

Virginia 2023 Election Analysis

To flip both chambers, Republicans needed to win all 3 key Senate races and 4 out of 7 key State House races. Mathematically, the Senate started as the harder chamber to flip as McAuliffe won one of the key seats by 5%. The House, however, had 6 Youngkin seats up for grabs. Analysis shows that money and messaging were the keys to the Democrats' victory.

Spending

Democrats outspent Republicans in 2 of the 3 key Senate seats, by an average of \$300k. In seats we lost in the House, Democrats outspent Republicans by an average of \$605k.

Messaging

Democrats focused their attacks on abortion. Approximately 60% of ads run by Democrats were about abortion. Republican attacks were a little less concentrated, but Crime still lead with approx. 45% of Republican ads being about Crime.

One of the key standouts in watching the ads is a lack of response by Republicans when being attacked. The key Senate race we won (SD-24) was the only Senate race where the Republican pushed back attacks by Democrats. Neither of the two key Senate races we lost pushed back attacks in ads.

On the House-side, among key races, there were two (HD-82 and HD-97) campaigns that pushed back abortion attacks. In HD-97 the Republican candidate attempted to push back attacks but was outspent by a staggering \$1.7 million and lost. The HD-82 winner, Kim Taylor, was the only Republican who rejected the 15-week abortion plan. She was the only Republican, House or Senate, who both pushed back abortion attacks and counter-attacked on abortion messaging about Democrat extremism. Taylor was also the only Republican in a key House seat to outspend the Democrat.

Turnout

Early indications point to evangelical turnout being down in 2023 compared to non-evangelical turnout. Analyzing county-level turnout as a proportion of 2020 turnout shows that turnout in the least evangelical counties was at 60% of 2020 vs turnout in the most evangelical counties was at 44% of 2020.

Using the same measure, a look at Presidential support shows that Biden counties turned out at 56% of 2020 and Trump counties turned out at 58% of 2020.

Early Voting

Efforts to push Republicans to vote early appear to show mixed news for Republicans. 67% of Reps who voted early, also voted early in 2021 (vs. 74% for Dems). Democrats did a better job than Republicans of turning out low and mid-propensity voters early; Democrats turned out 5% more low propensity early voters and 7% more mid-propensity early voters. 52% of Republicans had primary vote history vs. 43% for Dems. So, it appears that the Republicans did add more first-time early voters than the Democrats but also appears that Dems moved more people who may not have otherwise voted onto early voting.

Appendix

Key Senate Races

SD-30	6% LOSS	(McAuliffe +5)
SD-31	4% LOSS	(Youngkin +1)
SD 24	1% WIN	(Youngkin +4)

Key House Races

HD58	10% LOSS	(Youngkin +8)
HD65	6% LOSS	(Youngkin +3)
HD84	6% LOSS	(McCauliffe +3)
HD21	4% LOSS	(Youngkin +6)
HD97	4% LOSS	(Youngkin +2)
HD57	2% WIN	(Youngkin +11)
HD82	0.2% WIN	(Youngkin +2)

Early Voters

Republicans

- 67% also voted early in 2021
- 52% prime voters
- 11% voted in 50%+ primaries
- 10% were low propensity
- 71% were mid propensity
- 19% were high propensity

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Democrats

- 74% also voted early in 2021
- 43% prime voters
- 3% voted in 50%+ primaries
- 15% were low propensity
- 78% were mid propensity
- 7% were high propensity