2021 VIRGINIA ELECTION RECAP

Description

The November 2, 2021, Virginia elections resulted in a sweeping upset, with Republicans capturing all three statewide offices and the House of Delegates majority, ending Democratic unified control of state government.

Virginiaâ??s â??off-off yearâ?• statewide and legislative elections feature the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, and 100 seats in the House of Delegates on the ballot. Turnout is usually relatively low, though the 2019 and 2017 elections saw turnout increase dramatically, leading to Democratic unified control of state government in 2019 for the first time in a generation.

This year, with Democratic President Biden in office after former Republican President Trump, in a political environment generally perceived as unfriendly to Democrats at both the national and state levels, the elections were highly competitive. 91 of 100 House seats were contested. Final polls showed a tossup for the gubernatorial race between former Governor Terry McAuliffe (D) and political newcomer Glenn Youngkin (R), with Youngkin having clear momentum going into Election Day. Statewide and House elections broke fundraising records and drew national attention.

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Control of the governorship and House of Delegates was at stake. Record turnout was higher than in 2019 across the board, especially in Republican areas. Meanwhile, Democratic turnout was lower in traditional party bastions like Northern Virginia, as well as in key battleground suburbs like Chesterfield County and Virginia Beach. Suburban and independent voters appear to have favored Republican candidates this election.

Below is a breakdown of the statewide and House of Delegates races, followed by a preview of what to expect for next yearâ??s legislative session.

Statewide Races

Governor. Republican **Glenn Youngkin** defeated former Democratic Governor Terry McAuliffe by a little over 2 points. Third party candidate Princess Blanding garnered less than a point. McAuliffe left office in 2017 after his first term. Governors are not allowed to serve successive terms in Virginia. Youngkin is a political newcomer, a former CEO of the private equity, asset management, and financial services firm, The Carlyle Group.

Lt. Governor. Republican **Winsome Sears** defeated Democrat Hala Ayala by less than 2 points. Ayala vacated her Northern Virginia House seat to run for Lt. Governor. Sears is a former Delegate from the Norfolk and Virginia Beach area. As Lt. Governor, she will be the first Black woman elected to statewide office in Virginia.

Attorney General. Republican **Jason Miyares** defeated Democratic incumbent Mark Herring, who was running for a third term as Attorney General, by 1 point. A Cuban American, Miyares leaves his current Virginia Beach-based seat in the House of Delegates to become the first Latino elected to statewide office in Virginia.

House of Delegates

After taking control of the House of Delegates in 2019, Democrats defended their 55-45 majority on Election Day. The legislative district maps are the ones drawn by the former Republican majority, with about 20 districts affected by the 2019 court-ordered redistricting that made several more Democratic.

Republicans needed to flip 6 seats to capture the majority. Republicans flipped 7 seats, many narrowly. Two Democratic incumbents, Alex Askew and Martha Mugler, requested recounts but the election results have been subsequently confirmed.

Incumbents Who Lost (7):

Lashrecse Aird â?? District 63

Alex Askew â?? District 85

Josh Cole â?? District 28

Nancy Guy â?? District 83

Chris Hurst â?? District 11

Martha Mugler â?? District 91

Roz Tyler â?? District 75

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List of all new Delegates-Elect (17):

District 7 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Nick Rush;* Incoming Delegate-Elect: Marie March

District 9 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Charles Poindexter**; Incoming Delegate-Elect: Wren Williams

District 12 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Chris Hurst; Incoming Delegate-Elect: Jason Ballard

District 28 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Josh Cole; Incoming Delegate-Elect: Tara Durant

Delegate 45 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Mark Levine**; Incoming Delegate-Elect: Elizabeth Bennett-Parker

Delegate 50 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Lee Carter**; Incoming Delegate-Elect: Michele Maldonado

Delegate 51 â?? Outgoing Delegate Hala Ayala;* Incoming Delegate-Elect: Briana Sewell

District 63 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Lashrecse Aird; Incoming Delegate-Elect: Kim Taylor

District 66 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Kirk Cox;* Incoming Delegate-Elect: Mike Cherry

District 75 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Roslyn Tyler; Incoming Delegate-Elect: Otto Wachsmann (pharmacist)

District 79 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Steve Heretick**; Incoming Delegate-Elect: Nadarius Clark

District 82 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Jason Miyares;* Incoming Delegate-Elect: Anne Ferrell Tata

District 83 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Nancy Guy; Incoming Delegate-Elect: Tim Anderson

District 85 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Alex Askew; Incoming Delegate-Elect: Karen Greenhalgh (may go to recount)

District 86 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Ibrahim Samirah**; Incoming Delegate-Elect: Irene Shin

District 88 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Mark Cole;* Incoming Delegate-Elect: Phillip Scott

District 91 â?? Outgoing Delegate: Martha Mugler; Incoming Delegate-Elect: A.C. Cordoza (may go to recount)

*Incumbent did not seek re-election to House of Delegates.

**Defeated in primary election.

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Expected 2022 House of Delegates Partisan Composition: 52 Republicans, 48 Democrats

House Leadership. The House Republican Caucus has elected current Minority Leader Todd Gilbert as Speaker-Designee, Delegate Terry Kilgore as Majority Leader, Delegate Kathy Byron as Caucus Chair, and Delegate Jay Leftwich as Majority Whip.

The House Democratic Caucus has elected current Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn as Minority Leader and current Majority Leader Charniele Herring as Caucus Chair.

2022 Outlook General Assembly Outlook

With Republicans now slated to gain control of the Governorâ??s office and House of Delegates, we can expect a major shift in policy priorities from these arms of state government. Governor-Elect Youngkin campaigned on local education and parentsâ?? rights issues, curbing COVID-19 masking and vaccination requirements, pro-business economic and jobs policies, lowering taxes â?? including eliminating the grocery tax and suspending the gas tax â?? crime and safety, government efficiency, and regulatory reform. The Governor-Elect has appointed his transition team which is currently vetting candidates for the various Secretariates. We expect appointments to start happening soon.

Before the new Governor takes office, outgoing Democratic Governor Ralph Northam will submit his administrationâ??s final full budget to the General Assembly for the next legislative session. The Senate of Virginia is still under narrow (21-19 seats) Democratic control, with newly elected Republican Lt. Governor Sears now wielding the tie-breaking vote.

The newly created Virginia Redistricting Commission was not able to reach consensus on new legislative maps. As a result, the Supreme Court of Virginia has appointed two special masters (one from each party) to draw the maps for court approval. Depending on the approval timeline and potential litigation, Virginia may schedule another round of House elections next year based on the new maps. The first set of maps were released on December 8th and can be found here: https://www.vacourts.gov/courts/scv/districting/maps_special_masters.pdf

It is expected, though not confirmed, that the General Assembly will convene in-person for the 2022 session. We also expect their offices to be open to the public though there may be maximum occupancy limitations. Each office will also likely create their own visitation and masking policies. Because of the change in majority rule in the House we are also awaiting the appointment of new committee and sub-committee chairs. Those are generally made available on the first day of session although the Speaker-Designee has stated he will release the names of select committee chairs beforehand. So far, we know that Delegate Barry Knight will be the new chair of the Appropriations Committee.

As we get deeper into the pre-legislative season we will keep you informed of developments. Once the Governorâ??s budget is released later this month we will report on anything that may effect the industry. Additionally, we expect legislation to begin coming in and we will review those for the same.

James Pickeral
Founding Partner, has more than two decades of experience in government affairs- with a focus on legislative and regulatory health care issues. He has worked with clients in the economic development, renewable and alternative energy, and pharmaceutical industries. James previously served as Manager of State Government Affairs for Troutman Sanders Strategies and the Director of Policy for the Virginia Pharmacists Association. James spent three legislative sessions as Legislative Assistant to Delegate John Oâ??Bannon.

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