

Ed. Note: While the Journal tried to hold space before press time to report on the election, the incredible events prevented us from knowing the final results before our deadline.

Presidency Still Undecided; Congress Narrowly in GOP Hands After Seesaw Election Day

Days after Election Day, the American people still did not know who would be inaugurated as the 43rd President of the United States in January 2001. In a wild start to the 21st century, the identity of the next President was still to be determined by the recount of the ballots that would tell which candidate received Florida's 25 electoral votes. No one seemed to know for sure how long the United States would have to wait to find out who had won.

On November 8, 2000, Vice President Al Gore (D) had 260 electoral votes, while Texas Governor George W. Bush (R) had 246. Oregon was also still too close to call, but its seven electoral votes would not get either candidate to the threshold of 270 electoral votes needed to win. Ironically, though some pundits had predicted the reverse, it was Al Gore who won the popular vote but stood to lose in the Electoral College. The outcome was almost certain to rekindle a national debate over whether to jettison the Electoral College and have the people directly elect the President.

Another razor-thin scenario was being played out in the Senate. By the day after the election, the partisan divide in the Senate stood at 50 Republicans, 49 Democrats and one race still undecided. That was in Washington where former Rep. Maria Cantwell (D) was close to unseating incumbent Sen. Slade Gorton (R). If the final count shows that she does, the Senate would have a 50-50 split.

In that case, the identity of the Vice President, who under the Constitution is the presiding officer of the Senate, would be critical. If Bush's running mate Richard Cheney were elected, he would cast the tie-breaking vote and give control to the Republicans. If Gore running mate Sen. Joseph Lieberman were elected, he would be required to give up his Connecticut Senate seat (which he won on November 7), thus providing that state's Republican Governor John Rowland with the opportunity to appoint a Republican to the seat, giving the GOP a 51-49 edge.

Control of the House of Representatives remained with the Republicans, but only narrowly. Going into the election, Republicans held a 222-209 margin over Democrats, with 2 Independents and 2 vacancies. The Democrats appeared to have shaved at least some of that margin. However, several races were still undecided pending recounts and the tabulation of absentee ballots, leaving the final House lineup unsettled for at least several days following the election.

Organized labor turned out large numbers of voters on November 7, thanks to one of the largest and strongest grass roots campaigns ever undertaken. According to a national survey, labor households made up 26 percent of the electorate, up from 23 percent in 1996 and 1998. The survey showed that 63 percent of union members supported the Gore/Lieberman ticket, while 32 percent voted for the Bush and Cheney. Ralph Nader received 3 percent, with the remaining 2 percent going to other candidates. ■



©2000 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.
All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. on Union-made paper.

IBEW Journal (ISSN: 0897-2826)
Published monthly, except January/February and July/August, which are combined issues, by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, 1125 15th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005-2765. Subscriptions prices in the United States and Canada, \$4 per year in advance. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to IBEW Journal, 1125 15th St., N.W., Room 810, Washington, D.C. 20005-2765. This Journal will not be held responsible for views expressed by correspondents. Paid advertising is not accepted.

Canada Post Agreement No. 1454919