

Much has been written over the last week about the political tsunami that swept across America as citizens exercised their constitutional right to change their government. It was not entirely unexpected, but the magnitude of change we witnessed on November 2 was nevertheless historic. Alabama was not bypassed by this rising tide. Records dating back to the Reconstruction era were broken.

It has hardly been mentioned by the national news media, but our state made history last week by electing two women to serve in the United States Congress. Never before have two women simultaneously represented Alabama in Washington. Dixie Bibb Graves, the wife of Governor Bibb Graves, was appointed by her husband to serve in the U.S. Senate from 1937 to 1938. And Elizabeth Bullock Andrews represented the Third Congressional District from 1972 to 1973 following the death of her husband, Congressman George Andrews. Finally, Maryon Pittman Allen served two years in the U.S. Senate after her husband, Senator John Allen, died in office in 1978.

While Mrs. Graves and Mrs. Allen were both appointed to their Senate offices, Mrs. Andrews was actually elected to Congress. Until last week, she alone held that distinction in Alabama history.

On November 2, Montgomery city councilwoman and attorney Martha Roby and Selma native and Birmingham attorney Terri Sewell were elected to represent Alabama's Second and Seventh congressional districts, respectively, in the 112th Congress. Martha will be Alabama's first Republican congresswoman, while Terri, a Democrat, will be Alabama's first African-American congresswoman. I have had the privilege of getting to know both of these representatives-elect and look forward to working with Martha and Terri as they bring their important and unique voices from our great state to the nation's capital.

North Alabama's Fifth Congressional district, which includes Huntsville, also saw its first elected Republican congressman since Reconstruction. Longtime Madison County Commissioner Mo Brooks will join Martha Roby and Terri Sewell as Alabama's newest members of Congress in January. This is the biggest turnover in our state's seven-person House delegation since 2002.

The face of Congress will also shift with the New Year as the Republican Party will regain the majority. Come January, the U.S. House of Representatives will select a new speaker and set about implementing a new direction in governing. The centerpiece of the new majority's agenda is the Pledge to America, about which I have previously written. In short, House conservatives will push for reduced government spending, lower taxes, more transparency in government and a repeal of the president's unpopular and costly health care plan.

There is much to do between now and the new Congress and I will be writing more about the changes in store in the weeks ahead. If you have not already read the Pledge to America, I invite you to do so by visiting my web site at <http://bonner.house.gov>.

Good News for Local Shipbuilding Jobs:

Last week, the Navy announced plans to purchase more shallow water combat ships from Mobile's Austal USA. The \$5 billion contract would keep Austal's South Alabama workforce busy building a total of ten littoral combat ships (LCS) over the next five years. This is very good news for the local economy since Austal has committed to doubling its workers to near 4,000 if it gets the contract.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said the Navy wants to buy both Austal's LCS design and that of its competitor, Lockheed Martin, due to lower anticipated costs for each ship and advantages of having more than one manufacturer.

The Navy's plans to buy both ships must first be approved by Congress before it adjourns in December. If Congress does not act in time, the Navy has signaled it would proceed and select only one winner in the competition. Austal USA offers a superior ship for the best price and I feel Mobile would still win a head-to-head competition should it come to that.

Last January, amid much fanfare and strong public turnout, the Navy commissioned Austal's very first LCS vessel, the U.S.S. Independence. The Independence is a new type of warship, both fast and highly maneuverable. Austal's state-of-the-art module manufacturing facility, prominent on the Mobile waterfront, symbolizes Mobile's rebirth as a Navy shipbuilding city. The Navy decision to buy the Austal LCS reinforces Mobile's new shipbuilding role.

Mobile is well positioned in the LCS competition and I will continue to give my full support to Austal USA's efforts to build these cutting-edge, high tech warships for the Navy in South Alabama.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.