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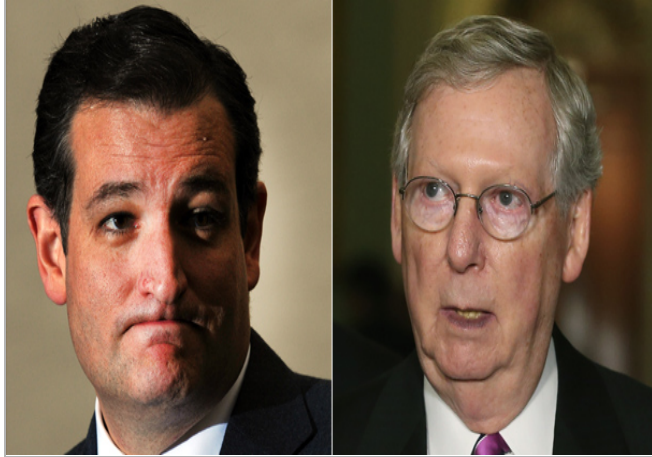
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It's on: Battle for soul of the GOP



By **DAVID NATHER** | 11/5/14 7:35 AM EST Updated: 11/5/14 11:36 AM EST

Now, the Republicans will have to live up to the expectations — and see if they can get on the same page.

They didn't just have a marginally good night on Tuesday — the GOP had a huge night, easily winning control of the Senate. They're on track to expand their House majority to historic levels. And they're winning governors' mansions, too, with some of their most vulnerable incumbents hanging on against the odds.

Republicans already have claimed at least 52 seats in the Senate, and that's without final results in Alaska

and Louisiana, which could easily go to the GOP as well.

President Barack Obama and Mitch McConnell, who's about to become the new Senate majority leader, were set to hold back-to-back press conferences to outline their plans Wednesday afternoon. McConnell will go first, at 2 p.m. in Louisville. Then Obama will take questions at the White House at 2:50 p.m., where he'll give the first public hints of how he'll deal with an even more challenging political landscape in his final two years in office.

(Full 2014 election results (http://www.politico.com/2014-election/results/map/senate/#.VA7_sGOjKSo))

Top Republican leaders said Tuesday night and Wednesday morning that the party should use the opportunity to work with Obama to get some things done, while conservatives in the party are continuing to push the repeal of Obamacare and other nonstarters.

McConnell sounded conciliatory notes on Tuesday night and in an **interview with Time** (<http://time.com/3558263/mitch-mcconnell-shutdown-obamacare-majority-leader/>) that posted Wednesday. He told Time that the GOP might be able to reach agreements with Obama on trade and tax reform, adding that “we're going to want to see what kind of things we might be able to agree on with the President. After all, he's going to be there for two more years.”

On NBC's “Today” show on Wednesday, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who's eyeing Obama's job, said McConnell and House Speaker John Boehner should “sit down and decide what their priorities are and then sit down with the president. People want to get things done.”

(Also on POLITICO: **GOP takes control of Senate in midterm rout** (<http://www.politico.com/story/2014/11/election-update-midterms-2014-house-senate-races-112491.html>))

And Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus said on MSNBC on Wednesday that his party should find “real, achievable goals that are simple, that we can define for the American people ... work with the president, get those things done, repeat and repeat and repeat.”

First, though, Republicans are going to have to figure out how to manage their own internal tensions.

Conservative activists are not going to be interested in small ball — the kinds of little legislative victories that could help the Republicans keep the Senate for more than two years. They’re going to want the GOP to pick big fights with Obama, and give the voters the clearest possible choice in 2016.

They want the GOP Senate to do everything it can to repeal Obamacare, fight regulations across the board, and hold the line against immigration reform — setting up a likely clash if Obama moves ahead with his expected executive order on immigration.

(PHOTOS: Election Day 2014 (<http://www.politico.com/gallery/2014/11/election-day-2014/002090-029684.html>))

“Just like the House majority four years earlier, the new Senate Republican majority is built on the repeal of Obamacare. And in a stark departure from conventional wisdom, nearly every newly elected Republican Senator ran against amnesty,” said Dan Holler, a spokesman for Heritage Action for America. “As we move forward, Republicans must govern as they campaigned.”

Jenny Beth Martin of the Tea Party Patriots put it bluntly: “You’re welcome, GOP. Now keep your promises.”

Club for Growth’s Barney Keller said the Senate’s economic priorities should include tax reform — a goal McConnell shares — but also “full repeal of Obamacare, gutting Dodd-Frank, and demolishing regulations that are stifling capital formation.”

And conservative activist Brent Bozell warned: “The GOP owes its victory to its base and breaking any promises now will put their majority and any chance for the presidency in 2016 in jeopardy.”

The pressure won’t just come from the outside, either. In a **speech (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcgzmMqMtSg>)** at Texas Gov.-elect Greg Abbott’s victory party on Tuesday night, Ted Cruz, one of the Senate Republicans who’s likely to run for the White House, said voters have “given Republicans another chance” and they should do big things with it.

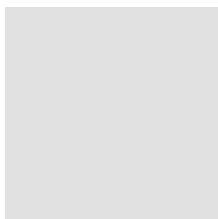
“Now is the time for tax reform. Now is the time for regulatory reform. Now is the time to go after and do everything humanly possible to repeal Obamacare. Now is the time to stand up to the president and say, ‘No more amnesty,’” Cruz said.

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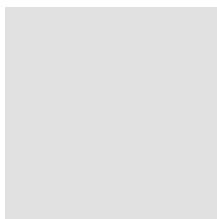
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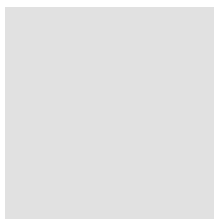
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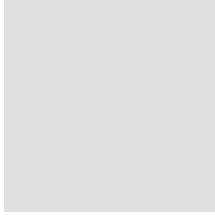


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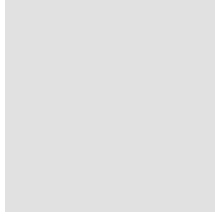
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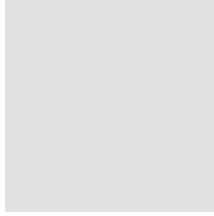
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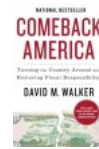
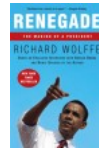
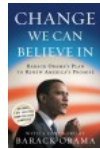
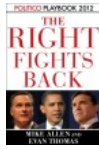
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