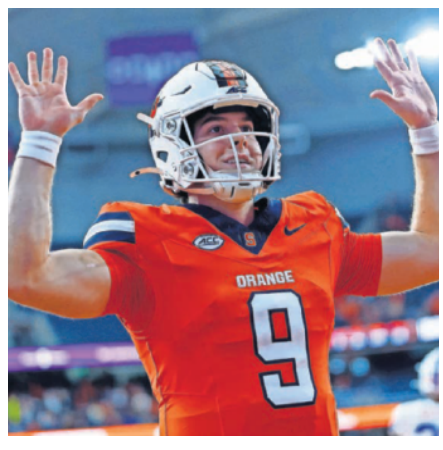
THE POST-STANDARD



Clutch: Orange football has resurrected its season with two wins. With four games left, will they qualify for a bowl? B1

ELECTION 2026 ONONDAGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Democrats claim a supermajority

A Democratic wave leaves Republicans with as few as 3 seats on the legislature they ruled for generations.

Chris Baker and Rylee Kirk *Staff writers*

Just when Republicans in Onondaga County thought it couldn't get worse, it got worse.

Democrats, who last year won their first majority in 50 years on the Onondaga County legislature, flipped at least three more seats blue.

They claimed a supermajority on the legislature, meaning they can override any veto from the Republican county executive, Ryan McMahon.

They took down one of the legislature's longest-serving members, Brian May, who has represented Lysander since 2011. They kept a seat in a red district around Skaneateles. They won in Clay and Lysander. They put up a heck of a fight in Elbridge.

Just four years ago, those results would have been unthinkable. But Tuesday's Democratic steamrolling caps a relentless leftward march for a county government that's been dominated by Republicans since Nixon resigned.

Time will tell what that newfound power for Democrats means. Chairwoman Nicole Watts said her top priority next year will be tackling child poverty.

For decades, the Republicans dominated most of the suburban and rural districts across the county. The Democrats were relegated to a handful of seats in the city and inner suburbs.

The Dems finished Tuesday with at least 13 of the 17 seats on the county legislature. They've got a narrow lead in the 14th district, where Jessica Dapson led Cody Kelly by 99 votes at the end of the night.

If Dapson's result holds after absentees are counted, it would mean there are only three Republicans left on the county legislature. That would be their smallest caucus ever.

The last time either party had such a lopsided majority was around 2012, when the legislature shrank from 19 seats to 17, leaving Republicans with a 14-3 majority. The legislature chairman at the time was Ryan McMahon.

As recently as two years ago, Republicans held an 11-6 majority on the legislature. That lead was wiped out last year as Democrats flipped four seats.

Democrats won in both years on the backs of voters fed up with Republican politics nationwide. Much of that comes from dissatisfaction with President Donald Trump's unpopular policies such as tariffs, mass deportations and a war with Iran that has driven up gas prices. Democrats flipped both houses of Congress Tuesday night, winning in places like Michigan and Texas and Georgia.

Matt Jones, who beat an incumbent Republican in the county's 2nd legislative district, said Trump's unpopularity certainly helped Democrats.

"The Republican Party, unfortunately, embraced a leader that took them down the wrong path and led them away from

SEE ONONDAGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE, A6



County Legislature Chair Nicole Watts was among the Democrats at The Mizpah wine bar watch party Tuesday. *Dennis Nett, dnett@syracuse.com*

ELECTION 2026 CENTRAL NEW YORK

A blue wave became a tsunami: 5 takeaways from the election



Democrats gather at The Mizpah wine bar in downtown Syracuse Tuesday night to watch Election Day returns. *Photos by Dennis Nett, dnett@syracuse.com*

Democrats swept into elected offices they have not held in decades.

Tim Knauss *tknauss@syracuse.com*

Central New York Republicans tried to shield themselves this year from the coming surge of anti-Republican sentiment, but nothing could hold back the giant wave. Voter dissatisfaction with President Trump and the national GOP washed over the entire election, affecting local races ranging from town board to county judge.

Here are some of the major takeaways.

The blue wave of 2025 became a tsunami in 2026

Democrats who were hoping to win two additional seats on the Onondaga County Legislature seized at least three and possibly four instead. The Democrats will have a veto-proof supermajority for the next four years, for the first time since the county government as we know it formed in 1960.

Democratic victories piled up throughout the region.



Syracuse mayor Sharon Owens gets the crowd going at The Mizpah wine bar watch party.

U.S. Rep. John Mannion, D-Geddes, became the first Democrat to win back-to-back elections in his Congressional District since James Hanley did it in 1978.

The town of Clay elected Dave Capria, its first Democratic town supervisor since 1958.

Voters rejected a widely respected veteran County Court judge, Matthew Doran, in favor of his Democratic challenger, Jeffrey Leibo.

Democrats won seven of the 10 contested town supervisor contests, plus the Baldwinsville mayor's race.

One thing was clear, said Rich McCarron, who gave up his county legislature seat to run for state Assembly, losing to Democratic incumbent Rachel May.

Voters want change, he said.

"Whether it's a statement against local politics, or a statement against national politics, it was a pretty loud statement," McCarron said. "It's an old-fashioned shellacking."

Republicans lost the legislature despite spending big and stiff-arming Trump

Local Republican candidates did their best to keep a distance from Trump. Most stayed far away from the president's political rally last month in Syracuse. Many GOP candidates emphasized their approach as "bipartisan" or "non-partisan."

Onondaga County Legislature candidate Brandon Camperlino, a Republican who ran in a predominantly Democratic district, circulated petitions to get a second ballot line. He urged voters to vote for him on the "Common Ground" line.

Another Republican county legislature candidate, Leslie English, put it this way on a campaign mailer:

"Vote the person, not the party."

The blue wave of Democratic wins took its toll anyway.

Last year, Democrats wrested control

SEE ELECTION TAKEAWAYS, A7

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ONTARIO COUNTY A2

Mom indicted

Shirley Morales, the mother of convicted killer Precious Arzuaga, is accused of helping her daughter kidnap Sam Nordquist, the transgender man who was tortured and killed last year by Arzuaga and others.

LIFE C1

Marcellus revival

Steve Tross, chef and owner of Stone Creek, is bringing the Alvord House back to life. The building, which dates to 1815, is being renovated and Tross hopes to open the bar and restaurant before Christmas.