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## Mississippi Election Recap

Was it a Blue Wave or the passing wake of judicial action that rolled down the Mississippi on Tuesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>? That is the question facing Mississippi Democrats and Republicans alike, following a slate of elections that saw the Mississippi Republican Party lose a seat in the House of Representatives and two seats in the Senate, costing the GOP its supermajority in that chamber.

A federal court ruling issued earlier this year required Mississippi lawmakers to redraw districts to comply with Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. As a result of the redrawn districts and two special elections, six Senate and one House seat were on the ballot across the state. A seat in traditionally conservative Northwestern Mississippi flipped after the incumbent Republican chose not to run again in the reconfigured district. And in Hattiesburg, the state's fourth-largest city, Johnny DuPree, a former mayor and Democratic candidate for state and federal office, defeated his GOP opponent in a race for a seat held by another Republican who chose to retire rather than run with a redrawn map. In the House, Democrat Justin Crosby defeated incumbent Republican Jon Lancaster in a redrawn district crafted as a result of the federal order, the Democrats' only flip in the lower chamber.

Despite the losses, the GOP retains its hold across the Capitol, with large majorities in both the House and the Senate, including the powerful and influential Speaker of the House and Lieutenant Governor.

Mississippi Democratic Party Chairman Cheik Taylor, a Democratic State Representative from Starkville, lauded the two flips as a win indicative of Mississippi Democrats' ability to compete, while also recognizing the importance of the courts in creating the opportunity for change. Meanwhile, Mississippi Republican Party Chairman Mike Hurst spoke against the significance of the results by commenting that “Republicans were the underdogs in these gerrymandered districts drawn by an unelected court pursuant to a misapplied federal statute that has been weaponized by interest groups.”

Regardless of the source of the ripple in Mississippi’s usually calm off-year political waters, the resulting currents are sure to rock boats as the legislative session draws near. Several hot-button political issues, ranging from Medicaid expansion to school choice, appear poised to dominate agendas set by forces other than a Republican supermajority for the first time in over a decade.

*-Seth Dickinson is an Attorney with the Taggart Law Group, PLLC*