

2019 | ELECTIONS REPORT

Only a handful of states held “off-year” elections in 2019; however, the results made significant changes to legislative and likely gubernatorial control in two of these states. In **Kentucky**, the Democratic candidate for governor is claiming victory in a race still too close to call. Partisan changes in **Louisiana, Mississippi** and **New Jersey** were minimal; however, in **Virginia**, Democrats were able to take away the Republican’s narrow lead in the legislature and take control of both chambers, making the state the only Democratic trifecta in the south. In Kentucky, Republicans gained the attorney general’s seat, which has been in Democratic hands for decades.

ATTORNEYS GENERAL RACES

Republicans won each of the three attorneys general races held in 2019. The position remained under Republican control in Louisiana and Mississippi. In Kentucky, Republican Daniel Cameron’s victory gave the position to the Republicans for the first time in over seven decades.

Kentucky

The 2019 attorney general election was a closely watched race. As reported by the [State Board of Elections](#), Republican nominee Daniel Cameron came out on top, taking about 57 percent of the vote over former Attorney General Greg Stumbo, who walked away with 42 percent of the vote. According to [WFPL](#), Cameron is a corporate attorney and formerly served as general counsel to U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Stumbo had served as the state’s attorney general for one term previously in 2004-2008.

Issues central to the campaign included the opioid crisis, cannabis and recently passed legislation regarding abortion, as well as the role of the attorney general in defending these abortion laws before federal courts. Cameron is the first Republican to claim the seat that has remained in Democratic control since 1947.

Louisiana

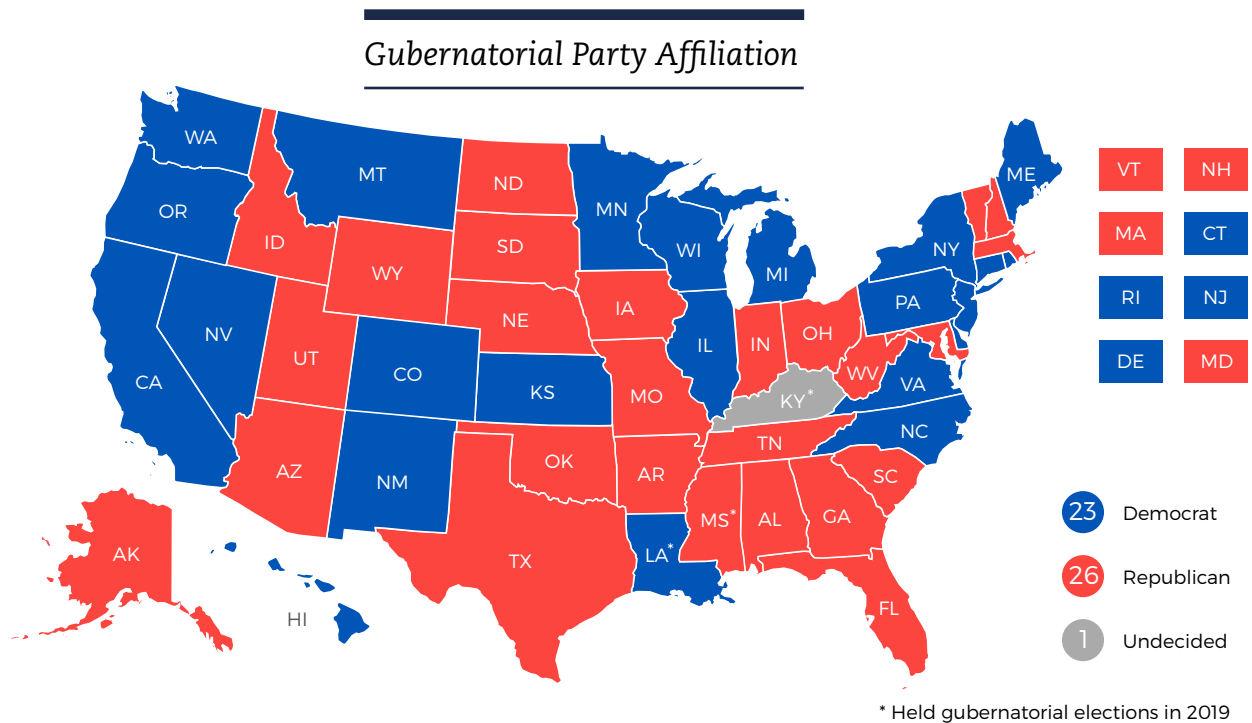
Republican incumbent Jeff Landry was re-elected as attorney general in the October 12 primary election, receiving 66 percent of the vote against his Democratic challenger Ike Jackson, according to the [Secretary of State](#). Attorney General Landry received the majority of votes, preventing a runoff election later in November. [WAFB9](#) reports that Jackson also unsuccessfully ran against Landry in 2015. According to [The Advocate](#), central campaign issues included managing the petrochemical industries in the state, LGBT rights and repealing the Affordable Care Act.

Mississippi

Republican State Treasurer Lynn Fitch won the attorney general's race over Democratic nominee Jennifer Collins. Fitch received 58 percent of the vote to Collins' 42 percent, according to [The New York Times](#). Fitch served as state treasurer since 2012 and has had a 34 year legal career. The [Clarion Ledger](#) reports that she will be the first woman to hold the attorney general's office in Mississippi. Fitch has stated her focus is on making Mississippi more business friendly, preventing Washington overreach, tackling elder and child abuse, ending human trafficking and finding solutions to the opioid crisis.

GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS

Although the race has not yet been formally called, it appears that Democrats were able to capitalize on voter frustration with the Trump administration to flip the gubernatorial seat in **Kentucky**. The race in **Mississippi** appeared to be close in the weeks leading up to the race, but Republican Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves was able to pull out the victory and maintain a trifecta in the state. **Louisiana** will hold their election on November 16.



Kentucky

The gubernatorial race has not yet been called. As of November 7, [The New York Times](#) reported that Democratic challenger, Attorney General Andy Beshear, leads Republican incumbent Gov. Matt Bevin 49.2 percent to 48.8 percent. Governor Bevin has refused to concede the race. The race has been cast as a showdown between a deeply unpopular governor and an unpopular party. Although both Republican President Donald Trump and Republican Vice President Mike Pence were in the state in the days leading up to election to promote Governor Bevin, Andy Beshear still holds a lead of 5,300 votes. Bevin has requested a recanvass, a double-checking of the vote totals, which rarely leads to different results, according to [NPR](#). Kentucky law does not provide for a recount in gubernatorial elections. If Bevin contested the election, it would be settled by the Republican legislature.

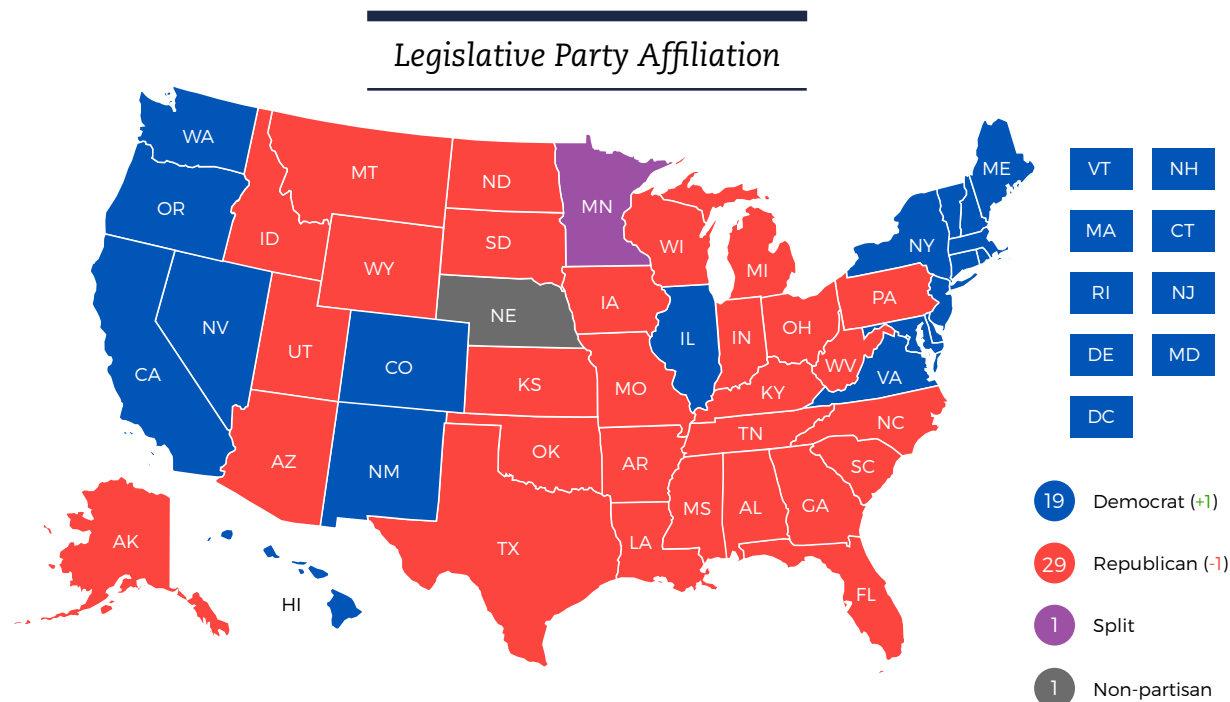
Louisiana

Democratic incumbent Gov. John Bel Edwards, first elected in 2015, is seeking a second term. He will face Republican challenger Eddie Rispone on November 16. Governor Edwards is the only Democratic governor in the Deep South and the only Democrat holding statewide office in Louisiana, according to [The Advocate](#). Polling conducted by [ALG Research](#) has shown Edwards leading with 52 percent compared to Rispone at 36 percent. Rispone has been publicly endorsed by President Trump, while Edwards has been endorsed by the mayor of New Orleans. Trump plans to hold another rally in the state in support of Edwards a few days before the election, according to [The Advocate](#).

Mississippi

Democratic state Attorney General Jim Hood lost the race for governor to Republican Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves by a margin of 52.2 to 46.5 percent, the [AP](#) reports. Although the race was close, Reeves received some last-minute assistance from President Trump and Vice President Pence. Ultimately, Reeves won both the popular vote and the majority of state House of Representatives districts, avoiding the need for legislators to become involved in the contest. Under Reeves, it is unlikely that Medicaid will be expanded in Mississippi; a position that was held by his opponent.

LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS



Louisiana Statewide Elections

Both chambers of the legislature are up for election. Even though it is a normally quiet election year, Republicans took a strong hold of both legislative chambers at the October 12 primary election. According to [The Advocate](#), Republicans now maintain a supermajority in the Senate of 27 to 12 after picking up two previously Democratic seats. Even with one more race facing a runoff election on November 16, Republicans will still maintain the bare minimum of a supermajority with 26 seats in control.

In the House, Republicans have picked up eight seats, bringing their numbers to 68, two short of the 70 needed to make a supermajority. Five of those 68 races are going to a runoff election on November 16. If supermajority's can be achieved in both chambers, it will veto-proof bills and Republicans will be in firm control of redistricting efforts that will begin next year.

Mississippi Statewide Elections

All seats in both the House and Senate were up for election. Pre-election, the 122-seat House, with four seats currently vacant, was Republican-controlled by a margin of 72 seats to Democrats' 46, with 62 seats required to form a supermajority. On November 5, Republicans won 75 seats compared to the Democrats' 46 seats, with one seat won by an Independent, according to [BIPEC](#).

In the 52-seat Senate, Republicans controlled the chamber with possession of 33 seats to Democrats' 19, with 27 seats required for a supermajority. Republicans gained three additional seats in the election, for a total of 36 seats, with Democrats in turn losing three seats for 16 seats. As a result, the status quo remains the same with Republicans controlling both the House and Senate. The largest policy shift will occur in the Senate where Mississippi will lose the hardline conservative Republican Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves and get a more moderate Republican in Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann.

New Jersey Assembly Elections

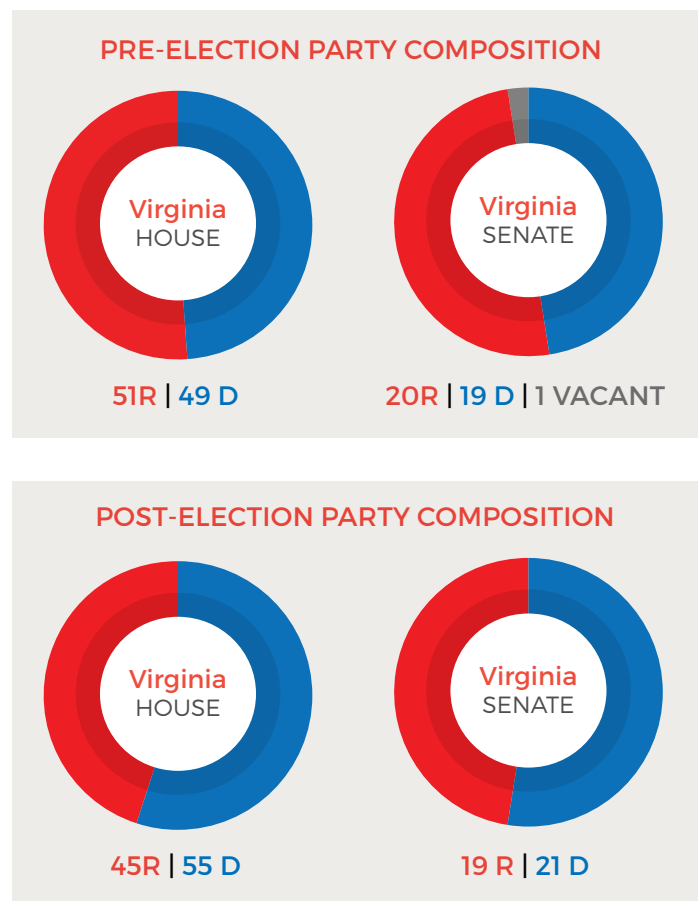
Republicans made small gains in the Assembly picking up three to five seats in the chamber with a few races undecided. Republicans picked up both seats in District 1 and hold a slim lead in District 2, [NJ Spotlight](#) reports. Democrats were unable to capitalize on any seats they were originally hoping to flip in districts 8, 25 and 39. Democrats also failed to unseat Assembly Republican Leader Jon Bramnick, R-Westfield, and Asm. Nancy Munoz, R-Summit, who defeated well-funded Democratic challengers in a hotly contested District 21 race. If present results hold, Democrats will hold a 50 to 30 majority in the chamber when the new session convenes in January.

Virginia Statewide Elections

Every seat in the House and Senate were on the ballot and Democrats were able to successfully turn the state into a Democratic trifecta by taking control of both chambers from the Republicans. Pre-election, the 100-seat House was controlled by Republicans, with a slender majority of 51 seats to Democrats' 49, according to the [Virginia Public Access Project](#). Democrats came out of the election with control of the House, with 55 seats to Republicans' 45.

In the 40-seat Senate, prior to the election, the Republicans controlled the chamber with 20 seats, but held on to their majority tenuously with Democrats controlling 19 seats with one vacancy. Democrats won 21 seats to Republicans' 19, guaranteeing them a majority even without Democratic Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax's vote.

The state will enter the 2020 legislative session with the legislature and executive branch controlled by Democrats. [Myrtle Beach Online](#) reports that this will be the first time in 26 years that the state is completely blue and Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam has already laid out his vision for a changing Virginia, including gun control measures and additional liberal policy proposals.



Special Elections

Alabama Republican Van Smith will become the new representative for House District 42, according to the [unofficial results](#). House District 42 became vacant after Rep. Jimmy Martin, R-Clanton, passed away in May, reports the [Alabama Political Reporter](#). Van Smith received nearly 88 percent of the votes, while his opponent Democrat Kenneth Allison, received 11 percent.

California Republican Megan Dahle won the special election for Assembly District 1 against Democrat Elizabeth Betancourt. Assembly District 1 became vacant when Asm. Brian Dahle, R-Bieber, was elected to the Senate in a June special election, reports [The Sacramento Bee](#). According to the [semi-official results](#), Dahle received 57.9 percent of the vote. According to [USA Today](#), no matter who won the seat, the state will break its previous record with a total of 38 women in the legislature.

Two **Georgia** Republicans are heading to a runoff election on December 3 for House District 152, reports [The Atlanta-Journal Constitution](#). Former mayors Jim Quinn and Bill Yearta received the most votes in the special election to replace retiring Rep. Ed Rynders, R-Albany. However, neither candidate won more than 50 percent of the votes, requiring a runoff election. Quinn received 41.6 percent and Yerta received 34.4 percent.

In **Kentucky**, Republicans won both seats in the special election held for House districts 18 and 63, according to [unofficial results](#). [Spectrum News](#) reports that District 18 became vacant in September when Rep. Tim Moore, R-Elizabethtown, resigned due to his strong belief in term limits. District 63 became vacant in August when Rep. Diane St. Onge, R-Park Hills, resigned to move out of state. Republican Samara Heavin received 60 percent of the vote for District 18 to her Democratic opponent Becky Miller's 39 percent. In District 63, Republican Kim Banta received 63 percent of the vote and Democrat Josh Blair received 36 percent.

Missouri held a special election for House districts 22, 36, 74, 78, 99 and 158, resulting in one seat flipped from Republican to Democrat in House District 99. Rep. Brandon Ellington, D-Kansas City, resigned his House District 22 seat in July to serve on the Kansas City Council, reports [KCTV News](#). According to [unofficial results](#), Democrat Yolanda Young received 81 percent of the vote; Republican Tammy Louise Herrera received 11 percent.

Rep. Jean Evans, R-Manchester, resigned from House District 99 in February to become the Missouri GOP Executive Director, reports [St. Louis Public Radio](#). Democrat Trish Gunby received 54 percent of the vote against Republican Lee Ann Pitman, who received 46 percent. According to the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#), this race was hotly contested in a district that was carried by President Trump in the 2016 election, but also won by Democratic U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill.

The [Barry County Advertiser](#) reports that Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick, R-Shell Knob, left District 158 to become state treasurer. Republican Scott Cupps received 82 percent of the vote. Democrat Lisa Kamp received 17 percent.

In three of these elections, the Democratic candidate either ran unchallenged or against a minor party candidate. As expected, the seats remained within the Democratic party. Rep. DaRon McGee, D-Kansas City, resigned from House District 36 in April following sexual harassment allegations, reports [KCTV News](#). Democrat Mark Sharp received 72 percent of the vote; write-ins and Green party candidate Roberta Vorhees received the remaining percentage. Rep. Cora Walker, D-Ferguson, resigned her seat in House District 74 to take a position in the St. Louis County Executive's administration, reports [St. Louis Public Radio](#). Democrat Mike Person received 57 percent of the vote. Libertarian candidate Nicholas Kasoff received 42 percent. The only candidate running for House District 78 was Democrat Rasheen Aldridge, who will be replacing Rep. Bruce Franks, D-St. Louis, who resigned in May to focus on health issues, reports [St. Louis Public Radio](#).

New Jersey Sen. Bob Andrzejczak, D-Middle Township, lost his race to retain his District 1 seat after losing to Republican Mike Testa by a 53 to 47 percent margin. According to [NJ Spotlight](#), Testa benefited from a late robo-call by President Trump. Senator Andrzejczak was initially appointed last November following former Sen. Jeff Van Drew's, D-Dennis, election to Congress.

New York Republicans held on to power in District 57, with Republican George Borrello defeating Democrat Austin Morgan by a 71 to 28 percent margin, [The New York Times](#) reports. Borrello will fill the seat vacated by former Sen. Catherine Young, R-Olean, who resigned her seat following a failed bid to become Senate Minority Leader.

Texas held three special elections for vacant House seats. Democrats had hoped to pick up at least one additional seat outright in a closely watched District 28 contest. In a crowded seven candidate field Democrat Eliz Markowitz and Republican Gary Gates emerged as the top two candidates, winning 39 and 28 percent of the vote respectively, [The Texas Tribune](#) reports. Both candidates will advance to a runoff election on a date which has not yet been announced by Republican Gov. Greg Abbot. The seat was vacated by former House Appropriations Committee Chair Rep. John Zerwas, R-Richmond, who resigned to take a job with the University of Texas system.

Runoffs will also be held in the two other House special elections. In District 100, Democrat Lorraine Birabil received 33 percent of the vote and will face fellow Democrat James Armstrong. In District 148, Democrat Anna Eastman will face Republican Luis La Rotta in a runoff to fill the seat vacated by former Rep. Jessica Farrar, D-Houston, who retired in August.

Washington held two special elections to fill vacancies in Senate District 40 and House District 13. In Senate District 40, Sen. Liz Lovelett, D-Anacortes, who was appointed to fill a seat vacated by former Sen. Kevin Ranker, D-Orcas Island, defeated Republican challenger Daniel Miller by a 68 percent to 31 percent margin.

In House District 13, Rep. Alex Ybarra, R-Quincy, who was appointed to fill the seat vacated by Rep. Matt Manweller, R-Ellensburg, defeated Democrat Steve Verhey by a 76 percent to 23 percent margin, reports the [Washington Secretary of State](#).