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The Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life is a non-partisan organization devoted to serving the people of North Carolina and the South by informing the public agenda and nurturing leadership.

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SOUTH NOW

The South: Awash in Red in 2004

FERREL GUILLORY, director, Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life

Again in 2004, the South showed decisively that it serves as a powerful and essential base for the Republican Party in building a national majority. The election-night maps painted the region in an unbroken crescent of red, as President Bush swept every state in the region — even Florida this time without a chad-hanging recount.

Thus, the broad-brush historical story is that the region has shifted from the once solid-South of Democratic dominance to the South on which the Republicans now have an Electoral College lock. Beneath this overarching story, as the essays in this issue of *SouthNow* suggest, Southern politics remains a complex mix of state-by-state differences, of fascinating personalities, of intense partisan competition and of voters often driven more by cultural and emotional issues than by economic interests.

In this issue, we present state-specific essays by university scholars and journalists, invited to assess the 2004 election results and to consider what the outcomes might mean for each state in the near future. In addition, we have drawn on the useful Southern regional findings of the exit poll conducted for TV networks and newspapers, as well as discussions sponsored by the UNC Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life.

Let us begin, then, with a few observations, offered to stimulate further discussion:

◆ Between the “solid South” of yesteryear and the “GOP lock” of today, there is a distinct difference. Then, the underdog party hardly mattered. Now, the underdog party has not gone away. Then, elections were effectively settled in Democratic primaries, not in two-party general elections. Now, both Democrats and Republicans have primary contests in most states (not Louisiana), and general elections feature Democratic vs. Republican battles.

◆ As Bill Bishop has reported extensively in the *Austin American-Statesman*, and summarizes in his essay inside, Americans — Southerners included — have sorted themselves geographically into like-minded communities, in which one party or another now wins in “landslide” proportions. Today’s polarized landscape features, as Bishop has written, “Democrats concentrating in dense

urban areas and inner suburbs, and Republicans expanding in exurban and rural America.”

◆ Scott Keeter, director of survey research for the Pew Research Center, has analyzed attitudes of voters in the South compared to attitudes of voters across the nation. Mostly he has found convergence, just as the South has become more like the nation in the expansion of its economy and the development of metropolitan areas. Still, he has found distinct differences that “cluster on issues that have emotional power. These issues underlie changes in the parties. ... Small differences are consequential in a political system as closely balanced as the U.S. today.”

◆ The 2004 elections affirm Keeter’s analysis. Voters in five Southern states gave large majorities to measures designed to prohibit gay marriages. In Alabama, voters turned down, narrowly, an effort to remove vestiges of segregationist language from their state’s constitution (an issue further explored by Frances Coleman in this collection of essays).

◆ As the 2004 election approached, the Democratic Party engaged in a lively debate over whether it should write-off the South or nominate a ticket that would compete in at least segments of the region. Ultimately, of course, Democrats nominated John Kerry, a Massachusetts senator, for president. He chose Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina as his vice presidential running mate. The Kerry-Edwards ticket competed throughout the campaign in Florida, kept North Carolina competitive only for a while, but eventually focused almost entirely elsewhere.

◆ In the course of the Democrats’ regional debate, it has been widely noted that, since 1964, Democrats have won the presidency only when they have nominated Southerners for president (Johnson, Carter and Clinton), although that strategy didn’t work with Gore in 2000. In light of the Republican sweep of the South in 2004, the question of whether Democrats need a Southerner to win arises anew. If so, a major consequence of the Bush-led Republican victories is the depletion of the pool of potential Democratic contenders. Democrats now hold only six of the 28 U.S. Senate seats in the 14-state region. And Democrats occupy only six governor’s offices. ■

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Shades of Purple in Virginia

MARGARET EDDS, *editorial writer*, The Virginian-Pilot

John Kerry came closer to defeating George W. Bush in Virginia than in any Southern state, save Florida. Moreover, Kerry's 8.2-percentage-point loss was a mere one-tenth of one percent worse than Democrat Al Gore's loss to Bush in 2000.

Those positives were the thinnest of silver linings to a state Democratic Party expecting to do better.

After Virginia's summertime designation as a "state of interest" for the Kerry campaign, after an investment of more than \$2 million, and on the heels of a successful tax initiative that suggested growing moderation in the body politick, many Democrats expected a dividend in the election results.

That none materialized was a psychological boost to Republicans that superseded their 2004 victories. The presidential tally, coupled with an easy Republican win for a vacant congressional seat in the Norfolk-Virginia Beach 2nd District, will propel the party into the 2005 statewide elections with a firm sense of dominance.

To be sure, for the past seven gubernatorial election cycles, dating back to 1977, Virginians have elected governors of the opposite party to the one capturing the White House the previous year. But Bush's romp in almost every region of

the state, save northern Virginia, coupled with strong GOP majorities in both chambers of the state legislature and an 8-3 advantage in the congressional delegation, create doubt that the pattern will continue.

If the pattern repeats and a Democrat wins the governor's office, it will be because of a split in the Republican Party over taxes and investment in the core services of education, public safety and health care. Democratic Lt. Gov. Tim Kaine, the presumptive Democratic nominee for governor in 2005, favored the \$1.4 billion tax increase that passed the General Assembly last spring, after an historic impasse between House and Senate Republicans. Attorney General Jerry Kilgore, the expected Republican gubernatorial nominee, opposed it.

It's too soon to know how Kaine and Kilgore will position themselves on taxes and other financial matters, but it's clear that rehashing the 2004 tax vote and addressing a mounting crisis in transportation funding will be high on voters' agendas.

Meanwhile, the financial split lives on in the Republican Party. Many party faithful side with Kilgore, the House leadership, and anti-tax groups in opposing the 2004 tax hike. But, a substantial minority of Republicans appear to

agree with GOP senators that additional funds were essential to preserve critical services. While anti-tax guru Grover Norquist and a group of allies have pledged to unseat as many of the 17 GOP renegades who broke with the House leadership to favor higher taxes, a bipartisan group of business and community leaders has formed to support their re-election in 2005.

Meanwhile, two Virginians whose names weren't on the ballot scored political points with the 2004 elections. Gov. Mark Warner, one of an ever dwindling group of prominent Southern Democrats, was propelled onto several national lists of potential presidential candidates in 2008. While that may be a stretch, and there's no indication that Warner is even interested, his recently assumed chairmanship of the National Governors Association should expand his national visibility over the next year.

On the GOP side, freshman U.S. Sen. George Allen also earned accolades for his leadership of the GOP senatorial campaign committee. On the heels of that success, he too was being mentioned as a future candidate for national office.

The more likely scenario is a match between the two after Warner's term expires next year and Allen comes up for re-election in 2006. ■

Anachronism in Alabama

FRANCES COLEMAN, *editorial page editor*, Mobile (Ala.) Register

It was supposed to be a quiet election in Alabama, with no dust-ups on the ballot. After all, the governor's office isn't up for grabs until 2006. Ditto for seats in the Alabama Legislature.

As for the presidential race, George W. Bush was a shoe-in on the 2004 ballot, as was incumbent U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby.

That left an assortment of state supreme court seats, some county commission and school board races, and a half-dozen or so amendments to the state constitution.

Why, then, in the aftermath of an election that was supposed to be a snoozer, is Alabama making headlines across the country and around the world?

Because, presented with a fresh opportunity to shoot themselves in the foot, public-relations-wise, Alabamians couldn't resist. Instead of giving the nod to Amendment 2, which would have removed outdated references to segregation from the state constitution, they voted it down.

That's right. Hard though it may be for out-

siders to fathom, Alabamians refused to take references to schools for "white and colored children" out of the 103-year-old constitution.

In the process, they also said "no" to getting rid of the state's old poll tax; and they hung onto a stipulation in the constitution that Alabamians have no right to an education at public expense.

The poll tax, of course, was designed to make it hard for black people to register to vote, if they were so bold as to try. The provision for segregated schools was to

GOP Wins in Florida; Ideological Shift Less Certain

ROBERT FRIEDMAN, editor of perspective section, St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times

Four years ago, Florida earned an unwelcome reputation as the ultimate divided state. The counters and the courts needed more than a month to conclude that George W. Bush won the presidency by defeating Democrat Al Gore in Florida by a mere 537 official votes. Florida's red-blue split personality was reflected in other ways on the 2000 ballot. For example, Democrat Bill Nelson won the U.S. Senate race to replace retiring Republican Connie Mack, while Republicans strengthened their solid majorities in both houses of the Legislature.

The 2004 election dramatically changed Florida's political image. On the surface, Florida now looks like just another of the Southern states engulfed by a Republican red tide. Bush won a relatively easy victory in Florida over Democrat John Kerry, despite pre-election polls (and Election Day exit polls) showing an even race. Republican Mel Martinez, hand-picked by the White House, emerged from a competitive Republican primary and narrowly defeated Democrat Betty Castor to win the U.S. Senate seat of retiring Democrat Bob Graham. And Democrats became even more of an endangered species in Tallahassee. They hold only 36 of 120 state House seats and 14 of 40 Senate seats. And the pool of plausible Democratic candidates for statewide office in 2006 and 2008 has never been shallower.

Just below the surface, though, Florida voters sent other signals that suggest the Republicans' 2004 successes were due more to tactical advantages than ideological shifts. Voters in several counties approved new local taxes targeted to education and the environment. And voters overwhelmingly approved a state constitutional amendment raising the minimum wage.

And while the Republicans' control of Tallahassee has never been stronger, the new House and Senate leaders may shake up the status quo. Gov. Jeb Bush, who was able to rely on a bovinely complacent Legislature during his first six years in office, is looking more like a lame duck.

Incoming Senate President Tom Lee is a straight-talking maverick who is emphasizing campaign finance reform and growth management ... two issues seldom associated with previous Republican leaders. After several sessions of poisonous relations between the Republican leaders of the Senate and House, Lee and incoming House Speaker Allan Bense are notably friendly. Bense is a solid conservative, but his courtly style will be a welcome change from his two immediate predecessors: wild-eyed reactionary Tom Feeney (who, like Katherine Harris, was rewarded with a made-to-order U.S. House district two years ago) and

the Borgia-like Johnnie Byrd, who failed spectacularly in his efforts to turn the last legislative session into a self-promotional vehicle for his U.S. Senate campaign.

In some ways, the 2004 elections showed Florida to be even more divided than before. The Panhandle voted like Alabama. Southeast Florida voted like New York. And the I-4 corridor through the middle of the state remains an evenly split battleground. The Republicans' most impressive gains were made in the exurbs along the rapidly growing fringes of Tampa and Orlando.

Maneuvering already has begun for the two biggest 2006 races. Attorney General Charlie Crist, Lt. Gov. Toni Jennings and Chief Financial Officer Tom Gallagher ... all relative moderates ... are the most prominent Republicans expected to seek to replace Bush as governor. Several Democrats, none of whom can match Crist's and Gallagher's name recognition or statewide success, are making noises about running. Either Crist or Gallagher may be persuaded to switch to the U.S. Senate race, where Nelson is a lonely, and perhaps vulnerable, Southern Democrat. ■

ensure against "race mixing" and other unacceptable notions about equality.

And just in case anybody was inclined to believe that the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling would change things in Alabama, legislators in the mid-1950s came up with the amendment specifying that the Alabama constitution did not guarantee anybody a public education.

Perhaps only in Alabama would voters fear the right to free schooling. Or, more specifically, perhaps only in Alabama — a state

with a historic paranoia about federal courts — would voters fear that Amendment 2 was a ploy to allow "activist judges" to order the state to raise taxes to improve its public schools.

Never mind that the federal government long ago outlawed Jim Crow laws, and that neither the public nor the courts would permit Alabama to close its public schools. Never mind that a gubernatorial commission, when it drafted Amendment 2, was merely aiming to clean up the state's 103-year-old constitution.

Never mind that when Americans think of Alabama, many of them think of its racist past, including Selma's "Bloody Sunday" and Birmingham's church bombing and fire hoses.

Decades ago, Southern author Eugene Walter asserted in one of his novels that "down in Mobile, they're all crazy."

Makes you wonder, were he alive today, if Walter would expand his observation to include the entire state. ■

Continuity in Carolina

FERREL GUILLORY, director of Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life

For North Carolina, the 2004 elections produced more of the same, only more so. All in all, they reconfirmed long-standing trends.

Voter turnout surged to 3.5 million ballots cast — exceeding the 2000 turnout by more than half a million voters. As usual, the higher turnout generated by a presidential election worked in favor of the Republican Party.

For the ninth time in the last 10 presidential elections, North Carolina voters awarded the state's electoral votes to the Republican ticket. And Richard Burr's victory marked the sixth straight time since 1972 that the GOP candidate has won a U.S. Senate seat while running along with a GOP presidential candidate.

Still, North Carolina re-elected Democratic Gov. Mike Easley. His victory means that Democrats have captured the governor's office in four consecutive elections even as the state went Republican for president. Both President Bush and Governor Easley won the votes of more than 1.9 million North Carolinians.

For a while, in the summer of 2004, it seemed that two special factors would put North Carolina more "in play" than customary in a presidential election year:

- ◆ The election took place against the backdrop of a significant economic transition. The state's traditional textile-tobacco-furniture economy suffered severe erosion against waves of globalization. And, as a ripple effect, state government had to cope with an erosion in its sales and income tax revenues.
- ◆ For the first time in nearly a century and a half, a North Carolinian appeared on a major-party ticket. When Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry picked U.S. Sen. John Edwards as his running mate, it sent a charge of excitement through Democratic ranks and ensured that the national campaign would maintain a presence in North Carolina.

By Election Day, however, the economy appeared, to some extent, on the rebound — to the advantage of both the Republican president and the Democratic governor. As he campaigned for re-election, Easley made several announcements of new job-producing business expansions in the state. In addition, Easley reminded voters that he had guided the legislature toward adopting balanced budgets, despite economic woes, while continuing educational investments.

Edwards, meanwhile, could not offset the late-summer, post-convention assault on Kerry's record in Vietnam that left the Democratic

candidate weakened across the nation. The Edwards-Kerry ticket won a quarter of a million more votes than the 2000 Gore-Lieberman ticket, but still fell to an even stronger surge among Republicans. Edwards emerges from the presidential campaign without the platform of a Senate seat, and yet by virtue of his performance on the campaign trail, he remains among the potential Democratic candidates for president in 2008.

By his victory — amid an election in which Democrats lost considerable ground in the South — Easley will almost assuredly receive attention as a potential model for succeeding as a Democrat in a red presidential state. The statewide exit poll showed that Easley won a majority in four of the state's five major regions, falling slightly below 50 percent only in the Greensboro/Winston-Salem metropolitan area.

President Bush won super-majorities among both white men (74 percent) and white women (72 percent), the exit poll reported, while he won 76 percent among voters who identified themselves as suburbanites. Easley won more than 40 percent among white men and women and among suburbanites — running from 10 to 20 points ahead of Kerry and Democratic Senate candidate Erskine Bowles among such Republican-leaning voters.

Democrats picked up several legislative seats, enough to solidify their majority in the state Senate and to regain a fragile majority in the state House. At the same time, Republicans maintained their seven to six lead in congressional seats, as well as making gains in statewide Council of State offices.

Thus, the 2004 elections left the state much as it had been: No realignment took place. No new coalition formed. The state remains intensely competitive, with exit polls showing four out of 10 voters identifying with the GOP, four out of 10 aligning with Democrats and two out of 10 saying they are independents. Absent a change-inducing event or the emergence of change-agent leadership, the prospect is for more of the same over the rest of this decade. ■

The South in 2000 & 2004: Community Type

	% / total	2000		% / total	2004	
		Bush	Gore		Bush	Kerry
Urban	(35)	43	54	(37)	56	42
Suburban	(34)	59	39	(32)	58	42
Rural	(31)	64	35	(31)	58	41

SOURCE: 2000 Voter News Service and 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

The South and the Nation, 2004: Race & Gender

	% / total	SOUTH		% / total	NATION	
		Bush	Kerry		Bush	Kerry
White Men	(33)	72	37	(36)	62	37
White Women	(38)	68	44	(41)	55	44
Non-White Men	(12)	33	67	(10)	30	67
Non-White Women	(17)	26	75	(12)	24	75

SOURCE: 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

Recently Competitive, Louisiana Now Trending Red

LANNY KELLER, editorial writer, *The (Baton Rouge) Advocate*

What does it take to make a Democratic presidential candidate competitive in Louisiana again? Not even relatives in France, nor a highly publicized crawfish lunch in New Orleans, could help John F. Kerry. By August, the national campaign was out of the state and had essentially wasted its time and money for several months before.

There was something of a case made for trying to put Louisiana in play for the challenger. Bill Clinton carried it twice, and Al Gore lost it by a relatively narrow margin for a Deep South state. Two statewide elections — 2002, when U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu was re-elected, and 2003, when Gov. Kathleen Blanco was elected — had been narrow wins for Democrats.

But the 57 percent margin for President Bush makes it difficult to argue that the state, long considered one of the few Deep South venues still hospitable to the Democrats, is even a pink state now.

And that's not counting David Vitter.

The very conservative congressman from suburban New Orleans was thought by much of the smart money to be beatable when — not if — one of the two leading Democrats forced him into a December runoff for the Senate seat of retiring John Breaux. But this time, the open primary system failed the Democrats, with Vitter winning outright at 51 percent in November.

It was something the Democrats didn't see coming until far too late. Vitter, 43, a Harvard graduate and Rhodes Scholar, was not only smart but personable on television — something that his many detractors in state politics believed impossible. Democrats thought him too conservative even for Louisiana.

Vitter was roundly despised as a headline-hunter by colleagues in both parties in the state House. But he united the GOP, something else no one ever thought possible. No other serious Republican even entered the open primary. Former Gov. Mike Foster, who once wouldn't have cast a line to rescue a drowning Vitter, headed Sportsmen for guess who.

Vitter's win was just a remarkable achievement. He is the first popularly elected GOP senator in Louisiana history.

Breaux, the dominant political figure in the state and respected across party lines, stumped the state for conservative Democrat Rep. Chris John, who didn't manage 30 percent. State Treasurer John N. Kennedy was farther behind. Neither had a compelling message and combined for only 44 percent.

An "aberration," as Democrats claim? After all, they said, but for Bush's coattails, Vitter would have been forced into a runoff. And then, a coalition of moderate Acadiana whites and blacks would have made for a winnable D race, just as in 2002 and 2003.

Doubtful, particularly in light of how far down the party has gone in other races.

One congressman in North Louisiana sneakily switched to Republican to avoid a Democratic challenge, but the GOP won the others fair and square. John's Acadiana seat and that of retiring House power Billy Tauzin (R) were wins in December runoffs for the party, the latter to Billy Tauzin III.

Vitter's seat was taken by another Rhodes Scholar, 2003 gubernatorial runner-up Bobby Jindal, 33, a former Bush administration official and the son of Indian immigrants. The first Indian-American in Congress since 1956, articulate and smart, he is a rising star for the GOP. He has a copper-bottom seat and the opportunity to run again for governor or for senator later. After all, Blanco could serve two terms and Jindal would be just 40 at qualifying in 2011.

Only in Baton Rouge, where a majority-white electorate elected Democrat Melvin "Kip" Holden as its first black mayor, did the party show signs of life. And that win owed more to the woes of the incumbent than his party, which carried the parish handily for Bush.

Every majority-white House district in the state is now held by Republicans, albeit one by a brown Republican. Only the majority-black seat in New Orleans is held by a Democrat. Landrieu has to look anxiously at her prospects for a third term in the 2008 election; she and Vitter are barely on speaking terms, and the latter will want to burnish his "face to watch" credentials by working to knock off his senior colleague.

An aberration? More like a trend in Louisiana. ■

The South in 2000 & 2004: Age

	% / total	2000 Bush	Gore	% / total	2004 Bush	Kerry
18-29	(17)	52	44	(16)	52	47
30-44	(33)	57	41	(28)	60	39
45-59	(28)	56	42	(30)	60	39
60+	(22)	54	45	(25)	58	42

SOURCE: 2000 Voter News Service and 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

The South in 2000 & 2004: Race

	% / total	2000 Bush	Gore	% / total	2004 Bush	Kerry
White	(74)	67	31	(71)	70	29
Black	(17)	8	91	(18)	9	90
Latino	(7)	50	48	(9)	64	35

SOURCE: 2000 Voter News Service and 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

Mississippi Leads Red State Wave

CURTIS WILKIE, Cook chair in journalism, University of Mississippi

The rest of the country is beginning to look a lot like Mississippi.

After lagging near last place in education, health and per capita wealth for decades, an argument can be made that Mississippi is leading a white Christian conservative revolt against the Democratic Party.

The Election Day exit polls showed that 22 percent of the voters considered “moral values” of greater importance than the war in Iraq or the economy, and virtually all of these people favored the Republican candidate.

That finding shocked some observers. Yet it is consistent with a political trend evident in Mississippi long before the state first departed from the Democratic “Solid South” with the Dixiecrats in 1948.

Today, Mississippi not only lies in the mainstream of a sea of red states on the electoral map, it occupies a place in the vanguard of the Christian conservative movement.

Politics and old time religion were bedfellows here before Rhett Butler and Scarlett O’Hara. The strain of Christian conservatism goes back to the period when Mississippi was settled in the early part of the 19th century. Many immigrants from Scotland and Ireland found the Baptist faith in their new country alluring because its worship seemed warmer and more fervent than the Calvinism they once practiced. They flocked into Baptist congregations and other fundamentalist denominations that praised the Lord, put emphasis on white and male supremacy, and encouraged piety.

In the era of Jim Crow, Mississippi lived under the tyranny of the Southern Baptist Convention. Segregation was said to have biblical underpin-

nings. Sunday blue laws were imposed. Prohibition was enforced until 1966, more than three decades after the repeal of the Volstead Act. Public school children were taken on “field trips” to Baptist revivals and proselytized regularly by Baptist ministers invited to be guest speakers at student assemblies.

Rather than rally behind John F. Kennedy like other Democratic states in the old Confederacy, Mississippi opted in 1960 to send an “unpledged” slate to the Electoral College. It was not so much that Mississippians objected to Kennedy’s Catholicism — the state voted for Al Smith in 1928. The problem involved Kennedy’s reputation as a liberal.

Since 1956, only Jimmy Carter, a devout Southern Baptist, managed to carry the state for the Democrats. That was in 1976. In subsequent elections, Democratic presidential candidates — as well as other Democrats running for office in the state — have been tarred as liberals, or worse. John Kerry was no exception. Sen. Trent Lott, a Mississippi Republican playing to a conservative audience at the Neshoba County Fair last summer, called Kerry a “French-speaking socialist from Massachusetts,” a faraway state where gay marriages had been sanctioned.

Conservatives helpfully yoked a constitutional amendment banning gay marriages to the presidential ballot in Mississippi, ensuring that ministers would have a theme to denounce in sermons the Sunday before the election. The maneuver helped drum up fundamentalist activity in 11 states altogether. In Mississippi, 85 percent of the voters supported the amendment.

Following Bush’s 60 percent triumph in the state, Marty Wiseman, a political science professor at Mississippi State University told *The Clarion-Ledger* of Jackson, “I’ve heard people say, ‘If you’re

a Christian, you vote for Bush, and if you voted for Kerry it’s obvious you haven’t been saved.”

Bush was further aided in Mississippi by his war on terrorism and the war in Iraq. The only war Mississippi ever disliked was Lyndon Johnson’s war on poverty. War is so popular here that even the great conflict over slavery, lost in 1865, is still celebrated in some circles as a divine cause.

Once singled out as a peculiar state, Mississippi is no longer isolated. It’s influential. Governor Haley Barbour, an exponent of Richard Nixon’s “Southern strategy” that helped divide and conquer the Democratic Party, served as national chairman of the Republican Party. The state’s two senators are key members of the Republican majority in the U.S. Senate. Two of the four congressmen are Republicans. Though nominally a Democrat, Rep. Gene Taylor is Mississippi’s answer to Zell Miller, voting with the GOP on many issues.

Black voters, the only durable source of strength for Democrats, have been lumped by redistricting into a single congressional district covering the Delta and African-American neighborhoods in Jackson.

White conservative Christians not only control the state, they see their verities becoming the nation’s values.

Political developments seem to be a rush backwards in time, an about-face that is comforting to the religious right, but disturbing to secular Mississippians with unhappy memories of McCarthyism and Jim Crow and religious demagoguery. In the old days, the climate seemed so oppressive that tens of thousands of blacks fled the state to Chicago and Detroit and other Northern cities. Sympathetic whites, such as the writer Willie Morris, also moved “North Toward Home.”

That no longer is an option. During the campaign, Kerry’s anthem was Bruce Springsteen’s, “No retreat, baby, no surrender.” Now, for Democrats in Mississippi, the lyrics of another rock song seem more appropriate, “Nowhere to run to, nowhere to hide.” ■

The South and the Nation, 2004: Ideology

	SOUTH			NATION		
	% / total	Bush	Kerry	% / total	Bush	Kerry
Liberal	(17)	21	78	(21)	13	85
Moderate	(43)	48	52	(45)	45	54
Conservative	(40)	86	13	(34)	84	15

SOURCE: 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

Gay Marriage Ban Boosts Kentucky GOP

AL CROSS, interim director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community at the University of Kentucky

The problems of Kentucky's first Republican governor in 32 years didn't cost the GOP at the polls, as its partisans feared, but the party almost lost a U.S. Senate seat because a freshman senator coasting on his sports celebrity careened into unexpected trouble. A gay-marriage ban was their ace in the hole.

Republicans began 2004 at their high-water mark in Kentucky, holding all but one seat in the state's congressional delegation and controlling the state Senate and the executive branch of government (except the offices of attorney general, auditor and treasurer). Early in the year, *The (Louisville) Courier-Journal's* respected Bluegrass Poll found for the first time that a marginal plurality of Kentuckians considered themselves closer to the Republican Party.

Things soon changed. Former Attorney General Ben Chandler, a Democrat, won the 6th District congressional seat Republican Ernie Fletcher gave up after beating Chandler in the 2003 election for governor. When Fletcher tried to push a tax-reform plan through the legislature, a political stalemate ensued, and for the second straight biennium the state operated without a legislatively enacted budget.

Fletcher's approval rating sank when his proposed changes in health insurance for teachers and state employees prompted teachers to threaten a strike, creating headlines in nearly every county. The Republican governor called a special legislative session, which enacted a plan that teachers supported.

Democrats in legislative races hoped to capitalize on Fletcher's troubles, but lacked the money to remind voters of the controversy, and it faded. The state GOP, well financed with administration leverage, ran a strong campaign linked to a referendum to elevate Kentucky's gay-marriage ban to the state constitution, an amendment many House Democrats had tried to quash. Democrats lost seven of their 64 seats in the 100-member House and made no gains in the Senate.

The amendment also saved Republican U.S. Sen. Jim Bunning.

With John Kerry passing up Kentucky, most Democrats thought they had no chance of unseating Bunning, but the old Hall of Fame pitcher ran such a minor-league campaign that he nearly lost to state Sen. Daniel Mongiardo.

Bunning's balks included: saying Mongiardo looked like a son of Saddam Hussein; asking for police protection as he toured the state; running the first attack ad though he was far ahead, misrepresenting as Mongiardo's home a house that wasn't; refusing to join Mongiardo in a TV debate studio, then reading opening and closing statements from a TelePrompTer; and saying he didn't know about the widely reported insubordination of Army reservists in Iraq, one from Louisville.

Bunning lost Louisville and Lexington by a total of 84,800 votes, but ran strongly in rural areas to win statewide by 23,151. That reflected the gay-marriage vote; Bunning's final ad said

Mongiardo opposed a federal version of the amendment, and two Republican state senators implied that their 44-year-old, unmarried colleague was gay, which he denied.

There was one change in the state's Washington lineup. Republican Geoff Davis won Bunning's old 4th District seat, held for three terms by conservative Democrat Ken Lucas, by defeating Lucas' chosen successor, former Cincinnati TV anchor Nick Clooney — father of George and brother of Rosemary.

Fletcher took heart from the election results, replaced some top aides and hoped for a better year. His troubles were part of a continuing trend of declining influence of the governor's office, once one of America's most powerful.

His predecessor, Democrat Paul Patton, had regained some of the power that governors of the 1980s had given up or lost to the legislature, but Patton's fortunes fell in late 1999, when party switches gave Republicans control of the Senate. Then the term-limited Patton was snared in a sex scandal, knocking him out of the Senate race. Under Republican legislative pressure, weakened Democrats were forced to abandon the state's system of public financing for gubernatorial candidates, ensuring that Republicans would have a financial advantage in 2003. Fletcher won by 10.1 percent, a record for a Republican governor of Kentucky. He is eligible for re-election in 2007, but even some Republicans wonder if he will be their nominee. ■

The South in 2000 & 2004: Morals

	2000 HIGHER PRIORITY FOR PRESIDENT			2004 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE			
	% / total	Bush	Gore	% / total	Bush	Kerry	
Moral Leadership	(36)	74	25	Moral Values	(24)	89	10
				Terrorism	(21)	89	11
				Economy/Jobs	(20)	21	77
Managing Government	(58)	38	58	Iraq	(12)	36	64
				Health Care	(9)	24	76
				Taxes	(4)	69	31
				Education	(4)	36	64

SOURCE: 2000 Voter News Service and 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

Republicans Romp in Georgia

TOM BAXTER, columnist, Atlanta Journal Constitution

In 2002, Georgia was the last Southern state to elect a Republican governor. But once that critical breach was made, an elephant stampede ensued.

In 2004, as expected, George W. Bush romped to victory in the state, and Rep. Johnny Isakson, a suburban Republican who ran his first statewide race against Democrat Zell Miller for governor in 1990, won the race to succeed Miller in the U.S. Senate.

But the Republicans' most sweeping gains came in the Georgia General Assembly, where they added four seats to their majority in the Senate and leaped from 72 seats to 96 in the House. With three party switches after the election, the Republicans now hold a 99-81 House majority, marking the biggest partisan swing in any legislature in the country this year.

The key to victory for the Republicans was Gov. Sonny Perdue's successful court challenge to the legislative map enacted by his predecessor, Democratic Gov. Roy Barnes. Perdue and the state GOP aggressively recruited candidates for the newly drawn districts after the map was handed down by a three-judge panel earlier this year.

The Republican legislative candidates were also helped mightily by the overall political climate, with Bush at the top of the ticket and a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

The marriage amendment passed by a 3-1 margin, bringing out conservative voters in the

rural and exurban areas where the GOP made its greatest gains. House Speaker Terry Coleman has come in for a good bit of second-guessing for allowing the legislation to put the marriage question on the ballot to proceed, when Democrats had it bottled up.

In January, Coleman, the last in a long line of rural Democratic speakers, will hand over the gavel to Republican Rep. Glenn Richardson, from the Atlanta suburb of Paulding County.

And then there was Zell. Miller, the most influential Georgia Democrat of his era, has steadily drifted away from the national party since he was appointed by Barnes to fill the late Sen. Paul Coverdell's seat in 2000. This year, he spoke at the Republican National Convention, sparred on MSNBC with Chris Matthews and campaigned for Bush across the country.

While Miller took no active part in Georgia races, his activities weren't lost on the folks back home, and added to the good mix for Republican legislative candidates.

The big surprise of the Senate race was the entry of Democratic Rep. Denise Majette, who pulled an upset over the outspoken Cynthia McKinney in a congressional race two years ago.

Influential Democrats — including former President Jimmy Carter and Sen. John Corzine, who chaired the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee — courted a young entrepreneur, Cliff Oxford. But his campaign quickly foundered after divorce records surfaced detailing violent encounters between Oxford and his ex, and Majette beat him in the Democratic primary to become the first African-American woman to win a Senate nomination.

Isakson, cruising through his third statewide race, beat Majette by about the same margin by which Bush topped Sen. John Kerry. Majette's race did have one big impact. McKinney ran for her old seat, and with Majette out of the way, she dispatched a field of better-funded opponents to win the Democratic primary outright, stunning politicians who had expected a runoff.

The congressional races provided the only high note for the Democrats. In the 12th District, John Barrow, a trial lawyer and former county commissioner, unseated Republican Rep. Max Burns after one term.

In the 3rd District, Democratic Rep. Jim Marshall, who narrowly defeated Republican Calder Clay two years ago, won a rematch with Clay by a convincing 63 percent.

In a mantra likely to be repeated by Democrats trying to hang on in this more challenging environment, Marshall's chief of staff, John Kirincich, credited being "culturally in touch" with his voters as key to the victory.

Both these districts were drawn by a Democratic legislature to be good territory for Democratic candidates. Revisiting the Congressional map will be tempting for Republican legislators who owe their majority to the new map drawn for them. And yet, Republicans have a leader in Perdue whose first priority has to be dealing with a difficult state budget. One of the Republicans' first actions was to cancel the budget hearings at the beginning of the session, which have often been harbingers of fiscal problems. But the rough patches in the budget will surface eventually, and now it will be the Republicans who have to smooth them out. ■

The Loyalty Gap

Republicans appear to be a slightly more unified voting bloc than Democrats, and this loyalty gap is widest in the South. Nationwide, the gap between the percentage of Republican support of Bush and Democratic support of Kerry was 4 percent (93 percent of Republicans for Bush minus 89 percent of Democrats for Kerry). In 2000, the gap was 5 percent (91 percent of Republicans for Bush minus 86 percent of Democrats for Gore). In both elections, the gap has been significantly wider in the South, at 12 percent (94 percent minus 82 percent) in 2000 and 10 percent (96 percent minus 86 percent) in 2004.

SOURCE: 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

The South and the Nation, 2004: Education

	SOUTH			NATION		
	% / total	Bush	Kerry	% / total	Bush	Kerry
No H.S.	(5)	60	39	(4)	49	50
H.S. Graduate	(23)	56	43	(22)	52	47
Some College	(31)	60	40	(32)	54	46
College Graduate	(27)	61	38	(26)	52	46
Postgrad Study	(14)	54	46	(16)	44	55

SOURCE: 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

Texas: Polarized Landslide Country

BILL BISHOP, staff writer, Austin American-Statesman

The Republican victory in Texas was so complete and so dominant that the report from here could be a single note melody.

George Bush won 61 percent of the vote and all but 18 of 254 counties — everything except for the border and what Republicans like to call the “People’s Republic of Austin.”

House Majority Leader Tom DeLay’s congressional redistricting scheme worked. Before November, Democrats had 15 seats out of Texas’ 33. Now they have 11. Republicans targeted five conservative Democrats when the state legislature redistricted (again) last year. Four of these Democrats lost in November, including the ranking Democrat on the House Agriculture Committee, Charlie Stenholm. Only Rep. Chet Edwards survived — and he did it only because he was running against the most conservative of the Republicans in a district that was slightly more Democratic than the others

DeLay wanted to increase the Republican majority in the House and he figured he could do it in Texas alone. He figured right. Republicans picked up four seats in Texas and lost one in the other 49 states.

What else is there to say? Except ...

There were two telling exceptions to the Republican sweep. Dallas County elected a gay, Hispanic, female Democrat to be sheriff. And a Houston state House district voted out the 22-year Republican incumbent, the chairman of the appropriations committee, electing a Democratic Vietnamese immigrant.

These were two small races, but they say something not only about Texas, but the rest of the nation — a country that is rapidly dividing into political camps based as much on geography and lifestyle as ideology.

In 1976, 26 percent of the electorate lived in a county where either Kerry or Bush won by 20 percentage points or more. (We counted only Republican and Democratic votes in making this calculation.) By 2004, however, 48.3 percent of American voters lived in one of these landslide counties.

This divided and increasingly concentrated electorate has taken on a distinct geography over the past six presidential elections. Democrats are now packed into densely populated urban counties and the inner suburbs. Republicans have an overwhelming advantage in exurban and rural communities.

Part of this change — probably a large part of this change — is due to migration. People are seeking out communities with particular kinds of lifestyles — gays and coffee shop loungers over here, big church Ozzies and Harriets over there — and that is reshaping political geography. “The politics of mobility are getting pretty interesting,” says Anna Greenberg, a Democratic pollster. Republican strategist Bill Greener sees a “cultural divide” between racially mixed and liberal urban areas and largely white and conservative exurban and rural regions.

This pattern held nationally: Kerry winning ethnically mixed and densely populated urban counties and older suburbs; Bush winning largely white and fast growing exurbs and rural counties.

That pattern is (finally) appearing in Texas — and helped give Democrats their first increase in state House seats in more than three decades. Okay, the Dems only gained one seat, but it’s the pattern that’s important. Hubert Vo, a Vietnamese immigrant beat state House power Talmadge Heflin in a Texas community that is becoming more urban and diverse. (Heflin is

alleging voting irregularities and has asked his fellow House Republicans perhaps to overturn the election. The House speaker, however, has already given away both Heflin’s chairmanship and, perhaps more tellingly, his office.)

Bush won intensely urban Dallas County by fewer than 10,000 votes. But Democrat Lupe Valdez took the Dallas County sheriff’s race by more than 17,000.

The state’s cities are making a demographic and political turn. Bush gained only 23,000 votes in Dallas County over his total in 2000. Kerry picked up 60,000 votes more than what Al Gore won in 2000.

Democrats increased their totals by a few thousand more than Republicans in Harris County (central Houston) — and Kerry increased his vote by 71,000 in Travis County (central Austin) over Gore’s 2000 total. Bush received only 6,000 more votes in Travis County than he got four years ago.

Still, Texas put the X in the exurbs, the fast-growing patches around all the major cities. In Ellis County, south of Dallas, Bush picked up 8 votes for every one gain by the Democrats from 2000. And overall in the state, Bush gained more than 700,000 votes over his 2000 total. Kerry beat Gore by just under 400,000.

In other words, get outta here. Forgetaboutit. Case closed. ■

The South and the Nation, 2004: Income

	% / total	SOUTH		% / total	NATION	
		Bush	Kerry		Bush	Kerry
Under \$15K	(9)	43	57	(8)	36	63
\$15K–\$30K	(17)	45	54	(15)	42	57
\$30K–\$50K	(23)	55	44	(22)	49	50
\$50K–\$75K	(21)	65	35	(23)	56	43
\$75K–\$100K	(13)	64	35	(14)	55	45
\$100K–\$150K	(10)	73	27	(11)	57	42
\$150K–\$200K	(4)	62	38	(4)	58	42
\$200K +	(3)	67	32	(3)	63	35

SOURCE: 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

Arkansas: A Moral Loss for Dems

JAY BARTH, associate professor of politics, Hendrix College (Conway, Ark.)

While Florida was always on the list of 2004 battleground states, Arkansas — a state that George W. Bush won by just over 50,000 votes (and by about 5 percentage points) in 2000 — flirted with being another Southern state to gain that status throughout the election year.

In the spring and summer, both the Kerry and Bush campaigns sent staffers into the state, and the campaigns and their allied 527 groups spent funds on television advertising in the Little Rock and northwest Arkansas markets.

By Labor Day, however, advertising had come to a stop, the Bush staffers had departed for Colorado, and the Kerry staff remained tiny (although the state party's coordinated campaign did show a statewide presence aided by some funds from the DNC). A handful of public polls showing a tightened race around the time of the first fall presidential debate encouraged state Democrats, led by former U.S. Senators Dale Bumpers and David Pryor, to make their own advertising investment to win the state without a large outlay from the Kerry campaign.

But, instead of the photo finish surprise victory for Kerry envisioned by Democrats, Bush won with a vote margin doubling that of four years earlier. Below the presidential level, however, a

more mixed picture of election year 2004 emerges in what remains in many ways the most Democratic of Southern states.

Arkansas's political landscape is composed of five distinctive regions: two that favor the GOP, two that favor the Democratic Party, and a final that "swings." In the two Democratic parts of the state — the urban Pulaski County (Little Rock) and the heavily African-American counties of the southeastern Delta — John Kerry performed similarly to Al Gore (in terms of percentages and raw votes won). But, in the two reliably GOP regions — the fast-growing counties of the Ozarks and the suburbs that donut Little Rock — turnouts surged as compared to four years previous, to the benefit of Bush.

Something even more interesting occurred in the "rural swing" counties, running along a diagonal line from the southwest corner to the northeast corner of the state. These heavily white counties had been closely contested in 2000, with most swinging only slightly to Bush over Gore. But, in 2004, Bush won the group decisively.

Post-election analyses emphasizing the role of "moral values" in Bush's electoral victory in the nation at large are certainly debatable. But, there is little debate over the role of one aspect of this clump of issues — same-sex marriage — in altering the turnout dynamics in the state to Bush's benefit, especially in these rural swing counties.

Amendment 3, Arkansas's version of a state constitutional amendment to bar the recognition of same-sex marriages and similar legal partnerships, won the votes of 3 in 4 Arkansas voters on November 2. And, the amendment won its most overwhelming victories in the

swing counties, with most exceeding 80 percent in their support for the measure.

Because a chunk of voters skipped the measures on each side of Amendment 3 on the ballot yet voted for the marriage amendment, it seems clear that voters came to the polls looking to voice their support for this measure. Another beneficiary of this trend may have been GOP U.S. Senate candidate Jim Holt, who spent barely \$100,000 through mid-October compared with incumbent Blanche Lincoln's nearly \$5 million. Holt ran a campaign consisting primarily of robo-calls and yard signs focusing on his "protection" of marriage and lost by a surprisingly slim margin — 56 percent to 44 percent.

While most demographic changes favor Republicans in Arkansas, exit polls indicate that Kerry won the youngest Arkansans, in a shift from the last two presidential elections. And, Lincoln's victory — narrow as it was — means that Arkansas is the only state in the South with two Democratic U.S. Senators.

The continued service of the three Democratic House members — including a surprisingly decisive victory by the Second District's Vic Snyder — means that five of the state's six representatives in Washington are Democrats. Moreover, the Democratic Party actually made marginal gains in the state legislature, a first since the implementation of the state's severe term limits law in the mid-1990s.

So, despite the outcome at the presidential level, the state remains a political outlier in the South as it moves into 2006. A battle royale promises to take place in the race for governor, as the Democrats hope to regain the office that has been lost to them since 1996. ■

Gender Gap

- Southern women tilt Republican. Nationally and in all three other regions, Democrat John Kerry won the support of the majority of women voters. But in the South, President Bush carried the female vote, and rather decisively — 54 percent to 46 percent.
- There's still a gender gap. This election merely reaffirmed the trend, and the South was no exception. The national gender gap for Bush was 7 percent (55 percent of male vote minus 48 percent of female). In the South, the gap was 8 percent (62 percent of male vote minus 54 percent of female).

SOURCE: 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

The South in 2000 & 2004: Religion

	% / total	2000 Bush	Gore	% / total	2004 Bush	Kerry
Protestant	(65)	58	40	(54)	59	40
Catholic	(19)	59	39	(27)	52	47
Jewish	(2)	*	*	(3)	25	74
Other	(7)	32	63	(7)	23	74
None	(7)	40	54	(10)	31	67

SOURCE: 2000 Voter News Service and 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

Realignment in West Virginia?

ALLAN HAMMOCK, chair, Department of Political Science, West Virginia University

For the political parties in West Virginia, the election of 2004 was both a glass half-full and a glass half-empty.

For the Republicans, the optimistic outlook sprung from winning the presidential contest by a whopping margin of 13 percentage points and from winning two statewide elective offices — Secretary of State and a seat on the Supreme Court of Appeals. For the Democrats, it was the overwhelming victory of gubernatorial candidate Joe Manchin and the re-election of most of the statehouse and executive branch officials.

The half-empty glass for the Republicans was the fact that the party's candidate for governor, Monty Warner, was only able to win a meager 34.9 percent of the two-party vote in the face of George W. Bush's 56 percent. For the Democrats, it was losing three more seats in the State Senate and one in the House of Delegates, and, for the first time in some 30 years, losing two statewide offices.

While there is talk of "realignment" in West Virginia, there is still some question as to how best to interpret these election results. Do the results portend of a coming to power of the Republicans, or are they merely a short-term deviation from the prevailing pattern of Democratic dominance?

On the side of realignment are the obvious back-to-back victories of George W. Bush, with the victory in 2004 by a wider margin than 2000 (13 percentage points in 2004 as compared to 6 in 2000); the capture of two statewide offices; the increase in the number of Republicans in the state legislature since 2000 (from 25 to 33 in the 100 member House of Delegates; 6 to 13 in the 34 member Senate); and, perhaps most important, the fact that the Republicans were able to register more new voters in 2004 than the Democrats (27,607 Republicans to 24,818 Democrats). Add to this the fact that for the first time in some 70 years the Republicans in 2004 contested every legislative and statewide executive office, the conclusion might very well be that if realignment is not here, it is not far away.

On the other hand, it is probably too early to arrive at this conclusion. As noted in previous

research, whenever all the factions of the Democratic Party (liberal/labor, conservative, and non-ideological county office holders) are on the same page politically, there is absolutely no way of stopping the Democrats, given their 2 to 1 advantage in party registration. Manchin's landslide victory is case in point.

West Virginia has historically voted for incumbents in presidential elections, having voted for Eisenhower, Nixon, and Reagan in their second terms, though not in their first. Not wanting to change horses in mid-stream, and certainly not in wartime, the voters overwhelmingly supported Bush.

Finally, the Republican victories at the state-wide level (Secretary of State, Supreme Court Justice) were a bit of an anomaly. In the Secretary of State race, an appealing Republican candidate, Betty Ireland, defeated 90-year old Democrat Ken Hechler, a former holder of that office. Although age was not explicitly a factor in the race, there is little doubt that Hechler's age plus his failure to live up to voluntary campaign spending caps long advocated by him when he was Secretary of State (an hypocrisy that bothered a lot of people), probably did him in.

In the race for Supreme Court Justice, a high-powered negative campaign against incumbent Democrat Warren McGraw was too much to overcome. McGraw's little-known opponent, Republican Brent Benjamin, was the beneficiary of deep-pocketed donors, including the CEO of Massey Coal Company, who spent more than \$3 million of his own money. The political arms of the national and state Chambers of Commerce and the AMA also chipped in for Benjamin.

Still, there are signs of realignment and more change than continuity in West Virginia. The most important change is perhaps not in election outcomes, but in population shifts. The areas of the state that have traditionally supported the Democratic Party and its candidates (roughly those south of Route 60) are losing population (a decrease of 13.5 percent between 1990 and 2000) while areas that are fast-growing (the Eastern Panhandle counties close to the Washington, D.C., suburbs) are

those that are attracting Republicans (an increase of 17.4 percent). Two of the four counties carried by Warner were in the Eastern Panhandle.

Ultimately, whether the glass is half-full or half-empty for the respective political parties in West Virginia might come down to demographics. ■

U.S. House Vote in the South

State	Total Vote	%Rep	%Dem
OK	1,374,610	63.7	28.3
SC	1,439,118	63.7	33.8
KY	1,635,042	62.2	36.8
GA	2,960,696	61.5	38.5
LA	1,545,982	60.6	39.4
VA	3,004,007	60.5	34.1
AL	1,792,759	60.2	39.5
FL	5,627,494	59.0	39.3
MS	1,116,203	59.0	30.0
TX	6,958,603	57.7	39.0
TN	2,218,738	52.3	46.5
NC	3,413,071	51.1	48.9
AR	791,240	45.2	53.9
WV	721,656	42.0	57.6
US	111,907,498	50.1	47.4

SOURCE: *The Rhodes Cook Letter* 6:1 (January 2005): 14.

The South and the Nation, 2004: Same-Sex Couples

	SOUTH	NATION
Legally Marry	17	25
Civil Unions	32	35
No Legal Recognition	48	37

SOURCE: 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

Record Turnout Spurs GOP in South Carolina

JACK BASS, professor of humanities and social sciences, the College of Charleston

For the first time since Reconstruction, Republicans won control in 2004 of both U.S. Senate seats in South Carolina. Left uncontested by the Kerry campaign despite a decisive state-

wide victory nine months earlier in the state's presidential primary by native son John Edwards, President George W. Bush won by a 58–41 (one percent scattered among four minor party candidates), a 17-point margin. A record 69.8 percent of the state's 2,315,462 registered voters turned out.

servative" who opposes abortion even in cases of rape or incest and who in his campaign expressed support for banning "known" gays and lesbians from teaching in the public schools.

Racial Gap

- White voters provided a super-majority for Bush. Nationally, 62 percent of white males and 55 percent of white females supported Bush. In the South, 72 percent of white men and 68 percent of white women backed the President. Bush's win among white women nationally was powered entirely by the South, as Kerry won the white female vote in all three of the other regions. Exit polls in 2000 showed Bush winning 70 percent of the white male vote and 64 percent of the white female vote in the South.
- The black-white racial gap is widest in the South. The gap between Bush's support among white voters and his support among black voters in the South was 61 percent (70 percent minus 9 percent). Nationwide, this gap was only 47 percent. This gap in the South was nearly identical in 2000, at 59 percent (67 percent minus 8 percent).
- The widest racial gaps were in Mississippi (75 percent) and Alabama (74 percent). In Mississippi, 85 percent of whites backed Bush, whereas 10 percent of blacks did. In Alabama, 80 percent of whites and 6 percent of blacks voted for the President.
- Bush improved his standing dramatically with Latinos. The 2000 exit polls showed a narrow victory for Bush over Gore within this group, 50 percent to 48 percent. This year's exit polls showed a spike into super-majority range, with Bush capturing 64 percent of the Latino vote in the South, the only region where Bush carried this group.

SOURCE: 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

The outcome left Republicans controlling all three top offices, with Fourth District U.S. Rep. Jim DeMint replacing Democratic Sen. Ernest F. (Fritz) Hollings, who retired after 38 years. In the Senate, DeMint joins fellow Republican Lindsey Graham, elected in 2002 to the seat held by Strom Thurmond for 48 years. With the retirement of its two titans, South Carolina's combined seniority in the Senate in two years has plummeted from almost 86 years to 2.

With former Republican Congressman Mark Sanford a popular governor beginning his third year in office and Republicans controlling both houses of the legislature, some post-election commentators began driving nails in what they saw as the Democratic coffin carrying only the corpse of a political party.

Although some polls showed Democratic State Superintendent of Education Inez Tenenbaum within striking distance of DeMint two weeks before the election, her campaign in the closing days lost steam with no new issues. DeMint won decisively with 53.8 percent to 44.2 for Tenenbaum (two percent for four other candidates on the ballot), trailing Bush by four percentage points. In the final analysis, Bush's coattails were too long, and DeMint thoroughly attached himself to them in the campaign. Some observers believe, however, that had the Tenenbaum campaign involved Hollings more and had him make the point in the final days that having one senator from each party had served the state well, it would have tightened the outcome. A month after the election, Tenenbaum announced she would seek reelection as state superintendent of education in 2006, but left open a possible return challenge to DeMint or a race for governor in 2010.

Unlike Graham, who has shown a strong independent streak in his first two years, DeMint is a thorough Bush loyalist and a "Christian con-

Reports of the death of the Democratic Party, however, appear premature. Bush's coattails lost their pull below the Senate race. The state's U.S. House remained unchanged, with all six incumbents, four Republicans and two Democrats, winning reelection. In the legislature, Democrats gained one seat in both the House and Senate, won a solicitor's (district attorney) race in Republican-dominated area, won a sheriff's race with a black deputy in 60 percent white Colleton County, and picked up two Charleston county council seats, with a strong possibility of gaining a third in a special election in January.

Democrats retained the loyalty among black voters, more than 28 percent of total registration. Although exit polls reported an 11 percent support among blacks for DeMint, an analysis of all precincts with 90 percent or more African-American showed Tenenbaum receiving 93 percent of their vote. (Among white registered voters—there is no registration by party—polling data indicates that roughly 25 percent consider themselves as "independents.")

The Republican dominance clearly gives them control of government in the state, but their immediate test will be one of governance. The GOP's central theme in recent years of cutting taxes has created a dilemma because of reduced services. Gov. Sanford is proposing extensive increases in 2005 to add law enforcement personnel, but so far without a plan to pay for it. Meanwhile, personnel cuts in state regulatory agencies have weakened their capacity for enforcement on a variety of issues ranging from fraud to tax collections. The governor's proposal for vouchers for private schools and home schooling is a contentious issue, with Tenenbaum and others already expressing strong opposition.

In South Carolina, Republicans remain dominant in what has become a state with genuine two-party competition. ■

Tennessee's Muddied Landscape

MICHAEL DAVIS, reporter, Chattanooga Times Free Press

When it comes to political characterizations, good luck pigeonholing Tennessee. While the GOP has made strong strides in Tennessee, like the rest of the South, the Volunteer State continues to maintain significant partisan diversity.

Democrats continue to win in numerous state legislative and Congressional districts and, as recent history has shown, also in statewide contests. The 2004 election reinforces this partisan medley: Republicans dominated in the presidential contest, but Democrats maintained control of the U.S. Congressional delegation and one chamber of the state legislature.

Like the rest of the South, Republicans control Tennessee by a sizable advantage in presidential politics. Few people seriously thought Sen. John Kerry could win Tennessee, and those who declared the Volunteer State in play for the Democratic presidential nominee were far off. Blue state boasting quickly morphed to red state reality as President George W. Bush steamrolled Sen. Kerry by 14 percentage points in Tennessee. Kerry only won 17 of the state's 95 counties, with his main support in Nashville, Memphis and suburban and rural counties in middle and west Tennessee.

Republican muscle is also demonstrated through the GOP's capture of the state Senate. For the first time since Reconstruction, the Republican Party controls the Senate, by a slim margin of 17–16. Republicans targeted several districts, with concerted efforts by interest groups such as the Tennessee Right to Life political action committee behind the conservative surge. While voicing hopes for continued bipartisan cooperation with Democrats, GOP Senate leaders have already pledged to follow through on their slight edge by pushing conservative fiscal and social agendas.

Democrats have maintained control of the state House and held support in various state and Congressional districts across Tennessee. The power of incumbency proved strong for Tennessee's U.S. House delegation in the November elections. All nine Congressional members retained their seats, with five Democrats and four Republicans spread across the state. The only seat even mildly considered in play turned out to be a strong win for con-

servative Democrat Lincoln Davis, who rolled past Republican challenger Janice Bowling by a comfortable 11.3 percent margin.

Bruce Oppenheimer, a political science professor at Vanderbilt University, points to strong Democratic showings in Memphis and in his city of Nashville, large metro areas that typically elect Democrats in presidential and Congressional races, as evidence of the party's continuing strength in the Volunteer State. He says the party is gaining in traditionally conservative East Tennessee, by fielding moderate candidates that can appeal to the concerns of rural residents.

Looking at statewide races, the picture becomes more complicated. Things do not look good for a Democratic candidate running statewide in Tennessee, but things change, Oppenheimer said. I think there are ways Democrats can be competitive. He points to Democrat Phil Bredesen's win over Republican Van Hilleary, a former U.S. Congressman, in the 2002 gubernatorial race as a sign Democrats can be viable in a state that has become red on a national level. As a moderate Democrat focused on issues like health care, voters saw Bredesen as a more formidable leader than Hilleary. Talk has already turned to the U.S. Senate race for Republican Majority Leader Bill Frist's seat, and Oppenheimer thinks a similar scenario could bode well for Democrats. If Republicans field a conservative candidate who alienates more centrist voters, he believes Democrats could make another serious run statewide in the Volunteer State.

Oppenheimer contends Tennessee has clearly had a Republican tilt for the last decade, a claim supported by the growing force the GOP has had in presidential and state legislative contests. But the state's political makeup is more complicated than that. Democratic control of the Governor's mansion and a majority of U.S. House seats shatters the red state paradigm created through GOP presidential dominance. From the east to the middle to the west, Tennessee maintains the ultimate mix of political partisanship. ■

Presidential Vote in the South

State	Total Vote	% Bush	% Kerry
OK	1,463,758	65.6	34.4
AL	1,883,415	62.5	36.8
TX	7,410,749	61.1	38.2
KY	1,795,860	59.6	39.7
MS	1,139,824	59.0	40.2
SC	1,617,730	58.1	40.9
GA	3,298,790	58.0	41.4
TN	2,437,319	56.8	42.5
LA	1,943,106	56.7	42.2
WV	755,659	56.1	43.2
NC	3,501,007	56.0	43.6
AR	1,053,694	54.4	44.5
VA	3,198,367	53.7	45.5
FL	6,609,810	52.1	47.1
US	122,266,085	50.7	48.3

SOURCE: *The Rhodes Cook Letter* 6:1 (January 2005): 13.

Oklahoma: Republican Realignment Continues

RONALD KEITH GADDIE, professor of Political Science, The University of Oklahoma; editor, *SoonerPolitics.com*

For years, it has simply been taken for granted that the Republicans will win the presidential vote in Oklahoma. But, there have been plenty of rural Democrats around who traditionally split their votes and keep the Jefferson-Jackson crowd in power where it matters — state and local politics. The Democrats have assumed they had “seats to give” in the legislature and could take solace in the ability to control the chamber despite dwindling majorities. Now, there is nothing left to give.

The Republicans took control of the state house of representatives for the first time since 1920, and came within two seats of taking the senate. The Republican gains are a direct consequence of the arrival of legislative term limits. Republicans gained a net of eleven seats in the House, to raise their total to 58 of 101 seats, and closed their Senate margin to 22 of 48 seats. In the contested House and Senate seats, Republicans took 53 percent and 56 percent of ballots respectively. Republicans should pad their gains in the 2006 election and take control of the Senate, as most of the open seats created due to term limits are currently held by Democrats (including all 14 term-limited state senators).

The Republican surge presents a significant challenge to the upcoming re-election prospects of Democratic Governor Brad Henry. The new Speaker, Todd Hiett (R-Kellyville), is widely considered to be a likely challenger to Henry in 2006. The speaker’s position in Oklahoma is relatively strong, and Hiett and the new Republican leadership will aggressively pursue confrontation with Governor Henry on a variety of issues, including tort reform and the tax code.

The youthful Governor Henry has been relatively quiet in his first two years in office, while pushing the legislature to make his one campaign promise — a lottery for education — a reality. Henry only won 44 percent of the vote in a three-cornered race in 2002, and despite an approval rating in the high 50s, he does not have strong re-elect numbers. The next legislative session will go far in defining the governor; the question that remains is whether the governor or his Republican opponents do the defining.

This year’s centerpiece campaign in Oklahoma was the U.S. Senate race. Former three-term Republican Congressman Tom Coburn defied the expectations of party insiders by obliterating their choice — former Oklahoma City

mayor Kirk Humphreys — by a 61 percent–25 percent margin in the July primary. The Democratic nominee, District 2 Congressman Brad Carson, prevailed out of an uneventful primary. The general election campaign degenerated into a series of negative attack ads from both sides, amounting to the most expensive political campaign in state history. Coburn defeated Carson by an 11 percent margin

The last Democrat to carry Oklahoma for president was Lyndon Johnson in 1964. President Bush swept all 77 counties this year, with 66 percent of the popular vote. An examination of the exit polls indicates strong support for the incumbent president among white voters (71 percent for Bush), white conservative Protestants (90 percent), and self-identified evangelicals (77 percent). Bush’s vote county-by-county mirrors the distribution of evangelical voters around the state.

Grassroots, evangelical activists wrested the U.S. Senate nomination away from Humphreys and awarded it to Coburn, and they provide the structure for the movement of rural whites away from their historic Democratic allegiance. The next test — can they propel their preferred candidate into the governor’s mansion? ■

The Suburban Voter

Edison/Mitofsky pollsters asked voters to identify their communities as being large or small cities, suburbs, small towns or rural areas.

Findings were then grouped into three main categories — urban, suburban and rural. While much of the post-election analysis has focused on the urban–rural split across the country, the suburban vote appears to have been a major factor in this election, as self-identified suburban voters throughout the South voted heavily for the GOP.

The number of voters who see themselves as suburbanites varies wildly from state to state. In Arkansas and West Virginia, only 7 percent of voters said they live in the suburbs. On the other end of the scale, 61 percent of Floridians claimed the suburbs as their home.

Some other findings:

- Self-identified suburbanites were the most consistent voters in the South from 2000 to 2004, with 59 percent supporting Bush in 2000 and 58 percent supporting him in 2004. Meanwhile, self-identified urban and rural voters showed significant swings. Urban voters backed Gore with 54 percent in 2000, but swung 13 percentage points toward Bush in 2004, giving him 56 percent against Kerry. The Democrats, on the other hand, increased their minority share

of the rural vote from Gore’s 35 percent in 2000 to Kerry’s 41 percent in 2004.

- Suburbia was Florida’s battleground. The 61 percent of Florida voters who identified as suburbanites split their votes 50-50 between Bush and Kerry. Bush carried both the urban and rural vote in the state in 2004.
- In North Carolina, suburbanites provided the victory margin for Bush. While only representing 20 percent of all voters in the state, self-identified suburban voters gave Bush a super-majority of 76 percent, significantly increasing his victory margin statewide. Bush won small majorities of the urban (51 percent) and rural vote (55 percent).
- In South Carolina, the super-majority was smaller than North Carolina’s, but the number of suburban voters was twice the size (41 percent). Whereas Bush garnered only 42 percent of the urban vote and won a small majority of 56 percent of the rural vote, he carried the suburban vote with 66 percent.

SOURCE: 2004 Edison/Mitofsky exit polls

The SouthNow Blog

ERIC GAUTSCHI, assistant director, Program on Southern Politics, Media & Public Life

This election season saw the rapid evolution of the Web log, or “blog,” from an obscure concept into a prominent talking point in the national conversation. For the Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life, the campaign was an opportunity to catch the trend, as we developed the SouthNow Blog (www.southnow.org/blog) just after Labor Day and continued publishing through Election Day.

On the whole, the mainstream media (or “MSM” in blogger-speak) has latched onto the blogging phenomenon as a compelling story and even as a storytelling device, with more news organizations now publishing their own blogs.

We viewed our blog as a means for surveying a variety of sources on specific news topics — in this case, the presidential, senatorial and gubernatorial races in the South. This kind of activity was a natural complement to the research and analysis we do with our print publications, roundtables, conferences and seminars. To help us in our endeavor, we recruited a team of graduate students from the journalism school at UNC.

As we surveyed the blogosphere, we found numerous examples of sites devoted to informing the public debate and critiquing and nudging members of the mainstream press toward better political coverage. However, we found a void in resources devoted to the politics of the South; it is in this space where we hope our blog will continue to fit. The SouthNow Blog will re-launch in mid-January, with a shift in focus from campaigns to policy.

WHAT WE’VE LEARNED:

A window into agenda-setting

Blogging is a natural activity for an academic institution, where the literature review is the stock in trade. Looking at a single story across a sample of newspapers can tell us a lot about which stories make it into the news and which ones don’t. The exercise also sheds light on how stories are framed — which elements are featured prominently and which ones are downplayed.

By looking at a sample of a dozen or so prominent newspapers in the South, we found that not all papers reported the same stories, nor were the stories framed in the same way from paper to paper. Despite heavy reliance on the wire services and the prevalence of “pack journalism” that is still commonplace more than three decades after *The Boys on the Bus*, variance does exist in the reporting of straight news. Many of these differences, especially the subtle ones, would never occur to us if we hadn’t consciously gone about the task of comparing newspapers.

We also found significant differences between national and local coverage of the campaigns, particularly with the U.S. Senate races in South Carolina and Oklahoma. In these cases, the more controversial stories were mostly driven by national news outlets and were often ignored in the publications most likely to be read by voters in those states.

Newspaper Web sites need help

With only a few exceptions, newspaper Web sites are a mess. Archives are typically either non-existent or so user-unfriendly as to render them useless. Pop-up ads are abundant, page load times are slow, and site navigation is often confusing at best. Finding anything other than the current day’s top stories can be a major chore. Some sites run only wire stories and discard much of their own coverage, while other sites eschew all national news and publish only the local stories.

Most sites make readers register to get access, which adds an extra step, and others cut off all access to anyone but print subscribers. It is common for links to change throughout the day and for stories to disappear altogether and get replaced with updated alternatives (wire stories, in particular). It is generally very difficult to discern how online versions of newspapers match up with their print counterparts.

Polls — can’t live with ’em, can’t live without ’em

We tracked the polls throughout the South from Labor Day onward. SurveyUSA led a new trend in less-expensive, automated polling, allowing the company to release new findings on a near daily basis.

Typically, newspapers treated the release of polls as a significant news event.

Two key elements went unreported in most polling stories, however. For one, the meaning behind the polls was almost universally obscured. Sampling error was rarely explained and was typically shorthanded to mean all margin of error, and the gap between candidates’ numbers was regularly misconstrued.

Second, polling stories rarely included any kind of contextual references — historical trends and data, comparisons to other polls, a poll’s track record of reliability and biases on the part of the polling firms. Most important, the value in the information was almost never framed correctly, i.e. polls are snapshots in time rather than reliable predictors of voter behavior on Election Day.

A case in point was the U.S. Senate race in North Carolina, in which polls showed a commanding lead for Democrat Erskine Bowles up until the final weeks of the campaign. By and large, coverage of these polls lacked context, and the result was an often misleading picture of where the campaign was heading. We knew, for example, that Republican Richard Burr would have a major advantage in that presidential election years have historically favored the GOP and that the probability of President Bush’s victory in the state was very high. We also knew that these polls included a relatively high number of undecided voters and that early polling would favor the candidate with the greater name recognition, Bowles.

Particularly with the presidential race, this election also saw the emergence of unscientific online polls as part of post-debate coverage. Whereas television news has included call-in polls in debate coverage for years, the online poll and its use by newspapers is a new trend.

Participation in these polls became centerpieces of each campaign’s strategy and was openly touted as such in mass emails sent from the campaigns to their supporters. Results of these polls were widely reported by newspapers in the “who won, who lost” debate wraps, but the unscientific nature of the polls was routinely

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downplayed, and this new development in campaign strategy, a compelling and important process story, went largely unreported.

Yesterday's news is history

You might not get this from most campaign stories, but the world really was not created yesterday. The campaign saw an abundance of stories with hyperbolic leads declaring the most divided electorate in history, the nastiest cam-

paigned ads in recent memory, the notably "sharp" and "pointed" debate exchanges, the massive surge in voter registration and turnout, the historic rise of young voters as a significant voting bloc. While there is some truth to these stories, they all lacked an historical comparison that would have put them into proper context. Our finding has been that this election was largely about continuity, more of the same, in many ways a 2000 redux. By and large, newspapers throughout the South saw the election differently and mostly ignored the past in the process. ■