

CBS NEWS POLITICAL UNIT

GENERAL ELECTION HANDBOOK
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By:

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WITH POLITICAL UNIT INTERNS

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2004 GENERAL ELECTION AT A GLANCE

DATE:	Tuesday, November 2, 2004
VOTING AGE POPULATION:	217, 766, 271
PRESIDENTIAL YEAR TURNOUT:	2000: 51.2% (105,396,627) 1996: 49% (96,277,872) 1992: 55% (104,425,014) 1988: 50% (91,594,809)
MID-TERM TURNOUT:	2002: 42% (88,903) 1998: 36% (72,450,901) 1994: 39% (75,116,835) 1990: 37% (67,877,124) 1986: 36% (64,799,921)
ELECTORAL VOTES:	538 (50 STATES AND DC)
NEEDED TO WIN:	270
US SENATE SEATS AT STAKE:	34 (19 DEM, 15 REP)
CURRENT SENATE LINEUP:	100 (48 DEM, 51 REP, 1 IND.)
GOVERNORSHIPS AT STAKE:	11 (6 DEM, 5 REP)
CURRENT GOVERNORSHIP LINEUP:	50 (28 REP, 22 DEM)
US HOUSE SEATS AT STAKE:	435 (227 REP, 205 DEM, 1 IND, 2 VACANCIES)
NADER ON BALLOT:	34 STATES PLUS DC: AL, AK, AR, CO, CT, DE, DC, FL, IA, KA, KY, LA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MS, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, ND, RI, SC, SD, TN, UT, VT, WA, WV, WI, WY *Litigation is pending in 8 states (HI, ID, IL, MI, OH, OR, PA, TX)
REFERENDA, INITIATIVES, BOND ISSUES:	162 IN 34 STATES
DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE REFERENDA:	11 States: AR, GA, KY, MI, MS, MT, ND, OH, OK, OR, UT

POLL CLOSING TIMES

EASTERN STANDARD TIME	STATE	ELECTORAL VOTES	SENATE	GOVERNOR	HOUSE SEATS
7:00pm	Georgia	15	Majette - D Isaakson - R	NONE	13
	Indiana	11	BAYH - D Scott - R	KERNAN - D Daniels - R	9
	Kentucky	8	Mongiardo - D BUNNING - R	NONE	6
	S. Carolina	8	Tenenbaum - D DeMint - R	NONE	
	Vermont	3	LEAHY - D McMullen - R	Clavelle - D DOUGLAS - R	1
	Virginia	13	NONE	NONE	11
7:30pm	N. Carolina	15	Bowles - D Burr - R	EASLEY - D Ballantine - R	13
	Ohio	20	Fingerhut - D VOINOVICH - R	NONE	18
	West Virginia	5	NONE	Manchin - D Warner - R	3
8:00pm	Alabama	9	Sowell - D SHELBY - R	NONE	7
	Connecticut	7	DODD - D Orchulli - R	NONE	5
	Delaware	3	NONE	MNNER - D Lee - R	1
	DC	3	--	--	--

EASTERN STANDARD TIME	STATE	ELECTORAL VOTES	SENATE	GOVERNOR	HOUSE SEATS
(8pm con't.)	Florida	27	Castor – D Martinez – R	NONE	25
	Illinois	21	Obama – D Keyes – R	NONE	19
	Maine	4	NONE	NONE	2
	Maryland	10	MIKULSKI – D Pipkin – R	NONE	8
	Massachusetts	12	NONE	NONE	10
	Mississippi	6	NONE	NONE	4
	Missouri	11	Farmer – D BOND – R	McCaskill – D Blunt – R	9
	New Hampshire	4	Haddock – D GREGG – R	Lynch – D BENSON – R	2
	New Jersey	15	NONE	NONE	13
	Oklahoma	7	Carson – D Coburn – R	NONE	5
	Pennsylvania	21	Hoeffel – D SPECTER – R	NONE	19
	Tennessee	11	NONE	NONE	9
8:30pm	Arkansas	6	LINCOLN – D Holt – R	NONE	4
9:00pm	Arizona	10	Starky – D MCCAIN – R	NONE	8
	Colorado	9	Salazar – D Coors – R	NONE	7

EASTERN STANDARD TIME	STATE	ELECTORAL VOTES	SENATE	GOVERNOR	HOUSE SEATS
9pm (con't.)	Kansas	6	Conroy – D BROWNBACK – R	NONE	4
	Louisiana	9	primary November 2	NONE	7
	Michigan	17	NONE	NONE	15
	Minnesota	10	NONE	NONE	8
	Nebraska	5	NONE	NONE	3
	New Mexico	5	NONE	NONE	3
	New York	31	SCHUMER – D Mills – R	NONE	29
	North Dakota	3	DORGAN – D Liffrig – R	Satrom – D HOEVEN – R	1
	Rhode Island	4	NONE	NONE	2
	South Dakota	3	DASCHLE – D Thune – R	NONE	1
	Texas	34	NONE	NONE	32
	Wisconsin	10	FEINGOLD – D Michels – R	NONE	8
	Wyoming	3	NONE	NONE	1
10:00pm	Iowa	7	Small – D GRASSLEY – R	NONE	5
	Montana	3	NONE	Schweitzer – D Brown – R	1
	Nevada	5	REID – D Ziser – R	NONE	3

EASTERN STANDARD TIME	STATE	ELECTORAL VOTES	SENATE	GOVERNOR	HOUSE SEATS
(10pm con't.)	Utah	5	Van Dam – D BENNETT – R	Matheson – D Huntsman	3
11:00pm	California	55	BOXER – D Jones – R	NONE	53
	Hawaii	4	INOUYE – D Cavasso – R	NONE	2
	Idaho	4	None CRAPO – R	NONE	2
	Oregon	7	WYDEN – D King – R	NONE	5
	Washington	11	MURRAY – D Nethercutt – R	Gregoire – D Rossi – R	9
1:00am	Alaska	3	Knowles – D MURKOWSKI – R	NONE	1

OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS

WHAT'S RED AND BLUE AND PURPLE ALL OVER?

by Dotty Lynch, Senior Political Editor, CBS News

In December 2001 Bush political guru Karl Rove told gathering at the American Enterprise Institute that there had been a seamless strategy from the campaign to the White House. Looking at the last four years it seems there have been pretty much a seamless strategy from Campaign 2000 to Campaign 2004. Around the same time Bush strategist Matthew Dowd told CBS News that he expected the 2004 election to be pretty much a replay of 2000 “unless the Democrats nominate John Edwards, or another southerner.” Then the battleground would shift, he said. No matter who the Democrats nominated he said that Bush would have to increase his support with Hispanics because in some of the key battleground states, New Mexico, Nevada and Colorado those voters could tip the balance.

Rove told the AEI crowd that he was concerned that the decision in 2000 to focus so heavily on education and the compassionate side of conservatism had driven away the Christian evangelical base and he was determined that President Bush’s promise to cut taxes be enacted, both to prove he was a promise keeper and to keep the conservatives in line.

With ten days to go before an election which has been going on for four years, most polls find President Bush and John Kerry in a statistical dead heat although a few national polls show President Bush holding a small lead. And, the 2004 battleground does indeed look the one from 2000 battleground. The most recent CBS/New York Times poll conducted October 14-17, found that among likely voters President Bush had 47%, John Kerry 45% Ralph Nader 2% and 6 % undecided. While the polls showed that people believed that John Kerry “won all three debates” he had not completely persuaded those few uncommitted voters that he was the leader they were looking for.

President Bush’s strength apparently lies in the fact that a majority of voters believe he is doing a good job handling terrorism. On Iraq, voters give low marks to both candidates, not believing either has a clear plan. Kerry’s vote to give the President authority to use force in Iraq bedeviled him during the primaries, giving rise to the Dean machine and it has weakened his credibility on a war the American people have soured on. His votes “for and against” the \$87 billion appropriation for Iraq became the Bush campaign’s most effective way to define Kerry as a flip-flopper and it took until October for Kerry to find a credible concise way to describe his position on Iraq and winning the peace.

The Kerry campaign tried over and over to move the campaign agenda to domestic issues but wars—Vietnam, Iraq and the one on terror have dominated campaign coverage. Kerry’s Vietnam years which his campaign thought would be an unmitigated plus came back to bite him in the form of the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth whose relatively small ad buy mushroomed on talk radio and into the mainstream media for much of August while Kerry’s campaign faltered. .

However, going into the final stretch President Bush’s job approval rating stood at just 44% overall and among voters who are still making up their minds, it was even lower. Among uncommitted

voters-- people who are undecided or say they could still change their minds-- less than one-third approve (31%), nearly half disapprove (47) of the job the President has done. And, among the completely undecided voters there is also a very low approval (27%) of Bush's handling of his job but an even higher number (39%) who aren't sure.

Looking at the Electoral College breakdown, our most recent (10/25/04) CBS News estimate gives President Bush a small lead with 227 votes in 27 states, Kerry with 190 votes from 14 states and DC and 121 electoral votes from 9 states in the toss-up category. We will review this chart daily between now and election day.

ELECTORAL COLLEGE VOTES CHART, 10/25/04

State	Votes	Bush	Lean Bush	Toss-Up	Lean Kerry	Kerry
Alabama	9	9				
Alaska	3	3				
Arizona	10		10			
Arkansas	6		6			
California	55					55
Colorado	9		9			
Connecticut	7					7
Delaware	3				3	
District of Columbia	3					3
Florida	27			27		
Georgia	15	15				
Hawaii	4					4
Idaho	4	4				
Illinois	21					21
Indiana	11	11				
Iowa	7			7		
Kansas	6	6				
Kentucky	8		8			
Louisiana	9		9			
Maine	4				4	
Maryland	10					10
Massachusetts	12					12
Michigan	17			17		
Minnesota	10			10		
Mississippi	6	6				
Missouri	11		11			
Montana	3	3				
Nebraska	5	5				
Nevada	5		5			
New Hampshire	4			4		
New Jersey	15				15	
New Mexico	5			5		
New York	31					31
North Carolina	15		15			

North Dakota	3	3				
Ohio	20			20		
Oklahoma	7	7				
Oregon	7				7	
Pennsylvania	21			21		
Rhode Island	4					4
South Carolina	8	8				
South Dakota	3	3				
Tennessee	11		11			
Texas	34	34				
Utah	5	5				
Vermont	3					3
Virginia	13		13			
Washington	11				11	
West Virginia	5		5			
Wisconsin	10			10		
Wyoming	3	3				
Total	538	125	102	121	40	150

The Electoral College, by the way, isn't doing so well itself. A new Time magazine poll shows that by a margin of 57% to 35% Americans think the constitution should be amended to abolish it and elect whoever gets the most votes. An attempt to change the winner take all aspect of the electoral votes to a proportional system in Colorado, however, looks like it is headed for defeat; the most recent polls showed it trailing.

The Kerry folks claim that he may be lagging a bit nationwide but is now slightly ahead in the all important battleground states. This list has gone from a high of 21 this summer to 11 in the final week. The final battlegrounds are Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

After John Edwards was added to the ticket in July, the Kerry campaign flirted with a number of border states, Arkansas, Louisiana, Virginia, North Carolina but by early September decided they were heading in the Bush direction (a few recent polls however suggest that Arkansas may be close). Missouri, Arizona and West Virginia also went away when the polls showed Bush continuing his lead. Washington, Maine and Oregon started to look more and more pro-Kerry, and in the case of Oregon and Washington, the campaigning has also diminished because the race was virtually over by the final week because of heavy early voting. .

Michigan never exactly left the battleground but the Kerry and union folks redeployed some of their troops when it appeared that Kerry had a safe lead. . But in the last week, some closer than expected polls brought it back into play—from “leaning Kerry” to toss up. Similarly, Minnesota which Al Gore carried in 2000 is now a toss-up. New Jersey never exactly got into the battleground, but the Bush-Cheney folks kept flirting with it until the end. And with both sides advertising like crazing in Philadelphia, voters in southern New Jersey saw the same slew of ads as those in the official battlegrounds.

A state by state analysis of the Presidential race by Beth Lester is in the Presidential section.

Money: For Both the Air and the Ground Wars

The Center for Responsive Politics released a report last week estimating that this year's election would cost \$3.9 billion, almost a billion more than four years ago. Part of the reason for this is, of all things, campaign finance reform. The new legislation which was intended to reduce the influence of big money in campaigns, doubled the amount of "hard money" individuals can give (from \$1,000 a person to \$2,000) and banned "soft money" to the political parties. Apparently donors took advantage of the opportunity for double or nothing and the big money folks gave to the multitude of "527" groups who were more than happy to take advantage of the "reform"

The Center projects that the Presidential campaigns together with the outside groups that support them (ACT, Move On.org Progress, Swift-boat Veteran for Truth et al) will have spent \$1.2 billion and much of that money will have been spent on TV ads. The University of Wisconsin which has been tracking these ads found that in two week period between Sept 24-October 7, 87% of all Presidential ads were in 50 markets which comprise just 27% of the American electorate leaving 70% of the voters left out (or sparring) from the main Presidential battle. The heaviest spending was in 10 states which included Colorado, a new battleground and a particularly key focus of the ad wars. The heaviest barrage of ads during that period was in three media markets in Ohio (Cleveland, Columbus and Toledo) two in Florida (Miami and Tampa), Harrisburg Pennsylvania, the smaller states of Wisconsin, Nevada, New Mexico, and interestingly in Grand Rapids Michigan.

The content of the ads is interesting. Despite—or perhaps because of—the relative lack of attention paid to the issue of health care in campaign coverage, 62% of the Kerry ads in that two week period were on this issue while only 28% of the Bush ads mentioned health care. The Kerry campaign was more likely to discuss issues in general than the Bush campaign; even taxes, typically Rove's silver bullet, were discussed more by Kerry (33%) than Bush (27%). One issue ignored by the Kerry-EDWARDS campaign was tort reform. The Bush ads dealt with this in 12% of their ads.

As far as a "tone" is concerned, the Bush ads tended to be both more positive and more negative, than Kerry's. Eighty four percent of Kerry ads were "contrast" types while the Bush ads split 36% positive, 34% contrast and 30% negative. The award for the most negative ads goes to the Democratic National Committee; 96% of their ads fit that category. The DNC and outside groups supporting Bush and Kerry did no positive ads at all. Only 27% of all Presidential ads from Labor Day to October 7 were positive. (The University of Wisconsin will issue a new report at the end of October.) A spate of "scary ads" with wolves and people crying wolf filled the airwaves as Halloween approached but both sides said they were planning to end this most contentious campaign on a positive note. We wait with bated breath.

The new "in" thing this year was a return to grassroots campaigning. The Democratic leaning **Americans Coming Together** says that in the final weeks of the campaign that they will make 12 million phone calls, send 21 million pieces of mail and distribute 11 million fliers. On Election Day, it will deploy 45,000 volunteers in 14 states.

The Bush campaign says it has over 1.2 million volunteers and have signed up chairmen in every

county in the country; in the battleground states they say they have chairmen in every precinct. Their “72 hour” program in 2002 was widely credited with successes in key Senate races and the RNC plans to repeat it again this year.

Voter registration rolls have swelled making election officials proud and scared at the same time. In Florida over one million new voters are on the rolls since 2000. Interest in this election is extremely high as is the tension level, as the campaign comes to an end.

Voting—Early, Fraudulent or Suppressed

Voting itself became an issue in 2004, or more precisely in 2000. Following the Florida debacle, Congress passed the Help Americans Vote Act (HAVA) which was supposed to correct the problems which came to light in the aftermath of 2000. However HAVA and its Election Assistance Commission itself had problems—unfunded mandates, late start-up, spotty compliance and on Election Day the only guarantee is that 2004 will NOT be problem free,

The CBS/New York Times poll conducted last week found that only 50% of Americans believe that President Bush was elected legitimately in 2000, while 45% believe he was not. And a new Time magazine poll shows that while only 27% of Americans believe that officials in their area will try to manipulate the vote, 60% of them believe that election officials in other parts of the country may try to do this.

With concerns about voter fraud (coming mostly from Republicans) and voter suppression (coming mostly from the Democrats) dominating the headlines, these worries are likely to increase as Election Day draws near. There appears to be a record number of voters voting early in the 35 states that allow early or “no excuses” absentee voting. About a fifth of voters nationwide say they plan to vote early and, according to the Washington Post, as of October 21st 1.3 million people had voted in 8 key battleground states. Many western states have allowed early voting for a while. In Oregon all votes are cast by mail so there is no Election Day. In New Mexico they estimate half of the votes will be cast before November 2, and similarly in Nevada and Colorado there is a very heavy early vote in places ranging from grocery stores to the Las Vegas strip.

In Iowa where Election Day lasts for five weeks, over 200,000 people have already voted. In Florida where election officials hope this reform will reduce lines and clear up problems before Election Day, the very early vote appears to be tilting a little Democratic

Unlike 2000, where voting problems were considered a minor annoyance, this year everyone is on the lookout for voting issues, especially the issue of provisional voting. This “reform” in HAVA that allows people to vote provisionally if their names are not on the rolls, is one of the more controversial changes. The act mandates that votes be cast—but not that they be counted. If, when and how those votes will be counted has been the object of law suits and may slow down knowing the winner of the election in several close battleground states. Democrats say they will have 10,000 lawyers ready to go to make sure their voters are counted and the Republicans say won’t be out-lawyered.

Then there is issue of the voting machinery itself. Twenty five percent of the country is voting on new machines—something that is bound to cause confusion, in particular with some poll workers who are as old as the machinery is new. Electionline.org has done extensive review of the changes and its report available online. Some states are sticking to the old ways. For example, 70% percent of voters in Ohio, the mother of all battleground states, will still use those punch cards that we all became so familiar with in 2000. Chads, any one?

Wither Nader Ralph Nader who has gone from being the hero of a group of idealistic Democrats to their Darth Vader has persisted in running for election in 2004. His former raiders including Toby Moffett, Mark Green along with the Democratic Party have actively worked to keep him off state ballots. Despite Nader's contention that he will take more votes away from president Bush than from John Kerry some rich Republicans like T Boone Pickens and Ben Stein and the Republican state parties have given him money and help to get him run. It now looks like his name will appear on the ballot in 35 states AL, AK, AR, CO, CT, DE, DC, FL, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MS, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, ND, RI, SC, SD, TN, UT, VT, WA, WV, WI, WY. However, there is still litigation in Michigan to try to get him off their ballot and Nader is still trying to get on in Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Oregon and Texas although most of the ballots are printed and many votes have already been cast..

So far the Democrats have been successful in keeping him off the ballot in the battlegrounds of Ohio, Pennsylvania and especially Oregon where he got 5% of the vote in 2000. Our recent poll shows him picking up only 2% nationally but in some key battleground states, especially places like Maine, Wisconsin, Minnesota and New Mexico, he could once again have impact on the result.

The Senate: So Near and yet, So Far

The Republicans currently hold a 51 seat majority in the Senate. For the Democrats to take control they need to pick up two seats if President Bush is reelected and one if John Kerry wins and a VP Edwards were there to break a tie. But for the Democrats to be able to do this would take a substantial push, near perfect campaigns and some luck. The Democrats are defending 19 seats, the Republicans 15 and many of the competitive ones are in "red" states. .

According to the Cook Report's Jennifer Duffy, the math favors the GOP although the Democrats are competitive in all the toss-up states. As she breaks it down, the GOP can count on the 36 Republicans not up this year plus 8 safe Republican seats which are up. That brings their total to 44 safe GOP seats. The Democrats start with 30 not up and another 10 safe seats bringing them to 40 seats in the bank. The remaining 16 seats include four which are likely to go Republican (Missouri, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and probably Kentucky) and four likely to go Democratic (California, Wisconsin, Washington and Illinois.) That accounts for 92 seats (48 Republican and 44 Democratic) putting eight other seats in play. For the Democrats to get to fifty they need to win 6 of the 8; to get to 51 seven of the eight. In other words all the Republicans have to do is win one of the toss-ups if Bush is elected and two if Kerry wins. All eight are in states that Bush carried in 2000.

The Democrats' struggle stems mainly from the retirements of Senators in five Southern states, Bob Graham in Florida, John Edwards in North Carolina, Fritz Hollings in South Carolina, John Breaux

in Louisiana and Zell Miller in Georgia. This is NOT Kerry country; only Florida is a battleground state and the campaigns kept the top of the ticket at arms length until the final week when it was time to get out the base Democratic vote. .

The other Democratic struggle is in South Dakota where Senate Minority leader Tom Daschle is in a very close race against former Rep John Thune. Daschle is not only keeping his distance from Kerry but aired a commercial showing him hugging President Bush.

The Republicans had four retirements of their own (three this year and one in 2002) which are giving them problems Ben Nighthorse Campbell's seat in Colorado and Don Nichols in Oklahoma are up for grabs. In Illinois, Republican Peter Fitzgerald's retirement gave rise to a series of calamities for the GOP. Their dream candidate, Jack Ryan got caught in a sex scandal and the Republicans lurched from Mike Ditka to Maryland's Alan Keyes for a replacement. Democratic rising star Barak Obama is so confident of victory that he has left the state several times to campaign for other Democrats. And, in Alaska when Sen. Frank Murkowski got elected Governor in 2002 and appointed his daughter Lisa to succeed him, the Democrats smell blood. Former Governor Tony Knowles is running a strong race to pick up that GOP seat.

A wild card right now is that Kentucky also appears to be in play. Sen. Jim Bunning a strong conservative and ally of President Bush looked to be in good shape but some erratic behavior and odd statements, comparing his opponent to Saddam Hussein's son was one, has created some doubts. Last week he said he was unaware of the allegedly mutinous behavior of troops in Iraq because he didn't read the papers and only watched Fox News. The Democratic candidate, Dan Mongiardo was not considered a strong contender but some polls now suggest he may be coming on.

If this really gets close, we may all be having Thanksgiving in New Orleans. That's because Louisiana's election on November 2 is only a primary. If no one gets a majority (and that looks likely) there will be a run-off election on December 4 probably between Democrat Chris John and Republican David Vitter.

Here's where we see these Senate races now:

2004 Senate Races (34 States 19 Democrats, 15 Republicans) ,

Strong Democrat (11): Arkansas (Lincoln, D) , Connecticut (Dodd) , Hawaii (Inouye) , Illinois (open) , Indiana (Bayh) Maryland (Mikulski) , Nevada (Reid) , New York (Schumer) , North Dakota (Dorgan) , Oregon (Widen) , Vermont (Leahy)

Likely Democrat (2): California (Boxer) , Washington (Murray)

Lean Democratic (1): Wisconsin (Feingold)

Toss-up (8): Alaska (Murkowski) , Colorado (open) , Florida (open) , Louisiana (open) , North Carolina (open) , Oklahoma (open) , South Carolina (open) , South Dakota (Daschle)

Lean Republican (1): Kentucky (Bunning)

Likely Republican (2): Missouri (Bond), Pennsylvania Specter) _

Strong Republican (9): Alabama (Shelby), Arizona (McCain), Georgia (open), Idaho(Crapo), Iowa (Grassley), Kansas (Brownback), New Hampshire (Gregg), Ohio (Voinovich), Utah (Bennett)

A state by state overview of these races by Allison Davis is in the Senate section.

Governors: Only Eleven up This Year

There are currently 28 Republican and 22 Democratic Governors. Of the 11 up this year Republicans currently hold 5 statehouses, the Democrats hold 6. Two the of 5 Republican state houses, Montana and Utah are in jeopardy as are 3 of the 6 Democratic ones, Indiana, Missouri and Washington State. In addition, Republican incumbents in New Hampshire and Vermont are in tight races.

Three of the 11 states have women running for Governor including incumbent Governor Ruth Ann Miner in Delaware, Claire McCaskill in Missouri and Attorney General Christine Gregoire in Washington State. There are currently 9 female Governors. Two Republican women Governors won't be coming back; Judy Martz in Montana is retiring and Olene Walker in Utah lost her primary.

Here's where we see these Gubernatorial races 10 days out:

2004 Gubernatorial Races (11 States) :

Strong Republican (1) : North Dakota

Lean Republican (1) : Vermont

Toss-Up(6) : Indiana, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, Utah and Washington

Likely/Lean Democratic (3): Delaware, West Virginia and North Carolina:

A race by race overview by Allison Davis is in the section on Governors.

The House: Incumbent Protection Rules Except in Texas

The current House breakdown is 227 (R), 205 (D) and 1 independent and 2 vacancies, Porter Goss, the Republican of Florida who has gone to head the CIA and Doug Bereuter Republican of Nebraska. The Democrats would have to have a net gain of 12 seats (plus independent Bernie Sanders) to get the 218 votes needed to take back the House. But with ten days to go most experts are predicting a status quo election in the House, a pickup no bigger than 3 seats for either side. There are only 37 districts where there is no incumbent, leaving 398 with incumbents in mostly safe races.

According to CBS News consultant and Cook Report analyst Amy Walters the Republicans' best pickup opportunities are mostly in Texas, where the party could gain as many as six seats because

of redistricting master-mined by Republicans backed by House majority leader Tom Delay. The Democrats' best chances are in open-seat races, including those for Colorado's 3rd District, Louisiana's 3rd, New York's 27th, and Washington's 8th. .

In 2004, 34 incumbents are retiring, 19 Republicans and 15 Democrats. There are three new districts in Texas and in two of them, Republican redistricting put longtime Democratic incumbents Martin Frost and Charlie Stenholm in districts with Republican incumbents.

Democrats won two special elections in 2004 in Kentucky and South Dakota and began the year hopeful that the trend away from Republicans would continue. But there seems to be no tidal wave brewing in the 50-50 election.

There is an overview of the 33 hottest races in the House section put together by the CBS news Political Unit staff and interns with guidance from CBS News consultants Mark Gersh and Amy Walters. A complete list of all 435 races is also available on request.

Referenda. According to the Ballot Strategy Initiative Center (BSIC), there are 162 statewide ballot measures this year in 34 states. Nationally, the number of citizen initiatives is up slightly from 2002, but the numbers have been substantially lower than those of the mid-1990s.

An estimated \$250 million will be spent on ballot measure this year but big money doesn't assure victory. According to the BSIC of the eight most massively financed "yes" campaigns in 2002, only two passed. And of the eight most expensive "no" campaigns - each of which had far less money behind them all eight measures were rejected. Voters appear to prefer just saying No to ballot measures. Some of these measure have been put on the ballot to try to stimulate turnout. The gay marriage referenda are good examples.

In eleven states, voters will make decisions on so-called "definition of marriage" initiatives, all of which ban gay marriage. Those states are Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Utah. The initiatives are fairly similar, except for Ohio and Michigan where the language is more far-reaching. The initiatives are expected to pass by wide margins in nine of the states. Polls show Oregon and Michigan are too close to call.

Marijuana is also an issue in three states this year, Alaska Montana, and Oregon. California, once again has the most ballot measures (16) , including Proposition 71 which seeks to raise \$3 billion for stem-cell research. This goes against President Bush's ban on federal funding of new stem cell lines. Gov. Schwarzenegger has yet to take a position on Prop 71.

In Colorado, Amendment 36 would award the state's Electoral College votes proportionately instead of the current winner-take-all method. The amendment would be effective immediately. If it passes, expect a legal challenge which, in a close race, could hold up determining who is president. Recent polls show it trailing.

Other states to look at are Arizona (anti-immigration), Florida (parental notification for abortion) and Maine (property tax limit).

A full description of these ballot measures by Beth Lester is in the Referenda and Initiative section.