

Nevada Assembly speaker tilts state to far right

By Nia-Malika Henderson, Washington Post

Nevada Republicans won big this November, flipping the Nevada state Assembly and Senate from blue to red and winning every statewide office – including re-electing Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval in a landslide. So you'd think Sandoval would be happy, right?

Maybe not. Ira Hansen is very likely to become the next speaker of the state Assembly, after being put forth as the nominee of the majority Republicans. Hansen has written disparagingly about blacks, Latinos and women in the past, even using words like “negro” and “darkie.”

Republicans backed Hansen over a more moderate pick. And given the more moderate and pro-abortion rights Sandoval has often clashed with more conservative elements of his party, it seems quite possible Hansen could be a thorn in his side for the next few years – just as he the governor is primed to build more of a national profile.

Hansen's ascent also suggests that Nevada, a state that President Obama won twice, is headed the way of North Carolina, where Republicans in power for the first time in many decades used that power to pass some controversial bills – often to the detriment of Gov. Pat McCrory (R) and the still-successful campaign of Speaker and new Sen.-elect Thom Tillis, R-N.C.

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