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ELECTION 2018

## Ten Takeaways From the Midterm Elections

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*By Joshua Jamerson*

The Democrats have taken control of the U.S. House by winning in suburban districts, and the Republicans appeared likely to expand their majority in the U.S. Senate by defeating Democrats in rural states President Trump won. Here are 10 takeaways.

### 1. Southern Democrats Running for Governor Come up Short

In Georgia, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams refused to concede the race to her Republican rival early Wednesday morning; the race remained too close to call, but her Republican opponent Brian Kemp held the lead with 99% of the precincts

reporting. The insurgent Democratic candidate in Florida, Andrew Gillum, did concede to Republican Ron DeSantis, who AP later declared the winner. The Florida governor election was one of the most expensive races of the cycle.

## 2. A House Surprise in Oklahoma

This seat was rated by the Cook Political Report as likely staying in the Republican column. It was the only seat rated as safe GOP to flip to the Democratic column, making it the biggest surprise of the night. Democrat Kendra Horn defeated Republican Rep. Steve Russell.

Of note: Billionaire Michael Bloomberg's political arm went in late, spending big to flip the seat.

## 3. Kind of Surprise in Texas' Seventh Congressional District and New York's 11th

While Oklahoma was a big House surprise, there were a couple of others. Texas Republican Rep. John Culberson was defeated by Democrat Lizzie Pannill Fletcher, and New York Republican Rep. Daniel Donovan was defeated by Democrat Max Rose. Both those races were rated as leaning in the GOP's favor by the Cook Political Report, so though the Democrats weren't favored, they were at least in the conversation as pick-up opportunities.

## 4. Senate Democrats Stumble on Trump Turf

As of Wednesday, Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia was the only incumbent Democrat re-elected to the Senate from a traditionally red state. Three others were defeated: Democrats Claire McCaskill of Missouri, Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota and Joe Donnelly from Indiana were bested by Republican opponents who pledged to be better allies to President Trump. Republicans argued that the bitter confirmation battle of Justice Brett Kavanaugh energized their base in these states; some Democrats acknowledged Republican support shored up after the confirmation fight last month.

A fifth incumbent Democrat from a traditionally red state, Sen. Jon Tester of Montana, was locked in a race with Republican state auditor Matt Rosendale that was too close to call as of early Wednesday. Mr. Tester, too, voted against Justice Kavanaugh's confirmation.

## 5. Cruz v. Beto

Texas GOP Sen. Ted Cruz won re-election to the Senate after a contest that saw him

become the target of the largest grass-roots campaign in American history. The Associated Press declared Mr. Cruz the winner over Democratic Rep. Beto O'Rourke. Mr. Cruz's victory—albeit a relatively slim one for deep-red Texas—shows that the state remains out of Democratic hands despite the party's long-held fantasies about demographic changes in the state moving it out of Republican hands.

## 6. A Giant-Slayer Goes Down

Democrat Abigail Spanberger, a former covert CIA officer, defeated GOP Rep. Dave Brat in the outskirts of Richmond. Mr. Brat, an economics professor at a local college, became a tea-party star in 2014 when he toppled House Republican Majority Leader Eric Cantor in the biggest House primary upset in generations.

## 7. Democrats Run Through the Suburbs

It was long assumed that the road to the Democratic House majority would run through America's suburbs. There were strong signs that turned out to be the case. Two districts help underscore that outcome. Democrat Jason Crow defeated Mike Coffman for re-election in a suburban Denver district (CO-06). Mr. Coffman was a perennial target for the Democrats given the demographic changes in his district. He famously learned Spanish after his district was redrawn in 2012 to include a nearly 20% Hispanic population. Mr. Crow is an attorney and political novice who has gained traction from anti-Trump sentiment and his pro-gun control message tied to his service as an Army Ranger in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Virginia Rep. Barbara Comstock (VA-10), ranked among the most vulnerable House Republicans, lost her bid for a third term. She was the first Republican to be unseated Tuesday night.

## 8. Democrats Flip Several Governors' Mansions in Midwest

Democrats flipped several Midwest governors mansions: The party took control in Illinois, Michigan, Kansas and Wisconsin, where GOP Gov. Scott Walker had not yet conceded as of 3:15 a.m. Wednesday. The Democrats lost a governor's race in Ohio, which was already in Republican hands.

## 9. No Significant Interference in Election Detected

U.S. security officials and social-media firms spotted a limited amount of deliberate disinformation targeting the midterm election. Still, they said they had not seen any significant efforts to directly breach election infrastructure with cyberattacks. Government agencies, including the FBI and Department of Homeland Security, remained on alert.

## 10. Historic Muslim Victories Swell Women-Win Column

Two Muslim women from the Midwest were elected to the House of Representatives, making history as the first women of their faith to serve in Congress. Rashida Tlaib, a Palestinian American, will represent Michigan, and Ilhan Omar, once a Somali refugee in Kenya, will represent Minnesota. Both received an overwhelming majority of the vote in their respective districts on Tuesday and join a surge of Democratic women coming to the new Congress.

Election 2018

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Corrections & Amplifications An earlier version of this article incorrectly gave Abigail Spanberger's first name as Amy. (Nov. 7, 2018)

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