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# News From The States

# EVENING WRAP



By [Kate Queram](#)

**Programming note:** Later this month, we will be switching to a new platform for delivering our newsletters. It should look the same on your end, but adding our email address to your contact list is the most surefire way to keep us at the top of your inbox. If you notice any disruption to service, please reach out directly. Thanks, and wish us luck!

I complain a lot about government (because ... look at it), but I will say this: In any given month in America, there's an election to discuss\*, and that is a wonderful thing\*\*.

\*You could, for example, discuss the 2020 election whenever you want, at length, endlessly, even though it was three full years ago!

\*\*I couldn't even get through one single paragraph without making a joke at the government's expense. (I'm not even sorry.)



## The Big Takeaway

Today's election results come to us from Louisiana, where voters headed to the polls Saturday (not a typo) for a winner-take-all [statewide primary](#) where candidates from each party compete head-to-head in hopes of winning a majority of votes and, with it, the election. If no one clinches a majority, the top two candidates advance to a run-off election six weeks later. Think of it less as a primary than a general election, with some run-offs sprinkled in as needed.

**At least three of Saturday's contests will advance to a second election in November**, giving voters a second opportunity to select a state [treasurer](#), [attorney general](#), and [secretary of state](#).

But no follow-up was needed in the governor's race, where Republican Attorney General Jeff Landry surged to victory with 52% of the statewide vote in a crowded field that included two Democrats, seven GOPers and a right-leaning independent, [the Louisiana Illuminator reported](#).



*Louisiana Gov.-elect Jeff Landry, reveling in the taste of outright victory.*

*(Photo by Travis Gauthier/for the Louisiana Illuminator)*

“Tonight’s election was historic,” Landry told supporters at a victory party. “Tonight’s election says we are united.”

Landry, a MAGA-approved conservative, will replace the term-limited Gov. John Bel Edwards, the lone Democratic governor in the otherwise ruby-red Deep South. His likeliest Democratic successor, former Louisiana transportation secretary Shawn Wilson, captured just 26% of the primary vote; far less than expected in a state where Democrats comprise 40% of the electorate. The early returns were a massive victory for Republicans, who said Landry’s win portended a statewide embrace of conservative politics.

“I think the state has decided to make a turn to the right politically,” said Louisiana Republican Party Chairman Louis Gurch. “It’s time for a change.”

**Eh, maybe.** The [GOP's strong performance](#) Saturday likely benefited quite a bit from paltry turnout, which topped out at 35.8% — a 10-point difference from 2019. Edwards highlighted the “historically bad” numbers [in a statement on Sunday](#), imploring voters to please get off their butts and participate in next month’s election to prevent MAGA-endorsed candidates like Landry from sweeping into office and wreaking havoc on the state.

“Nearly 300,000 fewer people voted than in 2019’s open primary,” Edwards said. “I know our current politics are ugly, but they will only get uglier if we disengage and allow the most partisan, extreme voices to dominate.”



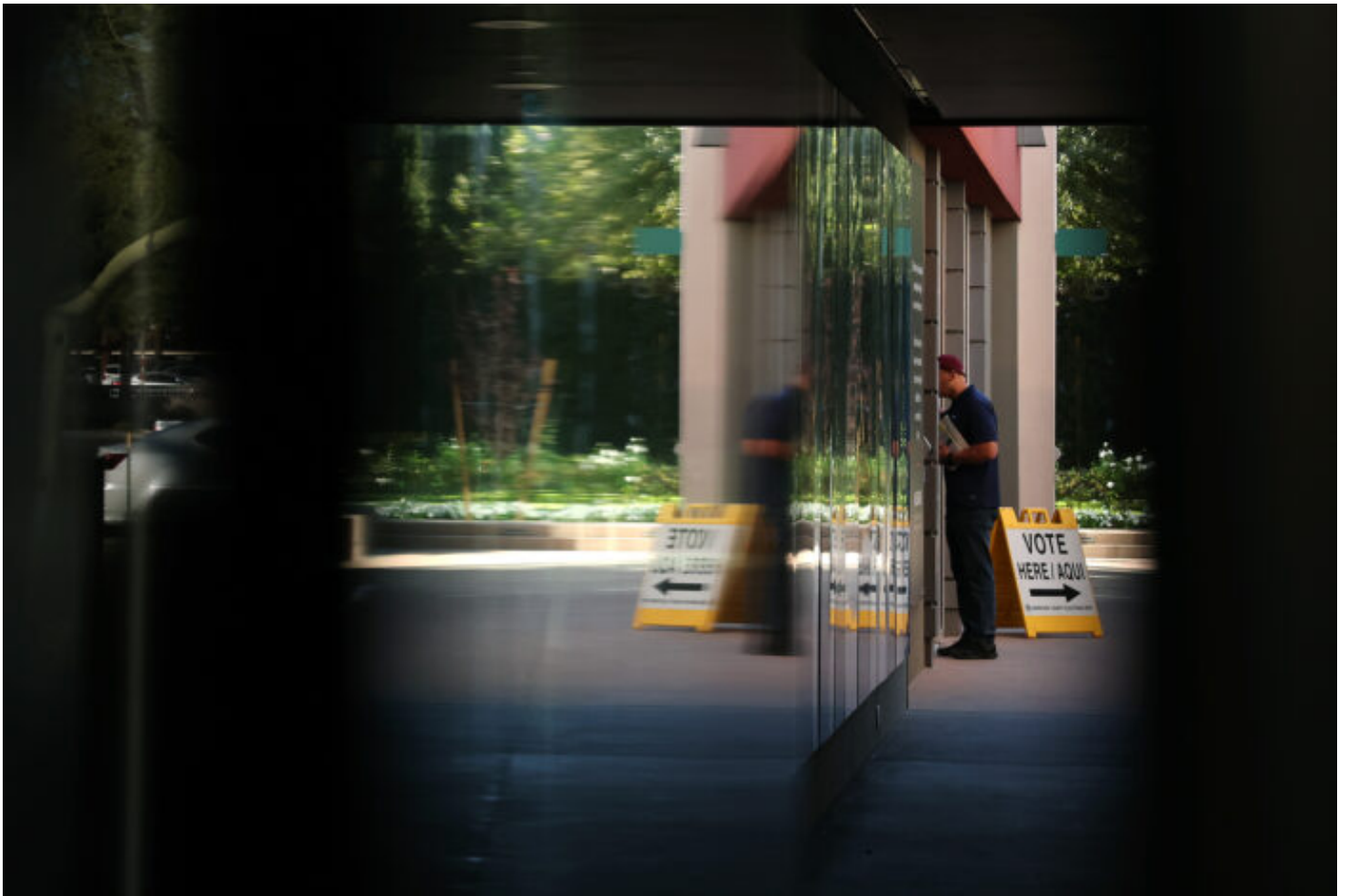
*“They’ll give you a sticker and everything.”*

*(Photo by Getty Images)*

**There will be no primary election for 2024 presidential candidates in Idaho**, which will pivot to a caucus system after Republicans [unintentionally canceled](#) the contest and then missed a deadline to reinstate it. The state’s political parties will each run a nominating caucus — Republicans on March 2, followed by Democrats on May 23, two days after the regularly scheduled primary election for state legislative races, [the Idaho Capital Sun reported](#).

**Both parties have held caucuses before** — most recently, in 2012 (Republicans) and 2016 (Democrats) — but moved away from the format due to rules that require voters to attend in person, at a limited number of locations, on a specific date and time. The regulations resulted in logjams, with voters at some sites waiting outside for hours just to get in the door. Given the history, experts said, it's surprising that lawmakers [didn't reconvene](#) to fix the problem.

“The question is why were they not interested in greater participation by the citizenry, because they had it within their power to accomplish that by reinstating the primary,” said David Adler, a political scientist who has taught government and constitutional law at universities in Idaho.



*AND ONLY HERE*

*(Photo by Getty Images)*

**Theoretically, the caucus process allows voters more time to deliberate** and engage with candidates, campaign officials and each other. But that's only a plus if voters can, or want to, dedicate the time to the process. Typically, most of them don't, said Jaclyn Kettler, an associate professor of political science at Boise State University.

“Because primary elections generally reduce barriers to voting, they have higher turnout,” she

said. “In most presidential nominating contests, states with primary elections have higher turnout than those with caucuses.”

**That’s been true in Idaho.** Turnout among Republican voters increased fivefold from the [2012 caucus](#) (44,672) to the [2016 primary](#) (225,000), according to state data. If that trend continues, it might be a problem for Republicans, who could be held responsible for selecting a format that actively limits voter participation, Adler said.

“It may make the open primary ballot initiative all the more attractive to them because it will ensure their opportunity to play a bigger role in our democratic system,” Adler said.

**Voter suppression for thee, not for me:** [Reproductive rights advocates say Arizona Senate candidate Kari Lake is spreading ‘blatant lies’ about abortion](#) ... [Three seconds to spot fraud? Testing Arizona’s ballot signature checking process](#) ... [Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in Iowa: I won’t let Gaza refugees into the U.S.](#) ... [\(Georgia\) Fulton 19 update: Juror screening nears in Trump RICO case, Coffee emails, DA spars with House Rep](#) ... [Patton departs elective Kansas politics holding to centrist roots, less burdened by critics](#) ... [Kansas professors/fans: Musician Taylor Swift poised to raise political voice in 2024](#) ... [Louisiana voters approve four amendments to state constitution](#) ... [Montana licenses PragerU for classrooms, watchdog weary of ‘extremist’ content](#) ... [Nevada Gov. Joe Lombardo parrots Cuomo in effort to invalidate Ethics Commission](#) ... [Ahead of primary, nearly 4,000 Democratic New Hampshire voters switch affiliation to Republican or undeclared](#) ... [Attorney Hilary Harris Klein on North Carolina’s new and restrictive new voting and election laws](#) ... [Ohio’s Republican U.S. Senate candidates clash over foreign policy in first forum](#) ... [GOP lawmakers say Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro’s response to harassment case shows room for improvement](#) ... [West Virginia Democrats face an uphill battle as they try to fill a ballot for the 2024 election](#) ... [Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Rebecca Bradley to speak at Federalist Society conference](#)

## Also Trending

In hopes of boosting declining enrollment, at least six Virginia universities now offer guaranteed admission to high school seniors who achieve a certain GPA. The most recent addition is Virginia Commonwealth University, where [any first-year freshman applicant](#) with a 3.5 GPA who ranks in the top 10% of their graduating class will automatically qualify for admission.

“The guaranteed university admission program will easily connect top-performing high school graduates with a nationally ranked major research university,” Hernan Bucheli, an interim vice president with VCU, [told the Virginia Mercury](#). “And this program will have a positive impact on

Virginia’s economy, because we know that our talented graduates are career-ready and a majority stay here in Virginia.”

Enrollment at Virginia’s public colleges and universities has slid steadily over the past decade, dropping from 409,075 students in 2012 to 368,174 in the fall of 2021. From 2021 to 2022, the number of enrolled students increased slightly, to 369,813. Some campuses have seen their student bodies grow in recent years, but the progress has been unequal, according to state data. For example, VCU lost roughly 1,000 students from fall 2020 to fall 2022, while at least six universities saw their enrollments grow.



*“Welcome to college! Here’s a key for your room at the Holiday Inn.”*

*(Photo by Sean Rayford/Getty Images)*

**Guaranteed admission could address the problem — but it also creates new issues**, like guaranteeing an adequate stock of housing for expanded student populations. That’s been a challenge at places like Norfolk State University, which had housing available this fall for only [half of its 6,000 incoming students](#). The school sent displaced students to three local hotels, one of which is now home to more than 300 students.

“The university is adjusting to accommodate as much of this growth as possible,” NSU said in a statement. “We are excited that more students are seeing the tremendous value of a Norfolk State education and doing our best to make room for as many new students as possible.”

Housing has been a similar issue at VCU, where [dozens of incoming freshmen](#) had to stay at hotels last month after the school [ran out of dorm rooms](#). The crowding worsened after one of the school’s 12 residence halls was shuttered for [mold remediation](#) and renovations.

“While this is launching as a pilot program, we do expect an increase in admissions,” said Michael Porter, a spokesman for VCU. “Short term, we are working across the university to anticipate and address housing needs, including how we allocate residence hall space.”

**Leave a message on the whiteboard:** [Two Alabama universities to receive grants for child care](#) ... [Suicide-prevention program teaches Alaska students how to identify their own strength](#) ... [Legislative hearing on DEI in Arkansas higher ed scheduled for today](#) ... [\(Hawaii\) Students return to Lahaina schools as EPA seals down toxic ash](#) ... [Missouri education board set to discuss social-emotional learning standards](#) ... [New Jersey lawmakers mull tweaks to school funding formula](#) ... [Oklahomans concerned contentious law impacts teaching of ‘Killers of the Flower Moon’ history](#) ... [Charter school advocates return to West Virginia Legislature in hopes of securing start-up funding](#)



## From The Newsrooms

- [One artist will be picked to humanize the Rhode Island State Police. No statues, please.](#)
- [Tourism dollars flow from Tennessee Whiskey Trail](#)
- [Ohio Issue 1: Attacks on parental rights do not appear in abortion amendment](#)
- [‘Monster under my bed’: Disabled Kansans wait years for help, with the future uncertain](#)
- [Washington state faces steep path closing mental health bed gap for jailed defendants](#)



## One Last Thing

Suzanne Somers, an actress best known for her role as a ditzzy roommate on “Three’s Company,” [died Sunday](#) from breast cancer. She was 76.

Somers, who went on to create a [diet and fitness empire](#), was fired from the sitcom after she [requested a raise](#) to bring her salary in line with that of her male co-star, John Ritter.

“I’ve been playing what I think is one of the best dumb blondes that’s ever been done, but I never got any credit,” [she told The New York Times in 1980](#). “I did it so well that everyone thought I really was a dumb blonde.”

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