

## Devastation: GOP Picks Up 680 State Leg. Seats

By **Jeremy P. Jacobs**

November 4, 2010 | 11:30 AM

[+Share](#)

While the Republican gains in the House and Senate are grabbing the most headlines, the most significant results on Tuesday came in state legislatures where Republicans wiped the floor with Democrats.

Republicans picked up **680 seats** in state legislatures, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures -- the most in the modern era. To put that number in perspective: **In the 1994 GOP wave, Republicans picked up 472 seats.** The previous record was in the post-Watergate election of 1974, when Democrats picked up 628 seats.

The **GOP gained majorities in at least 14 state house chambers. They now have unified control -- meaning both chambers -- of 26 state legislatures.**

That control is a particularly bad sign for Democrats as they go into the redistricting process. If the GOP is effective in gerrymandering districts in many of these states, it could eventually lead to the GOP actually expanding its majority in 2012.

Republicans now hold the redistricting "trifecta" -- both chambers of the state legislature and the governorship -- **in 15 states.** They also control the Nebraska governorship and the unicameral legislature, taking the number up to 16. And in North Carolina -- probably the state most gerrymandered to benefit Democrats -- Republicans hold both chambers of the state legislature and the Democratic governor does not have veto power over redistricting proposals.

The Republican State Leadership Committee took the lead in the state legislature contests. **Chris Jankowski**, a spokesman for the committee, said they were very specific in where they used resources this year.

"These are not races that usually see the level of sophistication that we used," he said.

The news was not entirely bad for Democrats. They point to their holding on to the redistricting "trifecta" in eight states. (That number jumps to nine if Democrats hold onto the Colorado state House and 10 if you include Rhode Island, which just elected independent **Lincoln Chafee** as governor). That's more states than the Democrats controlled during the last redistricting battle in 2001.

The GOP holds the redistricting trifecta in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Utah, Texas, Tennessee, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma and Ohio - plus, as noted earlier, Nebraska and North Carolina.

Of those, South Carolina, Utah, Georgia and Texas are projected to gain seats after the census. Florida is also slated to gain, but the state just passed a ballot referendum seeking to take control of redistricting process away from the state legislature.

Ohio and Michigan are also important because they are projected to lose at least one seat, making the redistricting lines all the more important.