

Obama is Re-elected to Second Term

Written by By George E. Curry NNPA Editor-in-Chief
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WASHINGTON (NNPA) – After riding to victory in Ohio on the strength of his successful auto bailout plan and a come-from-behind victory in Virginia and possibly Florida, President Barack Obama was re-elected on Tuesday to a second term.

Obama was ahead of Republican challenger Mitt Romney Tuesday night by approximately 1 million votes in the general election, but is expected to win the Electoral College by a much larger margin when electors meet on Dec. 17 to officially determine who becomes the next president of the United States. Of the 538 electors, Obama needs only 270 to win. He is poised to collect approximately 322 votes in the Electoral College to Romney's 206. If that figure holds up, it will be down from the 365 electoral votes Obama won in 2008.

Not only did Obama become the first Black president in 2008, he also becomes the first African-American to win a second term in the House House. Following in the footsteps of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, his election marks the third consecutive time a U.S. president has been re-elected to a second term.

Although experts had predicted a long night before a victor would be declared, CNN announced Obama as the projected winner at 11:18 p.m., EST. With the outcome still unknown at the time in swing states Florida, Ohio, Colorado, Virginia and Nevada, the Buckeye state put Obama over the top.

Obama swept to victory by reassembling his progressive coalition of Blacks, Latinos, youth, unmarried women, Jews, union members and gay men and lesbians.

Speaking to cheering supporters in Chicago, Obama said: "While our journey has been long, we have picked ourselves up. We have fought our way back. And we know in our hearts that, for the United States of America, the best is yet to come."

Blacks and Latinos voted overwhelmingly in favor Obama, with the president again earning more than 90 percent of the African-American vote and 71 percent of Latinos, according to [exit polls](#)

Women favored Obama 55 percent to 43 percent, about the same as it was four years ago (56 percent). But there was a sharp division among females, with unmarried women preferring Obama 68 percent to 30 percent and married women backing Romney 53 percent to 46 percent.

Among White voters, Romney led Obama 58 percent to 40 percent, three points better than John McCain's showing in 2008. Obama received only 36 percent of the White male vote, compared with 41 percent four years ago.

Blacks of every age group proved that they had Obama's back: 18-29 (91 percent), 30-44 (94 percent), 45-64 (93 percent) and 65 and above (93 percent).

Obama did better with families earning less than \$50,000 a year, Romney did slightly better with middle class voters and held a wider margin among those earning \$100,000 or more. Obama

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again won the youth vote, though by a smaller margin than four years ago.

Obama and Vice President Joe Biden carried most of the swing states, including: Michigan, Romney's birthplace; Massachusetts, where Romney served as governor; New Hampshire, where Romney has a summer home; Wisconsin, the home state of Congressman Paul Ryan, the Republican vice presidential nominee, as well as Ohio, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Nevada, and Virginia.

Obama was leading Romney in Florida by about 45,000 votes, or 0.53 percentage points, as of early Wednesday morning. At that time, 99 percent of the state's 8.27 million votes had been counted.

In a brief speech in Boston, Romney said, "I so wish that I had been able to fulfill your hopes to lead the country in a different direction. But the nation chose another leader. So Ann and I join with you to earnestly pray for him and for this great nation."

Democrats maintained their majority in the Senate and Republicans kept their grip on the House. In closely watched races, two Republicans who had made controversial remarks about "legitimate rape" and abortion – Todd Akin in Missouri and Richard Mourdock in Indiana – were defeated in their Senate contests. Elizabeth Warren, an outspoken liberal, defeated Republican incumbent Scott Brown in Massachusetts. Rep. Tammy Baldwin will become the first known lesbian to serve in the U.S. Senate after defeating former Gov. Tommy Thompson in Wisconsin.

In a major surprise, conservative Republican Congressman Allen West was trailing Democrat Patrick Murphy 159,959 to 157,578 with 99 percent of the vote counted as of Wednesday morning. West's district was redrawn to include more Republican voters but apparently that won't be enough to save his seat.

Another Black conservative, Saratoga Springs, Utah Mayor Mia Love, lost her bid to unseat Rep. Jim Matheson, losing by less than 3,000 votes.

Obama's re-election probably means that the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, probably will not be repealed as Republicans had hoped.

The president, who made two Supreme Court appointments in his first term, will most likely get an opportunity to make another appointment to the court, possibly two. Depending on who retires from the court, Obama's appointments could alter the direction of the court, which has been drifting to the right.

His first challenge will be a budget showdown with Republicans, who want to reduce the deficit solely through spending cuts. Obama, on the other hand, is insisting on a combination of cuts and increased revenue, including repeal of the Bush tax cuts that favor the wealthy.

Exit polls showed that the economy was the top issue on voters' minds. Although 76 percent of voters said the economy is poor or "not so good," 54 percent approve of the way President Obama is doing his job.

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The polls showed that voters blame George W. Bush more than Obama for the sluggish economy. Voters also said they trust Obama more than Romney to protect the middle class.

Obama's re-election victory set off a round of speculation about what Republicans need to do to remain competitive in national politics.

Republican strategist Alex Castellanos said on CNN, "This is not just going to be a loss for Mitt Romney...This is going to be a repudiation of the Republican Party. Democrats moved to the middle – new Democrats – and they transformed their party. Republicans are still the party of 'no.' We're not seen as having enough solutions."

Another CNN analyst, David Gergen, said Obama needs to make some major concessions to Republicans, but James Carville disagreed, saying elections have consequences.

Since the election, everyone has been speculating on whether Tuesday's outcome will increase the prospect of House Republicans working more closely with the White House. Although no one claimed to have the definitive answer to that question, there were signs that the rancor between the president and conservatives is not likely to evaporate soon.

Some conservatives started raising questions about the size of Obama's victory, saying he should not interpret the results as a mandate. They didn't raise similar questions in 2000 when George W. Bush was declared the winner after receiving 500,000 fewer popular votes than Al Gore, his Democratic challenger.

And Donald Trump was being, well, Donald Trump.

He tweeted about a dozen rants, including: "We can't let this happen. We should march on Washington and stop this travesty. Our nation is totally divided!"

He said in another one, "The electoral college is a disaster for a democracy."

The Electoral College has its roots in the U.S. Constitution.

"Article II, Section I of the Constitution, as amended in 1904 by the 12th Amendment, sets forth the requirements for election of the President and Vice President," said a Congressional Research Service report. It said the Constitution "authorizes each state to appoint, by whatever means the legislature chooses, a number of electors equal to the combined total of its Senate and House of Representatives delegations, for a contemporary total of 538, including three electors for the District of Columbia."

State electoral votes are reported to Congress, which usually meets in a joint session on Jan. 6 following a presidential election. However, because Jan. 6, 2013 falls on a Sunday, Congress will probably meet the following Monday or Tuesday.

Vice President Joseph Biden, as president of the Senate, will preside over the joint session. He will open the electoral vote certificates from each state in alphabetical order and pass the

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certificates to four vote counters or tellers, two appointed by the House and two appointed by the Senate. After the votes are counted, the results will be announced by the vice president.

The electoral outcome has matched the popular vote in 47 of the 51 presidential elections since ratification of the 12th Amendment in 1804. The exceptions were 1876, 1888 and 2000 when George W. Bush was declared president after losing the popular vote to Al Gore. No candidate won the majority of the Electoral College vote in 1824, leaving the election of the president to the House of Representatives.

As Trump's comments show, the debate will continue over whether the Electoral College should be replaced by direct elections.

The Congressional Research Service report noted, "Proponents of direct popular election argue that it is simple, democratic, and foolproof: the candidates with the most popular votes would win under any conceivable circumstance. Opponents, and defenders of the electoral college, claim that the existing system is an integral and vital element in the U.S. federal system, that it contributes to a stable and ideologically diverse two party system, and that it has delivered the 'people's choice' in 47 of 51 presidential elections since the 12th Amendment came into effect in 1804—what they characterize as an excellent track record."