ARIZONA ELECTION RECAP

The "blue wave" broke in Arizona, with Democrats winning every statewide election.

For the first time since 1948, Arizona has two Democratic senators—Ruben Gallego and Mark Kelly; Democrats as Attorney General (Kris Mayes re-elected), Secretary of State (Adrian Fontes re-elected), and Governor (Katie Hobbs re-elected); and Democrats in control of both chambers of the Arizona State Legislature. With the governorship and both legislative chambers, Democrats now hold a state government trifecta, and with the Governor, Attorney General, and Secretary of State, a state government triplex. Democrats have not controlled both legislative chambers since 1966.

Election officials continue to count votes, with results expected to be tallied until the week of November 16th. It is likely that 17 seats in the Arizona Legislature have shifted from Republican to Democratic control. Democrats flipped 7 seats in the Arizona Senate, cementing a 20-10 supermajority. In the House, Democrats flipped 10 seats and currently hold a 37-23 majority, with LD-25 and LD-27 still too close to call as of November 10, 2026. Thirteen Republican incumbents appear to have lost their bids for reelection.

Democrats won the races for Mine Inspector (Brian Matlock), notwithstanding that the incumbent Republican was appointed by the Democratic Governor; Superintendent of Public Instruction (Teresa Leyba Ruiz); and State Treasurer (Eli Mansour). Democrats also won both open races for Arizona Corporation Commissioner on the ballot this year, changing the Commission's makeup from five Republicans to three Republicans and two Democrats. However, the five-member Commission will remain under Republican control.

In tight contests for United States Congress, voters have selected Democratic candidates Amish Shah and Joanna Mendoza over their Republican competitors. Republican Congressman Eli Crane won narrowly in a district that is generally not competitive. Republican Mark Lamb and Congressman Abe Hamadeh also won their elections in districts that are not generally competitive. It appears the delegation will consist of 5 Democrats and 4 Republicans.

Perhaps the illustrative victory of the election was that of 19-year-old Democratic candidate Sebastian Matta, who became the new Clerk of the Superior Court for Maricopa County, defeating the far-more-experienced Senator Jeff Dial. The Clerk manages record-keeping, finances, and administrative operations for the courts of the fourth largest county in the U.S. Matta was featured on Jimmy Kimmel in a virtual interview, where he explained he lives in his parents' home while attending Arizona State University as a sophomore. It is an interview worth watching.

In an election that heavily favored Democrats, legislative Republicans did win policy victories on several statewide ballot measures they referred to voters. Though some outcomes are still too close to call, Arizona voters are currently passing the following ballot propositions:

- Proposition 141, which amends the State Constitution to prohibit taxation on motor vehicle miles traveled and prohibits the State Legislature from making laws limiting miles traveled in a motor vehicle.

- Proposition 316, which prohibits local governments from enacting a grocery tax without voter approval through June 2027 and caps any new or increased grocery tax at 2 percent.
- Proposition 317, which designates drug cartels as terrorist organizations and directs the Arizona Department of Homeland Security to do everything in its power to address threats posed by drug cartels.
- Proposition 318, which bars transgender students, athletes, employees, and visitors from joining sports teams or using school or athletic association facilities not designated for their sex assigned at birth.
- Proposition 319, which prohibits municipalities and government agencies from installing new photo traffic enforcement systems without voter approval and requires voter approval at the next general election and every ten years thereafter for any systems signed into contract before December 31, 2026.

Arizona voters are currently rejecting the following ballot propositions:

- Proposition 142, which would have amended the Arizona Constitution to prohibit preferential or discriminatory treatment of a person based on race, ethnicity, or other class.
- Proposition 144, which would have amended the Arizona Constitution to require photo identification and proof of citizenship to vote.
- Proposition 320, which would have required large school districts to spend at least 60% of their budget on "direct instructional expenses"

Organizational Meetings

Democrats will set the policy priorities for the next two years of Arizona's legislative term and will control the way in which policies are considered. Some Democrats, frustrated by Republicans' efforts to sideline almost all their bills, have pledged to take a more bipartisan approach to policy conversations once they are empowered to set committee agendas and voting schedules; however, groups who backed their victories are not necessarily on the same page.

Both Republicans and Democrats are meeting (or will be soon) to elect their new leadership. So far, we know that the new House Speaker will be Rep. Oscar De Los Santos. Rep. Nancy Gutierrez will be Majority Leader. Rep. Brian Garcia and Rep. Kevin Volk will be co-Majority Whips, and Rep. Quanta Crews will be Speaker Pro Tempore. The House Minority will be led by current Speaker Steve Montenegro, with Rep. Michael Carbone as Assistant Minority Leader and Rep. Lupe Diaz as Minority Whip.

Senate Democrats are expected to choose Senator Priya Sundareshan, their current caucus leader, as the next Senate President. Rumors abound regarding the other leadership roles, but likely names include Senator-elect Alma Hernandez, Senator-elect Christine Marsh, Sen. Analise Ortiz, Sen. Rosana Gabaldon, and Sen. Contreras. The Senate Minority will likely be led by Sen. John Kavanagh, with Sen. Mark Finchem as Assistant Minority Leader and Sen. Frank Carroll as Minority Whip.