



## Dawn rises **Red**

### 2014 Nevada Legislative election wrap up

It began on the country's eastern coast and by the time it reached Nevada, the Silver State was awash in red. It's been nearly 90 years since Republicans not only controlled the Governor's office, but both houses of the Legislature as well. That's right. The battle to flip the State Senate from Democrat to Republican control was the focus of GOP efforts this campaign season, but the oft-maligned Assembly Republican Caucus rode a tsunami of support all the way to Carson City as well and wrested control from the Democrats. Come February 2, 2015, a spectacle that hasn't happened in most Nevadans' lifetimes: Republican in the Governor's Mansion, Republicans controlling the Senate and Republicans controlling the Assembly.

The numbers are staggering. Governor Brian Sandoval cracked the 70% barrier on his way to his second, four-year term. The Senate seat determining control, SD 9, turned out to be a crushing win for the challenger. Becky Harris crushed incumbent Justin Jones by nearly 11 percentage points. The open seat in SD 8 was even more decisive, with Patricia Farley besting Marilyn Dondero Loop by 18 points. And new Senate Majority Leader Michael Roberson beat back his challenger, Teresa Lowry, by 20 points.

The real game-changer, though, was in the Assembly. The Republicans, whose caucus in the lower house at times could meet in a phone booth, went in to the night at a distinct disadvantage: they had 15 seats, the dominant Democrats held 27. All summer long, the GOP told anyone who would listen they were modestly targeting three D seats to flip to the R column. Today, the red wave Republicans look to have 25 seats, the Democrats 17. NO ONE saw that one coming.

The real question now is who will be tapped for the all-important committee chairmanships—in BOTH houses. We will know those answers, most likely, by the end of the week. All four caucuses will be meeting during the next evening or two. Is it Majority Leader Roberson (yes) and Assembly Speaker Hickey (probably)? Beyond that, we won't know anything until the caucuses caucus.

I was there in '95, when the Assembly was a 21-21 tie. It's been Assembly Democrats ever since. Dini, Perkins, Buckley, Ocegüera and Kirkpatrick. That ended last night—at least for the next two years. Which leads one to ask:

*Is it too early to start handicapping the field for 2016?*