

THE SCRANTON TRIBUNE

Suprise Democratic Win In The Pennsylvania State Senator Elections

Janice Swab • November 15th, 2014

HARRISBURG, PA. - In spite of speculation by pundits and laymen alike, the Democratic party has snagged 3 seats in the recent elections, making the split of the State Senate exactly 50/50. One such surprise came from Scranton itself, where the incumbent Senator Lipton (R) lost his seat to newcomer Oscar Martinez (D.)

Party	Seats Held Before Election	Seats Held After
Republican	26	25
Democrat	22	25
Independent	2	0

The outcome of this election has some interesting implications for how the assembly will function in the next four years, for the careers of both Scranton politicians, and trends for future elections. In no particular order:

- **What made Martinez (D) more electable than Lipton (R)?** Some speculation suggests that Lipton became unelectable after he was revealed to be gay: however, Martinez is gay as well, which is an openly known fact. This author believes that the cause lies in the same trend that won the Democrats the other two seats in the State Senate. That is, in a swing state, Republicans losing to Democrats and vice versa cannot be considered a terrible surprise.
- **How will votes fare now that the State Senate is split equally between two parties famous for gridlocking each other?** Luckily, [the lieutenant governor](#) can serve as a tiebreaker in his capacity as the President of the Senate. Since Mike Stack (D) won the seat of Lieutenant Governor in the same election, it is likely that any ties will be defacto Democratic wins for the next 4 years.
- **With that said, how likely is gridlock, given the new makeup of the State Senate?** It's hard to say. We reached out to the ranking third of the State Senate, Joe Scarnati (R), for comment on the topic, but received no response. However, based on the voting records of both Democrats and Republicans in the Senate, it's fair to say that this will be a significant barrier for any legislation voted on in the next 4 years.

In any event, it'll be interesting to see how the next term plays out in the Pennsylvania State Senate.