

Alabama Senate result shows collapse of support for Trump

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Final figures from the US Senate election in Alabama Tuesday show the victory of Democrat Doug Jones was due in large measure to a collapse in support for the policies of the Trump administration in a state where Trump won the 2016 election by a landslide.

Exit polls showed voters split 48-48 in approval or disapproval of the Trump administration, while Trump carried the state a year ago by a margin of 62 to 35 percent.

Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore won 650,436 votes, less than half the 1.32 million votes cast for Trump in 2016. Meanwhile Democrat Doug Jones won 671,151 votes, or 92 percent of the 730,000 votes cast for Hillary Clinton the year before.

Jones swept the four largest urban areas in the state—Birmingham, Mobile, Montgomery and Huntsville—running up a combined margin of nearly 150,000 votes, seven times more than his eventual statewide margin. In 2016, Trump had a narrow lead of 3,000 votes over Clinton in the four most populous counties.

Even more pronounced was the swing in upscale suburban areas outside of Birmingham and Mobile. Shelby County and Baldwin County combined to give Trump a margin of 100,000 votes, while Moore's lead there was only 25,000. Democratic Senate candidate Doug Jones actually received 8,000 more votes than Hillary Clinton in the two counties, while Moore won only half of Trump's vote.

The four main cities and their suburbs accounted for the bulk of write-in votes, which came to 22,000, five times the usual number, and slightly more than the margin of victory for Jones. Richard Shelby, the senior Republican Senator from Alabama, used a national television appearance Sunday, two days before the election, to announce he would cast a write-in for

another Republican rather than vote for Moore.

The barrage of media propaganda about Moore's alleged sexual transgressions did not succeed in shifting many voters from the Republican Party to the Democrats, but it did encourage many Republican voters to stay home.

In key areas, this resulted in a complete reversal of the outcome compared to 2016. In Madison County, for example, which includes Huntsville, the main city in northern Alabama, Jones received 65,664 votes, slightly more than Hillary Clinton's 62,435 last year. The Republican vote plunged, from 89,199 for Trump to only 46,313 for Moore.

Both exit polls and county-by-county totals indicated that African-American voters went to the polls in far greater numbers than expected, and in some areas in greater numbers than in the 2012 presidential election when Barack Obama was on the ballot.

Exit polls found that black voters made up 28 percent of the total, more than their 26 percent share of the population. While the statewide voter turnout was only 40.46 percent, turnout in some predominately black counties was well over 50 percent, while in some of the poorest predominately white counties turnout fell to as low as 29 percent.

Jones won 96 percent of the African-American vote, a higher percentage than Obama in either 2008 or 2012. He also led by wide margins among young people, include 22 points among those 18-30, as well as among those 30-44. Moore posted his highest margin among the elderly, with 59 percent of those aged 65 or older.

The youth vote was evident in the results from Tuscaloosa County, where the University of Alabama is located. Trump won the county by 16,000 votes, but Moore lost it by nearly 9,000 votes, receiving less than half as many votes as Trump, while Jones nearly

matched the showing of Hillary Clinton.

In the stronghold of Republican candidates in past elections, the rural and semi-rural counties across the northern half of the state, Moore won by large percentages but with severely depressed voter turnout. For example, in his home county of Etowah, which includes the city of Gadsden, Moore won 15,693 votes, less than half the 32,132 for Trump in 2016. By contrast, Jones received 10,518 votes, more than Clinton's 10,350 a year ago. The result is that Trump's margin of victory in the county, 21,782, was more than four times as large as Moore's 5,175.



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