

## Political digest

November 5, 2006

### 'Blue Dog' Dems could become power brokers

A group of conservative House Democrats known as Blue Dogs hopes it will have a louder bark after Tuesday's election.

If Democrats, as expected, ride a wave into the House on Tuesday, the House Blue Dog Coalition could grow from 37 members to nearly 50.

Even if Dems take control of the House, they'll have a slim majority. That means the Blue Dogs would play a key role in close votes. They likely would side with Democrats on raising the minimum wage and beefing up lobbying restrictions, but they'd vote with the GOP on defense and national security issues.

### If the polls are wrong ...

Washington political analyst **Stuart Rothenberg** was asked: What happens to the Democrats if they don't capture the House?

"Mass suicide," he says. "It would presumably also mean that the base Republican vote is greater than we believe, and they have a near-divine ability to make things happen."

### Gambling on politics

Why bother with polls when you can invest in political futures markets?

"Markets have a way of correcting the biases in polls," says **Justin Wolfers**, a business and public policy professor at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

- Recent betting on political future contracts at TradeSports.comcq-rosenb gives Democrats a 69% chance of winning the House. Democrats have a 29% chance of taking the Senate and a 24% chance of gaining majorities in both chambers, based on wagers.

- On the Iowa Electronic Markets, ([www.biz.uiowa.edu/iem/](http://www.biz.uiowa.edu/iem/)) run by the business school at the University of Iowa, Democratic chances of taking over the House closed at 72% on Tuesday, up from 43% at the beginning of October, and 32% for taking the Senate.

### Been there, done that

Sen. **Trent Lott**, R-Miss., says he feels sorry for his colleague **John Kerry** after the flap over Kerry's joke-gone-bad about soldiers in Iraq.

"I almost felt like calling John Kerry and saying, 'John, apologize and go home,' " Lott said.

He should know.

In late 2002, Lott lost the chance to regain his position as majority leader after saying at late Sen. **Strom Thurmond's** 100th birthday party that the country "wouldn't have had all these problems over the years" if it had elected Thurmond president in 1948. Thurmond was a segregationist at the time.

*Compiled from Free Press news services*