The Dallas Morning News

Texas' Leading Newspaper | Dallas, Texas, Wednesday, November 8, 2006 | DallasNews.com | 50 cents

ELECTIONS '06, SPECIAL COVERAGE 12-20A

Big night for Democrats

DigitalEXTRA

Results: Find the latest returns for local, state and national races.

Photos: More images from local and statewide candidates.

Video: Reports from the polls and election-night parties.

DallasNews.com/Extra

Party takes House, closes in on Senate in major blow to Bush

By TODD J. GILLMAN
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — American voters restored divided government Tuesday night, handing President Bush a stinging rebuke — and Democrats the leverage to demand a new approach in Iraq, a higher minimum wage and a host of other with-in-reach items.

The Democrats wrested control of the House from the GOP. And they appeared on the verge of taking the Senate as well, having won four Republican-controlled seats. Two seats, in Montana and Virginia, remained too close to call.

Years of war and scandal primed the electorate to mete out punishment, and the next two years will test Mr. Bush's willingness to adapt his policies and style or risk gridlock and stagnation.

"Voters wanted to send a strong message, but you can't send a strong message to the president when he's not on the ballot. It makes no sense," said Cathie Adams, president of the conservative Texas Eagle Forum.

"If the Republicans had stood for what they brought that they stand for in their platform, we wouldn't be in

See DEMOCRATS' Page 13A

CONTROL OF CONGRESS

HOUSE	GOP	Undecided	Dems*
	181	32	222
	-25		+25

SENATE	GOP	Undecided	Dems*
	49	2	49
	-4		+4

TRACKING KEY SENATE RACES

Missouri	Montana	Ohio	Pennsylvania	Rhode Island	Tennessee	Virginia
Jim Talent, R	Conrad Burns, R	Mike DeWine, R	Rick Santorum, R	Lincoln Chafee, R	Bob Corker, R	George Allen, R
vs.	UNDECIDED	vs.	vs.	vs.	vs.	UNDECIDED
Claire McCaskill, D	Jon Tester, D	Sherrod Brown, D	Bob Casey, D	Sheldon Whitehouse, D	Harold Ford Jr., D	Jim Webb, D

* Includes independent winners

ROB SCHOENBAUM/Staff Artist

DALLAS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY, JUDGE

Watkins stuns Shook

Democrat judges

Dallas County turned blue and was one of the few bright spots for the state Democratic Party. Dozens of Republican judges will be turning in their robes, as the Democrats picked up nearly all 42 contested seats. 15A

Bond package

All 12 propositions in Dallas' bond program passed with ease, priming the city for the largest single public investment in its history — $1.35 billion worth of projects. The three richest propositions each passed easily. 17A

Alcohol sales

Alcohol sales passed by wide margins in Coppell and Richardson, while opponents prevailed in Irving and Lancaster. 17A

MELANIE SOLTZ FORD/Staff Photographer

Democrat Craig Watkins, Dallas County's first black district attorney, is swept up in a victory celebration at Adam's Mark Hotel in downtown Dallas. Mr. Watkins defeated the better funded favorite, Toby Shook.

Foster upsets Keliher in triumph for local Democrats

By ROBERT THARP, JASON TRAHAN and KEVIN KIRA USIE
Staff Writers

Voters swept aside years of Republican domination in Dallas County on Tuesday, electing the county's first black district attorney, dumping the storied Republican county judge and giving dozens of GOP judgeships to Democrats.

"I'm not surprised," said Craig Watkins, the underfunded and often written-off Democrat who rode a rising Democratic tide to edge out his better-funded Republican rival, Toby Shook.

He wept tears of joy before he took the stage at the Adam's Mark Hotel, where Democrats were celebrating. "It's a new day in Dallas County" he told the crowd of about 1,000. "Republicans have held us for too long."

Dallas County GOP leaders placed the blame squarely on President Bush, and analysts said voters were fed up with national politics and the Republican Party. What was expected to be a gradual shift to the Democrats that began two years ago with the election of Democratic Sheriff Lupe Valdez instead turned into an overnight sea change.

The upheaval was probably a surprise for many Republicans, including Dallas County Judge Margaret Keliher, who lost a squeaker to Democrat Jim Foster, a first-time company owner who has never held public office.

"I said we can do better, and it's time to do better," said Mr. Foster, 62. "We're going to return Dallas County to the people. My predecessor has been on a binge. I will repair that."

See DEMOCRAT Page 17A

TEXAS GOVERNOR

Perry pulls out win over divided field

He outruns rivals to gain second full term

By WAYNE SLATER
Senior Political Writer

AUSTIN — With his re-election victory Tuesday, Rick Perry is positioned to be the longest-serving governor in Texas history but without the robust mandate of a majority of the state's voters.

Mr. Perry won with about 40 percent of the vote, leading a divided field in which most voters wanted someone else but couldn't agree on a replacement.

"Whether you call yourself a Democrat, a Republican or whatever, for the next four years I will be your governor," the Republican governor told jubilant supporters who jammed a downtown Austin hotel ballroom.

"I will serve you with humility," he said, "recognizing Texas is better when we all work together."

Democrat Chris Bell and independent Carole Keeton Strayhorn called the governor to concede defeat.

"It's been a long, hard hauls and one I'll always ho-

See PERRY Page 15A

Rick Perry	40%
Chris Bell	30%
Carole Keeton Strayhorn	18%
Kinky Friedman	12%

0.8% of precincts reporting

RICHARD ELLIS/Staff Photographer

Most voters preferred a replacement for Rick Perry, but they couldn't agree on one.

Partly sunny, warm

High: 65 Low: 61
Metro, Back Page

© 2006, The Dallas Morning News

7 83197 00001

INDEX

SECTION A
Lottery 2
Texas & Southwest 2
Nation 10-14
World 15-19, 21-23
Editorials and Letters 20-23
SECTION B — SECTION C
City/State 2
Metro 8
SECTION D — SECTION E
Market Day 1-7
SECTION F
Real Estate 28
Comics and Puzzles 29-30
Bridge 28
Horoscopes 28
SECTION G — SECTION H
SECTION I
Arts & Music 1

WORLD

Fallujah besieged anew

Two years after American troops launched a ground assault aimed at purging the heart of the Iraqi insurgency, Fallujah once again is a violent place. 10A

GUIDELIVE

A laughing matter

North Texans tried their hand at comedy as storm lined up in Addison to compete for "Funniest Mom in America," and in Arlington, comedians jockeyed for a spot on HBO's *Def Comedy Jam*. 1G

METRO

City may sue travel firms

The Dallas City Council is expected to vote today to hire an independent firm to examine whether online hotel-booking companies are cheating the city out of millions of dollars in hotel occupancy taxes. 1B

SPORTSDAY

Stars fall to Flames, 3-1

The Stars continued to struggle during power plays in a 3-1 loss to the Calgary Flames. The defeat was the second road loss for Dallas in two nights. 1C

METRO

Mental illness weighs on family

Rosie Sims' child was and her sister did their best to help her in her struggle with schizophrenia. But it was an exhausting, wrenching and ultimately futile effort. Eventually, her behavior attracted the attention of the police. 1B