



THE WASHINGTON EDUCATION WATCH

Mid-term Election Provides No Clear Winner, but Christians Know How to Handle This

With the midterm elections behind us we have an opportunity to gain wisdom for the future through the gift of hindsight. As the dust settles the one thing that seems clear is that neither Republicans or Democrats can declare a clear victory.

Because the Republicans remain in firm control of the Senate, Presidential appointments of all federal judges and cabinet officials, which must be approved by the Senate but not the House of Representatives, are [likely to sail through](#). Since the House has flipped to Democrat control, House committees are likely to use their majority to investigate all aspects of the Trump administration, including Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. This situation could become so difficult that Michael J. Petrilli, President of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute and a supporter of Secretary DeVos, [has suggested](#) that the Secretary, rather than endure the “show trials” that are likely, may want to “choose to step down and gracefully exit a thankless, no-win scene.” Because the House and Senate are controlled by different parties, budget bills and many other measures are likely to become victims of gridlock between the Senate and the House—unless the two parties can learn to speak to each other, listen to each other, and seek out common solutions.

Similarly, at the state level the mid-terms did not result in a definitive winner – particularly in the arena of public education:

- After the teacher walkouts last spring it was anticipated that teacher candidates for the legislature would fare well in the mid-terms. However [Education Week](#) tracked the success rate of teacher candidates and found that although 177 teachers filed to run for state houses, only 42 won. In Oklahoma, a state where the teacher walkouts were particularly fervent, 66 teachers filed to run for state legislative seats, but only 6 won.
- Looking at state-wide Governor’s races, while the Democrats picked up seven seats Republicans still control a majority (27) of the fifty states. In Wisconsin, Scott Walker, who had been very tough on public employee unions, [lost his bid for election to a third term](#) to Tony Evers. Evers had served as the Wisconsin Superintendent of Public Instruction and was heavily supported by the teacher unions. However, in Arizona David Garcia, a college professor supported by many educators, [lost in his race to become Governor](#) to incumbent Governor Doug Ducey.

- Support for ballot initiatives for education funding was also a mixed bag. For example, in Colorado, a place where governor-elect Jared Polis won on a platform that included increased funding for public education, a major ballot initiative that would have provided \$1.6 Billion for public education [failed with only 45% of the vote](#).

So, all of us—regardless of party preference—are left with something potentially upsetting. Many in our culture will choose this option leading to deeper divisions. But rather than either lashing out at those with whom we disagree, or harboring anger in our hearts, Christians can turn to the Lord to seek wisdom and allow Him to change our hearts and our minds. I have always been helped though confusing or frustrating political times by the Psalms—particularly Psalms 1 and 2. Psalm 1 speaks to us about our hearts and Psalm 2 speaks about nations and leaders of nations.

We know from Psalm 1 that if our, “delight is in the law of the LORD,” and if we meditate on his law day and night, that we will be

*like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.*

We all share a deep desire to be planted by that stream. For Christian teachers much of the fruit we bear comes in the form of blessings on our students. But if we are prayerful and thoughtful about how we speak about our political views we may find that we can also be a blessing to our coworkers.

Psalm 2 tells us that, “nations rage and the peoples plot in vain... and, the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed.” None of us want to be part of “the peoples” who “plot in vain” against the Lord.

However, Psalm 2 also lets us know that there is another kingdom to which our rulers can pledge allegiance:

*O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

So, what are we to do as citizens of a republic when we believe our rulers have gone astray and do not, “serve the Lord with fear?” In 1 Timothy 2:1-4, Paul tells us what to do: “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is

good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Clearly, we are called to pray for all people and for our leaders. In doing so our prayers will be a blessing to our nation and conducive to creating a life that will be peaceful, quiet, godly and dignified. Isn't that what all Americans really want?

Please share your thoughts on this column that you would like other readers to see by entering them in the form below. Personal comments can be sent to JMitchell@ceai.org.

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