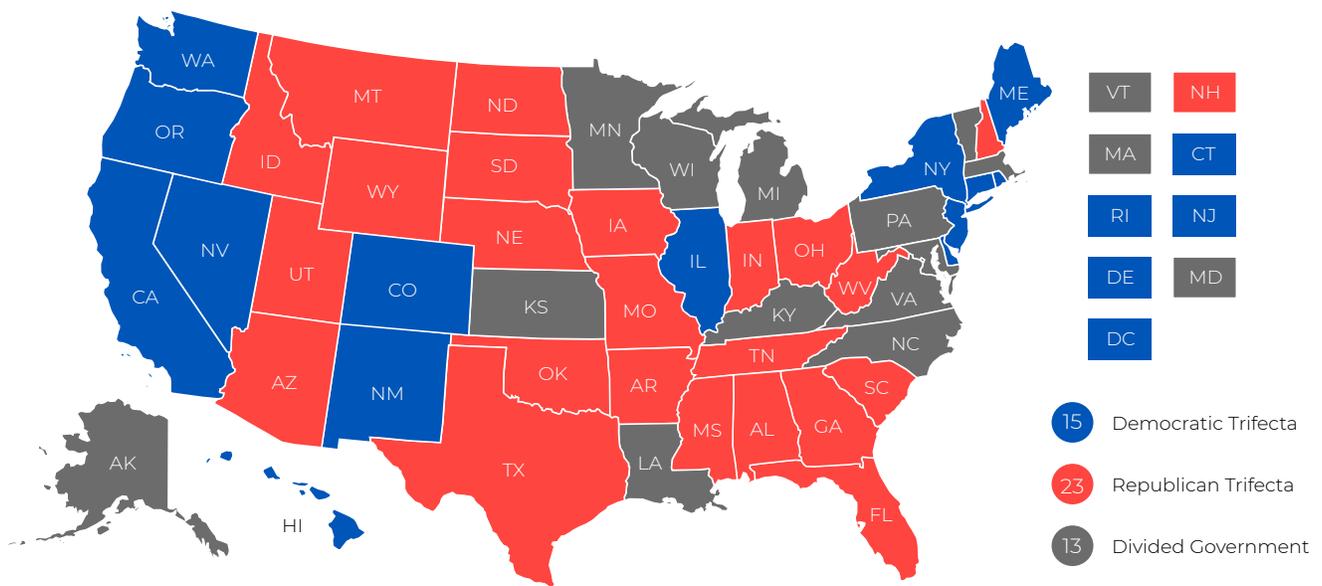


2021 ELECTIONS REPORT

This election cycle proved to be one of the most closely watched off-year elections in recent memory. Widely viewed as Democratic President Joe Biden's first electoral test since taking office, it was an unexpectedly bad night for Democrats up and down the ballot. While elections in **Virginia** were expected to be close, Republicans comfortably won all three statewide offices on the ballot and appear likely to flip the House. In a potentially ominous sign for Democrats ahead of the 2022 midterms, elections in **New Jersey** were unexpectedly close with Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy narrowly winning re-election. President Biden easily carried the state by 16 points in 2020 and Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy consistently lead in the polls. In the legislature, Democrats remain likely to maintain a majority in both chambers but without longtime Senate President Steven Sweeney, D-Salem, who lost his bid for re-election. While former President Donald Trump was not on the ballot, Democrats repeatedly tried to link him with Republican candidates; a tactic which largely fell flat at the polls and did not motivate Democratic voters like it did in 2020. States across the country also held numerous special elections that went mostly as expected and did not affect partisan control of any chamber.

POST-ELECTION STATE PARTY CONTROL





VIRGINIA ATTORNEY GENERAL RACE

Jason Miyares has won the attorney general's race against incumbent Mark Herring by a margin of 50.56 percent to 49.44 percent with 99 percent of the vote in, according to [Business Insider](#). Herring was seeking a third term and during his tenure secured wins for Democrats in LGBTQ+ rights, legalized marijuana and protecting the ACA in a Supreme Court hearing, according to [Yahoo! News](#). Miyares ran as a "tough on crime candidate" supporting increased policing budgets and had previously noted investigating the state parole board would be a focus for him criticizing their decision to release certain prisoners, reports the [Richmond Times Dispatch](#).

GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS

NEW JERSEY

Overcoming an unexpectedly tight battle, Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy became the first Democratic governor to win re-election in 44 years. The race was much closer than most expected, as Governor Murphy was leading comfortably in the polls for most of the race. Murphy was unable to turnout voters in Democratic strongholds, the [New Jersey Globe](#) reports, but he did benefit from a nearly one million voter registration advantage favoring Democrats, according to the [Associated Press](#). According to [NJ Spotlight News](#), recent polling showed voters approved of Murphy's pandemic response but also felt some restrictions were burdensome to small businesses, something his Republican opponent, Jack Ciatrelli, sought to capitalize on. Ciatrelli focused his campaign on high taxes referencing the state's property tax, which is the highest in the nation. Murphy spent much of the campaign trying to tie Ciatrelli to former President Donald Trump, [NPR](#) reports. Murphy has stated his plans next term include additional gun control laws, enacting a reproductive freedom law and expanding public prekindergarten. According to [NJ.com](#), the race could head to a recount but there is no automatic recount provision in state law.

VIRGINIA

Republican businessman Glenn Youngkin has won the governor's race against former Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe by a 51 percent to 48 percent margin, according the [Richmond Times-Dispatch](#). Youngkin becomes the first Republican candidate to win a statewide race since 2009 and headlines a slew of Republican gains down the ballot.

According to [CNN](#), Youngkin's campaign priorities included cutting taxes, prioritizing small businesses and economic growth following COVID-19; however, education issues were the centerpiece of the Youngkin campaign. Youngkin seized on debate comments by McAuliffe who stated, "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach." Youngkin had a difficult line to straddle in a state that former President Donald Trump lost by 10 percent just a year ago and as a result he decided to not run alongside the former



president, reports [CNN](#). Rather his strategy of distancing without disavowing the Trump wing of the party seems to have been successful, reports [Slate](#).

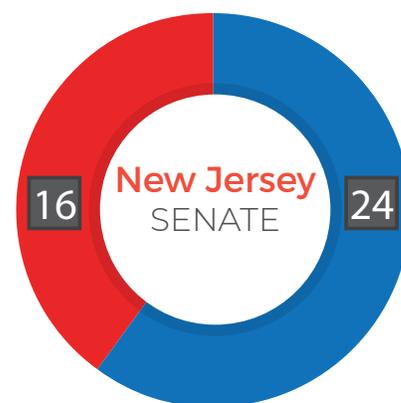
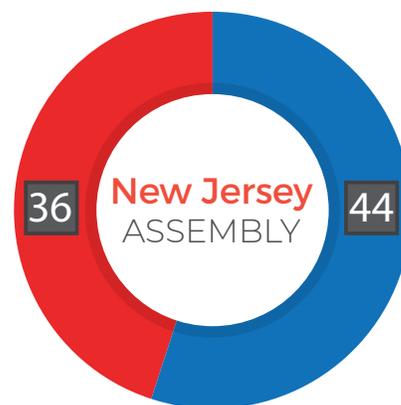
In his victory speech, Youngkin emphasized educational investment and school choice which are the issues that he most emphasized during the election. “We are going to restore excellence in our schools,” said Youngkin. “We are going to embrace our parents, not ignore them” [Bloomberg](#) reported. According to [Virginia Public Media](#), Youngkin’s priorities for his first day in office include banning the teaching of critical race theory, firing the state’s parole board, eliminating certain taxes and increasing teacher pay, though he will have to contend with a Democratic-controlled Senate to pass much of his campaign promises.

LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

NEW JERSEY STATEWIDE

All 80 seats in the Assembly were up for grabs this cycle, with Democrats enjoying a large 52-28 majority that was not in jeopardy. However, that majority will shrink as Republicans are poised to pick up eight seats in the chamber, the [New Jersey Globe](#) reports. Republicans flipped both seats in District 2 with former Atlantic City Mayor Don Guardian, R-Atlantic City, and attorney Claire Swift, R-Margate, ousting incumbent Asm. John Armato, D-Buena, and securing the other open seat. Republicans also secured two District 11 seats they were targeting, with Republicans Marilyn Piperno and Kimberly Eulner unseating three-term incumbents Asm. Eric Houghtaling, D-Neptune, and Asm. Joann Downey, D-Freehold. Other Democratic losses include Asm. John Burzichelli, D-Paulsboro, and fellow District 3 incumbent Asm. Adam Taliaferro, D-Woolwich, who lost to Republicans Beth Sawyer and Bethanne McCarthy Patrick. One race remains too close to call as former Democratic Montgomery Mayor Sadaf Jaffer holds a narrow lead over Republican Vinny Pancio for the second seat in District 16.

Elections in the Senate, where all 40 seats were up, proved to be the bigger story headlined by the defeat of longtime Senate President Steven Sweeney, D-Gloucester. Senator Sweeny lost to truck driver Edward Durr, who spent little on the race, for the District 3 seat, [Politico](#) reports. Republicans made other gains across South Jersey with Asm. Jean Stanfield, R-Westhampton, defeating Sen. Dawn Addiego, D-Evesham, in District 8. Addiego had previously defected from the Republican party in 2019. In a closely fought battle in District 2, former Asm. Vince Polistina, R-Egg Harbor Township, defeated Asm.

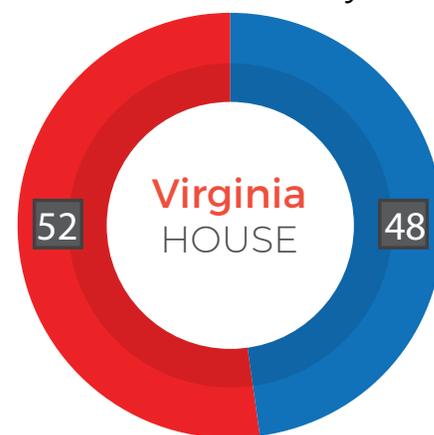




Vince Mazzeo, D-Northfield, the [New Jersey Globe](#) reports. If results hold, Democrats will have a 22-18 majority in the chamber. In light of numerous close races, Senate Democrats have postponed a leadership conference scheduled for tomorrow.

VIRGINIA HOUSE

Republicans appear to have erased a 10-seat Democratic majority in the House, where all 100 seats were up for election, flipping seven seats. In a high profile District 12 contest Republican Jason Ballard defeated Del. Chris Hurst, D-Blacksburg, by more than 10 percent, according to [unofficial results](#). Republicans also picked up another rural seat held by House Education Committee Chair Roslyn Tyler, D-Emporia, who lost a rematch to Republican Otto Waschmann. Other close contests included District 83 where Republican Tim Anderson defeated Del. Nancy Guy, D-Virginia Beach, by two percent. According to [The Washington Post](#), Republicans announced they had taken control of the chamber after results showed Republican Kim Taylor defeating Del. Lashrecse Aird, D-Petersburg. Republicans also flipped District 28 where Del. Joshua Cole, D-Fredericksburg, lost to Republican Tara Durant; and District 91 where Del. Martha Mugler, D-Hampton, was defeated by Republican A.C. Cordoza. No clear winner has been decided in District 85 where Del. Alex Askew, D-Virginia Beach, trails Republican Karen Greenhalgh by less than 200 votes, according to [unofficial results](#). At least one Delegate, Terry Kilgore, R-Gate City, has already announced plans to run for House speaker, [WJHL](#) reports.



SPECIAL ELECTIONS

GEORGIA

A special election was held to fill a vacancy in House District 165. Former Savannah Democratic Mayor Edna Jackson easily won the vacant seat winning 53 percent of the vote compared to 18 percent for her closest rival, former Chatham county board of elections member Antwan Lang, the [Savannah Morning News](#) reports. Jackson will be up for re-election in 2022 for a full term.

KENTUCKY

Three special elections were held to fill two vacancies in the House and one in the Senate. In House District 51, Michael Pollock, an insurance risk advisor, easily defeated former Taylor County judge executive and Democrat Eddie Rogers by a 73 to 24 percent margin. Results were similar in House District 89 where Republican Timmy Truett, an elementary school principal, defeated Democrat May Suramek, winning 77 percent of the vote compared to Suramek's 22 percent. In the Senate, Republican Donald Douglas, a physician, cruised to a 71 to 27 percent victory over Democrat Helen Bukulmez for the District 22



seat, [Lex18](#) reports. All of the seats were formerly held by Republicans and both chambers continue to remain firmly in Republican control.

MAINE

In the special election for House District 86, Augusta Democratic city councilor Raegan LaRochelle flipped the seat previously held by former Rep. Justin Fecteau, R-Augusta. LaRochelle defeated Republican James Orr with 1,372 votes to 1,071, reports the [Kennebec Journal](#). LaRochelle noted that COVID-19 economic recovery is one of the most significant issues facing the state.

MICHIGAN

Two special elections were held to fill vacant Senate seats in districts 8 and 28. The District 8 contest saw Rep. Douglas Wozniak, R-Shelby Township, defeat Democrat Martin Genter by a substantial 30,555 votes to Genter's 18,838, according to the [unofficial results](#). In District 28, Rep. Mark Huizenga, R-Walker, defeated Kent County Commissioner Keith Courtade, D-Alpine Township, earning 60 percent of the votes, [MLive](#) reports.

MISSISSIPPI

The state Supreme Court confirmed the state Board of Election Commissioners' appointment of Democrat Robert Sanders to House District 29, reports [Delta News](#). On October 28, the Supreme Court ruled that the circuit court did not have jurisdiction over the case, keeping the election off the ballot on November 2. Opponent Keveon Taylor, a law student at the University of Mississippi, was disqualified over a residency requirement. Sanders will serve out the remainder of former Rep. Abe Hudson's, D-Bolivar, term.

The special election in Senate District 32 narrowed the field to two candidates, reports [WTOK-TV](#). Out of the nine candidates who ran, Ron Hickman and Dr. Minh Duong will be heading to the runoff election on November 23. Hickman, a Noxubee County attorney and college professor, pulled 26 percent of the vote and Duong, a Meridian optometrist, pulled 23 percent. Kelvin Butler eked out a win over Gary Brumfield in Senate District 38 with just over 50 percent of the vote, reports [Y'all Politics](#). Butler served in the state Senate for 12 years prior to this victory. He left to run for Chancery Clerk in Pike County and then lost the seat to former Sen. Tammy Witherspoon in 2019.

NEW YORK

Democrats successfully held onto their supermajority in the Senate, with both Assembly District 86 and Senate District 30 remaining in the party. Assembly District 86 became vacant on September 10 after the resignation of Victor Pichardo, D-Bronx. Democrat Yudelka Tapia ran unopposed in the special election and will be his replacement.

Democrat Cordell Cleare of Harlem handily won the special election in Senate District 30 with 89 percent of the vote, reports [Patch](#). Cleare, the Manhattan Democratic Party nominee, is the former chief of staff of former Councilmember Bill Perkins, D-Harlem. Cleare centered her campaign around Harlem's lack of affordable housing and beat out



Shana Harmongoff, of the “Hope4NY” party, and Republican Oz Sultan who also ran unsuccessfully for the seat in 2020.

PENNSYLVANIA

Democrat Thom Welby will replace his former boss Sen. Marty Flynn, D-Scranton, in House District 113. Welby won against Republican Dominick Manetti and Libertarian Bonnie Flaherty with 69 percent of the vote and will finish out Senator Flynn’s term, which ends next November. According to [WNEP](#), Welby already said that he will not run for re-election and can therefore focus solely on his work and not campaigning. Democrats were also victorious in House District 164 with Democrat Gina Curry emerging as the clear winner. Curry drew 78 percent of the vote against Republican Brian Taylor and Libertarian Aniket Josan. These two victories bring the Democratic Caucus membership back up to 90 members, although this still remains in the minority, reports [PennLive](#).

RHODE ISLAND

Democrat and former Providence city councilman Sam Zurier won in a landslide with 90 percent of the vote in Senate District 3, reports [The Boston Globe](#). Zurier faced Republican Alex Cannon.

TEXAS

A runoff election was held to fill the House District 118 seat vacated by former Rep. Leo Pacheo, D-San Antonio. Republican John Lujan, who held the seat for a year in 2016, flipped the district defeating Democratic candidate and former legislative staffer Frank Ramirez by a 51.2 percent to 48 percent margin. According to [The Texas Tribune](#), the district had previously gone for President Joe Biden by 14 points in 2020. The race was closely watched by House Speaker Dade Phelan, R-Beaumont, who actively supported Lujan.