

## DEMS GET TO 51-49 IN THE SENATE – WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

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With the reelection of Georgia Senator Raphael Warnock in the Georgia runoff, Senate Democrats now have a 51-49 Senate majority. This may seem slim but compared to the 50-50 margin they were working with this past Congress, that extra seat is a genuine luxury for Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY). As he said in a triumphant press conference today, “It’s going to be a lot quicker, swifter and easier” to manage the upper chamber. Here are some benefits to the true majority Senate Democrats now enjoy.

**FULL COMMITTEE CONTROL** – With the 51<sup>st</sup> seat, Democrats will now have full control of all Senate committees. In the 50-50 Senate, committees operated under a power sharing agreement and deadlocks on legislation or nominees needed to go through an extra step of discharge procedure. Now, Democrats will have at least one extra member on each committee, leading to more committee assignments for some of their members and the extra vote needed to move items and nominees through the committee process. This will also free up floor time for additional executive nominees.

**SUBPOAENA POWER** – With committee control comes subpoena power, and now Democrats will have stronger power to issue subpoenas. Under the previous power sharing agreement, bipartisan support was needed to issue subpoenas. Now, Democrats can act on their own, bypassing Republicans, and conduct their own investigations.

**AN EXTRA VOTE TO LOSE** – Many of the Democrats’ key victories in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress were decided by a single vote. This gave certain Senators outsized impact on the final product. With the addition of just one Senator, Senate Majority Leader Schumer now has the ability to leave at least one hold out behind. In the previous Congress, Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) were the most challenging for Schumer to bring aboard. While both are up for reelection in 2024, Schumer can afford to lose at least one of them on tight votes moving forward.

**POLITICAL BREATHING ROOM** - Democrats are facing a highly challenging political map in the Senate in 2024. In addition to Manchin and Sinema, Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Jon Tester (D-MT), Bob Casey (D-PA), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) are also up for reelection. Those will all be targeted races, and with Warnock’s win last night, Democrats have a little more breathing room to protect their slim majority.