

Mapping the Republican Sweep: The 2010 Election Results in Ohio

This report maps the results of the 2010 election for state-wide offices in Ohio as well as voter turnout. The data for this report was taken from the Ohio Secretary of State's Office and indicate official results. Clearly, the 2010 election saw a sea change in Ohio politics, and dramatic contrast with the 2006 election: 2010 was a Republican sweep, while 2006 saw a near Democratic sweep of state-wide contests.

The Overall Election Picture in Ohio

In 2010, prior to the November election, all state-wide offices up for election were in the hands of Democrats, except for the open Senate seat and the state auditor. These offices included the governor, secretary of state, attorney general, and state treasurer. Republican challengers were able to defeat every one of these Democratic incumbents and to also hold the Senate seat. Some of the Republican victories were narrow, but some were fairly resounding. With a poorly performing state economy and with a strong sense of anti-incumbent anger brewing in the state, Democrats saw their fortunes turn negative across the board.

Map 1 is a depiction of the distribution of Republican votes for the average of all of the state-wide races in Ohio in 2010.

[Map 1](#)

There are several geographic patterns in Map 1. First, we see that there is an urban-rural split in the distribution of Republican votes. For the most part, counties with large cities in them such as Cuyahoga (Cleveland), Franklin (Columbus), Lucas (Toledo), and Summit (Akron) leaned Democratic while more rural counties leaned Republican. Second, we can see Southwest and Northwest Ohio leaned Republican much more than the eastern part of the state. We see also see that there is a concentration of Democratic-leaning counties in the northeastern portion of the state, although this is not uniform across the region. Although there is a large voter base in Northeast Ohio because of the size of the population, there was not enough of a Democratic lean to the region to swing the election in favor of Democratic candidates across the state.

2010 and 2006

In Map 2, we see gains and losses of Republican candidates from the 2006 to the 2010 elections.

Map 2

In almost all counties of the state, Republicans made gains in 2010. Republican candidates lost vote share in only in four counties: Athens, Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Lucas. These counties are traditionally heavily

Democratic counties. We see the biggest gains in the west of Ohio, which is traditionally Republican-leaning.

The 2010 Gubernatorial Race

The contest for governor was one of the closest of the state-wide races. The incumbent, Democrat Ted Strickland, was defeated by Republican John Kasich by two percentage points. Kasich was able to get 49.04% of the total vote for governor, whereas Strickland was able to garner 47.04% of the vote for governor. The remaining candidates in the field were able to get 3.92% of the vote when tallied together.

The distribution of votes for Strickland and Kasich across the state is shown in Map 3.

Map 3

As can be seen in Map 3, there is a clear pattern to the distribution of votes. In the major urban center counties, Strickland came out ahead of Kasich. The one urban county that is the exception is Hamilton (Cincinnati), where Kasich narrowly took more votes. The more rural counties generally went for Kasich. Another pattern is that the western portion of the state leaned much more toward Kasich than did the eastern portion of the state. Thus, the governor's race largely followed the general pattern of Republican and Democratic voting in the state.

The Gubernatorial Race: 2010 vs. 2006

Map 4 that shows how Strickland fared in 2010 compared to 2006 to show how different the outcomes were for the Democrat.

Map 4

We can see that across the counties of the state, Ted Strickland fared worse in 2010 than in 2006. He lost a significant amount of votes in some of the traditionally Democratic-leaning counties in Southeast Ohio, despite winning about half of the region's counties in both elections. We also see that central Ohio also turned away from Strickland, with him having won the region in 2006 but losing almost all counties in it in 2010.

In Map 5, we compare how Kasich fared in Ohio in 2010 compared to how Ken Blackwell, the Republican gubernatorial candidate in 2006, fared in that election.

Map 5

Map 5 illustrates how much better Kasich did in 2010 compared to Blackwell in 2006. We can see that Kasich did substantially better in competing against Strickland than Blackwell did. While both Kasich and Blackwell did well

in the western portion of the state, Kasich did substantially better in the central part of the state, which Blackwell largely lost. Both candidates did not do well against Strickland in the most southeastern part of the state, Strickland's home territory.

The 2010 Ohio Senate Race

Rob Portman was the Republican candidate and Lee Fisher was the Democratic candidate. Portman won the race with 56.8% of the vote. Lee Fisher was only able to claim 39.40% of the vote total. Other candidates got a total of 3.8% of the vote.

As we can see from these figures, the Democratic candidate for Senator did not do nearly as well in this race as the Democratic gubernatorial candidate. Portman defeated Fisher by nearly 18 percentage points. When we examine the distribution of votes in Map 6, we see the dominance of Portman throughout the state.

Map 6

Only in a few very solidly Democratic counties was Fisher able to win the majority of votes. Portman's was the most decisive of the Republican victories for state-wide office.

In Map 7, we see how Portman fared in 2010 compared to Mike DeWine, the Republican Senatorial candidate in 2006.

[Map 7](#)

DeWine lost that contest to Sherrod Brown, the Democratic candidate by a wide margin. The map reflects how much better Portman was able to do against Fisher compared to how poorly DeWine did against Brown. Both Portman and DeWine did well in Republican-leaning western Ohio. But Portman did significantly better than DeWine in the eastern portion of the state.

Other State-wide Races in 2010

Although DeWine failed in his Senate bid in 2006, he was able to win a state-wide office in 2010, for attorney general. He was able to narrowly defeat Richard Cordray, 47.54% to 46.26%. This was the closest of the state-wide races in 2010. In Map 8, we see the distribution of votes for DeWine and Cordray.

[Map 8](#)

Despite the close vote total, DeWine was able to edge Cordray in most counties in Ohio. Only in the traditionally Democratic stronghold counties was Cordray able to pull ahead of DeWine.

In the state auditor's race, Dave Yost was able to defeat David Pepper, 50.22% to 44.91%. When we examine the distribution of votes across the counties of Ohio in Map 9, we see the same general pattern as we saw in the DeWine-Cordray contest. This indicates that voters were voting largely along party lines in these state-wide races.

[Map 9](#)

In the Secretary of State race, Jon Husted, the Republican was able to win over Maryellen O'Shaughnessy, the Democrat, 53.66% to 41.46%. Josh Mandel, the Republican, was the winner over Kevin Boyce, the Democrat, in the election for State Treasurer. Mandel was able to garner 54.52% of the vote whereas Boyce was only able to get 40.58% of the vote. In Maps 10 and 11, we see the same general patterns as in the other state-wide contests.

[Map 10](#)

[Map 11](#)

Voter Turnout

One of the key issues in the 2010 election is voter turnout. Voter turnout is important because it can often determine whether a candidate wins or loses

based on whether the candidate is able to get his or her supporters to the polls. The state-wide average turnout for the 2010 election was 49.22%, meaning that this percentage of eligible voters actually voted. The average voter turnout for state-wide offices in 2006 was 53.25%, significantly higher than in 2010.

Map 12 shows the voter turnout, by county, in the 2010 Ohio election.

Map 12

The turnout is the average for the state-wide offices examined in this report. There is a general East-West pattern to the turnout in 2010. The western portion of the state, in general, saw higher turnout than the eastern portion of the state. This means that the Republican-leaning western regions of the state saw generally higher turnout than the Democratic-leaning eastern portion of the state. Thus, turnout helped the Republican candidates and seems to have hurt the Democratic candidates, overall.

Map 13 shows the turnout distribution in Ohio in 2006. This map is included for comparison with turnout in 2010.

Map 13

Map 13 shows several counties that have dropped in turnout in 2010 from the 2006 election. Map 14 shows the differences between turnout in the 2010 and the 2006 elections.

[Map 14](#)

We have included this map to illustrate if differences in the turnout point to differences in the election outcomes. It is clear that there was less voter turnout in 2010 than 2006 in almost every county. The East-West pattern emerges again in this map. There was, in general, less of a drop in voter turnout in the Republican-leaning western regions of the state as opposed to the Democratic-leaning eastern regions of the state. This indicates that Democratic-leaning counties had less-enthused voters compared to those counties that tend to lean Republican. It helps to explain why Democrats did so well in the 2006 state-wide contests and fared so poorly in the 2010 election.