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6:30 a.m. Tuesday and that Riley promised a smooth transition if Bentley won.

played at his watch party at Bryant-Denny Stadium.

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## GOP claims control of Ala. Senate

By Phillip Rawls  
The Associated Press

Republicans knocked off several veteran Democrats in the Alabama House and Senate and claimed to have taken control of the Legislature after 136 years of Democratic rule.

"This is more than just an historic day for the Alabama Republican Party, it is a victory for all Alabamians who believe in cutting wasteful spending, ending corruption and creating a business-friendly Alabama that will foster job growth," said Mike Hubbard, chairman of the Alabama Republican Party and minority leader of the Alabama House.

Democrats went into the election with 20 of the 35 seats in the Senate and 60 of the 105 seats in the House. But the GOP worked

with Republican Gov. Bob Riley to raise millions over the last three years to spend on legislative races and capitalized on anti-Democratic sentiment to take over the last branch of government controlled by Democrats.

Veteran senators who lost in Tuesday's election included Tom Butler of Huntsville, Phil Poole of Tuscaloosa, Ted Little of Auburn and Wendell Mitchell of Luverne. Some others were trailing in early returns, and the GOP upsets could increase with the final tally.

Republicans knocked off House Majority Leader Ken Guin of Carbo Hill and took the south Alabama district previously represented by Democratic House Speaker Seth Hammett of Andalusia, who retired.

Hammett's retirement and the big show by Republicans in Tuesday's election posi-

tioned Hubbard to try to move up to the speaker's post when the new Legislature gets organized in January.

Party control of the Legislature is particularly important this year because lawmakers will be called on to redraw congressional and legislative districts, a key to holding political power in Alabama.

Alabama is one of five states in the South where Democrats have controlled both the state House and Senate. Republicans control both chambers in five states, and in Virginia, Republicans control the House and Democrats the Senate.

In intense campaigns, Republicans pointed to the Democratic-controlled Legislature voting itself a 61 percent pay raise, along with three Democratic legislators convicted in a probe of corruption in the two-year college system.