



*Shefali Razdan Duggal*

PRESS CLIPS

## Obama Wins Second Term: Five Indian Americans Lose Congressional Bids

Shefali Razdan Duggal, who served as a key member of Obama's National Finance Committee and has raised more than \$500,000 for his re-election campaign, told India-West that – despite her ardent support for the president, she was nevertheless moved by Romney's concession speech.

"He was very humble after a long and hard-fought journey. Both (candidates) were really doing this out of the love they have for our country."

Duggal watched the race at a special VIP reception at McCormick Center, spending the evening in the company of actors Angela Bassett and Melanie Griffith, among others. The San Francisco-based political activist described Bassett as "charming" and added that Griffith – who sat next to her – literally jumped out of her seat when the announcement was made.

San Jose city councilman Ash Kalra, told India-West from Obama headquarters in his city that he was elated by the news. "I'm in a room here with hundreds and hundreds of supporters. It was a very emotional moment for us."

"We are all worried about the future of our country and confident that the president will guide us in the right direction," said Kalra, a key supporter of Obama who attended the Democratic National Convention as a delegate.

Going forward, the president is going to have to heal some of the bitter wounds of the race, said Kalra, adding that he was hopeful that Republicans in Congress would now compromise with Obama on key issues such as a vital jobs bill, which was blocked in the Senate earlier this year.

"The last Congress has had more filibustering than we've ever seen. Americans are tired of it," he said.

Indian American Republican heavyweights had predicted a Romney victory in the neck-to-neck race, which polled as "tied" as late as a day before elections. "We're going to win this thing," declared Akshay Desai to India-West in a pre-election interview. Desai, chairman of Finance Committee of the Republican Party of Florida, said job creation must be the immediate focus of either winner. A certainty of regulations which support small businesses would be key to mitigating unemployment, he said.

Congressional contenders fared less well on election night.

As Obama claimed victory in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, capturing the state's 20 crucial electoral votes, Iraq war veteran Manan Trivedi lost his second challenge to unseat Republican incumbent Jim Gerlach from his 6th district congressional seat. CNN declared Gerlach the winner with 50 percent of the votes counted. Trivedi captured 42 percent of the vote.

The Berks County physician opposed President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act had run on a platform of creating sustainable jobs. Trivedi did not return calls for comment on election night, but noted in an earlier interview with India-West that the nation was tired of the congressional status quo.

"There's a lot of buyers' remorse out there. People are realizing that as Republicans got control of the House, they addressed no concerns of the average American, did nothing about jobs, but focused instead on petty issues," he said.

In New Jersey, which was ravaged last week by Superstorm Sandy, Upendra Chivukula lost his bid to unseat incumbent Leonard Lance for New Jersey's 7th district congressional seat.

With 74 percent of the vote counted as India-West went to press, Chivukula had captured 39 percent of the votes.

Chivukula told India-West in an earlier story that Superstorm Sandy had captured all of his attention during the last critical week before Election Day.

"Two million New Jerseyans don't have power; we can't be doing campaigning now," said the Indian American Democrat, adding that he had focused on restoring normalcy to his district during the final days of the race.

Physician Syed Taj, a Democrat who ran for Michigan's 11th congressional district seat, also conceded his race late Nov. 6 evening. Taj had recently been attacked by Republican challenger Kerry Bontivolio for his purported ties to Islam.

Nate Smith-Tyge, Taj's communications director, told India-West that religion had played less of a role in determining the race than the partisan makeup of the district. "This was a district that was drawn up to be pro-Republican, and we had hoped that our moderate message would appeal here," he said.