Prepared for the Perfect Political Storm: Harry Reid Survives the Wave

Nevada Senate Case Study

Harry Reid (D) vs. Sharon Angle (R)
“Harry Reid is dead. Now if only the GOP can find someone to entomb him, perhaps he will not do yet again what he has done his entire career, which is miraculously come back to life to horrify state and national Republicans.” - Las Vegas Sun’s Jon Ralston in Jan. 2009
Harry Reid

• 4-time incumbent, 2-term congressman

• First elected 1982

• Majority Leader, easily won reelection in 2004 (61 to 35 percent)

• 33 percent Nevada approval rating (Jan. 2010)

• 8 percent favorability rating nationally (Jan. 2010)
Sharon Angle (R)

• Reno, Nevada native

• Tea Party backed conservative

• Former state assemblywoman

• Former school board member

• Failed in run for U.S. congress seat in 2006
Nevada: A Microcosm of America’s Struggles

- Highest Unemployment in Nation (14 % in Oct.)
- Highest Illegal Alien Population
- Highest foreclose rate in Country
- Economy spurred by gaming and mining
- 17 Counties, mostly rural and Republican
- Clark County accounts for 70% state population
THE ON-AIR AD CAMPAIGN

Nasty and Personal

• Lone TV debate (no audience) was a flop
  • Angle’s Ad Message
    - Reed supports illegal aliens
    - Reid to blame for economy, unemployment and foreclosures in Nevada

Reid’s Ad message

- Angle too “Dangerous and Extreme” for Nevada
NEVADA’S Spending Spree

Total Spent = $54 million

Angle = $28.2 million

Reid = $26 million

Outside spending = $17.5 million
## Public Polling Misses the Mark

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Angle</th>
<th>Reid</th>
<th>Margin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>10/30-10/31</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>Fox /Rasmussen</td>
<td>10/30-10/30</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Angle +3</td>
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<td>49</td>
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<td>CNN/Time</td>
<td>10/20-10/26</td>
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### Actual Results

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Margin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/3</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>Reid +5.6</td>
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## 2010 Results by County

<table>
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<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Reid %</th>
<th>Angle %</th>
<th>Reid Margin</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clark (61%)</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>+ 60,492</td>
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<td>Washoe (19%)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>+ 7,047</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 RURAL counties (19%)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>-26,880</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>+41,124</td>
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Keys to Reid’s survival

• Incumbency advantage

• Ground game (getting supporters to the polls)
  – Reid won late deciders 75 – 20 percent

• Portray Angle as too dangerous and extreme

• Cater to minorities
Reid’s Minority Report

- Hispanics: 69% for Reid, 30% for Angle
- Blacks: 79% for Reid, 10% for Angle
- Asians: 79% for Reid, 19% for Angle

Hispanics - 16% of voters
Blacks - 6% of voters
Asians - 4% of voters
Nevada Exit polls

- Liberal (19%): 11% for Angle, 84% for Reid
- Conservative (40%): 11% for Angle, 48% for Reid
- Moderate (41%): 30% for Angle, 66% for Reid
- Democrat (35%): 5% for Angle, 91% for Reid
- Republican (33%): 8% for Angle, 84% for Reid
- Independent (32%): 48% for Angle, 44% for Reid

Angle: Red
Reid: Blue

What Happened?

• Rasmussen – miscalculated Reid’s appeal among unaffiliated voters

• CNN – the race flipped in final day

• Mason-Dixon – Underestimated ground game


<http://mediamatters.org/blog/201009220018>

<http://www.dailykos.com/tv/w/002666/>

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