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2021 Election Recap

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, along with all 120 state legislators, were up for reelection this year. Over 2.4 million New Jerseyans and counting cast their ballots through early in-person voting for the first time this year as well as through vote by mail and traditional election day voting on November 2. This vote total represents a dismal voter turnout of just under 37%. Many of the most contested races remain too close to call.

Below is an update of the current status and results of the New Jersey Governor's race and key legislative races that were closely monitored this year. The votes are unofficial pending certification.

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2021 Governor's Race

Democrat Gov. Phil Murphy faced off against Republican Jack Ciattarelli, a CPA and former Assemblyman from Somerset County. With several statewide polls having Governor Murphy in the lead by double digits prior to Tuesday night, the election remained too close to call until Wednesday night when Phil Murphy was declared the winner by a 1% margin. Republicans overperformed in the strongholds of Ocean and Monmouth counties and Democrats underperformed in urban centers in Hudson and Essex counties leading to a nail-biting finish for Governor Murphy. The Ciattarelli campaign has yet to concede the race, citing the unknown number of ballots yet to be counted.

Legislative Makeup

Republicans had a blockbuster election night this year. In the Legislature, Democrats maintained control of the Senate by a narrower margin of 24-16 with the Senate Republicans flipping two seats for a net gain of one additional Senator. Assembly Democrats held their majority by a margin of 46-34 with the Republicans picking up six Assembly seats. Leadership positions in the Democratic and Republican caucuses were in play after a night of unexpected wins. Senator Nicholas Scutari is presumed to be leading the field of potential contenders to replace Senate President Steve Sweeney after he faced an unexpected upset from Republican challenger Edward Durr.

In the Assembly Democratic caucus, Speaker Craig Coughlin was reelected to his third term in the leadership role. Assemblyman Lou Greenwald was

reelected Majority Leader and Assemblywoman Annette Quijano was reelected as Majority Conference Leader. Assemblyman Benjie Wimberly joins the leadership as Speaker Pro-Tempore following Gordon Johnson's election to the state Senate.

Overwhelming changes in the dynamics of the Republican caucuses left the minority leadership posts up for grabs. In the Assembly, Assemblyman John DiMaio secured the votes in caucus to become the next Minority Leader over Assemblywoman Nancy Munoz. Assemblyman Ned Thomson will serve as the Republican Conference Leader and Assemblyman Antwan McClellan will serve as the Minority Whip. In the Senate, Senator Steve Oroho was elected to serve as the caucus' Minority Leader next session. Senators Bob Singer and Joe Pennacchio will serve as Deputy Minority Leaders. Kristin Corrado will serve as Conference Leader, Holly Schepisi will serve as Deputy Conference Leader and Anthony Bucco will serve as Whip. Declan O'Scanlon will serve as the Republican Budget Officer and Michael Doherty will serve as Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee.

Legislative District 2 (Atlantic County)

Former Republican Assemblyman Vince Polistina defeated Democratic Assemblyman Vince Mazzeo for the open Senate seat vacated by the retirement of Republican Senator Chris Brown. Republicans Claire Swift, a Margate attorney, and Don Guardian, a former Atlantic City mayor, have likely defeated their Democratic opponents incumbent John Armato and Atlantic County Commissioner Caren Fitzpatrick for the district's Assembly seats.

Legislative District 3 (Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties)

Democrats in the 3rd district, faced the most shocking upset of the night. Senate President Steve Sweeney lost his seat to Edward Durr, a truck driver from West Deptford by over 3%. Senate President Sweeney has yet to concede, saying voters deserve for all the votes to be counted. Incumbent Assemblymen John Burzichelli, chair of the Assembly Appropriations Committee, and Adam Taliaferro appear to have been unseated by Republican candidates Beth Sawyer, a licensed real estate professional, and Bethanne McCarthy Patrick, a retired Pennsville firefighter.

Legislative District 8 (Atlantic, Burlington and Camden counties)

Republicans had a clean sweep in the 8th district. First-term Republican

Assemblywoman and former Burlington County Sheriff Jean Stanfield defeated now-Democrat Senator Dawn Marie Addiego in her run for the Senate seat in the formerly split district. GOP Assemblyman Ryan Peters' decision to retire and Stanfield's decision to challenge Addiego in the Senate left the Assembly seats up for grabs this year. Hammonton Councilman Michael Torrissi (R) and Lumberton Township Administrator Brandon Umba (R) won their elections for the Assembly seats against Democratic attorney Mark Natale and school board member Allison Eckel.

Legislative District 11 (Monmouth County)

An all-female Republican slate had a strong showing against incumbent Democrats in the 11th district. Incumbent Democrat Senator Vin Gopal currently leads Republican challenger Lori Annetta by over 2,000 votes. Democratic Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling and Assemblywoman Joann Downey appear to have been defeated by Republican Assembly candidates Marilyn Piperno of Colts Neck and Kim Eulner of Shrewsbury.

Legislative District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset counties)

Democratic Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker has squeezed out a win over former Republican Congressman Michael Pappas by nearly 5 percentage points for the district's open Senate seat following the retirement of Republican Senator "Kip" Bateman. Democratic incumbent Assemblyman Roy Freiman and Montgomery Mayor Sadaf Jaffer hold narrow leads over Republican Vincent Panico, Hunterdon Central School Board President, and Joseph Lukac III, a Manville Councilman in their bid for the district's Assembly seats.

New Members of the Legislature

Democrats and Republicans will be welcoming several freshman members to their caucuses in January. Below is a list of the additional new members entering the legislature next year.

Senate

Jon Bramnick (R-21), former Assemblyman/Republican Minority Leader

Gordon Johnson (D-37), former Assemblyman

Assembly

Vicky Flynn (R-13)

Reginald Atkins (D-20)

Michele Matsikoudis (R-21)

Christian Barranco (R-26)

William Sampson (D-31)

Shama Haider (D-37)

Ellen Park (D-37)