

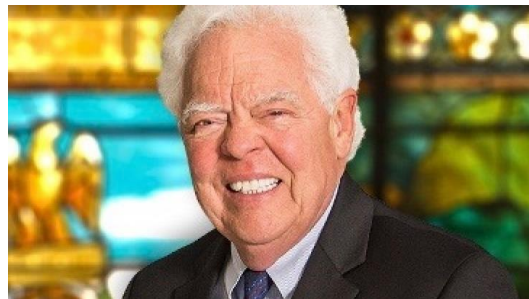
A Post Election Update - The November 2nd Results and Their Implications

By Bill Woods 11.16.21

Voters locally and across the country just cast their ballots. Since this is the first general election since the Presidential Election of 2020, political pundits are having a field day analyzing the meaning of how many of the races in various states and cities turned out. Here is a quick review of some of the results and their implications.

Locally, Cincinnati voters chose a new Mayor. After two terms in office, John Cranley steps down, and Aftab Pureval, the current Hamilton County Clerk of Courts, will replace him. Pureval defeated longtime Council member David Mann by amassing over 60-percent of the votes cast. His win makes Pureval the only Asian-American mayor in the Midwest.

Since first being elected to City Council in the 1970s, David Mann recorded a progressive record over the years as a Councilman, Mayor, Vice Mayor, and a member of Congress. In this fall's race, however, he ran as the conservative candidate. After finishing a poor second to Pureval in the May Primary, he seemed to sense that veering to the right provided him with the best opportunity of beating the Clerk of Courts.



In debates and his campaign ads, Mann stressed his experience and called attention to his opponent's credentials, which lack any time spent in City Government. In fact, he became quite belittling in a mailer to potential voters. It read: "the issues we are facing are too critical to turn over to a rookie. It's like my opponent has been learning to fly a kite as Clerk of Courts and now wants us to make him the pilot of a 747 jet airliner."

Beyond the experience issue, Mann emphasized his position of no new taxes for Cincinnati residents and his solid backing of the City's Police Department. He continued to call attention to Pureval's refusal in a debate to commit to a policy of no new taxes, and he transformed Pureval's position that police reforms should be explored into a "defund the police" stance.



"Aftab continues to bend to the will of extreme activists who call for the defunding of our police department."

Meanwhile, Pureval ran a campaign that focused on responding to critical issues confronting this City. His ads emphasized that he "has a fresh vision for Cincinnati." Part of that vision includes confronting the affordable housing crisis by finding sufficient City money to create and rehab units to effectively respond to this longstanding and growing need.

Equitable development was also stressed by Pureval. Realizing that much recent development sponsored by the City promoted gentrification that actually hurt neighborhood residents, he promised to support policies to insure "prosperity is shared in every corner of our city." Although he never advocated defunding the police, he did talk about

"implementing smarter community-based policing techniques that keep everybody safe." He also talked a lot about the pandemic's negative impact on the City, and the need to equitably rebuild community institutions such as small businesses.

Cincinnati voters also elected a new City Council. Due to the scandals that recently wracked the current Council and the fact that only one previously elected incumbent was running, big changes were expected. Would the three appointed Republican members keep their seats and possibly add two more candidates to give them their first majority in decades? Would the scandals revive, the City Charter Committee, Cincinnati's original Reform Party. Charter responded by running eight candidates, including two former Councilmen, Kevin Flynn and Jim Tarbell. And, what about all those independent candidates who were running with no party endorsement?

What the Council election really proved is that Cincinnati is very much a Democratic city.



Although six new Council members will take the oath of office, they are all endorsed Democrats. They will join incumbents Jan Michelle Lemon Kearney, Greg Landsman, and Liz Keating. Thus, the next Council will be made up of eight Democrats and one Republican. The Republican, Keating, finished ninth only 1,457 votes ahead of Michelle Dillingham, an unendorsed Democrat who also finished tenth in the previous Council election.

Besides the Democratic sweep, it is worth noting that only 24-percent of Cincinnati's voters cast ballots this year. Meanwhile, the Hamilton County Children's Services Levy and the Great Parks Levy passed easily. Issue III, the Cincinnati Charter Amendment proposal to shake up City Government, lost handily. This complex proposal included too many changes, and they did not deal directly with the recent bribery corruption indictments involving three City Council members.

Beyond Cincinnati and Hamilton County, what can be said about other elections across the country? Political pundits were fixated on the gubernatorial election in Virginia, and the victory of the Republican candidate has caused a great wringing of hands. It probably does mean that the Biden Administration and the small Democratic majorities in the Senate and House of Representatives need to carve out some achievements such as passing the Build Back Better Bill. The Democratic Party must show it can govern effectively, and it cannot depend on fear and antagonism toward Trump and his current hold on the GOP to assure them victories at the polls.

One missing issue in this election cycle seems to be how best to preserve democracy in this country. The refusal of Trump and many Republican leaders to accept the results of the last Presidential Election hovers over our public life. The attack on the Capital on January 6th now seems an acceptable act by too many extremists who prefer violence and white autocracy to a diverse democracy that includes the voices of African-Americans, Hispanic -Americans, and Asian -Americans as well as those of Euro-White Americans. This dangerous trend must be

kept in check by reformers, who need to actively advocate for pro-democracy reforms such as the Voting Rights Bills that are now stymied in the U.S. Senate.