

Trump Issues Blunt First Statement After Democrats' Tuesday Election Sweep

President Donald Trump has weighed in on Tuesday's off-year election results, and his take is pretty straightforward: The ongoing government shutdown and the fact he wasn't on the ballot led to a Democratic win.

This he attributed in a Truth Social post to unnamed pollsters.

"'TRUMP WASN'T ON THE BALLOT, AND SHUTDOWN, WERE THE TWO REASONS THAT REPUBLICANS LOST ELECTIONS TONIGHT,' according to Pollsters," the president wrote.

While Tuesday's results were hardly surprising save for one race, the margins were a bit daunting for those predicting a decent GOP midterm showing next year.

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In Virginia, Democratic nominee and former Rep. Abigail Spanberger won rather convincingly by 15-points over Republican Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears, 57.5 percent to 42.3 percent as of 1 a.m. Eastern. This led to the only real surprise of the night: Democratic Attorney General nominee Jay Jones, whose disturbing assassination fantasy texts led to many polls favoring incumbent Attorney General Jason Miyares, won by a 7-point margin.

In New Jersey, meanwhile, Rep. Mikie Sherrill became governor in a race that was less tight than polls indicated, beating GOP nominee Jack Ciattarelli by a 56.2 percent to 43.2 percent margin.

And, in California, Proposition 50 – which would lead to a redistricting of the state to make it more Democrat-friendly in who it sends to Congress – passed overwhelmingly.



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Finally, in New York City – where the race was effectively Democrat v. Democrat – Assemblyman Zohran Mamdani won over former New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo; with 91 percent of the votes in as of early Monday, the margin was 50.4 percent to 41.6 percent.

Now, what this means is anyone's guess. All the major races on Tuesday were in Democratic strongholds, and the Democrats – who are short on money and donor enthusiasm – needed cheap and convincing wins in places neither Trump nor the GOP in general felt like making a major stand. They got them.

As for the shutdown, Trump is partially correct. In northern Virginia, where suburban D.C. government employees tend to vote Democratic and had far more reason to show up than usual, it appears the NoVa vote handed Spanberger a greater margin of victory than expected and Jones a victory, period. In New Jersey, a wider-than-expected margin could be attributed to food stamp benefits being delayed and reduced by the shutdown in Democratic strongholds there.

Democrats seem eager to come back to the table now, according to reports – a wretched October surprise among the very people they claim to want to protect, if true.

However, both Spanberger and Sherrill pitched themselves as pragmatic moderates; they may *not be*, but they were the big winners Tuesday. Both they and their party are now saddled with a man who wished violent death upon his enemies in Jay Jones and a self-declared socialist who thinks “globalize the intifada” is hunky-dory in Zohran Mamdani.

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The practical results of how that ends up coming across in 2026 – when voters of all affiliations tend to be more engaged – remains to be seen.

Take Virginia, where Spanberger will likely spend a not inconsiderable amount of her time explaining why a moderate is working alongside someone who openly fantasized in text messages about killing the children of a GOP rival. That tends not to play as well in a state where several congressional swing seats are located.

Similarly, California Gov. Gavin Newsom will almost certainly be running for president quite openly by the time the midterms take place; redistricting California into a gerrymandered one-party mess that Saddam Hussein might have admired might not look so hot then, particularly if more people are fleeing the state. And then there's Zohran Mamdani, who promises to be a one-man clip machine no matter where you are in the country.

However, that brings up the second problem, which is more intractable for the GOP: 2026 is the last election where Donald Trump will be trying to elect congressmen and governors to work with his administration. From there on in, it's "Trumpism without Trump," as everyone is fond of referring to it. Does J.D. Vance step up into the role? If not, who does?

It's a bit early to be asking these questions, if accurate. Neither one played much of a role in Tuesday's races, nor were they eager to. A last-minute, half-hearted pitch by the president to elect his one-time nemesis Cuomo to avoid Mamdani was slightly effective in reducing the amount of the vote Republican nominee and de facto third-party candidate Curtis Sliwa got and reducing Mamdani's margin of victory from an all-out rout to a respectable, if predictable, win. In New

Jersey, Trump's enthusiastic endorsement of Ciattarelli was not similarly helpful.

Everywhere else, neither Trump nor Vance nor anyone in the White House seemed particularly engaged, and the same went for the rest of the GOP.

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In a low-stakes election, the Democrats held serve while treating this as if it were a presidential race. The GOP barely tried, and it showed. The upside of this, if you're a conservative, is that what happened isn't predictive of anything – yet.

The downside is that, given almost complete donor disengagement and a year of finger-pointing tell-alls about the 2024 debacle, the Democrats come away with momentum. Hard-earned momentum for races they should have won anyway and which mean little, sure, but momentum nonetheless. Moreover, the question raises itself: If this is how Trump's GOP performs without Trump on the ballot or stumping for it, how steady is it going to be in 2028 and beyond?

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