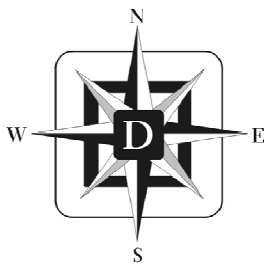


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Political Report

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A Confluence of Anti-establishment and Generational Change Political Forces Argue for Obama, Hagan and McCrory in NC

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John Davis Political Report is a COMPLIMENTARY in-depth summary of the key political trends and events impacting North Carolina politics. You may circulate as you wish. John Davis has followed NC politics for 23 years, serving as President of NCFREE and Editor of the Almanac of North Carolina Politics. He is President of John Davis Consulting, specializing in political research, analysis, forecasting and private briefings.

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<i>In this Issue</i>	
Page 1	The Shenandoah and the Potomac
Page 1	Not Since Nixon and Truman
Page 2	The 110 Year-old Candidate
Page 2	Outsiders Hagan and McCrory
Page 3	They're Not from Around Here

The Shenandoah and the Potomac: North Carolinians will likely make a dramatic break with their past on November 4 by choosing the Democrat for president, the Democrat for U.S. Senate, and the Republican for governor. The two primary political forces driving the coming Election Day upheaval are the anti-establishment mood of the voters and an era of generational change, each compounding the power of the other by coming together at the same time in political history.

By way of analogy, I was married in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, in a church on the side of a hill overlooking the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers. At the point where those two mighty rivers came together there was great turbulence. Year after year, many who tried to navigate the turbulent waters at the confluence of those rivers were injured; over the decades many lost their lives.

In 2008, we see the confluence of two powerful political forces: the anti-establishment mood of the voters and a generational change era. Many incumbents, especially the “ins” who are over 60 years old, will lose their campaigns trying to navigate the turbulence created by these two forces.

Not Since Nixon & Truman: Evidence of the anti-establishment mood of the country can be seen in the historic low job approval ratings given by American voters to the Republican administration in Washington D.C. and the Democratic Congress. According to mid-October Gallup polling, President Bush has an average job approval of 24.6%, with 69.3% of voters having a negative view. Bush's job approval is only one point higher than President Nixon's after Watergate in 1974 and only two points higher than President Truman's after he fired General McArthur in 1952.

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The job approval of the Democrat-led U.S. Congress is even worse than the Bush administration. Recent Gallup polling shows the average job approval of Congress at 14.3%, with 75% of the voters in America having a negative view.

If these lousy approval ratings of Bush and the U.S. Congress are not proof enough of the antiestablishment mood prevalent among voters today, consider this staggering Gallup finding: satisfaction with the direction of the country is at an all time low of 7%. Voters are angry, and they are looking for any excuse to vent their frustrations by ousting an incumbent ... or anyone associated too closely with an incumbent.

The 110 Year-old Candidate: The Barack Obama candidacy for U.S. President, built upon a foundation of voter anger, has become one of the great success stories in American history; successful in great part due to his adeptness at navigating political turbulence. Obama has also capitalized on the other force in 2008 politics: generational change. Obama is 46 years old, McCain is 73. Expecting a 23-year-old new voter to vote for a 73-year-old candidate is like expecting a 60-year-old voter to vote for a candidate who is 110 years old.

If elected, GOP presidential nominee John McCain would be the oldest president since the founding of the United States. President Reagan was a young whippersnapper when sworn in at the age of 69. The next oldest president was William Henry Harrison, sworn in at the age of 67 in 1841 and died one month later after coming down with pneumonia presumably because he refused to wear a coat and hat outdoors in bad weather during his 2-hour inaugural speech.

Obama is now leading McCain in all polls at the national level, and has a 51% to 48% advantage over McCain in North Carolina according to Fox News/Rasmussen Reports released October 20. Obama has a 49.7% to 46.1% average over McCain according to Pollster.com, figures that include all national polls conducted from October 17 to October 19.

Barack Obama has been an inspiration to young Americans and a catalyst for their historic high registration and turnout. Just since January in North Carolina, well over 200,000 new voters in the 18 to 24 year-old range have registered, a full one third of the 600,000 new voters added to the rolls this year in the Old North State.

Obama has an unprecedented organization in the state, with a reported 47 offices and 400 paid staff working daily to register and turn out voters with the help of thousands of volunteers. He has spent millions on TV here, outspending McCain 8-to-1, and has traveled to the state five times since his acceptance speech in Denver. Furthermore, he just reported raising a record-setting \$600 million, which means he has the money to stay on TV and keep his offices open and his staff working to get his voters to the polls from now until the polls close on November 4.

Outsiders Hagan & McCrory: The anti-establishment and generational change political forces are also fueling outsiders in North Carolina's U.S. Senate race and the race for governor. Republican US Senator Elizabeth Dole, who is 73 years old, is trailing in the polls behind her Democrat challenger Kay Hagan, a 55-year-old newcomer to statewide politics from Greensboro. These same political forces are helping Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory in his quest to be governor, a 52-year-old anti-establishment Republican running against Democrat Beverly Perdue, North Carolina's 61-year-old lieutenant governor from New Bern.

According to Pollster.com, a website that tracks federal races, Kay Hagan has an average of 47.1% in recent polls, with Elizabeth Dole trailing by six points with an average of 41.3%. RealClearPolitics.com, another national website tracking federal races, has Hagan at an average of 46.8% and Dole at 43.5%. In a North Carolina statewide poll released on October 10 by the Rasmussen firm, Hagan leads Dole among women by about 10 points and leads Dole among young voters by about 20 points. Clearly the anti-establishment and generational change forces are becoming increasingly difficult for U.S. Senator Dole to navigate.

In the race for governor, Pollster.com shows McCrory with an average of 44.0% in recent polls, with Perdue at 43.7%. However, McCrory's potential is enhanced by the same anti-establishment and generational change forces helping Obama and Hagan. According to a Civitas poll conducted October 9, McCrory leads Perdue among 18 to 25 year-old voters by 49% to 33%, similar to Obama's substantial 53% to 36% advantage with the same group over McCain. Among voters in the 26 to 40 year-old range, McCrory wins over Perdue by 46% to 35%.

Additional proof that many of the Obama and McCrory voters are motivated by the same political forces is found in the Civitas poll results on North Carolina's Unaffiliated voters, who now make up one-in-five of all voters in the state ... over 1.3 million strong. McCrory leads Perdue among Unaffiliated voters by a whopping 46% to 32%; Obama leads McCain among Unaffiliated voters by 49% to 40%.

If Hagan defeats Dole, it will be the first time since 1968 that a Democrat has won a U.S. Senate race in North Carolina during a presidential election year. If McCrory defeats Purdue, it will be the first time since 1920 that a Charlotte mayor has served as governor of North Carolina.

They're Not from Around Here: Just in the last 15 years or so, North Carolina has grown from a state of 3.5 million voters to the 10th largest state in the nation with over 6 million voters. According to NCFREE polling, most of the newcomers to our state are not from the South. Rather, they are from states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Jersey, Connecticut, California and Florida. These new voters are more urban and moderate; they are younger and less partisan than the pre-1990s North Carolinian.

Newcomers to our state are more inclined to vote for Obama, Hagan and McCrory because they are younger and because they are not incumbent leaders of the day. Young voters are not voting for Barack Obama for U.S. President because he is a Democrat or because he's liberal, they are voting for him because he's 46 and offers them hope for a new direction for the country ... one that their generation can influence.

These new North Carolinians will likely make a dramatic break with their past on November 4 by choosing the Democrat for president and U.S. Senate, and the Republican for governor because they are a new generation of younger, moderate leaders who offer greater hope for a transformation of the politics and public policy of the state and nation that will strengthen our economy, end the war, solve the great domestic problems of the day and restore the confidence of the people in their elected officials.