

2006 Election Impact On Construction Industry

On Nov. 7, 2006, the Democrats assumed control of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate for the first time since 1994. AGC has allies in Congress, on both sides of the aisle, and there will be newcomers to Congress in both parties whose backgrounds suggest they understand the problems facing the construction industry, especially if they hear from AGC members. AGC is poised to use the 110th Congress to strengthen bipartisan relationships with new decision-makers and outline an aggressive agenda for advancing legislative and regulatory goals.

HOUSE RESULTS

After more than 35 “toss-up” races went down to the wire on Election Day, the Democrats secured a 29-seat advantage in the House of Representatives, assuming majority control of that chamber. However, close votes in several districts have resulted in two run-off elections and nine recounts.

A number of prominent Republican House members lost their seats, and Democrats were able to make gains in most regions of the country, particularly the Northeast, in such states as Connecticut, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania.

As the Democrats take control of the House, there will be major

“AGC’s Legislative Action Center Web site was an important tool in educating the public about the importance of voting and the issues that most impact construction. The site was accessed more than 80,000 times in 2005 and 2006, an increase of more than 450% from 2004.”

changes to both the leadership and committee chairs.

AGC PAC was involved in 206 of the 435 House races. Of those in which we participated, 83% of the AGC-backed candidates won election, including victories for AGC-backed candidates in 9 open seats around the country. However, as of November 28 runoff elections are still pending in two districts and a hand recount was being conducted in a North Carolina seat.

SENATE RESULTS

Thirty-three U.S. Senate seats were contested, with Democrats holding 18 of those seats and Republicans holding 15. Democrats gained 6 seats and became the majority party with 51 seats versus 49 Republican-held seats.

The only win in a toss-up race for Republicans occurred in Tennessee, where former Chattanooga Mayor and construction company owner Bob Corker defeated Representative Harold Ford, Jr. in another of the

nation’s most closely watched Senate races.

The next Senate will also include two Independents—Senator Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) and Senator Elect Bernard Sanders (I-Vt.)—who could play a pivotal role in legislative decisions on which the Senate is evenly divided.

AGC PAC was involved in 22 out of the 33 Senate races with 55% of the AGC-backed candidates winning their races.

IMPACT ON CONSTRUCTION

The construction industry can continue to look to AGC to protect the gains made in tax policy and infrastructure funding in recent years while working to push comprehensive immigration reform and WRDA. The shift in power will have an impact on health-care policy from a market-based approach to more federal government support.

AGC will monitor plans to increase employer penalties for violations of worker safety and benefit laws and plans to boost funding for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to increase the number of inspectors. Fundamental tax reform continues as a top AGC priority, and the association will continue to urge Congress to eliminate the burden of the alternative minimum tax.

AGC has established close working relationships with both Congress and the Bush administration, becoming a trusted partner on critical industry issues. AGC will use those bipartisan relationships to advance its members’ interests. ■

