Trump wins US presidential election

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CNN reported at about 2:45 AM Eastern Standard Time that Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton had made a concession call to her Republican opponent Donald Trump, acknowledging that the billionaire real estate mogul had won the presidential election in a stunning upset and debacle for the Democratic Party.

Trump's victory was accompanied by a rout of the Democrats in the congressional races, with the Republicans retaining control of the Senate and suffering only a small reduction in their majority in the House of Representatives.

When the concession call came, vote counting was continuing in a handful of states, but Trump had effectively secured a victory in the Electoral College. According to television network projections, Trump had 244 electoral votes and was leading in states with enough electoral votes to give him the 270 required to win.

Some 45 minutes before the announcement of Clinton's concession, the *Hill* web site reported that Trump had won Pennsylvania, one of the industrial states that had been chalked up by pollsters and the media as firmly in the Clinton column. The win in Pennsylvania brought Trump's electoral vote total to 264.

Shortly thereafter, Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta told the gloomy crowd gathered at Clinton campaign headquarters in Manhattan that the candidate would not make an appearance until the morning.

The result came as a political shock, as pre-election polls and media commentators had almost unanimously predicted a Clinton victory by a relatively comfortable margin. Financial markets went into convulsions, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average futures market plunging 900 points in overnight trading. The NASDAQ market halted futures trading as prices fell through preset triggers.

According to network projections, Clinton was trailing by 1.2 million in the national popular vote. She could retake the lead in the popular vote after late vote counts in the Pacific Coast states, where she was winning by wide margins. It is the Electoral College, however, that determines the outcome of the presidential race.

When CNN announced Clinton's concession, the networks had not yet called the major industrial states of Pennsylvania, with 20 electoral votes, Michigan (16) and Wisconsin (10), as well as New Hampshire (4) and Arizona (11). There were two other undecided electoral votes, one each in Nebraska and Maine—states that award electoral votes by congressional district as well as statewide.

By 11 PM on Tuesday, Trump had won five of the closely-contested "battleground" states, including Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio and Iowa, while taking substantial leads in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin and Arizona. Clinton won only Virginia, Colorado and Nevada, while taking a narrow lead in New Hampshire.

Trump carried every Southern state except Virginia, which he lost narrowly, as well as the less populated states of the Great Plains and Mountain West, except for Colorado, New Mexico and Nevada. He also won Ohio, Indiana, Missouri and Iowa in the Midwest, and took leads in Wisconsin and Michigan, while Clinton won only Illinois and Minnesota outright.

In the Midwest and Pennsylvania, Trump broke through in previously Democratic strongholds in the presidential race by combining large majorities in traditionally Republican rural areas with victories in smaller industrial cities that had voted for Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012. These included Saginaw, Bay City and Battle Creek in Michigan; Dayton, Lorain and Canton in Ohio; Erie, Scranton and Wilkes-Barre in Pennsylvania.

Fueling Trump's lead in the polls was a further shift by whites without a college education—characterized as "working class whites" by the media, although many workers have a college degree—against the Democratic Party. While 40 percent of this demographic voted for Barack Obama in 2008, and he won a majority of their votes outside the South, only 27 percent voted for Hillary Clinton.

This reflects both the impact of the financial crash and the pro-corporate policies of the Obama administration on the jobs and living standards of the poorest sections of white workers, and the complete indifference of the Democratic Party to the plight of the working class as a whole. The Clinton campaign sought to mobilize voter turnout among black and other minority workers on the basis of identity politics, while offering no policies to benefit workers as a class.

Voter turnout was at record levels in many states—Florida alone saw one million more votes cast than in 2012—and there were long lines at polling places both in urban centers and in rural areas.

In the contest for control of the US Senate, where the Republican Party was widely expected to lose its 54–46 majority because 24 Republican seats were at stake compared to only 10 Democratic seats, the Democratic debacle was as pronounced as in the presidential race. As of this writing, only one Democratic challenger, Tammy Duckworth in Illinois, had ousted a Republican incumbent.

The networks confirmed that the Republicans would retain at least 51 seats in the Senate, guaranteeing their continued control of the upper legislative chamber. This puts a Trump administration in a position to determine the successor on the US Supreme Court to Antonin Scalia, the ideological leader of the far-right faction on the court who died earlier this year.

Heavily favored Democratic former senators Russ Feingold and Evan Bayh went down to defeat in Wisconsin and Indiana, and Democratic challengers were trailing in New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Missouri, three other closely contested seats. Republican Senator Marco Rubio, a former challenger to Trump for the presidential nomination, retained his seat in Florida.

In the House of Representatives, the Democrats hardly made a serious dent in the huge 60-seat Republican majority, gaining only a half-dozen scattered seats.

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