

# World and Nation

## Texas leads nation in '85 executions

WASHINGTON (AP) — Eighteen death-row inmates were executed in 1985, bringing the total number of executions to 50 since capital punishment was reinstated nearly a decade ago, the federal government reported Sunday.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics said Texas carried out the most executions last year with six. Georgia and Florida each had three. Virginia executed two prisoners, while Indiana, Louisiana, Nevada and South Carolina each used capital punishment once.

At the end of last year, 32 states held 1,591 prisoners under death sentences, all for murder. Five other states have legalized capital punishment but had no one on death row last year.

Of all the inmates on death row, 17 were women, 903 were white and 672 were black. Their median age was 32. About 11.5 percent of the U.S. population is black.

## Republicans seeking gubernatorial majority

WASHINGTON (AP) — With more than one-third of the nation's governorships certain to change hands, Republicans are bidding in today's elections for their first statehouse majority since the Nixon era.

GOP hopes are dependent on more than a dozen races too close to call, mostly in the South and West. The large number of toss-ups and lack of any unifying campaign theme or issues had both sides hedging bets and eyeing a mixed bag of final poll trends as the campaigns ended.

"There are so many races that are within an eyelash," said Michele Davis, director of the Republican Governors Association.

At a time when governors of both parties are emphasizing pragmatism over ideology, schools and jobs emerged as major issues across many of the 36 states that were electing governors.

But the campaigns themselves, sometimes fiercely negative, were the issues in a number of states. One

was Pennsylvania, a toss-up state the GOP was struggling to hold, where former Gov. William Scranton and his wife took to the campaign trail to defend their son's candidacy against a personal television attack.

The Democrat, Robert Casey, "launched the most despicable TV ads I have ever witnessed in any political campaign," the elder Scranton said, calling them "a new low in personal invective and character assassination." They focused on Lt. Gov. William Scranton III's work in Transcendental Meditation, showed old photos of him in beard and long hair, and said he got his current job because of his family.

Casey taunted: "If Bill Scranton can't stand up and fight for himself as a candidate, how will he be able to stand up and fight for anyone else as governor?"

Republicans hold only 16 of the 50 governor's mansions, and haven't won a majority since 1969, when they reached a peak of 32 governorships under President Richard Nixon.

But just as the arithmetic of 1986

favored the Democrats in the battle for the Senate, the GOP had the edge in the governors' races.

Democrats were defending 27 of the 36 seats up this year. And of the 19 incumbents who were scheduled to leave office, 15 are Democrats.

Even the Democrats acknowledged the GOP was likely to buck the historical midterm trend of losses for the party holding the White House.

Chuck Dolan, head of the Democratic Governors Association, said Democrats could lose four to eight seats — short of the 10 they need for a majority.

"The GOP falls flat on its face in terms of taking a majority," he said.

Davis, the GOP strategist, said a majority is possible "if every good break goes our way," and said a six-to-eight seat gain was probable.

Even if they retain a majority, Democrats would consider it a setback to lose in three of the biggest states at risk — Florida and Texas, which they now hold, and Pennsylvania, where they could gain.

## GOP fighting history to retain Senate control

(AP) — Democrats, with history and election-year arithmetic on their side, are trying to regain a Senate majority that was swept away six years ago in the Reagan landslide.

Republicans — still hoping Ronald Reagan can rally the public one more time with his "last hurrah" blitz — nonetheless were talking more and more about the long odds facing GOP candidates.

In person in California and Nevada, on television screens around the country and even via automatic telephone machines that delivered pre-

recorded personal appeals, Reagan seemed to be everywhere at once urging the public not to let him down.

"Think of the Senate elections as a matter of numbers," said Mitchell E. Daniels Jr., Reagan's White House assistant for political affairs. "Think of it as the Alamo starring Ronald Reagan as Davy Crockett, but this time the good guys might win."

But the stakes and the math of the Senate battle are against the GOP:

- Republicans hold a 53-47 majority.

- Thirty-four seats are being decided.
- Democrats need a net gain of only four seats to win a majority.
- Democrats are defending only 12 of those seats while Republicans are trying to protect 22.

Experience also predicts GOP losses.

In midterm elections at the six-year point of a presidency, the party in control of the White House has lost an average of about seven seats in the Senate.

## U.S. House likely to stay 'solidly Democratic'

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of the most expensive, negative and unfocused campaigns in memory likely will leave the House of Representatives pretty much the way it is now: solidly Democratic.

Both parties have predicted an overall gain for the Democrats of as many as 10 seats in the chamber

where they already hold a 253-180 majority.

A gain of that size, however, would be a departure from recent political history, which has seen much larger losses in off-year elections for the party in control of the White House.

So both sides are poised to call

such an outcome a victory.

Democratic incumbents are uncontested in 53 districts nationwide, and are rated as solid favorites in at least 184 others, which automatically would put them well over the 218 seats needed for control.

Sixteen Republicans have free rides to re-election, and GOP candi-

dates are likely victors in another 112 districts.

With so many officeholders secure, the focus is largely on the 43 open seats where there are no incumbents seeking re-election; an unusually high number are rated as toss-ups.

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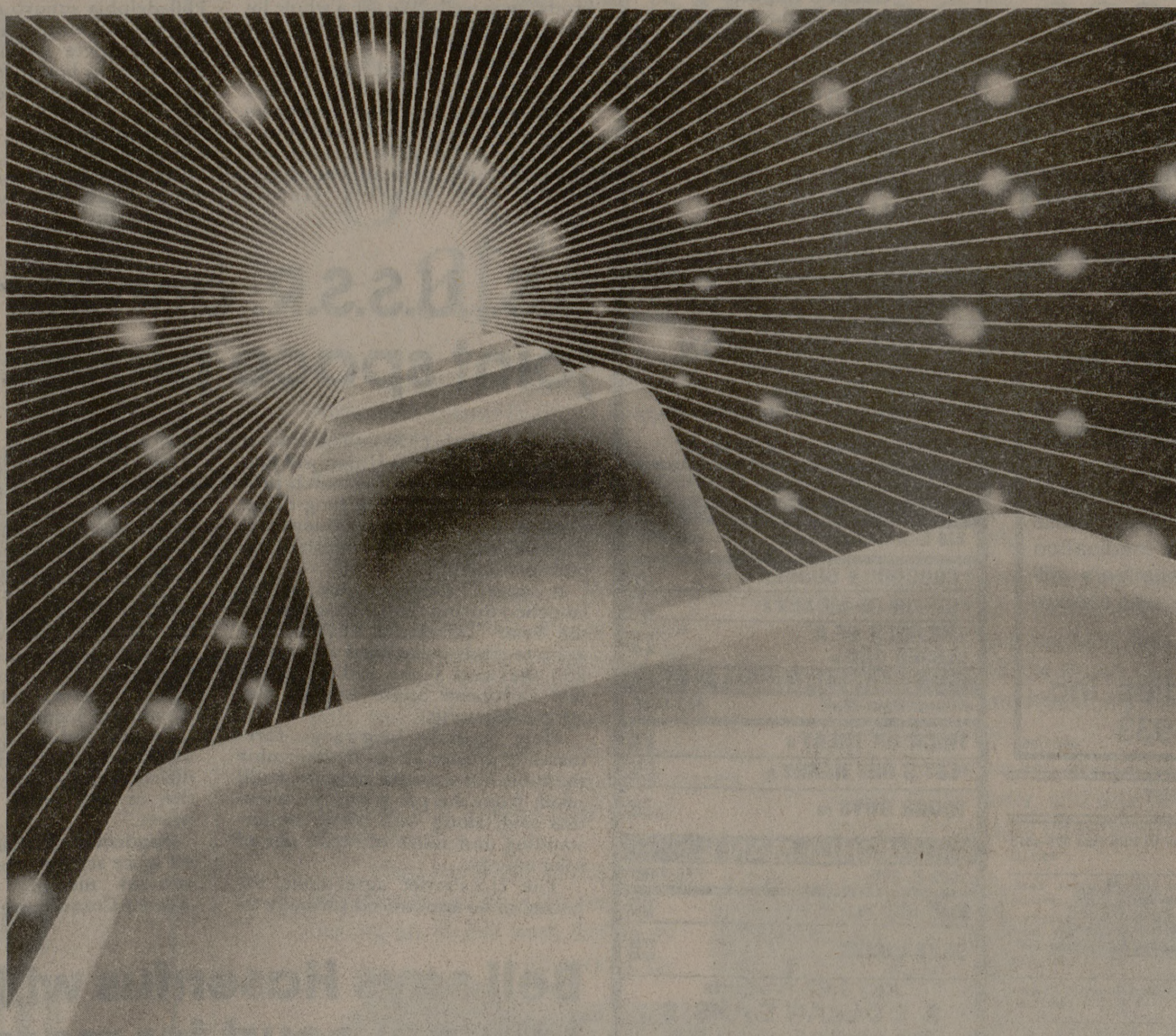
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