

60 didn't matter, anyway...

BY: TONY ROMM

Wither the dream of 60: [The undisputed re-election of Georgia Senator Saxby Chambliss](#) means that Democrats, [even if they win in hotly-contested Minnesota](#), will still fall short of a filibuster-proof majority. To the party's credit, it [did capture seven new Senate seats this year](#), including an upset that toppled [favored North Carolina incumbent Elizabeth Dole \(R\)](#). But the re-election of Chambliss, regardless of the party's previous accomplishments, renders the Democrats' symbolic, statistical aspiration unattainable.

However, President-elect Barack Obama and the party's Congressional leaders should not fret: 60 didn't matter, anyway. Many of the Democrats who successfully challenged or fended off their Republican opponents [did so from the center of the political spectrum](#), occasionally severing any ties with (if not flatly criticizing) Obama's presidential campaign. Now, these "blue-dog Democrats," including Mark Warner (D-Va.) and Hagan in the Senate [and about 50 others in the House](#), comprise those majorities that Democratic strategists previously insisted would vote as a whole.

But while some of those politicians do, in fact, owe their victories to Obama's coattails, there is little evidence to suggest new "blue dogs" will repay Obama by gravitating toward the left and supporting his line purely for the party's sake. In off-election years, satisfying constituencies usually trumps appeasing the president (a strategy the candidates may later leverage [if the sitting president casts a shadow over their re-election campaigns](#)).

However, political squabbles are amplified in magnitude when they occur within the party. Even though "blue dog Democrats" represent "red states," they are *still Democrats*, and their disputes are *still symbolic* of party disunity. Then again, that's the unstated paradox of the Democrats' "paint the states blue" strategy: You can easily change a building's color, but a new hue does not affect the people who work inside it. States, especially Virginia, may now rest in the Democrats' column, but their contents — and the candidates who represent them — are still more conservative or moderate than liberal (which is, perhaps, why Jim Martin lost to Chambliss; [he wasn't "red" enough](#) to win Georgia).

In other words, a Senate "supermajority" would have been symbolic, but legislatively insignificant. The successful sale of a trillion dollar health care policy, a prompt withdrawal from Iraq and a series of upper-echelon tax increases does not wholly depend on the party to which important politicians belong. Rather, it depends on voting records, campaign promises, constituencies, personal philosophies and political futures, none of which the magic number of 60 affects.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, December 3rd, 2008 at 9:54 am and is filed under [Eagle](#), [analysis](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

One Response to "60 didn't matter, anyway..."



Tony Romm » Blog Archive » New politics@theEAGLE post Says:
December 3rd, 2008 at 3:23 pm

[...] one's on Sen. Chambliss vs. the Democrats' pursuit of a supermajority. Check it [...]

Leave a Reply

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="text"/> | Name (required) |
| <input type="text"/> | Mail (will not be published) (required) |
| <input type="text"/> | Website |
| <input type="text"/> | |

Submit Comment

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR BLOG



Click here to add this blog's RSS feed to your reader!

LISTEN TO OUR PODCAST!

With the help of Andrew Tomlinson, The Eagle's Multimedia Editor, Charlie Szold, the Editorial Page Editor, Jen Calantone, the Managing Editor for News and others, we're pleased to present the politics@theEAGLE podcast, a weekly review of all things political!

Recent episodes:

-- November 1, 2008: Election Fatigue and the Obama Effect
--September 30: 7 in 7, with special focus on the economy and Gov. Palin
--September 25: Tax platforms, with special guest Prof. Donald Williamson, KSB.
--September 17: The economy (redux), and the debut of 7 in 7, our new crossfire discussion
--September 10: Presidential polling and the deficit
--September 4: The Palin pick, Obama's official nod and the economy.

CONTRIBUTORS

Alex Knepper (2)
 Andrew Tomlinson (1)
 Carolyn Phenicie (11)
 Charlie Szold (6)
 Ethan Klapper (3)
 Griffin Greenberg (2)
 Howie Perlman (1)
 Jen Calantone (1)
 Juan M. Botero Duque (1)
 Kaitlin Scanlan (4)
 Katie Litvin (6)
 Katie Smith (3)
 Nick Field (2)
 Peter Brusoe (5)
 Sam Hagedorn (5)
 Tony Romm (48)

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Politics@theEAGLE is a presidential election blog owned by The Eagle, American University's student newspaper, and Tony Romm, the newspaper's special projects editor and a student in the COMM-490 Capstone class. [Click to read more](#)

TAGS

[AU bailout](#)
[Biden](#)
[clinton](#)
[college](#)
[students](#)
[debate](#)
[deficit](#)
[delegate](#)
[Democrats](#)
[DNC](#)
[economy](#)
[election](#)
[electoral](#)
[votes](#)
[financial](#)
[crisis](#)
[florida](#)
[foreign](#)
[policy](#)
[Gustav](#)
[Iraq](#)
[kennedy](#)
[mccain](#)
[media](#)
[obama](#)
[ohio](#)
[Palin](#)
[pennsylvania](#)
[podcast](#)
[politics](#)
[polls](#)
[prediction](#)
[press](#)
[reaction](#)
[Republicans](#)
[RNC](#)
[social](#)
[networking](#)
[students](#)
[swing](#)
[state](#)
[swing](#)
[states](#)
[tavern](#)
[unity](#)
[virginia](#)
[voters](#)
[women](#)
[younger](#)
[voters](#)
[young](#)
[voters](#)

BLOGROLL

American University's School of Communication
 Chronicle of Higher Ed: Campaign U
 iVoryTowerz
 The Eagle
 The Eagle Blog
 TonyRomm.com
 Youth Vote '08

RECENT POSTS

60 didn't matter, anyway...
 Murkowski, Palin and the 2010 (or 2012?) race
 Post-Forum Analysis: The Presidency and the Press
 Missed last night's Forum? Watch it (C-SPAN) or listen to it (WAMU) online!
 politics@theEAGLE on NPR, C-Span!