

Nev. GOP feels secure with stance on shut down, future

By Karoun Demirjian, Las Vegas Sun

WASHINGTON – The congressional standoff that shut down the government and brought the country to the brink of defaulting on its debt may not have produced any winners, but polls, pundits and politicians from both sides of the aisle agree that the biggest political losers are Republican lawmakers.

Yet, in Nevada, Republicans are betting that in a year's time, the political hit they took in October 2013 won't matter much at all.

"OK, you (Democrats) shouted louder and you messaged better," Rep. Mark Amodei, R-Nev., told the *Sun*. "But in terms of drawing any long-term conclusions? We can quit talking about what a bunch of meanies the Republicans are. ... Past this weekend's cycle, it'll be OK."

Amodei, along with Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., voted against a compromise measure to restore the federal budget and raise the debt ceiling through early 2014. The bill passed with the support of the rest of the Nevada delegation, including Republican Rep. Joe Heck.

It is with a collective shrug that most Republicans are greeting the plummeting poll numbers, vitriolic campaign messages and general complaints about their party's unwillingness to make a deal.

"People have short memories, especially when it comes to politics," said Bob List, former governor of Nevada and current Republican strategist. "Life's going to go on. ... It's hard for me to understand exactly why Republicans are taking the heat."

“Victory is fleeting in the world of politics,” Nevada Republican strategist Sig Rogich said. “I don’t think it’s one of those issues that transcends into the 2014 election – it’s a long way off.”

Rogich isn’t one of those Republicans who can’t bring himself to criticize his own party. In fact, the former head of the 2010 cycle’s “Republicans for Reid” thinks the GOP completely “mishandled” the crisis by “trying to be so hard-edged.” He also has no love lost for the Tea Party, some of whom “are orangutans, for different reasons,” he said.

But Rogich, like many Republicans, questions whether the fallout from the government shutdown was really as bad as Democrats make it out to be.

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