

Virginia General Election Results
November 4, 2008
Unofficial Results; Subject to Change

Compiled by VAFREE
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 100% precincts reporting

District	Candidate	Votes	Percent
President	Barack Obama (D)	1,959,161	52.6%
	John McCain (R)	1,726,345	46.4%
US Senate	John Warner (R) * retires		
	Mark Warner (D)	2,369,250	65.0%
	Jim Gilmore (R)	1,228,601	33.7%
District 01	Rob Wittman (R) *	203,807	56.5%
	Bill Day (D)	151,214	41.9%
District 02	Thelma Drake (R) *	128,372	47.5%
	Glenn Nye (D)	141,406	52.3%
District 03	Robert C. Scott (D) *	239,587	97.0%
District 04	J. Randy Forbes (R) *	200,073	59.6%
	Andrea Miller (D)	135,032	40.2%
District 05	Virgil H. Goode Jr. (R) *	157,958	49.9%
	Tom Perriello (D)	158,703	50.1%
District 06	Bob Goodlatte (R) *	192,559	61.6%
	Sam Rasoul (D)	114,431	36.6%
District 07	Eric Cantor (R) *	233,286	62.7%
	Anita Hartke (D)	137,963	37.1%
District 08	Jim Moran (D) *	222,986	67.9%
	Mark W. Ellmore (R)	97,425	29.7%
District 09	Rick Boucher (D) *	207,286	97.1%
District 10	Frank R. Wolf (R) *	223,099	58.8%
	Judith Feder (D)	147,273	38.8%
District 11	Tom Davis (R) * retires		
	Gerry Connolly (D)	196,556	54.7%
	Keith S. Fimian (R)	154,735	43.1%

* indicates incumbent

Bold type indicates winner

Analysis of 2008 General Election Returns in Virginia

President

Barack Obama carried Virginia with 53% of the vote as he swept to a dramatic and historic victory for the Presidency on November 4, 2008. Obama's victory in Virginia, the first time in 44 years that a Democratic presidential candidate has won here, confirms the Commonwealth's position as a truly competitive, two-party battleground state. Virginia's 13 electoral votes helped propel the Democrat to an Electoral College landslide, winning a final tally of 364 Obama, 174 McCain.

Obama carried an impressive list of Virginia cities and counties, including many jurisdictions long considered strong Republican territory such as Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Manassas. He won the counties of Prince William, Loudoun and Henrico, and even won Harrisonburg, Winchester and Staunton – in the reliably Republican Shenandoah Valley. More than a dozen legislative districts long represented by Republican legislators voted for Obama, some by wide margins. Districts represented by GOP delegates Phil Hamilton, Tom Rust, and Jeff Frederick all handed Obama margins of more than 60%.

As the Virginian-Pilot editorialized: "Obama took the middle ground in Virginia, and he found it to be far more expansive than anyone thought."

Nationally, Obama garnered 53% of the popular vote, the first Democrat since Jimmy Carter in 1976 to receive more than 50 percent, and he dramatically altered the national electoral map. Obama overpowered McCain in Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Colorado, Nevada and New Mexico – all key battleground states carried by George Bush in 2004.

U.S. Senate

Former Governor Mark Warner won a huge victory in Virginia, trouncing former Governor Jim Gilmore with 64% of the vote – an unprecedented margin in a major-party statewide Virginia contest. Warner's moderate, solutions-oriented brand of politics won broad appeal across party lines and gave him a decided advantage over Gilmore, who struggled to gain traction and lacked sufficient funding to mount a competitive effort.

Mark Warner won all 11 Congressional Districts and 128 of 134 localities. His margin of victory in the 2008 Senate race (1.1 million) exceeded his vote total in the 2001 gubernatorial campaign (980,000). Gilmore carried just four counties: Augusta, Hanover, Powhatan and Rockingham; and two cities: Colonial Heights and Poquoson.

Warner's decisive victory now colors portions of Virginia blue, especially in the vote-rich regions of Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, and it completes a recent Democratic sweep of Virginia statewide contests. Virginia Republicans have now lost the past two U.S. Senate races in Virginia in 2006 and 2008, and the past two Gubernatorial campaigns in 2001 and 2005. The GOP also lost control of the state Senate in 2007, and has seen their numbers decline by 11 seats in the House of Delegates since 2003. This growing base of support for Democrats, along with Mark Warner's broad appeal among independent voters and GOP moderates, is transforming politics in the state.

Before Gilmore dropped his brief campaign for the White House this year and jumped to the Senate race, U.S. Rep. Tom Davis was considered the favorite for the GOP nomination. But the state Republican Party, in a reproach to the moderate Davis, chose a nominating convention rather than a primary. With Gilmore heavily favored in a convention format, the seven-term incumbent Davis announced his retirement from politics. As it turned out, Gilmore barely survived a convention challenge from the right in his own party, securing the nomination with less than one percent over little-known Northern Virginia Delegate Bob Marshall. At the same convention, conservative Republicans sacked their incumbent state chairman, former Lt. Gov. John Hager, in favor of 32-year-old staunch conservative Delegate Jeff Frederick.

As the University of Virginia's Larry Sabato put it:

"The Virginia GOP has moved even further right at a time when the state as a whole has dramatically moderated, making the Republican party's brand unpalatable to the key swing moderates and independents who determine the results of general elections, not to mention the band of Virginians who fund the candidates. All this is great news for the Democrats."

U.S. House of Representatives

Eight of Virginia's 11 incumbent Representatives breezed to re-election but Democrats appear to have

gained three seats in Virginia's delegation, although the final outcome in at least one close contest is still not known.

In Northern Virginia's 11th district, Fairfax County Board Chairman Gerry Connolly won convincingly with 53% over conservative GOP businessman Keith Fimian in the seat long held by retiring incumbent Republican Tom Davis. This race was a top target of both national parties in a competitive Northern Virginia district but returns solidify recent Democratic gains in the region. The district includes the city of Fairfax and large portions of Fairfax and Prince William counties. U.S. Sen. Jim Webb carried the district with 55% in 2006. In the statewide races of 2005, Gov. Kaine garnered 56%, and Leslie Byrne, running for Lt. Gov., captured 55%.

In the 2nd district, home to the U.S. Navy's Atlantic Fleet, political upstart Glenn Nye, 33, a former diplomat from Norfolk and virtually unknown in Virginia politics, beat two-term incumbent Republican Thelma Drake in what has long been a reliably Republican district. The final outcome was in abeyance for two days until some 27,000 absentee ballots were counted - an unusually high number due to the large military presence in the district. "Those ballots have been counted and the voters have decided," Drake said, congratulating Nye.

Election results in Southside Virginia's 5th congressional district are probably headed for a recount. Democrat Tom Perriello, a lawyer, appears to have a 745-vote margin over long-time incumbent Republican Virgil Goode, but Goode has not conceded the race. Perriello announced victory at a news conference this afternoon, but Goode claims "reporting irregularities - including misplaced paper ballots...and miscalculations in vote tallies." Goode said he would wait until the state Board of Elections certifies the vote on Nov. 24 before deciding whether to ask for a recount.

Incumbent Republicans Randy Forbes, Eric Cantor, Rob Wittman, Bob Goodlatte and Frank Wolf all turned back Democratic challenges. Democratic incumbent Jim Moran defeated Republican Mark Ellmore in the 8th, and Democratic incumbents Bobby Scott in the 3rd District and Rick Boucher in the 9th were unopposed.

It is extremely difficult to beat an incumbent member of the U.S. House of Representatives in Virginia. Before the General Election of 2008, it has happened just twice in the past 25 years: when Jim Moran ousted Stan Paris in 1990, and Tom Davis beat Leslie Byrne to capture Virginia's newest congressional district, the eleventh, in 1994. (Before that, you have to go back to 1982 when Norman Sisisky beat Bob Daniel, and Rick Boucher beat William Wampler.)

Since the year 2000, when current districts were first drawn, the advantages of incumbency have been all but insurmountable. But Republican incumbents faced an extremely difficult atmosphere this year with President Bush at all-time low approval ratings of 28% and nearly 80% of voters saying America is on the wrong track.

Nationally, Congressional returns show a new era of Democratic dominance in Congress, as Democrats added substantially to their already sizable majority in the House and came close to capturing the 60 votes needed for a veto-proof majority in the Senate. (Final returns in some U.S. Senate races remain in doubt.) Democrats now return to a position of power that predates the 1994 Republican revolution led by Newt Gingrich.

Voter Turnout

Voter turnout was impressive, although not as high as projected. It looks like about 74 percent of Virginia's 5 million registered voters cast ballots in the presidential race, a little higher than average in recent past presidential election years. There was a negligible drop off in the number of votes cast for the U.S. Senate (72.5%) and a further slight decline in turnout for congressional races.