



## County Welfare Directors Association of California

925 L Street, Suite 350, Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 443-1749

Frank J. Mecca, Executive Director

# CWDA

Washington, DC Office  
Tom Joseph  
Waterman & Associates  
900 Second Street NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 898-1444  
tj@wafed.com

**To:** County Welfare Directors Association of California

**From:** Tom Joseph, Director, CWDA Washington, D.C. Office

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**Re:** Federal Update

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Congress returns to Washington on November 12 for a lame duck session. The most pressing legislative business is the need to adopt a federal funding bill before December 11 to extend appropriations for all federal agencies and programs. Democratic and Republican leadership have indicated that they intend to craft an omnibus bill containing funding at current levels for all programs, including health and human services programs. While such an approach means that there will not be any cuts to programs such as the Community Services Block Grant and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, it also means that there will not be any funding for new initiatives, including adult protective services authorized in the Elder Justice Act.

Given the GOP sweep in last week's elections, House and Senate leadership will spend a lot of time during the remainder of this year staking out the legislative priorities for the new Congress.

### **California Federal Election Results**

At least 44 members of California's 53-member congressional delegation will be returning to Capitol Hill in January. The number of returning incumbents may increase, however, as uncounted mail and provisional ballots could reverse the presumed outcome in several close races. Based on results to date, the state will send 37 Democrats and 16 Republicans to Washington in 2015 (the existing ratio is 38 Democrats and 15 Republicans).

In a major surprise to most political pundits, Central Valley Democrat Jim Costa failed to secure an election-night victory and is currently trailing challenger Johnny Tacherra (R) by one percentage point. As ballots continue to be counted, Tacherra - a third generation dairy farmer from Fresno County - leads with 50.4 percent of the vote.

In one of the nation's most highly competitive contests, Democratic Representative Ami Bera currently trails former Representative Doug Ose (R) in the race for Sacramento's 7th Congressional District. Ose has a 2,000 vote lead over Bera. Sacramento County election officials estimate that more than 70,000 ballots remain uncounted.

For her part, incumbent Representative Julia Brownley (D) has a very narrow lead over her moderate Republican challenger, Assemblyman Jeff Gorell. Brownley, whose district

includes parts of Los Angeles and Ventura County, leads Gorell by roughly 1,000 votes with more than 40,000 ballots yet to be counted. In San Diego, Democratic Representative Scott Peters edged out Republican challenger Carl DeMaio, with the final results not known until last weekend.

All but one of the state's six open seats will continue to be represented by a member of the same political party. In the race to replace retiring Representative Gary Miller (R), Redlands Mayor Pete Aguilar (D) beat his Republican challenger, Paul Chabot, by approximately 2,500 votes.

In Contra Costa County, Democratic State Senator Mark DeSaulnier easily prevailed in his bid to replace long-time Representative George Miller (D). Another long-serving member of Congress, Democratic Representative Henry Waxman from Los Angeles, will be succeeded by State Senator Ted Lieu (D).

In San Bernardino County, Congresswoman Gloria Negrete McLeod (D) will be replaced by State Senator Norma Torres (D). Negrete McLeod, who announced her retirement from Congress after one term, lost against Republican Assemblyman Curt Hagman in the race for 4th District Supervisor in San Bernardino County.

Finally, the state's 25th and 45th Congressional Districts will continue to remain in Republican hands. In the 25th (Los Angeles/Ventura), State Senator Stephen Knight (R) will take the seat of retiring Representative Buck McKeon (R); Representative John Campbell (R), who is giving up his seat in the 45th District (Orange), will be replaced by State Senator Mimi Walters (R).

### **National Numbers**

As of this writing, several individual congressional contests are still too close to call, including Louisiana's Senate race (which will be settled in a December runoff). In Alaska, Republican Dan Sullivan appears to have beaten Democratic incumbent Mark Begich. Republicans will hold at least 52 seats in the Senate come January.

Republicans will be far short of the 60-vote supermajority that is needed in the upper chamber to advance most legislation of consequence. Except in limited cases - such as budget reconciliation (which requires a simple majority) - Senate Republicans will need Democratic cooperation for major legislative initiatives to advance.

House Republicans so far have netted a gain of 10 seats, expanding their majority to at least 244 members. The GOP could hold as many as 249 House seats when all undecided races have been settled.

Regardless of the outcome of the unresolved contests, Tuesday's Republican gains assure the GOP its largest House majority since the 1940s. If Republican candidates ultimately prevail in some of the undeclared elections, the GOP margin could reach its largest total since the 1920s.

While the Republican numerical gains are themselves historic, Utah voters also made history on Tuesday when they elected former Mayor Mia Love as the first black Republican female member of Congress (she also will be the first ever Haitian-American to serve on Capitol Hill). In addition, Republican Tim Scott became the first African American senator

from South Carolina, as well as the first black candidate in the South to be elected to statewide office since Reconstruction.

In upstate New York, 30-year-old Republican Elise Stefanik won an open seat, making her the youngest woman ever elected to the House of Representatives. In yet another first, Shelley Moore Capito (R) became the first woman from West Virginia to win a Senate race. All told, one-hundred women will serve in the new 114th Congress.

### **Congressional Leadership Changes**

In the House, little or no changes are expected to the GOP hierarchy. On the Democratic side of the aisle, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) announced that she will run for minority leader, the post she has held since 2011.

In the Senate, current Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) will swap jobs as members in their caucuses will likely keep them at the helm of their respective parties.

Members of the House and Senate are slated to negotiate committee size, ratios, and membership for the 114th Congress over the course of the coming weeks. The committee assignment process could continue into early 2015, particularly with a number of outstanding races not expected to be settled until later this year.

### **Congressional Human Services Committee Changes**

The House Ways and Means Committee, which has jurisdiction over child welfare, the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF) and other social services issues, will likely be lead next year by Representative Paul Ryan (R-WI), who will assume the chair due to the retirement of Representative Camp (R-MI). Given the Republican gains, the Committee ratio will change, with at least three Democrats losing their membership on the powerful committee, including Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA). Additional Republicans will be named to the Committee later this year.

Earlier this year, Rep. Ryan issued a paper proposing a sweeping overhaul and block granting of many human services and economic development programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), TANF and the Community Development Block Grant, to name a few. Rep. Ryan also proposes to eliminate the Social Services Block Grant.

On the other side of Capitol Hill, the reins of the Senate Finance Committee will be taken by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT). The Finance Committee has jurisdiction over TANF, child welfare and Medicaid. As with the House committees, the membership ratio will change, with the current 13 Democrats - 11 Republicans ratio likely to be reversed. Two Democrats may lose their seats on the Committee, with a corresponding pick up of two seats for the Republicans. Historically, the Committee has operated on a bi-partisan basis.