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SPECIAL ELECTION EDITION

Republicans surge to claim control of both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years. But in Nebraska ...

Kerrey bucks U.S. trend

Incumbent wins 55%

By Brian Sharp
Senior Reporter

OMAHA — After all the trash-talking and mudslinging in the senatorial race the past few weeks, Sen. Bob Kerrey found himself on top of the heap Tuesday night.

The same could not be said for the rest of the Democratic party.

By taking 55 percent of the vote, Kerrey defeated Republican challenger Jan Stoney, who had 45 percent. His victory was cheered by hundreds of supporters at the Old Mill Holiday Inn as the balloons came down and the band struck up "Happy Days Are Here Again."

"I thank you very, very much for your support, for your friendship, for your hard work and for this victory of all the people in the state of Nebraska," Kerrey said.

But the Senate he will return to will look much different. Democrats lost nine seats in the Senate and 54 seats in the House, as Republicans took control of Congress for the first time in 40 years.

"It's a fragile thing, the trust that people have in you," Kerrey said later of the Democratic loss. "And we lost it tonight. The entire Democratic party received a rebuke this evening."

Kerrey said the swing in parties meant he would not become the chairman of the Intelligence Committee and instead would be a ranking member.

It will be a "big step down," but Kerrey said he planned to have a voice in the committee's agenda during the next six years.

Joe Bataillon, chairman of the Nebraska Democratic Party, blamed the tough fight waged by Democrats this election year on a variety of things.

The party with a president in office always loses ground in Congress, he said, and incumbents always suffer from backlash. The negative campaigning in the senatorial race also discouraged voters.

In the end, the races came down simply to who could get their supporters to the polls.

Kerrey said he hoped Democrats would not impose gridlock on Congress similar to Republicans' actions in past years.

"The difficulty in progress doesn't have to do with beliefs," Kerrey said.



Travis Heying/DN

Sen. Bob Kerrey is congratulated after his acceptance speech in Omaha Tuesday night. Below: Republican candidate Jan Stoney hugs supporters after she conceded the Senate race.

Stoney loses, says campaign wasn't in vain

By Matthew Waite
Senior Reporter

OMAHA — Jan Stoney, a political unknown at the beginning of the campaign, conceded defeat to incumbent Democrat Bob Kerrey Tuesday night.

Her husband, Larry, summed up the night in one phrase.

"The voters have spoken," he said.

Stoney said in her concession that Kerrey had run a good race, and that her campaign did everything possible to unseat the junior senator.

"Tonight we witnessed a miracle," she said. "Democracy has worked. We may not like the outcome, but we cannot deny the results."

The evening was dotted with cheers from Stoney supporters about Republican victories announced on television. The mood among supporters was tense but upbeat as the first returns appeared on local news broadcasts.

Stoney told the more than 250 supporters




Michelle Paulman/DN

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ELECTION



Governor
Ben Nelson

Lt. Governor
Kim Robak

1st Congressional District
Doug Bereuter

2nd Congressional District
Jon Christensen

3rd Congressional District
Bill Barrett

U.S. Senate
Bob Kerrey

Nebraska Legislature

District 26
Don Wesely

District 28
Chris Beutler

District 30
David Maurstad

District 46
David Landis

Board of Regents

District 3
Chuck Hassebrook

District 4
Drew Miller

District 5
Robert Allen

District 8
Rosemary Skrupa

Attorney General
Don Stenberg

Secretary of State
Scott Moore

State Treasurer
David Heineman

State Auditor
John Breslow

Term Limits
Yes

'Landslide Ben's' 74 percent of vote beats Spence

By DeDra Jansson
Senior Reporter

OMAHA — Gov. Ben Nelson topped two Nebraska landmarks Tuesday in a decisive victory over Republican challenger Gene Spence.

Not only was Nelson the first governor to gain a second term in Nebraska in 20 years, he won the office by the largest margin of victory since 1964. Nelson claimed 74 percent of

the vote with 97 percent of precincts reporting.

"That gives new meaning to the term 'Landslide Ben,'" Lt. Gov. Kim Robak, who also was elected, said during Nelson's victory party at the Old Mill Holiday Inn in Omaha.

Nelson earned the nickname after his narrow victory over Kay Orr four years ago.

Spence received only 26 percent of the vote and conceded defeat by 9

p.m. "Seventy-four to 26," Nelson said as he took the stage to give his acceptance speech. "That's going to be the score when Nebraska wins the national championship."

"Tonight the people of Nebraska have spoken," Nelson said to a crowd of supporters wearing Nelson stickers and carrying yard signs bearing his name. "They have spoken loudly and clearly. They have given us a

vote of confidence for the past four years, and they have given us a vote of confidence for the next four years."

Nelson said Nebraskans had spoken for holding the line on spending, bipartisan government and innovative state programs.

"Tonight Nebraskans have spoken in support of innovative and competitive programs that move our state ahead in creative ways," he said. "We have proven we can create jobs,

stabilize taxes and compete anywhere in the world."

Sonny Foster, Nelson's campaign manager, said Nelson's victory was large because he was able to win votes from Democrats, Republicans and independents.

Foster said that as governor, Nelson had striven to bring Nebraskans together.

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