
Midterm elections: Republicans have a narrow lead in the House while Senate control hangs in balance

A total of 41.2 million early mail-in ballots revealed an America determined to participate in and defend democracy and the vote against any sectarian assault. This is the America that emerged victorious from the polls. Only a few hours before Midterm election polls close across the country, the Republicans seem to be headed for a win in the House, while the Senate still hangs in the balance, with a handful of make-or-break races. Yet the 'Red Wave' that the Grand Old Party dreamed of has not materialised, while the Democrats seem to have at least averted disaster. Pending the official results, therefore, U.S. voters are the only ones who can claim and declare outright victory, with an unprecedented turnout for a midterm election contest. In fact, the numbers driving the run-up to the vote show that 80% of US citizens flocked to the polls to stop the opposing party, blamed for destroying "the country as we knew it." But it seems that demonising partisanship was not fully rewarded by voters. In fact, many of former President Donald Trump's endorsed candidates have been defeated, ultimately a disappointment for the tycoon who took credit for the purported wins well in advance. Indeed, Trump backed over 300 Midterm candidates in the hope of eventually using the wins as a springboard for his 2024 presidential campaign, which he is expected to announce on December 15. Trump's political right enjoyed the thrill of success thanks to the wins of two women: Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene, Marjorie Taylor Greene, a far-right conspiracy theorist, was re-elected in Georgia, while former White House press secretary Sarah Sanders has been elected the first woman Governor of Arkansas. Republican Katie Britt won the Senate race in Alabama to no great surprise, making her the first woman elected to represent the southern State at the Senate. The United States saw other historic firsts: Wes Moore became the first African-American governor of Maryland, while Democrat Maura Healey became the first openly lesbian governor of Massachusetts. In the House of Representatives, Democrat Maxwell Alejandro Frost is the first member of Generation Z - born between 1996 and 2012 - to win a seat in Congress. Republican U.S. Rep. Markwayne Mullin, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, is the first Native American Senator since 1925. Meanwhile, Trump-backed Republican Senate candidate J.D. Vance was elected in Ohio, partly thanks to financial support from Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. U.S. Senator Chuck Schumer won re-election for a fifth consecutive term, a first for New York State. Midterm election day included also gubernatorial elections. Texas governor Greg Abbott won a third term in office, defeating the Democratic presidential primary candidate. Florida's Governor Ron DeSantis was also re-elected. DeSantis, seen as a possible Republican challenger of Donald Trump for the US Presidential election in 2024, has been advised to stay out of the presidential race. Democrat Josh Shapiro won the governor's race in Pennsylvania, while Republican Governor Brian Kemp won re-election in Georgia. He had not bowed down to Trump's threats to overturn President-elect Joe Biden after the presidential defeat. The US president telephoned the election winners: Maura Healey in Massachusetts, Dan McKee in Rhode Island, Jared Polis in Colorado; Majority Senator Schumer, elected in New York, along with Peter Welch of Vermont and Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester. The House and Senate election results will shape Biden's upcoming agenda and serve as a referendum on his administration, as the country is facing record-breaking inflation and chaos surrounding the protection of democracy. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, reaffirmed the importance of the vote, adding that "whatever the outcome, we will respect it" in keeping with the sound democratic principle of political alternation, befitting of any free country and of a long-standing democracy like the United States.

Maddalena Maltese, from New York