

## TEXAS GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS

*November 9, 2022*

Yesterday, Texas and the nation held midterm elections. Most statewide offices, including Governor and Lt. Governor, and all State Representative seats were on the ballot, as well as every state Senate district because of recent redistricting. Five State Senators and 25 State Representatives chose not to run for re-election, meaning a third of offices in each chamber will have new lawmakers. Every seat in the U.S. House of Representatives was also on the ballot, as well as a third of U.S. Senators, but neither Senator from Texas was facing the voters.

Typically, the party in power in the White House loses congressional seats in a midterm election, which trickles down ballot to state house races as well. With inflationary issues being present in many voters' minds, and President Joe Biden underwater in terms of popularity, the GOP was expected to make gains across the board. However, the *Dobbs* decision on abortion and the Uvalde school shooting tragedy created an incentive for Democratic turnout, perhaps to stem the tide.

Nationally, the Democrats may still lose the U.S. House and Senate – some races are still too close to call – but basically held their own, which is a victory in and of itself. The big GOP gains in Congress never materialized, and several governorships flipped or remained in Democratic hands, despite well-funded efforts. Predictors of a “Red Wave” sweeping the country largely missed the mark.

In Texas, however, it was generally a strong showing for the Republicans. Every statewide office remained in GOP hands, as they have since 1994, and most Republican candidates coasted to victory. Perhaps the lone bright spot for Democrats was that the votes in the Rio Grande Valley were a bipartisan affair, despite many predictions of RGV becoming a Republican stronghold. There were robust showings by some Republican underdogs like Adam Hinojosa in SD 27, but incumbent U.S. Rep. Mayra Flores (R-Los Indios), who secured the 34<sup>th</sup> Congressional District in a special election in June of 2022, lost to Vicente Gonzalez (D-McAllen) in a hotly contested effort.

Here is a quick summary of the outcome:

### Statewide Races

**Governor:** Despite a significant investment by Democratic nominee Robert “Beto” O’Rourke, Gov. Greg Abbott prevailed by more than 10 points. Beto never gained the kind of traction he enjoyed in his previous U.S. Senate run in 2018 and carried some baggage from his ill-fated presidential campaign in 2020. Gov. Abbott benefited from a generally strong economic climate in Texas.

**Lt Governor:** Likewise, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick (R-Houston) prevailed handily, defeating Democratic candidate Mike Collier, who sought help from crossover GOP voters but underperformed.

**Attorney General:** In perhaps the most hotly contested statewide race, sitting AG Ken Paxton (R-McKinney) coasted to victory over Rochelle Garza (D-Brownsville), an ACLU attorney. Predictions that Paxton’s legal and

ethical challenges during his tenure would erode his support among moderate Republicans did not materialize on election night, as he prevailed by ten points.

**Comptroller:** Current Comptroller of Public Accounts Glen Hegar (R-Houston) coasted to victory against CPA Janet T. Dudding (D-Bryan/College Station), as was widely expected. Hegar was the leading vote getter among major statewide offices.

**Land Commissioner:** For this vacant seat, State Sen. Dawn Buckingham (R-Lakeway), a physician, trounced Jay Kleberg (D-Austin), a sixth-generation Texan from the prominent King Ranch clan.

**Railroad Commissioner:** Republican incumbent Wayne Christian (R-Center) had a strong showing against Luke Warford (D-Austin), a former Texas Democratic Party staffer, prevailing by fifteen points.

**Agriculture Commissioner:** Republican incumbent Sid Miller (R-Stephenville) ran away with the race against Susan Hays (D-Brownwood), a civil rights attorney.

## Texas Senate

Every incumbent Senator won re-election, most by wide margins, as generally predicted. For the open seats, the results are as follows:

**SD 10:** This Tarrant County-based seat was the only district redrawn to change party hands in the Texas Senate. State Rep. Phil King (R-Weatherford). King ran unopposed after former State Senator Beverly Powell (D-Burleson) withdrew from the race.

**SD 11:** Conservative State Rep. Mayes Middleton (R-Galveston) prevailed without a runoff in the GOP primary to replace the retiring Senator Larry Taylor. Middleton was unopposed in the general election.

**SD 12:** In this Denton-area GOP seat, which was previously held by retiring Senate Finance Committee Chair Jane Nelson (R-Flower Mound), State Rep. Tan Parker (R-Flower Mound) prevailed 60%-40% over court coordinator Francine Ly (D-Dallas).

**SD 24:** This central Texas seat was previously held by Sen. Dawn Buckingham (R-Lakeway). It was redrawn to be closer to San Antonio and picked up the hometown of former GOP State Sen. Pete Flores (R-Pleasanton), a favorite of Lt. Gov. Patrick. Flores handily defeated Kathy Jones-Hospod (D-Kerrville) by thirty points.

**SD 27:** In a closely watched race, attorney Morgan LaMantia (D-McAllen) narrowly prevailed against Adam Hinojosa (R-Corpus Christi) for the seat previously held by Senator Eddie Lucio (D-Brownsville). Lucio was generally regarded as a conservative Democrat, and South Texas had been widely predicted to turn redder this election cycle. Nonetheless, LaMantia appears at this juncture to have secured the seat 50.16%-49.84%.

**SD 31:** In this panhandle-based seat previously held by retiring Senator Kel Seliger (R-Amarillo), oil & gas executive Kevin Sparks (R-Midland) ran unopposed in the general election. His victory shifts the political power of this seat southward for the first time.

## Texas House of Representatives

There were very few surprises in the Texas House as well. Among seats with incumbents running for re-election, races of note include:

**HB 45:** Incumbent Rep. Erin Zweiner (D-Driftwood) handily prevailed over City Council member Michelle Lopez (R-Kyle).

**HD 108:** Incumbent Rep. Morgan Meyer (R-Dallas) easily held off Elizabeth Ginsberg (D-Dallas) in a district reconfigured during redistricting to be more Republican.

**HD 118:** In a tight 51.8%-48.2% contest, incumbent Rep. John Lujan (R-San Antonio) again bested Frank Ramirez (D-San Antonio) in a rematch from last year's special election.

**HB 121:** Tenured Rep. Steve Allison (R-San Antonio) coasted to victory against Becca Moyer DeFelice (D-San Antonio) by a ten-point margin.

**HB 134:** Rep. Ann Johnson (D-Houston) will make her second trip back to Austin, emerging victorious against Ryan McConnico (R-Houston).

**HB 138:** Rep. Lacey Hull (R-Houston) also earned her second term in the statehouse by turning back Stephanie Morales (D-Houston).

Among the open seats, some of the more notable races included:

**HD 17:** For this central Texas-area seat, Stan Gerdes (R-Bastrop), a former staffer for Gov. Rick Perry, prevailed over Madeline Eden (D-Bastrop).

**HD 19:** Realtor and former Austin City Council member Ellen Troxclair (R-Austin) coasted to victory over Pam Baggett (D-Austin) in this western Travis County seat.

**HD 37:** Janie Lopez (R-San Benito) turned back former Senate staffer Luis Villarreal, Jr. (D-Harlingen) in this Valley district, flipping a seat previously held by Democrat Alex Dominguez.

**HD 61:** Former police officer Fredrick Frazier (R-McKinney) defeated Sheena King (D-Frisco).

**HD 63:** City Council member Ben Bumgarner (R-Flower Mound) overcame H. Denise Wooten (D-Flower Mound).

**HD 65:** Also in North Texas, Kronda Thimesch (R-Denton) coasted to victory against Brittney Verdell (D-Carrollton).

**HD 70:** In one of the more hotly contested races, Jamee Jolly (R-Plano) was narrowly bested by former House staffer Mihaela Elizabeth Plesa (D-Dallas) by a 50.7%-49.3% margin. This flips a seat previously held by Rep. Scott Sanford (R-McKinney).

**HD 76:** Suleman Lanlani (D-Sugar Land), a physician, beat Dan Mathews (R-Sugar Land) for this Houston-area seat, which was previously drawn in the El Paso area, but held by a Democrat.

**HD 92:** Salman Bhojani (D-Euless), a lawyer, defeated realtor Joe Livingston (R-Arlington), flipping this North Texas seat previously held by Rep. Jeff Cason.

**HD 114:** Former U.S. Congressman John Bryant (D-Dallas) won this Dallas-area seat that was vacated by Rep. John Turner by defeating Sarah Lamb (R-Dallas), who has placed on the ballot after GOP primary winner Mark Hajdu was removed for not meeting residency requirements.

**HD 122:** Mark Dorazio (D-San Antonio), a former GOP County Chair, bested Angi Aramburu (D-San Antonio) for the right to replace the retiring Rep. Lyle Larson.

**HD 133:** In western Harris County, Mano DeAyala (R-Houston) held off Mohamed Maarouf (D-Houston) to replace retiring incumbent Jim Murphy.

## Nationally

From a national perspective, Democrats were widely predicted to lose control of both the House and the Senate. As the dust settles, that has yet to be decided. The Republicans still seem poised to take the lower chamber, but the upper chamber could still go either way, while the Democrats were successful in several key gubernatorial races in swing states. Among the most watched races, victories included:

### **Governorships:**

**AZ:** Democrat Katie Hobbs seems to have narrowly prevailed against GOP candidate Kari Lake.

**GA:** Brian Kemp (R) handily defeated Stacey Abrams (D).

**MI:** Gretchen Whitmer (D) secured re-election by knocking off Republican Tudor Dixon.

**PN:** Democrat Josh Shapiro handily won his race against Doug Mastriano (R).

### **U.S. Senate:**

**AZ:** Mark Kelly (D) prevailed over Blake Masters (R).

**GA:** In a race that may head to a runoff, incumbent Democrat Sen. Ralph Warnock is ahead the slimmest of margins over Republican Herschel Walker.

**OH:** Republican J.D. Vance overcame Democrat Tim Ryan.

**PN:** John Fetterman (D) seems to have secured victory over Dr. Mehmet Oz (R).

## What This All Means...

**Statewide:** With no major surprises at the top of the state tickets thus far, expect the status quo from the Texas political leadership. Gov. Abbott had perhaps the most formidable challenge of his electoral career vs. Beto O'Rourke, but his comfortable victory suggest most Texans are generally pleased with his stewardship. The GOP continuing its unbroken winning streak at the statewide level will be perceived as a mandate for staying the course, by and large.

**Texas Senate:** The Senate is presently composed of 18 Republicans and 13 Democrats, but the election appears to have delivered a final split of 19 - 12 favoring the GOP. Because the Senate previously reduced the threshold needed to move legislation from 21 to 18, this in and of itself won't change how the Senate functions. However, the Senate lost several tenured, more centrist members and is picking up some very conservative voices. This suggests that Lt. Gov. Patrick, already among the state's most conservative leaders, will further solidify his grip on the Senate.

Some structural changes to the Senate are likely to take place. There will be an effort to push out Democratic chairmen – a move backed by the state Republican party and which scored well among the party faithful on the primary ballot. And with so many freshmen limiting the pool of GOP chairs, watch for mergers among Senate committees, with Jurisprudence perhaps folded into State Affairs, and a consolidation of the Natural Resources and Water/Ag/Rural Affairs committees.

**House of Representatives:** Pre-election, the partisan split in the Texas House was 86 Republicans and 64 Democrats, and after all of this, it remains exactly the same - Janie Lopez (R-San Benito) picked up HD 37 for the Republicans, and Mihaela Plesa (D-Dallas) secured HD 70 for the Democrats. Like the upper chamber, this does not crest any meaningful procedural threshold that modifies how the House functions. Absent a very unexpected turn, Speaker Dade Phelan (R-Beaumont) will remain comfortably in charge of his House colleagues and the House agenda. He does, however, face an announced challenger in Rep. Tony Tinderholt (R-Fort Worth), a Freedom Caucus conservative who argues there should be no Democratic chairs.

While the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislature in 2021 was considered among the most conservative in history, the House will likely continue to be a bulwark against the more conservative Senate. In particular, be on the lookout for House efforts to mitigate the impact of *Dobbs* decision with certain exceptions to abortion prohibitions, as well as twelve-month continuous postpartum coverage under Medicaid and other policy issues meant to benefit pregnant women and their kids.

There will be a significant number of new chairmanships, given all the turnover, and a lot of new staff. A mighty education effort on legislative priorities will need to be undertaken in order to successfully advocate among all the new faces.

**Overall:** The previously announced estimated budget surplus of \$27 Billion is likely to balloon even higher when the Comptroller next reports on the state' fiscal posture in January. This will increase pressure to lawmakers to deliver on a meaningful property tax cut, while funding other priorities – such as teacher pay raises, border security, Medicaid rates for certain providers and additional state infrastructure.

Watch for a marginal softening of position on reproductive issues and other matters that affect women and children (although gender-affirming care will likely be a hot topic). The budget surplus will fund most state priorities, subject to caps on the rate of growth of government, but should mean most tax & fee increases will be off the table.

Thank you for allowing us to be your voice at the Texas capitol. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.