

Iowa Legislature – Capitol Report 2022 Midterm Election Results

Statewide Races

More than 1.2 million Iowans voted in the midterm elections according to Iowa Secretary of State, Paul Pate. This is the second-highest midterm election turnout in Iowa, the highest occurring in 2018. The Republican Party of Iowa secured victories in all but one of the statewide and congressional races on Tuesday, flipping Congressional District 3 and both the Attorney General and Treasurer offices by defeating Democrat incumbents who have been in office for over 40 years.

Governor Reynolds won her race for re-election, defeating Deidre DeJear with nearly 60% of the vote early Tuesday night. Iowa's Auditor of State race remains the closest contested statewide race, with incumbent Rob Sand maintaining a narrow lead over challenger Todd Halbur, the race has not been officially called as of Thursday afternoon due to recounts occurring in two counties. Despite the recounts, Auditor Sand is expected to win the race, the only Democrat to win a statewide race this cycle.

- Governor: Deidre DeJear (39.5%) v. **Incumbent Kim Reynolds** (58.1%)
- Agriculture Secretary: John Norwood (38.8%) v. **Incumbent Mike Naig** (61.2%)
- Attorney General: Incumbent Tom Miller (49.1%) v. **Brenna Bird** (50.9%)
- Auditor of State: **Incumbent Rob Sand** (50.1%) v. Todd Halbur (49.9%)
- Secretary of State: Joel Miller (39.9%) v. **Incumbent Paul Pate** (60.1%)
- Treasurer: Incumbent Mike Fitzgerald (48.7%) v. **State Senator Roby Smith** (51.3%)

Libertarian Rick Stewart also ran for Governor and received 2.4% of the vote. The Libertarian Party of Iowa will once again qualify for major-party status after exceeding the 2% vote threshold; meaning the Libertarian Party of Iowa will be able to hold state-run primary elections and appear as a party option on voter registration forms.

Republican incumbents U.S. Representatives Randy Feenstra, Mariannette Miller-Meeks, and Ashley Hinson all defeated their challengers by the following margins.

- Congressional District 1: v. State Representative Christina Bohannon (46.5%) v. **Incumbent Mariannette Miller-Meeks** (53.5%)
- Congressional District 2: State Senator Liz Mathis (45.9%) v. **Incumbent Ashley Hinson** (54.1%)
- Congressional District 3: Incumbent Cindy Axne (49.6%) v. **State Senator Zach Nunn** (50.4%)
- Congressional District 4: Ryan Melton (30.4%) v. **Incumbent Randy Feenstra** (67.4%)

Iowa's third congressional district was the closest contested U.S. House race in Iowa with a 0.7% margin. State Senator Zach Nunn defeated Democrat incumbent Congresswomen Cindy Axne. The most recent polling done by the Iowa Poll in the weeks leading up to the election showed 49% likely voters favored a Democrat candidate while 48% favored a Republican. Iowa's third congressional district was closely watched across the country as the outcome could contribute to which party controls the U.S. House.

Incumbent Senator Chuck Grassley defeated his challenger, Mike Franken with 56.1% of the vote. The 2022 midterm election was Senator Grassley's closest margin of victory since his initial Senate campaign in 1980 where he won with 53.49% of the vote, since then he has won every re-election campaign with at least 60% of

the vote. Iowa's Senate race was closely watched after Senator Joni Ernst had a tough re-election campaign in 2020, Senator Ernst defeated her opponent with 51.8% of the vote.

State Senate

Republicans in the Iowa Senate expanded their majority from 32 to 34 on Tuesday, the party's largest majority in the Iowa Senate since 1980 when they controlled 38 seats. With a supermajority in the Senate, Republicans will be able to approve gubernatorial nominees without requiring Democrat votes. Republicans defeated two Democrat incumbents, flipping Senate District 1 in Woodbury county and Senate District 46 in Iowa, Johnson, and Washington counties. In Senate District 1 Rocky De Witt defeated incumbent Senator Jackie Smith whereas, in District 46, incumbent Senators Kevin Kinney and Dawn Driscoll were thrown together after redistricting last year. Senator Driscoll defeated Senator Kinney who has served in the Iowa Senate since 2015. Senator Driscoll was first elected in 2020.

Democrats flipped one seat in Senate District 14 after defeating Senate President Jake Chapman. Senators Jake Chapman and Sarah Trone Garriott were also redistricted together and faced off in the most expensive state legislature race, spending \$1.5 million.

Following redistricting, only 4 members of the 16-member Democratic minority were not on the ballot, with 3 members retiring. This compared to the 32-member Republican majority where 12 members were not on the ballot and 3 members retired to run for other offices. Of the 13 open seats created by redistricting and retirements, Republicans won 8 and Democrats won 5.

Senator Amy Sinclair, representing Senate District 12, was elected by the Republican caucus Thursday morning to replace defeated Senate President Jake Chapman. Senate Majority Leader Jack Whitver was re-elected to continue serving as majority leader.

State House of Representatives

Republicans in the Iowa House of Representatives also expanded their majority. With a few races still waiting to be officially called, Republicans are expected to return in January with a 64 majority. Republicans flipped 6 previously Democratic-held seats, defeating 3 Democrat incumbents in House Districts 2, 94, and 99. Rob Henderson defeated incumbent Steve Hansen in House District 2, Mike Vondran defeated incumbent Phyllis Thede in House District 94, and Matthew Rinker defeated incumbent Dennis Cohoon in House District 99.

Of the 34 open seats created by redistricting, Democrats won 14 while Republicans won 20. Only 20 of the 34 open seats had candidates from both parties running for election; out of the 20 seats, Republicans won 14 and Democrats won 6. Republicans had 7 of their 60-member caucus retire or run for different offices while Democrats had 11 of their 40-member caucus. Out of all 100 seats, Democrats did not have candidates running in 27 races while Republicans did not have candidates in 17 races.

The House Republican caucus re-elected Pat Grassley to serve as Speaker, Matt Windschitl to serve as Majority Leader, and John Wills to serve as Speaker Pro Tempore. Henry Stone was elected to serve as the new Majority Whip.

National

The minority party historically performs better during midterm elections; however, Republicans did not pick up as many seats in the U.S. House and Senate as previously expected.

Control for the Senate is still up for grabs as we wait for results from Arizona and Nevada. The Georgia senate race is heading to a run-off election on December 6 due to neither candidate winning 50% of the vote. In

Pennsylvania, Democrats flipped the U.S. Senate seat by electing Lt. Governor John Fetterman over Trump-backed Dr. Mehmet Oz. Republican J.D. Vance defeated Democrat U.S. Representative Tim Ryan for a highly contested open Senate seat in Ohio. Republicans held Wisconsin and Democrats held New Hampshire, both states with highly competitive Senate races.

Democrats exceeded expectations in battleground U.S. House races, but Republicans are still expected to capture a narrow majority. Currently, 398 of the 435 races have been called with Republicans winning 209 and Democrats winning 189. Democrats have lost 7 seats but held on to nearly a dozen of their most endangered incumbents. Republicans have gained 6 seats so far. Of the remaining 37 races, 8 are toss-ups, 13 are expected to go to Republicans and 16 are expected to go to Democrats.