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Q & A: Matthew Green on Nev-Senate

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Distinctly Catholic

As mentioned yesterday, this week at Q & A we are featuring participants in last week's panel on Catholics and the midterm elections, sponsored by Catholic University's Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies.

The video of that panel can be seen here.

Today, CUA politics professor Matthew Green looks at the Nevada Senate race.

Professor Green: The race I find the most compelling is the Nevada Senate race between Harry Reid and Sharron Angle. This election campaign has it all: a "Tea Party" challenger, tons of spending, amusingly gaffe-prone candidates, and the strong possibility that the most powerful Democrat in the Senate could be sent home packing.

What really surprises me is how close the race is -- especially given the many weaknesses of Angle, the Tea Party Republican challenging Reid. She has repeatedly made statements that are, shall we say, outside the mainstream: that Social Security should be eliminated (or at least privatized); that Obama and Reid want government to replace God; and that the city of Dearborn, Michigan is ruled by Islamic religious law.

As a result, Angle's media strategy now seems to be to just keep her mouth shut to everyone except conservative reporters and friendly audiences -- hardly the best way to reach those ever-coveted ?swing? voters. (Though she did manage to avoid any major screw-ups in her recent televised debate with Reid.)

I think the closeness of the race has more to do with Reid's weaknesses, and the even partisan split of Nevada, than with Angle's strengths. But make no mistake: if Angle wins, she'll be known as the

Senate's 'giant killer,' and her reputation -- and that of the Tea Party -- will reach new heights.

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