

VOTERS SPLIT ON KEY ISSUES

President Barack Obama won by a small margin in the popular vote (50.6% to Governor Mitt Romney's 47.8%), but he won by a large electoral college margin (332-206). President Obama won big among minorities (African Americans, Asians and Latinos), young people, homosexuals, Jews, secularists, and women (especially single women).

By a margin of 53% to 38%, voters blamed President George W. Bush for *current* economic problems, not President Obama. Obama also won the "empathy vote" (he was the candidate "who cares about people like me") by a huge margin. On those measures alone, it made it difficult for Romney to win.

On several state ballot initiatives, voters were almost evenly split on most measures.

Until the election, those who sided with the pro-traditional marriage side were 32-0 in the states, and the only places where gay marriage advocates were able to win were in states where either judges or legislators decided to break with tradition. But on Election Day, voters in Maine, Maryland and Washington voted narrowly for gay marriage; in Minnesota, voters rejected a state constitutional amendment banning gay marriage (though it is still not permitted by state law).

Colorado and Washington State voted to legalize marijuana use for recreational purposes, however a federal law banning marijuana is still in place. Florida voters refused to repeal the Blaine Amendment that prohibits public funds for any religious entity; the law is a vestige of the anti-Catholic prejudices of the 19th century. Affirmative action was stricken by voters in Oklahoma, and a law legalizing doctor-assisted suicide lost in Massachusetts. Voters in Montana passed a law requiring parental notification on abortion.

The political polarization is a reflection of the cultural

divide. We are in many ways a country split between practicing Catholics and Protestants who hold traditional moral views, and those of a secular bent who hold very liberal views. The room for compromise is small, making certain the likelihood of a protracted cultural war.