Vote reflects the status quo

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Congress can pull in the ratio of military spending.

But do the Democratic gains reflect any sweeping change in national voting patterns this year? Perhaps not, given the Republican gains in gubernatorial races. Do they, alternatively, reflect any larger trend that parties with sixth-year status are waning in popularity? It is, after all, a historic trend that parties lose seats in the Senate whenever presidents lose seats in the Senate. But Reagan seems to be as inexplicably popular as ever.

Perhaps this in itself is cause for hope. The Democrats have been perceived as the more sympathetic party, and are closer to the mainstream of the United States on most issues. That is why they have held control of the House for so long. But they have traditionally been unable to produce charismatic leaders who capture the imagination of the nation as a whole. This is why the White House has been filled with ideological zealots who have in their home states, the Democrats have still made a step forward.

In this election the Democrats have been able to match the Republicans on their own ground, personality for personality. That could effect the change that the Democrats have consistently been unable to achieve: a Democratic administration with a Democratic Congress.