthy review of current politics. Those embrace that information will increase their understanding of how to advance issues important to them. Those who dismiss such review and persist in deep denial about some candidates and agendas do so at their own peril. A few concluding observations are prompted by this election year's results:

1. Political parties must earnestly work to conform their agendas to the legitimate interests and honest beliefs of constituents. An expanding *flexible middle*, where citizens increasingly cross party lines based on candidate performance and credibility regardless of party affiliation, speaks to the fact that the days of party bosses tell-

ing constituents what to believe and what is in their interests are over. Political parties must transform to once again be the organized "how" to implement "what" diverse citizen groups believe, in place of the current trend of parties dictating to rank and file what insiders mandate for this year's agenda. Party bosses can ignore that reality, they just need to be ready, willing, and able to accept that their constituency base will rapidly erode should they do so.

2. Those who would be political leaders in our new millennium must acknowledge that the old days of party bosses and political insiders mandating, mainstream media promoting, and special-interest advocacy groups "justifying" self-serving agendas in the name of an allegedly noble cause are over. Not only does new information and communications technology break mainstream media's monopoly on relevant news, but when constituents find that an agenda's reality is far away from current news political parties take the hit for supporting programs that cannot work and are adverse to their own member's interests. Alternative news and information sources will be pleased to seize the competitive advantage provided by political parties defining agendas that work for them and insiders regardless of the impact on constituents and mainstream media producing slanted news to justify and support special-interest agendas. It is a competitive world, after all.

3. Elections will be more frequently determined by the flexible middle than party loyalists in the future. Elections are not won or lost by 100 percent or 50 percent of the vote. As evident from this year's Gubernatorial race in Washington, the Bush-Gore presidential race, and the Washington Gorton-Cantwell race for U.S. Senate in 2000, less than 10,000 votes can swing elections where one candidate is less credible or weak on an important issue. Party leaders, special-interest insiders, and mainstream media can, and probably will, continue to preach their agenda-drive sound bites to party-loyalists. Many good folks who have earnest beliefs, address legitimate issues, and present honest grievances will diligently work the flexible middle. I suspect that we will soon find party bosses and mainstream media working hard to sell special-interest agendas to a rapidly-shrinking party loyalist choir, while citizen advocates continue to seize gains by earnestly working with flexible middle citizens who take the time to understand and define their own best interests.

But aren't the above observations what politics is truly about? It has taken twenty years under Democrat Gubernatorial leadership in Washington to redefine a multi-partisan political path to our future in 2004. Good for us, we're growing up and together as a people!

Redmond Washington, November 23, 2004