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With regard to the rout on marriage amendments, she said, "The moral is that we can't win at the ballot box until we win at the water cooler."

Matt Daniels, president of the Alliance for Marriage, attributed Bush's increased support to social issues such as the Federal Marriage Amendment. He noted that in Ohio, Bush's support went from 9 percent to 16 percent among African Americans, while his support among Catholic women increased by 5 percent.

Queer voters cast 23 percent of their ballots for Bush in 2000, and most community leaders felt that number would drop precipitously. It did not. About 4 percent of all voters self-identified as gay, lesbian, bi or trans in exit polls conducted during both elections, and this year 21 percent said they voted for Bush.

Political science professor Ken Sherrill was mystified by the results. "Why was there no change in either the direction or the intensity of the vote?" he asked in a widely distributed e-mail. That is one of the many questions that community political leaders will have to ponder during the coming years.

Jacques said they "were trying to get our arms around that" and will continue to analyze that fact. "It is a very hard fact to fathom." She attributed it to some queer voters giving greater weight to nonqueer issues.

### Congress

Republicans had a precarious 51-vote majority in the Senate but picked up at least three seats in this election. Minority Leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota was the only incumbent to go down in defeat, losing a close vote to John Thune.

The South has become even more solidly Republican, as that party picked up seats where Democrats were retiring. And the political process likely will become even more partisan as two conservative firebrands first elected to the House in 1994 now step up to the Senate.

Oklahoman Tom Coburn, a physician and archconservative, returns to Capitol Hill after a four-year absence. During three terms in the House, he played a leading role on AIDS; after retiring in 2000, he was appointed by Bush as co-chairman of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

While advocates appreciated his push for increased AIDS funding, they strongly opposed

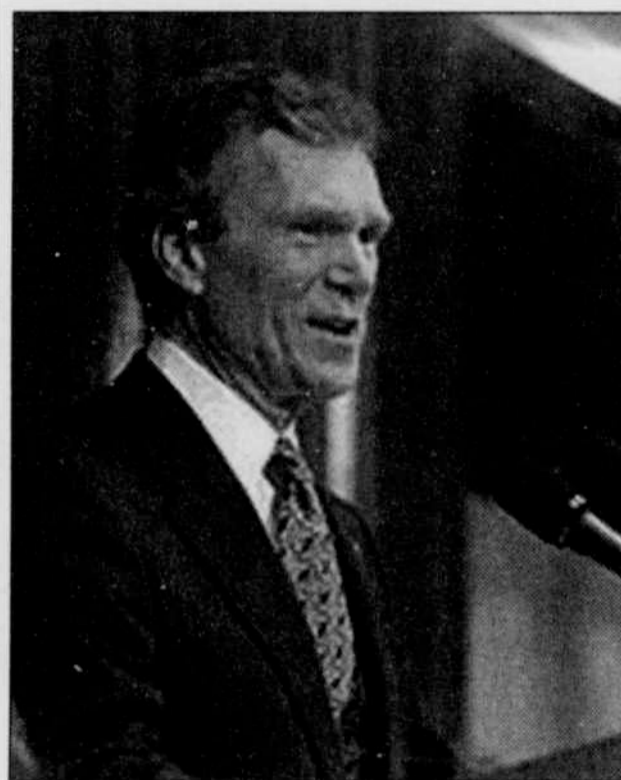


Despite a string of anti-gay remarks, U.S. Rep. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., will step up to the Senate

**"The moral is that we can't win at the ballot box until we win at the water cooler"**

—Cheryl Jacques

his efforts on abstinence, testing, opposition to condoms and investigations that most saw as harassment of AIDS services organizations. Now,



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as a senator, he is likely to play a leading role on reauthorization of the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act.

Another member of the class of archconservatives elected to the House in 1994 is Jim DeMint of South Carolina. A string of anti-gay remarks during the campaign were not enough to derail his bid to step up to the Senate.

In a highly contested Florida race, Housing Secretary Mel Martinez edged out Democrat Betty Castor. HRC poured close to a half-million dollars into an independent effort and voter registration to help defeat Martinez.

One of the most gay-friendly Republicans, Pennsylvania's Arlen Specter, won a tighter-than-expected bid for re-election. He is in line to become chairman of the Judiciary Committee, though conservatives may try to block that. The committee has jurisdiction over judicial nominees and hate crimes and nondiscrimination legislation.

Gay advocates found hope in the election of Barack Obama to represent Illinois. He will be the only African American in that body.

There never was any realistic hope for Democrats to retake control of the House. But Republicans are likely to gain at least two seats, due chiefly to redistricting in Texas that shifted congressional lines from ones favorable to Democrats to Republicans. They picked up four of the five seats targeted.

Jacques said, "92.4 percent of HRC-endorsed candidates returned to Congress." However, those generally were safe seats. Wherever HRC took a real chance in endorsing an underdog, it lost. **J**

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