

## **Election Day 2019 Results**

*Data and analysis as of November 18, 2019, at 10:30 AM Eastern*

The 2019 election year in Kentucky, Mississippi, New Jersey and Virginia awarded victories to both parties on Nov. 5, including some surprising results. Additionally, voters in Louisiana went to the polls on Nov. 16 in an important run-off election to decide if Governor John Bel Edwards (D) would receive a second term in office.

### **Kentucky**

The biggest news was Democrats unseating Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin (R) in an election that came down to a margin of just 1.4 votes per precinct. Attorney General Andy Beshear (D), the son of former Gov. Steve Beshear, won the Governor's office 49.2 percent to 48.8 percent, a spread of just 5,150 votes out of more than 1.41 million cast. Turnout increased massively over the 2015 Governor's election, exceeding 45 percent.

Bevin received negative ratings throughout most of his term, often putting him toward the bottom of gubernatorial job approval statistics in all 50 states. He under-performed in the eastern coal country region, running behind most Republican candidates, which proved a major factor in his defeat.

The Kentucky vote turned out better for Republicans in down-ballot statewide races, where the GOP swept the other offices with substantial percentages, including both the Attorney General and Secretary of State positions.

### **Louisiana**

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards (D) won a close run-off election over businessman Eddie Rispone (R) on Nov. 16. Louisiana is the only state with a jungle primary system where all candidates' names are on the same ballot; and a candidate must reach +50% threshold to win without the race going to a run-off with the second-place finisher.

Edwards received 47% on the Oct. 12 primary, which led to the head-to-head match-up with Rispone, who received 27% of the vote in the primary. Fast-forward to Nov. 16 and Edwards won with 51% of the vote, which gives him a second term in office.

### **Mississippi**

Mississippi Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves (R) overcame an opponent that all agreed was the Democrats' strongest possible contender. Reeves scored a 52 percent to 46 percent win against Jim Hood (D), who was elected as Mississippi's Attorney General in four consecutive elections. The GOP victory allows the party to keep a gubernatorial office they have held for 24 of the past 28 years.

Mississippi turnout increased more than 18 percent over the last gubernatorial election. The last three publicly released polls proved relatively accurate as they all showed Reeves with small leads hovering around the 50 percent mark. Like in Kentucky, the Republicans also swept the down-ballot races.

The Magnolia State also has an interesting caveat to their gubernatorial election. A gubernatorial candidate must not only win a majority of the statewide vote, but must also carry at least 62 of the state's 122 House districts, a system that Democrats have argued violates the one-person, one-vote federal election standard. The provision would surely have been challenged in federal court had Reeves not earned a majority of the popular vote. In fact, a preliminary injunction request was filed and denied, though the judge gave broad hints that he would void the election if no one received a 50-percent majority.

## **New Jersey**

Though New Jersey Democrats easily maintained the majority in their state House elections, Republicans surprisingly gained six seats. The Democratic advantage is still veto-proof, 54-26, but the GOP did post a victory. Though the state Senate was not up for election this year, Republicans won in a special election for a single seat, converting a district in the southern part of the state by defeating an appointed Democratic incumbent.

## **Virginia**

Virginia Democrats won the first major national redistricting election. As expected, the party captured both state legislative chambers from Republicans and now will be in position to re-draw the congressional, state Senate, and state House of Delegates boundaries after the next census is completed at the end of 2020. Democrats could potentially cement their recent victory into a majority for years.