Seven Ohio Counties Show Why Trump Lost as Republicans Won

By Matt A. Mayer

At the end of the day, the votes cast and counted determine who wins and who loses. Though it might be the case that many people cast ballots in 2020 who weren't eligible to do so for one reason or another, putting that horse back into the barn after the election is nearly impossible. The vote totals in seven Ohio counties shows why Donald Trump barely lost the election to Joe Biden while Republicans down ticket did extremely well.

Republican congressman [Troy Balderson's 12th Congressional District](#) encompasses parts of heavily-Democratic Franklin County (Columbus and its suburbs) along with six other suburban and rural counties north and east of Franklin County. Those counties include: Delaware, Licking, Marion, Morrow, Muskingum and Richland. Franklin County accounted for roughly 32 percent of the votes cast in the congressional race, with Delaware County next at 28 percent and Licking County third at 21 percent of the vote. The other four counties ranged from 7.5 percent down to just over 1 percent of the vote.

In the three most populous counties (Franklin, Delaware and Licking), the Republican congressional candidates secured more votes than Trump. Specifically, in Franklin County, Trump won 211,237 votes compared to 228,703 votes for the Republican congressional candidates, a roughly 16,500 vote advantage over Trump. In Delaware County, Trump secured 66,356 votes to Balderson's 70,080 votes. In Licking County, Trump got 59,514 votes to Balderson's 60,087 votes.

Not surprisingly, those three counties contain mostly urban and suburban voters, with Licking County having a few more exurban voters, which is why Trump nearly surpassed Balderson in that county. As you move away from Columbus to mostly small town and rural Ohio counties, Trump's performance improves. In Marion, Morrow and Richland counties, Trump surpasses the Republican congressional candidates' vote totals by 350, 300, and 1,200 votes, respectively. In Muskingum County, largely due to the city of Zanesville, Trump again falls below the Republican congressional candidates by 1,250 votes.

In the seven counties, Trump ended up with approximately 21,000 fewer votes than the various Republican congressional candidates (439,546 to 460,624). The results for Trump versus the Republican congressional candidates in these seven counties demonstrate how Trump's appeal increases as the geography changes from urban to suburban to exurban to rural counties. It also shows why he lost to Biden as other Republicans won.

In stark contrast to Trump, Biden bested the Democratic congressional candidates' vote total in all seven counties. The closest the congressional vote came to beating Biden was in Morrow County where he outpaced the Democratic congressional candidate by just 300 votes. In sum, Biden garnered 541,862 votes to 493,527 for the Democratic congressional candidates, or a more than 48,000-vote difference.

In head-to-head matchups, though Biden lost Ohio by 8 percent, he beat Trump by over 102,000 votes in the seven counties entirely because of the nearly 200,000-vote advantage he gained just in deep blue and vote-rich Franklin County, just as he lost to Trump handily in the other six counties. The Franklin County Democratic congressional candidates only bested their opponents by 152,000 votes. Comparing the two races in the other six counties bears out this pattern of non-Trump Republicans doing better than Trump. In the six other counties in the order of Delaware, Licking, Marion, Morrow, Muskingum, and Richland, Trump defeated Biden by roughly 8,600; 26,500; 10,700; 10,000; 15,900; and 23,800 votes, as the Republican congressional candidates beat their opponents by 19,900; 30,700; 11,000; 10,000; 18,900; and 28,800 votes.

These results show why Biden won the presidency as Democrats lost almost everywhere else. Among anti-Trump independent and moderate Republican voters, Biden outperformed fellow Democrats, as those same voters voted for Republican candidates down-ballot. A majority of voters liked the Trumpist agenda as evidenced by their support for Republicans candidates. A small, but meaningful subset of 40,000 voters in three states, however, just didn't want to see Trump back in the White House.

That anti-Trump, pro-Trumpism sentiment also explains how Republicans expanded their supermajorities in the Ohio House and Ohio Senate in 2020, as well as gaining in the US House and other state legislatures across the country. These results bode well for Republicans going into the 2022 midterm elections, when the party not occupying the White House typically prevails.

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