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Buncombe charts state legislative agenda after Democratic wave

Daniel Walton
Asheville Citizen Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

As North Carolina reckons with the change that the midterms brought to the state legislature, Buncombe County's government is figuring out what to ask of the new General Assembly. For county Board of Commissioners member Parker Sloan, the answer is clear: a lot.

Sloan alluded to the Democratic wave, which flipped control of the state House and broke the Republican supermajority in the state Senate, as the board discussed its legislative priorities at a Nov. 5 briefing. Given Buncombe's own Democratic alignment, he suggested, now was the time to dream big.

"We haven't created too many legislative priority documents as a commission across history, but I would encour-

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North Carolina state Sen. Julie Mayfield attends Jamie Ager's election night watch party at A-B Tech in Asheville on Nov. 3. JOSH BELL / ASHEVILLE CITIZEN TIMES



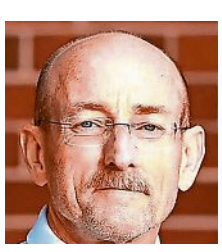
State Rep. Lindsey Prather speaks during Jamie Ager's election night watch party at A-B Tech in Asheville on Nov. 3
JOSH BELL/ASHEVILLE CITIZEN TIMES

Western NC helps Democrats end 16 years of GOP dominance

Cory Vaillancourt
Asheville Citizen Times
USA TODAY NETWORK



Cooper



Burrows



Russo



Stein

ASHEVILLE - The red wall finally cracked in Raleigh. Western North Carolina helped bring it down.

Democrats seized control of the North Carolina House of Representatives in Tuesday's midterm elections, ending 16 years of Republican dominance and dramatically altering the balance of power in state government.

"The voters of North Carolina made their voices heard loudly and clearly. They want balance. They want common sense in their government," Gov. Josh Stein said during a Nov. 4 press conference in Raleigh.

Unofficial results showed Democrats winning 71 of the chamber's 120 seats, a stunning reversal from the 71-49 Republican advantage heading into the election. Democrats also made substantial gains in the Senate, where Republicans appeared poised to retain a narrow 26-24 majority, although several races remained close enough for recounts.

For Democratic Gov. Stein, who spent his first two years in office battling a Republican-controlled legislature, the results represented a political transformation.

Characterizing the results as a demand for cooperation on affordability, public education, public safety and recovery from Tropical Storm Helene, Stein expressed optimism about working with incoming House Speaker Robert Reives, who is expected to replace Republican Destin Hall.

Stein acknowledged that even he

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Blue wave swamps GOP gains from redistricting

Dems overcome gamble to reshape House map

Emily R. Condon
USA TODAY

Republicans' redistricting war win didn't stand a chance against the blue tsunami.

Ahead of the 2026 midterms, at the direction of President Donald Trump, a handful of Republican-led states undertook an effort to redraw congressional district boundaries and create more seats that favored GOP candidates. The rare mid-decade move was aimed at defending and bolstering their narrow House majority.

Democratic-led states joined the "redistricting war," and lawsuits flew on both sides. By the time the gerrymandering blitz was over, Republicans were projected to have gained a nine-seat advantage over the 2024 lines.

On Nov. 3, however, most of those seats stayed in the hands of Democrats.

And even if they hadn't, it wouldn't have mattered. Democrats' projected House majority far outstripped those nine seats.

"When you're up against one of the greatest waves in American history, it's hard for these things to work out," political expert Kyle Kondik from Sabato's Crystal Ball at the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia told USA TODAY.

Still, that wave may have also hidden lurking dangers for Democrats.

"I guess you could sort of take a step back and say the overall House map is still a bit more Republican based on the 2024 presidential numbers than it has been prior to the remap, and maybe that has consequences for the future," Kondik said.

Dems gain ground after Texas launches redistricting war

Legislators in Texas kicked off redistricting craze, redrawing the state's lines to create five additional seats that favored Republicans.

It was an unusual move. States

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