

# Republicans Temporarily Take Control of State House in Blue State of Minnesota

By James Conrad



In a state where Democrats have maintained significant legislative influence, Minnesota's political landscape is experiencing an unprecedented transformation. The shift emerges as questions of electoral integrity and constitutional compliance take center stage in state capitals nationwide.

Throughout 2024, Minnesota's state government operated under Democratic Party control. The state's government implemented progressive policies that raised substantial concerns among conservatives regarding checks and balances. Recent developments have challenged this political arrangement.

The balance of power in the Minnesota State House has undergone a significant shift, underscoring the fundamental importance of constitutional requirements and proper district representation.

Following a December 15 court ruling that disqualified a Democratic representative-elect over residency requirements, Republicans have secured control of the chamber.

The GOP now holds a 67-66 majority after Democratic state Rep.-elect Curtis Johnson was found ineligible to serve and subsequently resigned. Ramsey

County District Court Judge Leonardo Castro ruled that Johnson failed to establish residency in his district for the constitutionally required six months before the election.

“While I disagree with the conclusions reached by the District Court, I recognize that whatever the decision on appeal, the ultimate decision belongs to the Legislature, where it appears there is no viable pathway for me being allowed to retain my seat,” Johnson stated in his December 29 resignation letter to Governor Tim Walz.

### **Huge Implications Here**

The ruling’s implications extend beyond numerical advantage. Republican state House Speaker-designate Lisa Demuth has confirmed the GOP will exercise organizational control when the legislature convenes on January 14, 2025. This development supersedes previous expectations of a tied chamber requiring power-sharing arrangements.

Democrats are challenging this interpretation of legislative rules. They contend that 68 seats are necessary for organizational control, despite clear precedent supporting majority rule. Democratic leaders, including current House Speaker Melissa Hortman, advocate maintaining previous arrangements despite the clear shift in numbers.

“This session provides a historic opportunity for the Minnesota House to govern on a bipartisan basis,” Hortman stated, attempting to minimize the majority’s significance. “House Democrats are ready to get to work with our Republican colleagues.”

The evidence against Johnson proved compelling. His Republican challenger presented surveillance footage and utility records demonstrating that Johnson’s claimed residence showed no regular activity or basic services. This

documentation provided irrefutable proof of non-compliance with residency requirements.

### **Special Election Scheduled**

Governor Walz has scheduled a special election for January 28, 2025 in the heavily Democratic district that Johnson won by 30 percentage points in November. While the seat may return to Democratic control, Republicans will maintain their majority through the crucial early weeks of the legislative session.

“This confirms that Republicans will have an organizational majority on day one,” Demuth emphasized. “We look forward to ensuring that a valid candidate represents District 40B in the upcoming legislative session.”

The situation reinforces core conservative principles regarding constitutional compliance and electoral integrity. As Minnesota prepares for the special election, this episode demonstrates that proper vetting and adherence to fundamental requirements remain essential to democratic governance.

The coming weeks will test both parties’ capacity to navigate this transition while serving their constituents’ interests. For conservatives, this majority provides an opportunity to demonstrate effective leadership and restore accountability in state government, even if temporary.