

Analysis of November 4, 2008 Election
Increased Voter Turnout and Some Changes in Favor of Democrats —But Still a Republican Region

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Introduction

While Barack Obama won the national popular vote in the November 4, 2008 election, John McCain and Sarah Palin carried the state by 55.5% to 43.7% for Obama and Joe Biden, and 0.7% for Bob Barr, the Libertarian candidate. Seven other minor candidates including Ralph Nader gathered a miniscule 0.01% of the vote. While Republicans carried Lubbock County by an even healthier 68.0% margin, a rejuvenated Texas Democratic Party made inroads in the State Legislature to where Republicans had a narrow 76-74 advantage in the House of Representatives with two districts undergoing a recount. And the consequences of that narrow vote may mean that Tom Craddick of Midland may not retain his Speakership when the Legislature meets in January 2009. Republicans also swept county seats in Dallas and Harris (Houston) Counties. While the Republican margin of victory in Lubbock this past week overshadowed the 59-60% margin Lubbock voters in 2006 gave Republican statewide candidates such as Lt. Governor David Dewhurst and Attorney General Greg Abbott, it was not even close to the 73.7% vote Kay Bailey-Hutchison garnered in her re-election battle against Barbara Ann Radnofsky who gathered in a modest 24.2% in 2006. Voting in the 2008 presidential race increased to a new historical high with 98,954 voters—60.3%—out of a record 164,087 registered voters, voter turnout never came close to the historical high of 73.9% of 1984 when Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush won re-election. See Table 1. The trend toward more and more voters casting ballots in early voting continued with a record 77.1% of the total votes cast coming in the October 20-31 period. The total voters of 2008 in Table 1 includes absentee and provisional votes which had not been canvassed by the Lubbock Ballot Board or included in Internet figures of the Texas Secretary of State for November 4 or November 9.

Early Voting Increases, Democratic Voters Increase while Republicans Defect

Two very unusual trends are found in the Lubbock voting that are not apparent in looking at John McCain’s margin of victory. What is important is not that the Republican candidate’s margin was 6.4% less than that of George Bush in 2004, but the Republican Party lost 4,107 voters compared to 2004 while the Democratic presidential ticket of Obama-Biden picked up 7,823 votes (34.8%) more than John Kerry and John Edwards won in 2004

Table 1
Early and Election Day Voting Lubbock County

	Early Voting	Election Day**	Total	Percent of Registered Voters
Nov 1984	NA	75,941	75,941	73.9% -- NA
Nov 3, 1998	NA	NA	49,771	53.7% -- 145,535
Nov 5, 2000	36,247	39,238	75,980	53.6% -- 141,657
Nov 5, 2002	24,467	31,125	56,392	36.9% -- 152,633
Nov 2, 2004	58,473	35,165	92,965	57.3% -- 162,225
Nov 7, 2006	29,938 (56.3%)	24,285 (43.7%)	53,185	33.8% -- 157,249
Nov 4, 2008	68,522 (69.2 %)	22,281 (22.5%)	98,954	60.3% -- 164,087 ++

** Does Not Include 6,731 Absentee Votes; ++ Includes Absentee/Provisional Votes (5.8%)Counted Later

Because Rick Perry faced opposition in 2006 from fellow Democrat turned Republican Carole Keeton Strayhorn and Comic Philosopher “Kinky” Freeman, it is hard to compare the percentages of votes for parties in the 2006 race. However, one can see that there was not only a greater turnout in all Lubbock precincts in the 2008 presidential election over gubernatorial and municipal elections but that there were historical high turnouts in Black and Hispanic precincts. While Republican percentages did not increase or decline much in nearly all Anglo-majority precincts from 2006, Black and Hispanic voters turned out in substantially higher numbers over previous gubernatorial and presidential elections and they contributed significantly to that increased 7,823 number of Democratic voters along with Texas Tech students and voters in a few other central Lubbock precincts such as Precinct 15 (Roscoe Wilson), 16 (J T Hutchison) and 29 (Atkins). Only 34% of voters in the Lubbock Christian University precinct supported Obama-Biden.

Table 2

Votes for Democratic- Republican Candidates for Governor and President, Lubbock County, 2004-2008

	2008 – Presidential ##		2006 Governorship		2004 Presidential	
Republican	Early	51,657 (69.1%)		13,236	Bush-Cheney 70,135 (75.3%)	
	Nov 4	<u>14,371</u> ---	Nov 7	<u>10,794</u>		
	Total	66,028 68.9%	McCain	24,030 (44.9%)	Perry	
			Palen			
Democratic	Early	22,667 (30.3%)		5,497	Kerry-Edwards 22,472 (24.1%)	
	Nov 4	<u>7,628</u>		<u>5,987</u>		
	Total	30,295 31.2%	Obama	11,484 (21.4%)	Bell	
			Biden			
Libertarian	Total	640 0.6%		307 (0.6%)	Libertarian	401 (0.4%)
Other	<u>Total</u>	<u>65 0.01%</u>		<u>17,691 (33.15%)</u> **	Nader & Others	<u>143 (0.1%)</u>
		97,063 100%		53,185 100%		92,965 (100%)

Based on November 9 statistics of the Texas Secretary of State.

** Other 2006 Candidates Included “Kinky” Freeman, Carole Keeton Strayhorn & James Dillon

Table 3

Comparative Turnouts of Selected Precincts on the Basis of Ethnicity, 2006-2008

Black Precincts	Nov. 2006		Nov. 2008		For	
	Turnout	Percent	Turnout	Percent	Obama	McCain
6 Alderson	525	14.9%	1,520	39.2%	87.1%	9.6%
20 Iles	295	20.5	666	17.6	95.7	4.1
40 Alderson-Posey	192	11.8	508	27.3	91.3	8.5
Anglo Precincts	Nov. 2006		Nov. 2008		For	
	Turnout	Percent	Turnout	Percent	Obama	McCain
7 Bowie	1,063	44.9%	1,670	69.8%	23.4%	75.9%
9 Rush	1,607	45.6	2,600	68.2	29.5	69.7
10 S. Overton-St. John’s Meth	280	20.0	580	39.8	55.1	42.3
15 Roscoe Wilson	796	44.1	1,249	65.5	45.9	52.4
23 Monterey	649	43.3	1,008	67.4	30.4	68.9
28 Parsons	1,148	39.2	1,827	53.5	30.9	68.5
36 Slaton	934	41.1	1,168	52.2	31.6	67.7
49 Texas Tech	116	10.0	818	51.2	44.1	53.9
50 Texas Tech	189	15.9	893	56.1	41.1	56.9
54 Honey	1,738	53.2	2,407	77.7	19.3	80.2
66 Lake Ridge	1,452	55.0	2,052	76.5	19.8	79.8
72 Frenship-Northridge	929	35.9	1,845	57.2	36.6	68.5
118 Bayless	799	35.9	1,213	64.0	27.4	71.7
Hispanic Precincts						
1 Wolffarth	531	20.7%	1,341	46.4%	56.7%	42.0%
3 McWhorter	506	15.1	1,256	55.7	64.7	34.4
5 Guadalupe	185	27.2	356	50.6	64.2	34.7
25 Brown	479	22.6	915	44.1	51.3	47.5
26 Harwell	493	15.8	1,139	36.9	56.2	43.3

Summary

In Lubbock, the South Plains and Panhandle Counties, Republicans won the presidential races and re-elected Republican Congressmen, Supreme Court Justices, State District Judges, Senators and State Representatives. State representative Joe Heflin, a Democrat, won re-election to his District 85 seat by a healthy 75% to 25% margin over Isaac Castro of Hamlin who received substantial financial and organization aid from outside the district. An analysis of those Supreme Court, other judicial races and county races show Democrats increasing their number of supporters while Republicans were losing voters compared to the number of their supporters in 2004 and 2006 as in Lubbock County. The 2010 Governor's race will bring increased Democratic efforts to win statewide and local races and Republican efforts to maintain their strength.