

December 2005

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It was a year to remember

We must never forget that no government schemes are going to perfect man... There is sin and evil in the world, and we're enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might.

--Ronald Reagan

After Christmas, media will take inventory of the major news events for 2005. Sure to rank high on every list will be Hurricane Katrina, the most costly natural disaster in U.S. history. Stories about the death of Pope John Paul II, the euthanizing of Terri Schiavo, Israel's pullout from the Gaza, Iraqi Elections, the *Kelo* ruling against property owners, and maybe the federal probe into the Valerie Plame incident are other best bets.

But locally, our vote for the high-interest news story of the year goes to the most expensive and controversial gubernatorial election in the state's 116-year history. Even foreign correspondents were intrigued enough to follow the drama to its "pithy" conclusion.

For the record, the DINO ROSSI-CHRISTINE GREGOIRE contest was the last in the nation to be decided—some seven months after the polls closed; providing the narrowest winning margin in any gubernatorial race in the nation since 1839, while convincing only 13% of voters that the election was well-run and ended with a legitimate winner.¹

Rossi, a former state senator, won a machine count and then a hand recount before falling behind in a controversial third ballot count by a matter of 129 votes out of some 2.9 million votes cast. GOP officials and several public interest groups compiled a strong body of evidence showing voting irregularities that according to Ralph Munro, the state's former chief elections officer, should have invalidated the election. Among the irregularities were:

- More ballots counted than could be matched with registered voters identified as voting
- Provisional ballots were placed directly into counting machines.
- Illegitimate votes were cast by convicted felons, deceased persons, and multiple-ballot voters.
- Ballots were "enhanced" by elections workers in a manner that permanently obscured the original mark of the voter in violation of state law.
- Some 527 ballots from unverifiable "voters" in the Pioneer Square area of downtown Seattle who listed the County Court House as their residence—a violation of law.
- Many boxes of "newly discovered" uncounted ballots were introduced during the "recounts"—a clear violation of state election laws.

Following seven months, two recounts, five lawsuits, and millions in legal fees, the world waited for Wenatchee District Court Judge John Bridges to tell us what to do. Taking 57 minutes to read his opinion, Bridges explained that while the election was so flawed even elections officials were unable to state with certainty who won the governor's race—it wasn't his job to remedy the situation.

Although state lawmakers assured voters that election reform was a high priority for the 2005 legislative session, only seven bills made it to Governor Gregoire's desk, while 15 more substantive reform measures died without public input.

Wall Street Journal editorial writer John Fund pointedly warned that even Mexico has a more secure voting system than we do. He believes it is foolishness to require more identification from a person renting a video than someone voting for a governor.

We agree. That is why we worked with lawmakers this year to address the public perception, real or otherwise, that voter rolls in certain counties may be seriously compromised. As a first step toward restoring public confidence in our state's election system, we called for a bill that would require all eligible voters to reregister before the next General Election. The majority party, however, opposed such action, arguing it would disenfranchise certain voters—a point well taken. It is our unambiguous intention to see to it that aliens, illegals, felons and the deceased, are disenfranchised as soon as practicable. We urge Senator Jim Kastama (D-Puyallup), chair of the Senate Government Operations Committee, to give Senate Bill 5078 (which requires all voters to reregister) a quick and impartial hearing.

Another important local political story for 2005 was the surprise defeat of House Bill 1515, a landmark proposal to expand the state's civil rights code to include "sexual orientation." The bill sailed through the House, but at the last minute fell one vote short in the more conservative Senate. Unfortunately, it is likely to get another look in the coming session.

The Christian Coalition has long opposed the rationale behind HB1515 because it assumes an underlying concept that all sexual behavior is equally valid and places sex outside morality. No other human behavior with such sweeping consequences has received such a stamp of neutrality.

Additionally, HB1515 skews the purpose of civil rights laws by codifying certain behaviors rather than obvious, immutable, or distinguishing characteristics which define other "protected classes." It also poses a legal can of worms, because, according to the American Psychiatric Association, "sexual orientation" is an umbrella term for 20 or more distinct sexual disorders.

More to the point, homosexuals are not being discriminated against in any areas considered essential by the courts: economic status, educational opportunity or political representation. Instead, widespread discrimination is occurring in communities where "sexual orientation" laws have been adopted, resulting in harassment and lawsuits against the *Boy Scouts of America*, the *Salvation Army* and numerous other religious and charitable organizations.

The point-man for the "sexual orientation" measure was/is Rep. Ed Murray, a professing Christian and practicing homosexual. Murray inherited the role from his political mentor, the late Rep. Cal Anderson, who died from complications associated with AIDS. His efforts are supported by Governor Christine Gregoire and all Democrats in the Legislature except for veteran Senators Jim Hargrove and Tim Sheldon. Both have paid a price for their principled stand.

But you have heard us share these talking points before. That is by design. We hope you will find opportunities to use our materials and information [in your own communications with church leaders, elected representatives and others who need to be informed]. It's what we're all about.

That said, we are encouraged, and we want you to be encouraged. This has been a very good year—filled with many blessings of the Lord. May you and your loved ones lift your praises to God and experience a real MERRY CHRISTMAS and a prosperous New Year!

Rick Forcier

Executive Director

¹ Moore Information Public Opinion Research, Portland, OR., 1/7/2005, www.moore-info.com