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CT Viewpoints

POLITICS

A Clinton wins means what for Connecticut?



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If you take a serious look at the polls, it seems reasonable to expect that Hillary Clinton will be the next president of the United States, capturing the required majority in the Electoral College as well as the overall popular vote.

Sure, there are a few states where die hard extremists and racists will stick with Donald Trump. However, by the time Election Day rolls around, and Trump continues his seemingly never ending stream of lies and distortions, most voters will realize that they should check the Clinton box.

As well, most will realize that voting for one of the third party candidates will be, in effect, casting a vote for Trump. And that is not something that will make any sense to those who are afraid of Trump but unsure of Clinton.

So, with Hillary Clinton in the White House, what does that mean for Connecticut?

As a result of the enthusiastic support for Clinton by Gov. Dannel Malloy and U.S. Sens. Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy as well as the rest of our congressional delegation, a Clinton win likely will mean increased power for our representatives in Washington. On a hardnosed economic basis it will be positive for Connecticut and our defense industry.

Of course, in the apparently likely possibility that a strong Clinton win will help sweep Democrats into the majority in the U.S. Senate, both Murphy and Blumenthal suddenly would see themselves moving up the ranks very sharply, perhaps into the chairmanship of a significant Senate committee. Republicans now have a 54-46 majority in the Senate. Democrats have to net just a handful of seats to take back the majority. It seems reasonable to anticipate.

Murphy already has said he is interested in chairing a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee. Moving into that spot, all by itself, would give him tremendous influence over defense dollars that go to Connecticut-based defense contractors.

Meanwhile, setting aside a potential cabinet post for Sen. Blumenthal, he already has set his eyes on chairing the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, where he now is the highest ranking Democrat. As well, Democrat control of the Senate might move him up to chair the subcommittee with authority over consumer affairs, a subject he dedicated himself to while serving as Attorney General of Connecticut. Noteworthy is the fact that the subcommittee also has oversight of the insurance industry.

On a political level, a Clinton sweep might very well mean we will suddenly have a new governor or a new U.S. Senator. As far back as April there was some speculation about Gov. Malloy being a potential cabinet member in a Clinton administration. As well, there already has been talk of Sen. Blumenthal being named U.S. Attorney General. Sen. Murphy's name also has been bandied about for a potential federal position. In fact, he is so highly regarded by the Clinton team that at one point he was a vice presidential possibility.

Should any of those three leaders from our state end up moving out of their current posts into a federal position, well, there certainly will be some scrambling in Connecticut political circles! In our state, the governor can appoint a replacement to fill a vacant U.S. Senate position although, under most circumstances, a special election must be held within no more than 160 days of the appointment.

One can only imagine the number of Democrats who have been patiently waiting in the wings for an opportunity to take over for one of these three well entrenched officials! And that is to say nothing of Republicans who otherwise felt unable to compete against this highly recognized triumvirate.

Clearly, there are any number of qualified state senators, mayors and others in Connecticut ready, willing and eager to jump to Washington . . . or perhaps to the Governor's office. It will be fascinating to watch.

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