

## Synopsis of Ohio Elections

### *Statewide Races*

#### **Governor (Open Seat)**

**Ted Strickland (D)**

Ken Blackwell (R)

The race for Governor in Ohio was never in doubt on Election Day. Democrat Ted Strickland had been leading in the polls since he entered the race and only widened his margin in the final vote tally. This election marks the first time in sixteen years that the Governor's office will be held by a Democrat.

#### **Attorney General (Open Seat)**

**Marc Dann (D)**

Betty Montgomery (R)

In perhaps the most stunning upset of the night, long time statewide office holder Betty Montgomery was narrowly defeated by Democratic State Senator Marc Dann. This race was believed to be a forgone conclusion early in the race but got increasingly tighter as polls showed Democrats in general doing better and Republicans doing poorly. This race was almost certainly affected by the Tom Noe scandal as Dann successfully tied Montgomery to the rare coin dealer.

#### **Auditor of State (Open Seat)**

**Mary Taylor (R)**

Barbara Sykes (D)

The only successful Republican statewide candidate, Mary Taylor ran a campaign that highlighted her qualifications for the job of State Auditor. In addition her campaign ran ads that depicted her opponent as someone who supported and voted for tax increases. That mixture was enough to buck the Democratic trend and win the Auditor's office for Mary Taylor.

#### **Secretary of State (Open Seat)**

**Jennifer Brunner (D)**

Greg Hartmann (R)

In one of the most important and overlooked statewide races, Democrat Jennifer Brunner seizes control of the state's chief elections office and will run as an incumbent for this apportionment board seat in 2010. Despite an aggressive grassroots effort, Hartman fell behind in fundraising, and Brunner hit her stride late in the race. This promised to be a contest of Hartmann's money versus Brunner's experience, but once Brunner won the fundraising contest, the race was all but over.

**Treasurer of State (Open Seat)**  
**Rich Cordray (D)**  
Sandra O'Brien (R)

After upsetting incumbent Jeannette Bradley in the May primary, few pundits gave Republican Sandra O'Brien a shot at defeating fundraising superstar, Rich Cordray in the general election. The talking heads were right, as Cordray proceeded to build and spend a huge bankroll and trounce the scrappy O'Brien.

**Supreme Court (Incumbent: Terrence O'Donnell)**  
**Terrence O'Donnell (R)**  
William O'Neill (D)

Democrats wrote this one off early as O'Neill refused to accept campaign contributions and basically forfeited any real chance of winning. O'Donnell capitalized on a great political name and his prior experience on the Supreme Court to win going away.

**Supreme Court (Open Seat)**  
**Robert Cupp (R)**  
Ben Espy (D)

In the more competitive and intriguing of the Supreme Court races, two former state senators ran a mostly amicable, issue-oriented campaign. Strong backing from party loyalists helped buoy the likable Cupp over the well qualified and former OSU football star Espy.

**State Issue 2- Minimum Wage Increase**  
**APPROVED**

In a race in which few seemed interested, small businesses ran a half-hearted campaign against a strong populist issue. Despite the General Assembly raising the minimum wage in statute earlier this year, voters easily approved this constitutional amendment which also calls for an annual cost of living adjustment to the wage.

**State Issue 3- Learn and Earn**  
**FAILED**

Despite being outspent nearly 20-1, religious leaders cobbled together a hodgepodge coalition to successfully oppose slots at racetracks. Proponents capitalized on public frustration with rising college tuition, but Ohioans just aren't ready to gamble within their own borders. Although tracking polls showed this issue being close, the no's came out in force to easily defeat the constitutional amendment.

## **Issues 4 and 5**

**Issue 4 – FAILED**

**Issue 5 – APPROVED**

In what can only be termed as an amazing outcome voters chose between two different smoking bans on Election Day. Issue 4, which was supported by bar owners and the tobacco industry, was defeated by a wide margin. Issue 4 would have allowed for smoking in bars and restaurants but was thoroughly panned by public health officials around the state as the “not” smoking ban. On the other hand Issue 5, which was supported by the Heart and Lung Association, outlaws smoking in all public places in Ohio. This prohibition would include all bars and restaurants and ends the patchwork of local smoking bans throughout the state. Election experts gave little chance that the electorate would be able to choose between the two and forecasted that both issues would either fail or pass together. This forecast was proven very wrong.

### *Ohio Senate*

#### **Senate District 3 (Incumbent: David Goodman)**

**David Goodman (R)**

Emily Krider (D)

A district, targeted by Democrats for a possible pick up, the numbers began breaking in favor of Senator Goodman early in October. No doubt that a heavy advertising blitz and grassroots efforts resulted in a win for the incumbent.

#### **Senate District 5 (Incumbent: Tom Roberts)**

**Tom Roberts (D)**

Donald McLaurin (R)

This district was target by Republicans for a possible pick up. Only marginally Democratic, Republicans thought that with an infusion of caucus dollars they may have a chance of knocking off the incumbent. However, in hindsight, with the Democratic victories at the top of the ticket there was little chance of picking up the seat from a popular and well known incumbent.

#### **Senate District 13 (Open District)**

**Sue Morano (D)**

Martha Wise (R)

This seat has been held by the thinnest of margins in the last two elections. Senator-elect Morano lost a tight race in 2002 to incumbent Jeffery Armbruster. Democrats believed that the odds were in their favor this year. That thinking was proven correct with Ms. Morano winning by a wide margin.

**Senate District 27 (Incumbent: Kevin Coughlin)**

**Kevin Coughlin (R)**

Judy Hanna (D)

In a competitive district, Republicans successfully defended incumbent, Coughlin. A strong Democratic showing in Summit County could not overcome a stronger grassroots effort and a healthy dose of campaign cash from the Senate Republican Caucus.

**Senate District 29 (Incumbent: Kirk Schuring)**

**Kirk Schuring (R)**

Thomas West (D)

Although a politically competitive district, Schuring remains one of its most popular political figures. The moderate Republican continues to “vote his district” and stave off stern opposition.

**Senate District 31 (Open Seat)**

**Tim Schaffer (R)**

Dennis Luper (D)

Despite the heavy Republican make up of the district, Democrats were hopeful that upstart candidate Luper could contest the open seat. Republican State Representative Schaffer showed that the GOP still reigns in the suburbs south and east of Columbus.

*Ohio House of Representatives*

**House District 1 (Open Seat)**

**Linda Bolon (D)**

Jim Hoppel (R)

Democrats believed from the beginning of this campaign that they had a good chance of picking up this single county district that was barely held by an incumbent Republican in the last election. That belief was proven correct. No doubt one of the most important factors in this win was the popularity of Ted Strickland who currently represents the county in Congress.

**House District 16 (Open Seat)**

**Jennifer Brady (D)**

Edward Herman (R)

Republican Sally Kilbane’s exit from the legislature due to term limits made this an open seat. Normally a strong Republican seat, this race came down to the wire. No doubt that Democratic turnout, and a lack of a Republican incumbent, has thrown this district to the Democrats.

**House District 17 (Open Seat)**  
**Josh Mandel (R)**  
Roger Goudy (D)

With a marginally Republican index, this was a targeted race for both sides coming into election night. However, Republican Josh Mandel was able to raise a tremendous amount of money and benefited from a strong grassroots organization and was able to win by a fairly wide margin.

**House District 20 (Incumbent: Jim McGregor)**  
**Jim McGregor (R)**  
Beverly Campbell (D)

Formerly a safe Republican seat, this district has seen an erosion of Republican support over the last several elections. This fact coupled with a strong Democratic showing threw this race into doubt as the election neared. Incumbent Jim McGregor was able to come out with a win due to a strong advertising campaign which saturated the Columbus media market.

**House District 21 (Open Seat)**  
**Kevin Bacon (R)**  
Keith Hernandez (D)

A seat left open due to the retirement of Republican Linda Reidelbach, the Democrats felt confident that this was a seat that they had a chance of winning. The candidates both fought for the moderate vote as the district has been trending less conservative in recent years. Republican Kevin Bacon wins the seat because he won the battle for the moderates through strong grassroots and advertising.

**House District 22 (Incumbent: Jim Hughes)**  
**Jim Hughes (R)**  
John Carney (D)

This district, which encompasses the north-western corner of Franklin County, is normally a slam dunk for Republicans. This year, however, the incumbent Hughes found himself in a tight race right up to the end. Strong media buys on his behalf and hard work at the grassroots level distanced him from Carney on election night.

**House District 24 (Incumbent: Geoffrey Smith)**  
**Ted Celeste (D)**  
Geoffrey Smith (R)

Historically this district, which is made up of Upper Arlington, Grandview and a portion of Columbus, has been a Republican strong hold. However, in recent years, the index has tightened considerably and as a result this district was targeted by Democrats. Several factors went into Celeste's win but most important were his name ID and his ability to fund advertisements.

**House District 43 (Open Seat)**  
**Steve Dyer (D)**  
Christine Croce (R)

This seat became open when incumbent Mary Taylor decided to run for State Auditor. Sliming indexes in recent years and the tremendous success for Democrats at the top of the statewide ticket converged to turn this historically Republican district into a Democratic pick up.

**House District 57 (Incumbent: Earl Martin)**  
**Matt Lundy (D)**  
Earl Martin (R)

Democrats pick up a seat they have long coveted in Democrat-leaning Lorain County. The blow is even harder for the Republican Martin who was rumored to have a leadership slot in sight in future General Assemblies.

**House District 58 (Incumbent: Dan White)**  
**Matthew Barrett (D)**  
Dan White (R)

Despite being appointed earlier in the year, incumbency was no help to White. In a seat that Republicans have held solidly, this upset sends ripples throughout the House.

**House District 63 (Incumbent: Tim Cassell)**  
**Carol-Ann Schindel (R)**  
Tim Cassell (D)

Cassell is the only incumbent House Democrat to fall. Despite cries of foul play from the Dems, House Republicans hammered Cassell over an ugly DUI incident. In a nasty race, the House GOP gladly walks away with their only upset.

**House District 64 (Incumbent: Randy Law)**

**Tom Leston (D)**

Randy Law (R)

In the upset that wasn't an upset, Democrat Leston reclaims the heavily Democrat-leaning seat that the GOP rented for two years. Despite a solid reputation in the district, Law had zero chance in a terrible district and an equally bad Republican year.

**House District 72 (Incumbent: Ross McGregor)**

**Ross McGregor (R)**

Dale Henry (D)

In a heated race that saw multiple cases make their way to the Elections Commission, newly appointed Republican McGregor, hangs on with relative ease. Democrats have long lusted for this competitive seat in Springfield and thought feisty Henry would punch their ticket. Despite heavy spending by both sides, McGregor returns to the House in January.

**House District 78 (Open Seat)**

**John Adams (R)**

Adam Ward (D)

In one of the most intriguing House races of the season, John Adams wins the heavily Republican, rural 78<sup>th</sup>. Despite youth and an energetic campaign, Ward cannot follow in his former boss' footsteps and win as a Democrat. That's right. Derrick Seaver was originally elected as a Dem and later switched to the GOP. Seaver eventually endorsed Ward, the Democrat. Did the endorsement hurt or help?

**House District 91 (Open Seat)**

**Dan Dodd (D)**

William Hayes (R)

In the ugliest political race in the House, Dodd scores a huge upset in a district that elected arch conservative Ron Hood and once sent Speaker Larry Householder to four terms in Columbus. Cries of race baiting and Willie Horton tainted this slugfest. Some speculate that the GOP war machine went too far and doomed a candidate that seemed destined to win.