

WAR GAMES: ISSUES AND RESOURCES IN THE BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF CONGRESS

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The following is a summary of the above article – the full text is at <http://csed.byu.edu/documents/2006monograph.pdf> .

Politics is like war. Campaigns are fought in battleground states. They deploy strategies to increase the chance of victory. Troops are sent out to mobilize the voters. The national elections of 2006 led to a victory by Democrats where they gained control of the House and the Senate. Some reasons were:

1. a referendum on Bush, especially his leadership concerning the Iraq War, but also his handling of Hurricane Katrina. His approval rating was low.
2. Scandals hurt the Republicans more than Democrats. (Tom DeLay, Duke Cunningham, Mark Foley, and Jack Abramoff).
3. The Republicans felt that the redistricting that occurred would hand them guaranteed seats, but that also failed.

More money was spent than previous mid term elections. Much was distributed to competitive races (except for the Democratic National Committee's 50 state program).

Chapter 7: The Battle for Ohio 2006:

Democrats made impressive gains in the 2006 election since Ohio voted for Bush in 2004. We elected a governor, other state officials, and a U.S. senator. We also picked up 1 congressional seat, held our open districts, and came very close to defeating several Republican incumbents. An analysis was done by the University of Akron, Bliss Institute. This election had some of the most expensive congressional campaigns in Ohio history. Republicans outspent Democrats in most races. Although special interest groups were significant, party spending was larger.

The state of Ohio has 5 distinct regions with different political profiles. Northeastern Ohio (Cleveland, Akron, Canton, and Youngstown) is Democratic and liberal. This is the most populous region in the state. Central Ohio (Columbus and its environs) is mostly Republican but trending Democratic in recent presidential elections. Southwestern Ohio (Cincinnati and Dayton) is the most Republican in ideology and is the most conservative. Northwestern Ohio (Toledo, but also small cities and farming communities) is primarily Republican. Southeastern Ohio is a swing region in partisan terms: largely rural, economically depressed, and culturally traditional. Because of the diversity on the state, campaigning must vary differently in different regions.

Some of the reasons the Ohio Democrats may have won in 2006 are:

1. Scandals concerning Tom Noe, who had close ties to prominent Republican officeholders in the state as well as President Bush and Governor Taft. (Coingate).

2. Governor Taft became the first sitting governor of Ohio to be convicted of a crime (failing to report loans and gifts). Taft's approval rating was the lowest in any Ohio governor in history.
3. President Bush also had a low approval rating, as did Congress, which helped the Democrats get elected.