

DECISION DESK HQ – 10 NOVEMBRE 2025

## Virginia and New Jersey's elections in 10 charts

*di Geoffrey Skelley*

### 10 visualizations exploring the results in Virginia and New Jersey

Democrats of all stripes enjoyed a strong electoral showing last week, largely as a response to President Donald Trump. In the realm of statewide elections, the two most significant performances came in [Virginia](#) and [New Jersey](#), where [center-left women candidates](#) with national security backgrounds won double-digit victories in each state's race for governor. Those successes also paved the way for sweeping Democratic wins in downballot races. Democrats captured all statewide offices in Virginia, achieved a double-digit seat gain in the state's lower legislative chamber, and took full control of state government. In New Jersey, Democrats have won their largest majority in the lower chamber of the state legislature in 52 years.

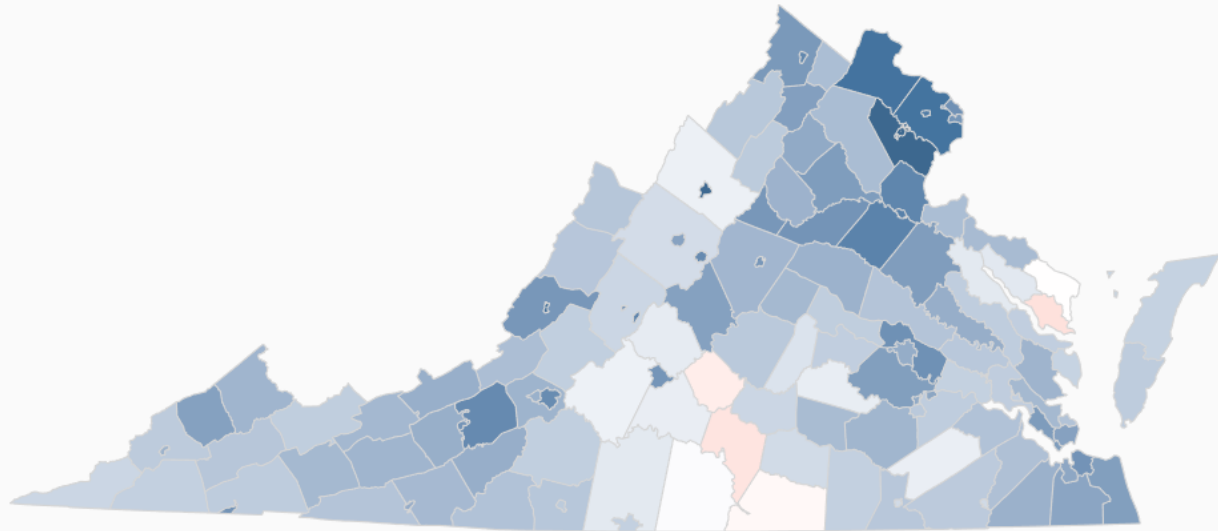
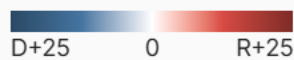
Below, I've put together 10 visualizations — maps, charts, and tables — detailing these results and their contexts.

### Virginia

The Old Dominion made history last week when it elected [its first woman governor](#). Former Rep. Abigail Spanberger, the Democratic nominee, defeated Republican Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears by about 15 percentage points, 57%-42%. Spanberger accomplished this by improving on the Democrats' showing in the 2024 presidential election in nearly every locality in the state — currently 128 of Virginia's 133 counties and independent cities, [based on unofficial results](#).

## Virginia: 2025 Governor vs. 2024 President

How much more **Democratic** or **Republican** each Virginia county voted in the 2025 gubernatorial race vs. the 2024 presidential race



Figures for 2025 are based on unofficial results as of Nov. 8, 2025.

Source: DDHQ, Virginia Dept. of Elections



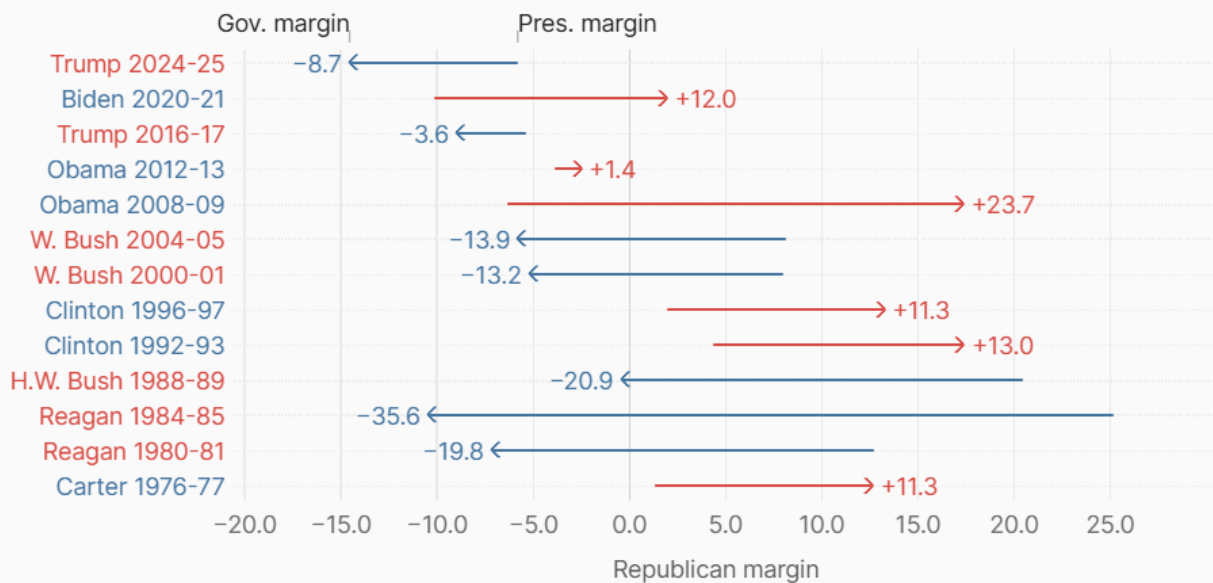
And where Spanberger improved the most was in Northern Virginia, which already serves as the Democratic Party of Virginia's bedrock. Across the cities, suburbs, and exurbs within the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, Spanberger won by more than 36 points, around a 12-point improvement on former Vice President Kamala Harris's 24-point edge in 2024. Accounting for 35% of the state's vote, Northern Virginia contributed the most to Spanberger's sizable win.

But Northern Virginia was not the whole story, considering Spanberger won by the largest margin of any Virginia Democrat in a gubernatorial election [since 1961](#). She improved on Harris's margins by about 7.5 points in both the Richmond and Virginia Beach-Norfolk metropolitan areas, and even did 6 points better in the rest of the commonwealth outside of [the Urban Crescent](#) (the three major metro areas).

As a result of her performance, Spanberger continued Virginia's long-running pattern of swinging away from the president's party in gubernatorial elections, which always occur the year after the presidential election. After President Donald Trump only lost the state by about 6 points in 2024, Earle-Sears lost it by close to 15 — about a 9-point shift.

## Virginia swings away from president's party

The change in the Republican margin in Virginia from the preceding presidential election to the subsequent gubernatorial election, 1976 to 2025



Figures for 2025 are based on unofficial results as of Nov. 8, 2025.

Source: Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections, Virginia Dept. of Elections



Spanberger's huge win at the top of the ticket also had downballot consequences. The 2025 election marked the fifth consecutive time that the same party swept Virginia's three statewide offices of governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general (the last split result came in 2005).

In the lieutenant governor race, state Sen. Ghazala Hashmi dispatched Republican John Reid by about 11 points. That will make Hashmi [the first Muslim woman elected](#) to statewide office in the United States. Hashmi ran fairly close to Spanberger, a result largely in keeping with most recent elections for statewide office in Virginia. For instance, in 2021, Republicans won the races for governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general by between 0.8 and 1.9 points — the kind of consistency that points to few split-ticket voters.

However, Virginia's 2025 attorney general race tested the straight-ticket voting tendencies of our polarized era. In early October, the race between Republican Attorney General Jason Miyares and Democrat Jay Jones [received a major shakeup](#) when news broke about a series of violence-laden texts Jones had sent in 2022. Miyares took a narrow lead in the polls, making it seem quite possible that


Virginia voters might produce a split-ticket outcome. But the pro-Democratic environment dragged Jones to a 6-point victory. Still, the fact Jones ran about 9 points behind Spanberger in margin is an obvious sign that the scandal affected his performance.

### Jones ran nearly 9 points behind Spanberger

The margin of victory in Virginia elections for governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general and the range in margin across the three races, 1977-2025

Year	Gov.	Lt. Gov.	Att. Gen.	Range
2025	D+14.8	D+11.1	D+6.2	8.7
2021	R+1.9	R+1.5	R+0.8	1.1
2017	D+8.9	D+5.5	D+6.8	3.4
2013	D+2.5	D+10.6	D+0.01	10.6
2009	R+17.4	R+13.1	R+15.1	4.3
2005	D+5.7	R+1.2	R+0.02	6.9
2001	D+5.1	D+2.3	R+20.1	25.2
1997	R+13.3	R+5.1	R+15.1	10.0
1993	R+17.4	D+9.0	R+12.3	26.4
1989	D+0.4	D+8.3	D+26.4	26.0
1985	D+10.4	D+3.7	D+22.8	19.1
1981	D+7.1	D+10.9	D+2.0	9.0
1977	R+12.6	D+8.5	R+7.1	21.1

Figures for 2025 are based on unofficial results as of Nov. 8, 2025.  
Source: Virginia Dept. of Elections



However, that Jones still won suggests that a lot of voters who voted Democratic still cast a ballot for him. The result answered at least in part a question coming into the election: To what extent would voters who cast ballots in the governor’s race choose to *not* vote for attorney general (or write in a name)? In theory, some Spanberger voters repelled by Jones’s texts might not vote for him but also might be unwilling to vote for Miyares, the Republican.

As it turned out, some voters did abstain, but not a huge share. The named candidates in the attorney general’s race received 1.3% fewer total votes than those in the gubernatorial contest. Now, some [ballot roll-off](#) is par for the course because races at

the top of the ballot usually receive more votes than ones lower down on the ballot. Yet while the undervote for attorney general was the largest since 2009, it was not historically large — a sign that Jones’s scandal only compelled a small group of voters to not vote in the attorney general contest.

## Slight uptick in ballot roll-off for attorney general

Number of votes for candidates on the ballot for governor and attorney general in Virginia statewide elections, 2001-2025

Year	Gov. candidate votes	Att. Gen. candidate votes	Att. Gen. diff.
2025	3,379,560	3,336,685	-1.3%
2021	3,285,735	3,267,664	-0.5%
2017	2,612,537	2,594,930	-0.7%
2013	2,229,227	2,207,389	-1.0%
2009	1,982,601	1,952,824	-1.5%
2005	1,982,222	1,941,449	-2.1%
2001	1,885,908	1,843,499	-2.2%

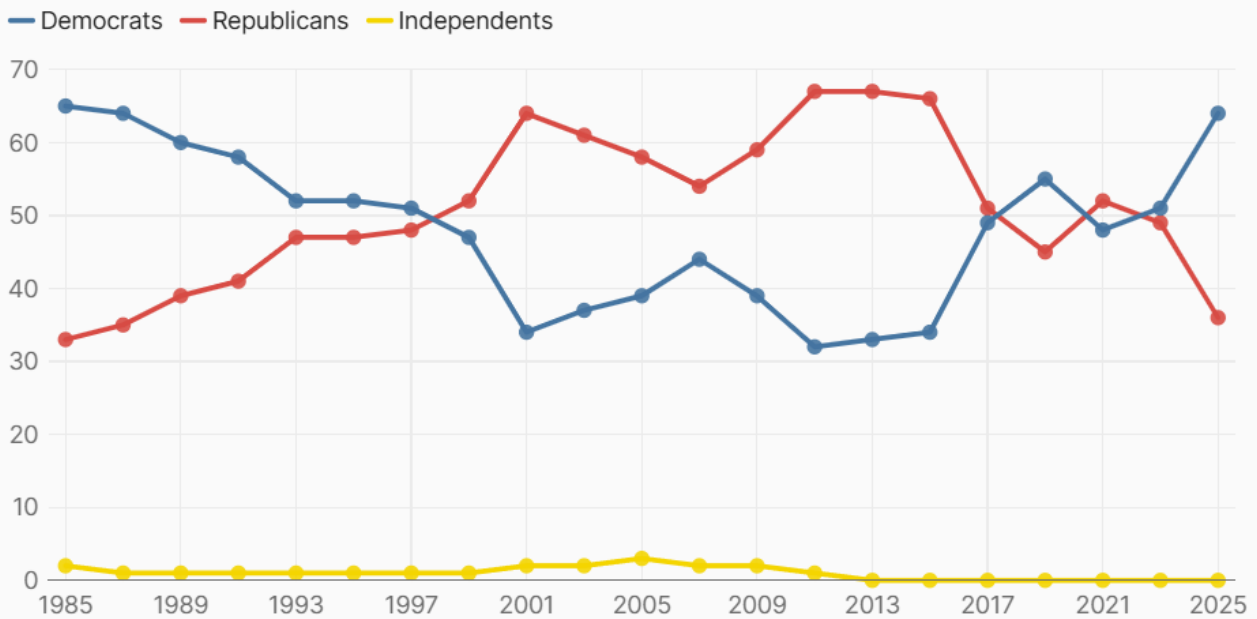
Figures for 2025 are based on unofficial results as of Nov. 8, 2025. Excludes write-in votes as part of measuring to what extent voters chose from among the candidates on the ballot.



Lastly, Democrats also reaped the benefits of the blue wave in the House of Delegates, the lower chamber in Virginia’s General Assembly (state legislature). Democrats [won 64 seats](#), a 13-seat gain from their pre-election position, when they held a narrow 51-49 majority. As a result, Democrats will have their largest majority in the House in nearly 40 years when the General Assembly [gathers for its regular session](#) in January.

## VA Dems won largest House majority in 4 decades

Seats won by each party in elections for Virginia's House of Delegates, 1985-2025



Figures for 2025 are based on unofficial results as of Nov. 8, 2025.

Source: Virginia Dept. of Elections



However, while this will ease Democrats' efforts to pass legislation in the House, they will still have a very fine margin to work with in the state Senate. There, Democrats [hold just a 21-19 majority](#), and that edge will actually shrink at least temporarily when Hashmi takes office as lieutenant governor. Democrats will be heavily favored to retain her seat in [the ensuing special election](#) — Harris [carried it](#) 63%-35% in 2024 — but they will have little breathing room as the General Assembly looks ready to take another vote on a constitutional amendment [to allow mid-decade redistricting](#).

### New Jersey

While Spanberger [was a heavy favorite](#) in Virginia, Democratic Rep. Mikie Sherrill looked to be [a weaker frontrunner](#) in New Jersey. In the polls leading up to Election Day, she led Republican Jack Ciattarelli by only about 5 points in Decision Desk HQ's average, and other aggregators placed her advantage in similar territory. But Sherrill looks to have defeated Ciattarelli by nearly 14 points, 57%-43%, [per unofficial results](#) — nearly the same spread as Spanberger.

## Polls underestimated Sherrill

Final polling average for New Jersey's gubernatorial race among different aggregators

Aggregator	Sherrill	Ciattarelli	Margin
RealClearPolitics	48.9%	45.6%	D+3.3
Race to the WH	49.7%	45.1%	D+4.6
Decision Desk HQ	50.6%	45.7%	D+4.9
VoteHub	49.8%	44.5%	D+5.3
FiftyPlusOne	50.4%	44.7%	D+5.7
<b>Result (unofficial)</b>	<b>56.5%</b>	<b>42.8%</b>	<b>D+13.7</b>

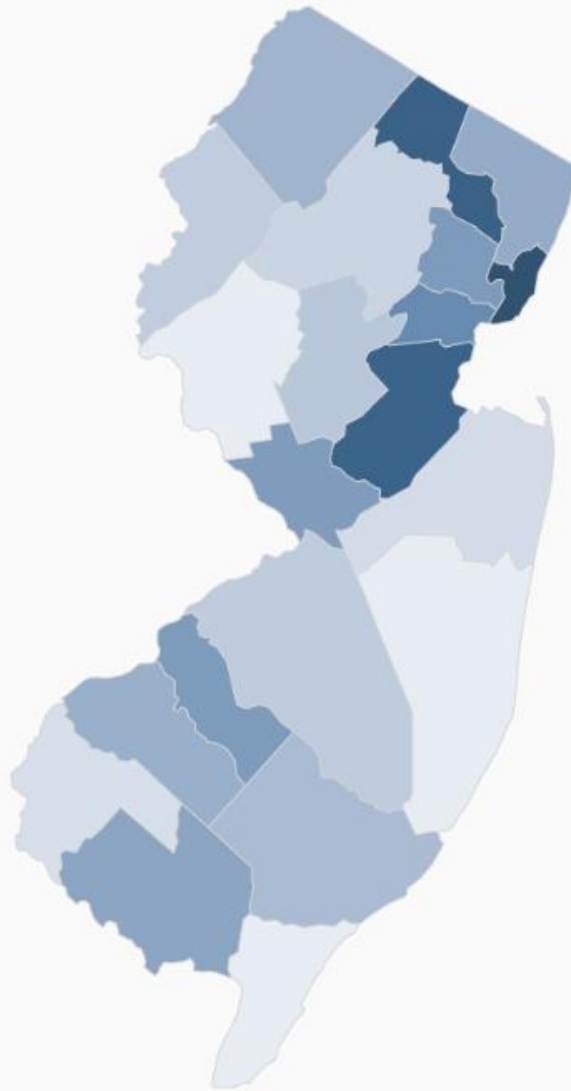
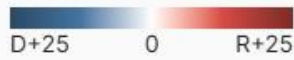
Result is based on unofficial figures as of Nov. 8, 2025.

This example should serve as a good reminder that trying to predict the direction of polling error before an election is a mug's game. As Eli McKown-Dawson [noted at Silver Bulletin](#) right before Election Day, error in New Jersey's polls has varied. In 2005 and 2013, polls exaggerated the GOP's final margin in the gubernatorial race. In 2001, 2009, 2017, and 2021, the polls overestimated Democrats. This was especially true in 2021 when different aggregators gave Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy a lead in the high single-digits, only for him to defeat Ciattarelli by just 3 points. But the 2025 miss may take the cake for overshooting one side — and in this case, it exaggerated the GOP's numbers.

Sherrill's victory involved gaining ground most everywhere in New Jersey, but her performance in places that [swung sharply to the right](#) in the 2024 presidential race particularly stood out. Last November, Trump improved the most on his 2020 showing in three counties: Passaic (19 points, from Joe Biden +16 to Trump +3), Hudson (18 points, Biden +46 to Harris +28), and Middlesex (14 points, Biden +22 to Harris +8). But of New Jersey's 21 counties, those same three featured the largest swings to the left in Tuesday's election.

## New Jersey: 2025 Governor vs. 2024 President

How much more **Democratic** or **Republican** each New Jersey county voted in the 2025 gubernatorial race vs. the 2024 presidential race



Figures for 2025 are based on unofficial results as of Nov. 8, 2025.

Source: New Jersey Division of Elections



[Hudson](#) and [Passaic](#) counties both have plurality Latino populations, while [Middlesex](#) residents are around one-quarter Asian and one-quarter Latino. Both of these broad demographic groups, [especially Latinos](#), shifted notably [toward Trump](#) in 2024. But in New Jersey, some of those voters returned to the Democratic fold in 2025: Hudson shifted 22 points to the left from the 2024 presidential race, while Passaic moved 18 points and Middlesex 17 points. Among the most striking results was the vote tally in Paterson, a [64% Hispanic municipality](#) in Passaic that

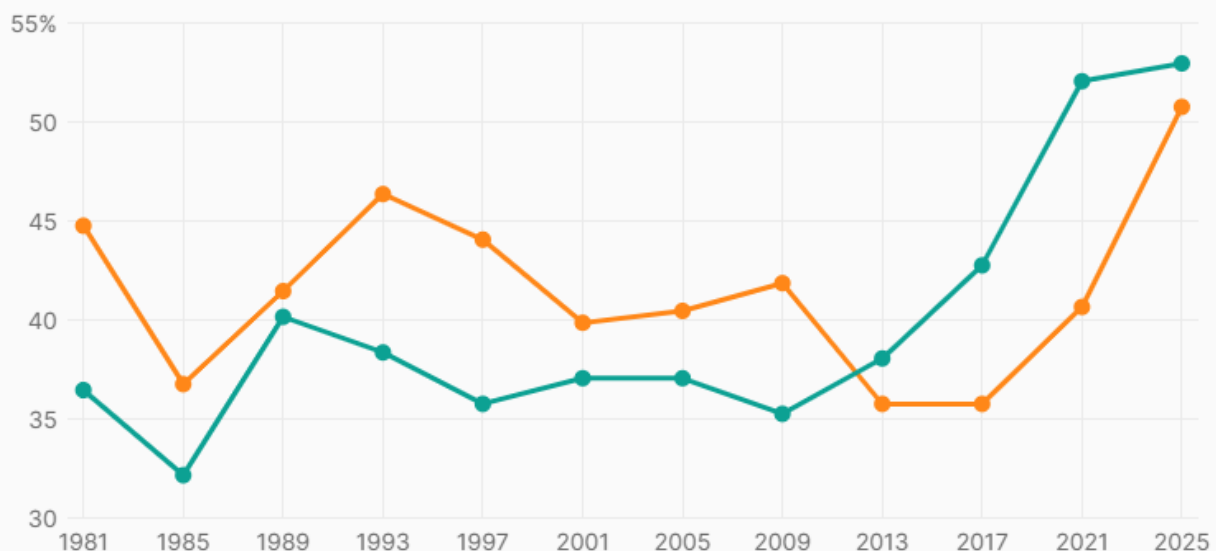
Trump lost by 61 points in 2020 but by only 28 points in 2024. The longtime Democratic stronghold went solidly blue on Tuesday, [backing Sherrill by 71 points](#).

Some of that swing to the left likely did result from some Trump voters voting Democratic. We can say that because New Jersey had very high turnout for a gubernatorial race: about 51% of the voting-eligible population cast a ballot, the state's highest share over the past 40-plus years. While that was short of the [67% who voted](#) in the 2024 presidential race, it marked a much smaller drop in turnout from 2024 than what we saw in New Jersey from 2020 to 2021. Back then, the share of the VEP who voted went from [72% in the presidential race](#) to just 41% in the gubernatorial contest.

As a result, turnout in New Jersey looked much more like Virginia's turnout rate than it did four years ago. In 2021, about 52% of Virginia's VEP showed up in a close gubernatorial contest that now-outgoing Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin won by 2 points. But even though New Jersey also had a close race, it fell well short of Virginia's turnout share. This time around, they both just cleared 50%.

## Turnout exploded in Jersey, stayed up in Virginia

Estimated turnout in New Jersey and Virginia gubernatorial elections as a percentage of the voting-eligible population, 1981-2025



Voting-eligible population based on estimates from the University of Florida Election Lab in federal election years (even years). Odd-year estimates were interpolated and 2025 VEP total was estimated based on average of 2020-2024 annual change.

Source: UF Election Lab, New Jersey Division of Elections, Virginia Dept. of Elections



The 2025 election was guaranteed to break one of two streaks in New Jersey — Democrats would either win three straight gubernatorial races for the first time since the 1960s, or Republicans would become the first presidential party to win an open-seat race for governor in New Jersey since 1981.

In the end, it was the former streak that came to an end. Sherrill’s victory means Democrats have garnered a third consecutive four-year term in Trenton.

### 3 straight Dem wins in NJ for 1st time since 1960s

New Jersey gubernatorial general election results, 1949-2025

Year	Winner	Loser	Margin
2025	Mikie Sherrill (D)	Jack Ciattarelli (R)	D+13.4
2021	Phil Murphy* (D)	Jack Ciattarelli (R)	D+3.2
2017	Phil Murphy (D)	Kim Guadagno (R)	D+14.1
2013	Chris Christie* (R)	Barbara Buono (D)	R+22.1
2009	Chris Christie (R)	Jon Corzine* (D)	R+3.6
2005	Jon Corzine (D)	Doug Forrester (R)	D+10.4
2001	Jim McGreevey (D)	Bret Schundler (R)	D+14.8
1997	Christine T. Whitman* (R)	Jim McGreevey (D)	R+1.1
1993	Christine T. Whitman (R)	Jim Florio* (D)	R+1.0
1989	Jim Florio (D)	Jim Courter (R)	D+24.0
1985	Tom Kean Sr.* (R)	Peter Shapiro (D)	R+40.3
1981	Tom Kean Sr. (R)	Jim Florio (D)	R+0.1
1977	Brendan Byrne* (D)	Raymond Bateman (R)	D+13.9
1973	Brendan Byrne (D)	Charles Sandman (R)	D+34.8
1969	William Cahill (R)	Robert Meyner (D)	R+21.2
1965	Richard Hughes* (D)	Wayne Dumont (R)	D+16.3
1961	Richard Hughes (D)	James Mitchell (R)	D+1.6
1957	Robert Meyner* (D)	Malcolm Forbes (R)	D+10.1
1953	Robert Meyner (D)	Paul Troast (R)	D+8.5
1949	Alfred Driscoll* (R)	Elmer Wene (D)	R+4.4

Figures for 2025 based on unofficial results as of Nov. 8, 2025.

Source: Dave Leip's Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections



New Jersey governors have had four-year terms since the 1949 election — they [had an unusual three-year term](#) before then — and in that time, only once has a party won

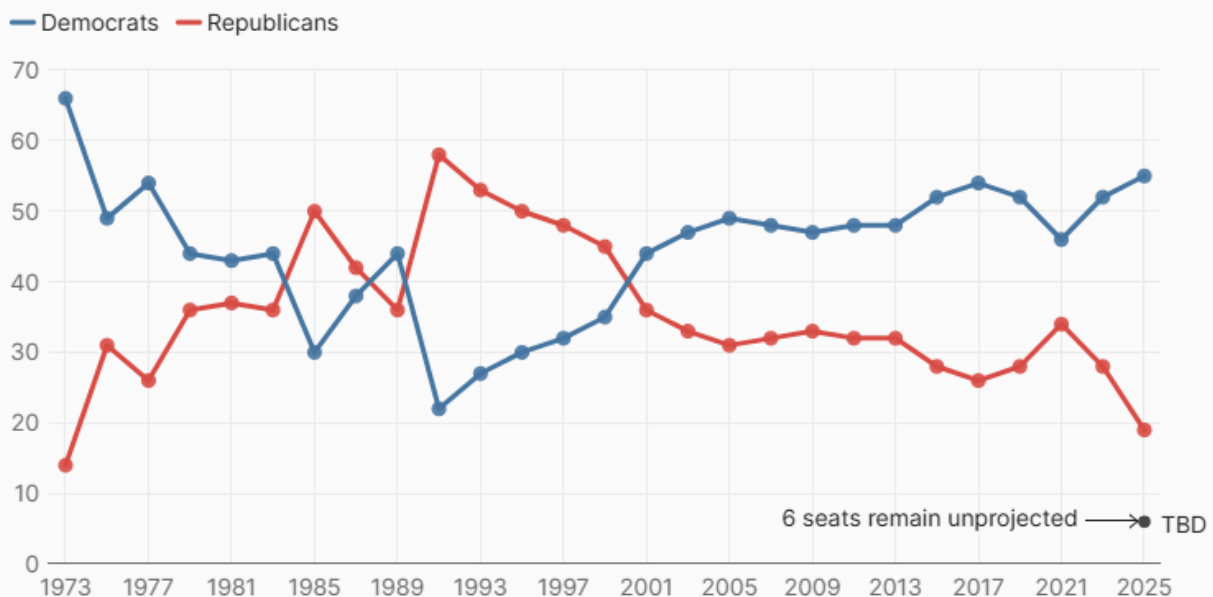
more than two gubernatorial elections in a row. From 1953 through 1965, Democrats won four straight races. Since then, neither party had pulled off the feat until Sherrill's victory last week.

Lastly, as in Virginia, Sherrill's resounding victory at the top of the ticket boosted Democrats downballot. New Jersey has no other state-level offices elected statewide besides governor, but its 80-seat General Assembly was on the ballot last Tuesday — and Democrats expanded their majority to heights not seen in a long time. (In New Jersey, the General Assembly is the lower chamber of the New Jersey Legislature, while in Virginia, the General Assembly is the title of the entire legislature encompassing the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates.)

As of this writing, DDHQ has projected Democrats will win 55 seats in the lower chamber to the GOP's 19, with six very close races still undecided. That [is the largest majority](#) Democrats have attained since they won 66 seats in 1973 during a difficult political period for Republicans as Watergate destroyed Richard Nixon's presidency.

### Dems won largest Assembly majority in 52 years

Seats won by each party in elections for New Jersey's General Assembly (lower chamber), 1973-2025



Figures for 2025 are based on unofficial results as of Nov. 8, 2025.

Source: Ballotpedia, New Jersey Division of Elections, News Reports

