

News From The States

EVENING WRAP

Thanks for being here and [supporting our work](#).



By [Kate Queram](#)

Despite my eternal election enthusiasm, I was a bit detached from yesterday's contests after I filed the newsletter. I had some mom stuff to do, but mostly it was because there are, in the end, only so many things on which a person can fixate. My breeziness lasted until exactly 6 a.m., when I woke up and saw the results and proceeded to cackle for three hours straight. So much glee. So many text messages. So, so much excitement to come here and tell you all about it.



The Big Takeaway

Democrats on Tuesday once again outperformed expectations, overcoming a historically unpopular president and a generally disaffected electorate to notch decisive wins in key elections across the country. The magic ingredient: Abortion rights, which emerged as a central campaign theme in Kentucky, [Pennsylvania](#), Virginia and Ohio (the only state where reproductive autonomy was literally on the ballot). Voters sided with Democrats in each of those races, proving the staying — and political — power of our collective rage over the demise of *Roe v. Wade*. Turns out hell hath no fury like half a nation of people whose bodily autonomy is constantly under attack.



*Hugs for abortion rights advocates only.
(Photo by Graham Stokes for the Ohio Capital Journal)*

Ohio voters delivered the clearest rebuke to anti-abortion Republicans, approving a proposal to enshrine reproductive rights (abortion, fertility treatments, birth control, miscarriage care, and other pregnancy-related decisions) in the state constitution, [the Ohio Capital Journal reported](#). The amendment, which takes effect in 30 days, protects abortion until fetal viability (roughly 22 to 24 weeks of pregnancy), with exceptions in cases where a doctor determines that the procedure is needed to save a patient’s life.

The result was a big bummer for Ohio Republicans, who had tried to [avoid this situation altogether](#) by passing their own [constitutional amendment](#) to make it harder for citizens to amend the constitution. When voters [rejected that proposal](#), Gov. Mike DeWine came up with a compromise: If voters rejected *their own* proposal, he’d see about scaling back the state’s six-week abortion ban.

“The vast majority of people in Ohio feel that there needs to be an exception for rape and incest,” he said in an interview last month. “So that certainly will be part of what together we would all come up with if this was defeated.”



*Voters came up with something different.
(Photo by Graham Stokes for the Ohio Capital Journal)*

Shockingly, voters did not go for this extremely detailed and ironclad promise, which is good because it was crap to begin with. DeWine never produced a draft of his proposal, perhaps because he was too busy recording [lying propaganda videos](#) about the one that was actually on the ballot. But even if he had, legislative Republicans likely would have ignored it, just like they ignored his previous (and similarly vague) calls to make (unspecified) changes to the six-week ban. On Tuesday evening, Senate President Matt Huffman turned that blind eye toward the will of the voters, vowing to repeal the constitutional amendment less than three hours after it passed, [per the Capital Journal](#).

“This isn’t the end,” [he vowed](#). “It is really just the beginning of a revolving door to repeal or replace Issue 1.”

That type of back-and-forth isn’t new, but it usually happens after a proposed amendment fails — not when voters approve it by a wide margin. (Because that’s ... the entire point of a citizen-led ballot initiative.) Theoretically, the legislature could propose its own amendment, but voters have effectively already weighed in on this issue twice, so it’s ... hard to see the point, beyond the right-wing

posturing that certain Republicans seem to enjoy. That effort could be further complicated by congressional action, which could supersede state policy, said Tracy Thomas, director of the Center for Constitutional Law at the University of Akron.

“[The amendment] is a win, but it’s just the nature of the process, it’s the best we can do at the state level,” Thomas said.



*Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin is “a little disappointed, to be clear.”
(Photo by Graham Moomaw/Virginia Mercury)*

Abortion rights fared well even in states with no explicit abortion proposals. Democrats in Virginia held the state Senate and flipped the House, hamstringing [Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin’s](#) plan to enact a “reasonable” 15-week abortion ban. Most candidates had focused their campaigns on preserving abortion access, [the Virginia Mercury reported](#).

“The people of the commonwealth of Virginia have spoken,” said House Minority Leader Don Scott, who is poised to become the first Black House speaker in Virginia history. “What they said was we won’t go backward. What they said was,

we believe in freedom. ... We have the blueprint for freedom in the Democratic Party.”

Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear coasted to reelection in Kentucky, besting Attorney General Daniel Cameron [by 5 percentage points](#) in a race that focused heavily on abortion rights. Beshear had repeatedly hammered Cameron for defending the state’s [draconian abortion ban](#), most notably in [a campaign commercial](#) featuring Hadley Duvall, a 21-year-old woman who recounted the trauma of being raped by her stepfather.

Beshear praised Duvall in his victory speech on Tuesday night and again on Wednesday as he called on lawmakers to amend the near-total abortion ban for victims of rape or incest, [the Kentucky Lantern reported](#). As is, the policy is “the most extreme law in Kentucky,” he said.

“We believe [Duvall] and everyone else should have options,” he said. “The legislature should make that change as quickly as they come in.”



*Rallying in Pennsylvania.
(Photo via the Pennsylvania Capital-Star)*

The singular focus was by design, even in states where reproductive autonomy was not immediately in jeopardy. Advocacy groups and conservative billionaires poured [more than \\$17 million](#) into a state Supreme Court race in Pennsylvania, where abortion is legal and the outcome of the election would not affect the court's liberal majority. But nothing is safe post-*Roe*. When abortion became a state issue, every state race became crucial, [the Pennsylvania Capital-Star reported](#).

Abortion is mostly safe — though not explicitly protected by law — in Pennsylvania, where Democrats control the state House and the governor's mansion. (On Tuesday, they also clinched the empty [state Supreme Court seat](#).) But that can turn on a dime, said Ryan Stitzlein, vice president of political and government relations for Reproductive Freedom for All.

“If [the 2022] elections had gone a different way, we very likely could be facing an abortion ban in Pennsylvania. These aren't idle threats,” he said. “This is a deeply impactful election for abortion access.”

Since then, advocacy groups have sought to keep abortion in the forefront of every election, mostly by highlighting Republican candidates' anti-abortion bonafides. In Pennsylvania, for example, Planned Parenthood launched [an ad campaign](#) attacking Republican Supreme Court candidate Carolyn Carluccio for removing anti-abortion materials from her website shortly after winning the primary. Her campaign said the site had simply been redesigned. (A minor blip for Pennsylvania's anti-abortion groups, which still endorsed her.) It's a simple strategy, but it's effective in an environment where unprecedented numbers of Americans favor legal abortion, said Breana Ross, campaign director for Planned Parenthood Votes.

“Last year we saw in Wisconsin how effective it really is to communicate with voters early and often about Supreme Court races and where candidates stand on the issues,” she said. “That was really a turning point for us.”

Turn it up: [Voters pass Proposition II, boosting Colorado's universal preschool program with tobacco tax revenues ...](#) [Aurora, Colo. election: Coffman, GOP-affiliated candidates poised to defend council majority ...](#) [Election results show Indiana voters mostly supporting school funding referendums ...](#) [In Kansas, 20-year-old son of Vietnamese immigrants wins city commission seat ...](#) [What could Kentucky's ballot look like in 2027? ...](#) [Mainers once again reject effort to scrap](#)

[guardianship provision from constitution](#) ... [Beyond the questions, here's how Maine's other big races shook out Tuesday](#) ... [Four metro Detroit communities resoundingly vote against cannabis dispensaries](#) ... [Democrats win mayoral races in Westland and Warren — and temporarily lose Michigan House majority](#) ... [Conservative candidates underwhelm in Minnesota suburban school board races](#) ... [Nadia Mohamed is Minnesota's first Somali American Mayor](#) ... [Analysis: Democrats have a ceiling in Mississippi, Republicans keep their lock on Coast and DeSoto County](#) ... [Amo won Rhode Island's CD1 race. Now, he's racing against the clock to D.C.](#) ... [Tony Buzbee, Mary Nan Huffman advance to runoff for Houston City Council race](#)



Caught Our Eye

Tuesday's results were good news for big-D Democrats, but they're also good news for little-d democracy, [our national bureau reported](#). In addition to bolstering abortion rights, voters across the country also stymied efforts to restrict voting (Virginia), reelected officials who have supported bipartisan election reform measures (Kentucky), rejected election deniers/conspiracy theorists (Pennsylvania), and embraced reforms designed to ensure election results reflect voter preferences (five cities). And more!

“Americans sent a clear message that they reject MAGA extremism and want leaders who will stand up for our fundamental freedoms and our democracy,” said Christina Harvey, executive director of Stand Up America, a progressive pro-democracy group. “Together with last year's wins in secretary of state races across the country, these victories help build a firewall for democracy in 2024.”



From The Newsrooms

- [Tapped Out: Investigation reveals New Orleans Sewerage & Water Board employees skipped, falsified drinking water tests](#)
- [Tennessee schools ask if lawmakers can afford to replace federal education dollars, why not invest instead](#)
- [Alaska pays millions to respond to domestic violence. Advocates want millions to prevent it.](#)

- [Oregon health authority warns of uptick in cases of mpox, formerly known as monkeypox](#)
- [‘Waiting for life to start again’: South Dakota family agonizes over parental termination](#)



One Last Thing

The Ghostbusters will battle [extreme climate change](#) in the forthcoming “Frozen Empire” movie, which seems both a little too scary and a little too ... *not at all like a ghost.*

News From The States

A PROJECT OF STATES NEWSROOM

Did someone forward you this newsletter?

[SUBSCRIBE](#) | [LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR NEWSROOMS](#) | [FOLLOW](#)



©News From The States, all rights reserved.

www.newsfromthestates.com | info@newsfromthestates.com

Manage your donation and subscription preferences [here](#).

Add info@newsfromthestates.com to your [address book](#) to ensure delivery.

Did someone forward you this newsletter? [Click here](#) to get it delivered to your inbox.

States Newsroom – News From The States

1414 Raleigh Rd #127

Chapel Hill, NC 27517

United States

You are receiving this email because you opted in via our website or States Newsroom. If you believe you received this message in error or wish to change your subscription, please (Unsubscribing is not supported in previews).

