



**REPRESENTATIVE PHILIP GUNN BECAME MISSISSIPPI'S FIRST REPUBLICAN SPEAKER** in 140 years when he was elected by acclamation in January. The GOP took control of the House for the first time since Reconstruction following the November election. Democrats had a 68-54 advantage going into the election, but Republicans ended up with a 64-58 margin. Representative **Greg Snowden** is the new speaker pro tem. **Terry Brown** is the new president pro tem in the Senate where the GOP increased its majority from 27-25 to 31-21.

#### **FORMER UTAH HOUSE SPEAKER DAVID CLARK**

**RESIGNED** from the Legislature in January. Clark has indicated he plans to run for Congress, and Utah prohibits sitting lawmakers from raising funds while the Legislature is in session. Clark has served in the House since 2001, and was elected majority leader in 2006 and speaker in 2008. Senator **Dan Liljenquist**, who won national recognition for his legislation reforming Utah's pension system, resigned in the middle of his first term and is mounting a challenge to Senator Orin Hatch.



**MAINE'S FIRST MALISEET INDIAN LEGISLATOR, David Slagger**, was sworn in by the governor and seated in the House. He joins two representatives of the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy tribes. Indian representation in the Maine Legislature dates back to 1823, three years after statehood. Indian representatives are chosen by their tribes and have limited legislative authority. They cannot vote, because they are represented by other legislators, but they can sponsor bills related to Indians and Indian land issues, serve on legislative committees, sit in the House chamber and speak on the floor. Slagger is a University of Maine Ph.D. candidate.

#### **NEBRASKA SENATOR TOM CARLSON IS SPONSORING A RESOLUTION**

easing the state's term limit laws. If passed, voters will decide whether to approve a constitutional amendment allowing lawmakers in the state's unicameral legislature to serve up to three consecutive terms. Currently, there is a limit of two terms. Nebraska is one of 15 states with term limits. But the idea already has prompted opposition from the president of Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom who pledged to lead the fight against it.

**FORMER SENATOR WILBUR FAISS SPENT EIGHT YEARS** in the Nevada Senate some 30 years ago (Faiss is shown with sons Bob, left, and Don, right). Today he has the distinction of being, at 100, the oldest living former legislator in that state—and perhaps the whole country. His two major accomplishments were laws that allowed pharmacists to dispense generic drugs in place of name brands and gave seniors free admission to state parks. He has a middle school named for him and has been married

for 78 years. He also has this advice: "Always look on the good side of people. Don't believe what everyone else says about them. I never dealt on the negative side of politicians, whether they were Democrat, Republican or independent." And he has something to say about today's political climate: "The nastiness is not statewide, or national—it is worldwide ... the federal government is a joke. Try to get along. Too many people want to turn everything negative when they should be positive."

**WHEN INDIANA LAWMAKERS RETURNED TO WORK** this session, they faced what Senate President Pro Tem **David Long** called "the thousand pound gorilla." On the first day of session, Democrats did not come to the floor to once again deny the GOP a quorum to deal with the so-called "right to work" bill that Long, House Speaker **Brian**

**Bosma** and Governor Mitch Daniels say is their top legislative priority. Last year the bill prompted 39 of 40 House Democrats to flee to Illinois when it came up. They stayed away for five weeks until the bill died. House Minority Leader **B. Patrick Bauer** said Democrats will "continue to weigh our options" when the bill comes up. But the stakes, financially at least, are tougher this time around. Republicans passed a new "anti-bolting" law in the budget that calls for fines of \$1,000 a day for those who leave the chamber. The GOP has a 60-40 majority in the House and wants Indiana to be the 23<sup>rd</sup> state to pass "right to work." Oklahoma was the last state to pass it in 2001.



#### **PROPOSITION 13—THE CALIFORNIA INITIATIVE THAT LOWERED PROPERTY TAXES**

and requires a two-thirds majority to pass any new taxes—changed life in the state forever. Or maybe not. Now that conventional wisdom is being challenged by a serious and highly regarded duo: Charles Young, former UCLA chancellor, and retired U.S. Court of Appeals Judge William Norris. They question whether the proposition was an "amendment," which requires only a majority vote of the people, or a "revision," which is considered a "change in the basic plan of California government" that affects the power of any branch of government. If it is a revision, as Norris thinks, it requires a supermajority in both chambers and a vote of the public. Norris says the two-thirds requirement



"upsets the bedrock principle of lawmaking by majority rule upon which the California Constitution was founded." The suit, filed in a Los Angeles state appeals court, also says Prop. 13 "restructured California's basic governmental plan by granting a minority in either house of the Legislature veto power over the majority's exercise of the core legislative power to raise revenue by taxation." If the suit is successful, the property tax provisions of Prop. 13 would remain intact, but the supermajority would be struck down.