

Election

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age, protect the mountains and seek a new direction in Iraq.

Taylor, who had controlled the seat since 1990, conceded the race around 10:30 p.m. Tuesday night in a speech to disheartened followers in West Asheville. But the 65-year-old vowed to remain involved with the region.

"I will continue to work with our communities, families, individuals and non-profit organizations to improve the lives of the people in this region," said Taylor, a Brevard resident and frequent visitor to the college.

How does outcome affect BC?

One of the foremost issues for BC students in this year's North Carolina 11th District race was education.

Charles Taylor boasts an extensive record of fundraising for colleges and universities in Western North Carolina, including Brevard College.

In Sept. 2004, BC President Drew Van Horn launched the three year "Building from Strength — Remembering the Past...Securing the Future" campaign to raise \$14 million for the college. With more than \$19 million raised last spring, Van Horn cited Taylor as a key contributor.

"Congressman Taylor's involvement in the Education and Research Consortium of the Western Carolinas (ERC), An Adventure of the American Mind, Brevard College's Pisgah Forest Institute, and the International Trade and Small Business Institute based at Brevard College has been important in the college's strategic plans to promote regional vitality and business growth," Van Horn said in September.

Taylor secured \$100,000 from the U.S. Department of Commerce in 2005 to finance the International Trade and Small Business Institute at BC. Seven Russian students are attending BC this year through the program.

Hamlett, who has been teaching at BC since 1999, says that

Taylor's defeat may have a dramatic influence on colleges and universities in Western North Carolina.

And if Shuler wants to get re-elected, Hamlett says, he too will create programs that benefit area colleges and universities.

"(Shuler's) campaigning for 2008 starts today," Hamlett said.

According to his campaign website, Shuler says he will strive for improvements to colleges and universities in Western North Carolina. In particular, Shuler wants to make financial aid more accessible for students.

"I will fight for increased financial aid funding, especially need-based aid and Pell Grants, so that the door to higher education is always open to any student," Shuler says on the website.

Democrats take Congress

On a larger scale, Democrats seized control of the House of Representatives for the first time in 12 years on Tuesday. As of Thursday at 10 a.m., Democrats had picked up 29 seats in the

House; they only needed 15 to capture the majority.

With the takeover, U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-California) is scheduled to be the first female Speaker of the House.

Pelosi has said that in the first 100 hours of Democratic control, the party will push for implementing the 9/11 Commission recommendations, raising the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour, supporting embryonic stem-cell research, abolishing corporate subsidies for oil companies, allowing the governmental negotiation of Medicare drug prices, imposing new restrictions on lobbyists and cutting interest rates on college loans.

According to BC freshman Ryan Fiffick, the Democratic takeover was just a matter of time.

"There's been a disproportioned allotment of power for a number of years," Fiffick said. "It's a self-correcting measure that occurs in all policies that prove ineffective, and it's about time"

Wednesday evening the Associated Press reported that the Democrats had gained control of the U.S. Senate as well by a margin of 51 to 49.

According to the AP, Democrats gained all six seats that they needed to capture the majority in the Senate.

The Virginia race, which matched Republican incumbent George Allen with Democratic challenger Jim Webb, was predicted by CNN to be 50 percent to 49 percent in favor of Allen. CNN did not declare Webb the winner as of Thursday morning, however, because a candidate may request a recount vote if the margin is less than one percent.

Many are predicting a recount vote in the state, which could take weeks, a process that Fiffick doesn't mind waiting for.

"I think the Republican policy council will probably take the same recount measures as Florida (2000 Presidential Election)," Fiffick said. "But I don't think they'll be successful like they were down there."



Photo by Chris Marett

Supporters campaign outside of the Brevard/Davidson River Presbyterian Fellowship Hall on Tuesday.