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An American Cyber-Column

About the House

Rich Galen

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* Thank you.

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* With the laser focus on a couple of handfuls of races for the U.S. Senate, it is sometimes hard to remember that all 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are up for grabs on Tuesday as well.

SIDEBAR

Before you hit the SEND key, I know that in addition to the 435 voting Members there are non-voting Delegates from the District of Columbia, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands. There is also a non-voting Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico.

END SIDEBAR

* According to the Clerk’s office, the U.S. House is currently divided: 234 Republicans and 201 Democrats. There are no vacancies and no Independents.
* Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-Ohio) has made it known he would like to come out of Tuesday’s counting with a net gain of thirteen seats. That would put the number of Republicans in the House at 247.
* Why is that important? For one thing, the highest total Republicans have had since World War II was 246. That was reached in the election of 1946 immediately following the war. If Boehner’s team can beat that he gets the bragging rights to the highest total in 68 years.
* Republicans controlled the House for exactly two years. In the election of 1948 the GOP lost 75 seats and came back in 1949 with only 171 Members.
* That wasn’t the worst drubbing in modern times. After the election of 1928 the GOP had a whopping 270 seats. Over the next two elections – the Great Depression elections – Republicans lost 153 seats so they came out of the election of 1932 with only 117 seats.
* But, wait. There’s more! In the <i>next</i> two elections (1934 and 1936) the Republicans lost another 29 seats so when the 75th Congress convened in 1937, Republicans only had 88 Members – by far the fewest in the 435 Member era.
* That makes the Watergate election of 1974 seem like a GOP victory as Republicans came back with 143 seats.
* The last time, prior to the 1994 elections, that the GOP controlled the House was in the first election of Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952 when Republicans picked up 22 seats to control the Chamber by a razor thin margin of 221-213 – eight seats.
* Republicans lost 18 seats and control of the House in Eisenhower’s first mid-term election and were in the minority for the next 40 years.
* Aside from bragging rights for Speaker Boehner it is likely that 15-18 Republican freshmen would have the effect of diluting the power of the 50-or-so Tea Party Republicans who have often refused to fall into line with the wishes of the Republican leadership.
* If, as is expected, Republicans take control of the Senate on Tuesday the political issue will no longer be passing bill after bill after bill in the House that a Democratic Senate would never bring to the floor.
* The political issue will be constructing legislation in the House that at least a majority of Republicans in the Senate can support so the “do-nothing” tag can be hung squarely around the collective necks of the Democrats in the Senate.
* Republican control of both chambers of Congress ended with the election of 2006 – the second George W. Bush midterm.
* It looks as if they will have clawed their way back into control when the 114th Congress opens in January, but that means they will have to be seen as actually governing, not just obstructing Barack Obama.
* On the <a href = “[**http://www.mullings.com/dr\_11-03-14.htm**](http://www.mullings.com/dr_11-03-14.htm)**” <**b> Secret Decoder Ring</b></a> page today: A link to the Clerk of the House page showing the number of Republicans and Democrats (or their precursors) all the way back to 1789.

Also a pretty good Mullfoto from Alexandria this weekend.

-- END --