



## Seven Silver Linings in Tuesday's Election Results

By Daniel J. Mitchell - 11/8/2012

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Last night was great. Two big victories, including a major comeback. Lots of drama, plenty of excitement. Here's the bottom line: Notwithstanding chilly conditions and determined opposition, my Arlington County softball team cemented its hold on first place by sweeping a doubleheader. And I was 4-6 with a pair of doubles, so I managed to contribute.

Oh, wait, a few of you are interested in something else that happened last night...that's right, there was an election. Before contemplating what this means for the nation, let's quickly check [my predictions](#).

Well, my presidential pick was fairly accurate. Even though people were scolding me for being too favorable to Obama, it turns out that I wasn't favorable enough. He won all the states I thought he would, and he also carried Colorado and Florida. And if about 100,000 people changed their minds, my prediction would have been perfect.

But I was way off in my predictions for the Senate. I actually thought Republicans would pick up a couple of seats. But they somehow managed to lose a few seats, even though Democrats had more than twice as many to defend.

That being said, I did a semi-decent job with my guess for the House of Representatives. We don't know all the details yet, but Republicans pretty much fought to a draw.

Now let's think about the consequences for America.

Based on the conversations I've had and the emails I've received, many of you are very glum. I can understand the angst, so let me try to cheer you up by mentioning seven silver linings to this dark cloud.

1. There will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reform entitlements the next time a Republican wins the White House. But it has to be the right kind of reform, not [means-testing, price controls, and other gimmicks](#) designed to somehow

prop up the current programs. Romney did select Paul Ryan as his running mate, so it's possible he would have pushed for structural reforms. But I'm guessing that the guy who adopted Obamacare on the state level ultimately would have botched this issue. This means [good reforms](#) are still possible, perhaps in as little as four years.

2. One of the most worrisome things about Mitt Romney is that he repeatedly [refused to rule out a value-added tax](#) when asked by the editors of the Wall Street Journal. I don't trust politicians when they say they'll do the right thing. So when they refuse to even give rhetorical assurances, alarm bells definitely start ringing. My nightmare scenario is that Romney would have been elected, made some half-hearted attempt to restrain spending, and then would have decided that a new source of revenue was needed once Harry Reid said no to any fiscal restraint. And as we saw during the Bush years, Republicans in Congress generally are willing to do the wrong thing when a Republican President makes the request. With Obama in the White House, it is highly unlikely that House Republicans would agree to this [dangerous new tax](#).

3. As a general rule, the party controlling the White House loses seats in the House and Senate during mid-term elections. This presumably means more Tea Party-oriented Representatives and Senators after 2014.

4. With Obama in the White House for four more years, there's an opportunity for a genuine advocate of small government to run and win in 2016. I don't know whether that person will be Senator Marco Rubio, Senator Rand Paul, Governor Bobby Jindal, Representative Paul Ryan, or someone who isn't even on my radar screen, but all of those options seem far more appealing – both philosophically and politically – than the GOP candidates who ran this year.

5. A Romney victory may have paved the way for Andrew Cuomo or some other statist in 2016. There will be leftists running next time, of course, but I'm guessing it will be more difficult for such a candidate to win since voters often get antsy after one party is in power for too long.

6. The election was not a mandate for [Obamacare](#) or the [faux stimulus](#). The President spent almost no time bragging about the two biggest "accomplishments" of his first term. Indeed, he was probably fortunate that he ran against a Republican who couldn't really exploit Obamacare because he did something very similar when he was Governor of Massachusetts (as [this cartoon](#) humorously illustrates). And he certainly didn't get any political benefit from having flushed \$800 billion down the drain on a bunch of [Keynesian](#) gimmicks.

7. One very positive feature of the elections is that lawmakers did not measurably suffer because of their support for the [Medicaid](#) and [Medicare](#) reforms in the Ryan budget. Nancy Pelosi's "Medi-scare" campaign was the dog that didn't bark in the 2012 elections. This presumably bodes well if there's ever a pro-reform President.

Now here are three reasons to be unhappy.

1. Obama is a bad President. His Keynesian stimulus was a flop. Obamacare made a bad healthcare system even worse. He keeps pushing for [class-warfare tax policy](#). And he wants to increase the [burden of government spending](#). I fully expect him to pursue the same misguided policies in a second term.

"Ha, ha, ha, I will haunt your dreams for the next four years!"

2. If there are any vacancies on the Supreme Court, they will be filled by doctrinaire leftists. So the [great libertarian conspiracy to restore constitutional constraints on the federal government](#) will be temporarily postponed.

3. We have to endure four more years of sanctimonious speeches.

But I doubt Romney would have pursued good policies, picked good Justices, or given uplifting speeches, so I would have been unhappy regardless.

So cheer up, my friends. Our Founding Fathers had to risk their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to create America. In the battle to restore/protect their vision, all we have to do is engage in some activism.

P.S. Since I've written that conservatives and libertarians [share some common ground on the issue of abortion](#), I'm going to make a friendly suggestion to pro-life Republican candidates and their consultants. Spend a couple of days before each campaign developing a few on-the-shelf talking points so you're less likely to say really stupid things about rape and abortion.

P.P.S. For my partisan Republican friends who are looking for someone to blame, allow me to suggest [George Bush and Karl Rove](#). By deliberately choosing [bad policy](#) in hopes of gaining short-run political advantage, they created the medium-run conditions that enabled Obama to win the White House.