

With Elections Over it is Time to Govern Wisely

This week's election has brought about sweeping changes in Missouri government. Missourians have expanded the Republican majority in the Missouri Senate from 20 to 23. There will be 11 Democrats in the Missouri Senate. Republicans have also expanded majorities in the Missouri House. Missourians replaced a Democrat governor, lieutenant governor, and state treasurer with Republicans. This election, by any measure, was a large victory for Republicans.

Missouri will be watching with expectation. Let me suggest to my fellow Republicans that two words need to guide us in the coming days and months: humility and magnanimity. After hard-fought victories, those who won are often tempted to gloat, openly and privately. True leaders will reject that impulse and will instead reach out to those who voted against them.

Missouri Republican leaders need to reach out to those voted against them. It can and should be done without sacrificing principles. Everyone deserves a chance to speak up and to provide their insight on issues that face the state. Some of the best and most helpful suggestions that I receive come from Democrats in my district who disagree with me on many issues. Above all, elected officials must strive to make sure that everyone, regardless of their party affiliation and regardless of whether they agree or disagree with the elected official, feel as if their elected official listens to what they have to say.

Collectively, Missourians tend to exercise common-sense. At the first hint of gloating, the very people who made for a sizable Republican victory will begin rethinking their vote. The Bible advises, "To those whom much has been given, much will be expected." Missourians have given Republicans a large victory. Now, it is time to govern. We must include Democrats and go to work on the big issues facing our state: better educating our children, fixing our sorry roads, and reforming our justice system. If we Republicans fail to act boldly, and decisively, if we fail to listen to all of our citizens, we cannot expect to be rewarded in the next election.

I am very excited about the future of our state. These are times of great opportunity. However, I will need your insight and suggestions. If you have any ideas on how we can make this state a better place to live, please contact me.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at matt_bartle@senate.state.mo.us or by phone at (888) 711-9278.