

In rebuke to Trump's fascism, Mamdani elected mayor of New York City, Democrats sweep governor races

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On Tuesday, 190 elections spanning more than 30 states in the US took place, including the mayoral election in New York City and gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey. The elections unfolded under conditions of mounting authoritarianism and deepening class polarization.

The New York City mayoral election

In the financial center of the American capitalism, Zohran Mamdani's mayoral victory marks a development of immense political significance. Until recently a virtually unknown assemblyman and member of the Democratic Socialists of America, Mamdani defeated Andrew Cuomo, the son of former Governor Mario Cuomo and a longtime representative of the New York political establishment, and Republican Curtis Sliwa.

Mamdani's margin of victory was significant, achieving over 50 percent of the vote compared to Cuomo's 41 percent and Sliwa's 7 percent. Over 2 million votes were cast, the most since 1969, and 17 percent of those who voted were first-time voters.

According to the *New York Times*, more than 735,000 New Yorkers cast early ballots ahead of Tuesday's in-person vote, the highest ever for a non-presidential election in New York City. Of those early votes, 42 percent were cast by people between the ages of 18-44, 2 percent higher than in the 2024 presidential election early vote. The last *New York Times*/Siena poll conducted in September found younger voters preferred Mamdani over Cuomo by 73 to 10 percent.

While Mamdani has gained the support of large sections of the Democratic Party establishment, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, an ardent Zionist and one of the most vocal supporters of Israel's onslaught on Gaza, refused to endorse Mamdani—the winner of his own party's primary. Asked about the race Tuesday, Schumer remarked: "I voted and I look forward to working with the next mayor to help New York City."

Mamdani's victory is not merely a rebuke to the Trump administration but to the Democratic Party establishment itself. The large vote for Mamdani is a distorted reflection of the growing support for socialism and the radicalization of the working class and youth.

However, the Mamdani campaign does not represent a frontal assault on the wealth of the oligarchy but an attempt to rescue the Democratic Party. Since winning the primary earlier this year, Mamdani has done all he can to reassure the ruling class that his campaign represents no threat to their wealth or class interests.

Mamdani has pledged to retain Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch, a favorite of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and scion of one of the

wealthiest families in the United States. Her continued leadership ensures that the New York Police Department will remain a bulwark of repression against pro-Palestine demonstrators and the working class as a whole.

The Tisch family fortune, derived from Loews Corporation and the NFL's New York Giants, epitomizes the incestuous relationship between big business, the media and the state. Mamdani's decision to keep Tisch signals to Wall Street and the real estate oligarchy that his mild reform proposals are "negotiable"—that nothing fundamental will be touched.

Yet the hostility of the ruling elite toward Mamdani is not because it fears his program but because it fears the threat of genuine socialism. Polls such as the recent Axios/Generation Lab survey show that 67 percent of US college students hold a positive or neutral view of socialism, while only 40 percent view capitalism positively.

In response, fascistic Republicans—Donald Trump, Stephen Miller and Elon Musk among them—denounced Mamdani and his campaign. On his social media platform Monday ahead of the election, Trump threatened to withhold federal funding from New York City if Mamdani won:

If Communist Candidate Zohran Mamdani wins the Election for Mayor of New York City, it is highly unlikely that I will be contributing Federal Funds, other than the very minimum as required, to my beloved first home, because of the fact that, as a Communist, this once great City has ZERO chance of success, or even survival! It can only get worse with a Communist at the helm, and I don't want to send, as President, good money after bad. It is my obligation to run the Nation, and it is my strong conviction that New York City will be a Complete and Total Economic and Social Disaster should Mamdani win.

Trump refused to endorse the Republican primary winner, Curtis Sliwa, writing, "Whether you personally like Andrew Cuomo or not, you really have no choice. You must vote for him, and hope he does a fantastic job."

On election morning, Trump issued an antisemitic threat to New York's Jewish population, the largest in the country, writing on his social media platform: "Any Jewish person that votes for Zohran Mamdani, a proven and self-professed JEW HATER, is a stupid person!!!"

Trump's fascistic rants strengthened support for Mamdani, the current beneficiary of mass anger at Trump and the financial oligarchy he represents. Large numbers of Jewish voters backed Mamdani precisely because of his opposition to the genocide in Gaza and his refusal to equate Jewish identity with the Zionist state.

Former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who ran as an independent

with the backing of Trump's far-right network after losing the Democratic primary, voiced the fears of the entire ruling class before voting Tuesday:

You're seeing a civil war in the Democratic Party ... You have an extreme, radical left that is run by the socialists ... This country is not a socialist country. The city is not a socialist city ... Socialism has never worked anywhere on the globe.

Elon Musk, who also endorsed Cuomo, joined the now routine right-wing campaign to discredit the election results, posting on X that the New York City ballot was "a scam," as part of the broader Republican strategy to delegitimize any election they do not win, recycling the same falsehoods used to justify Trump's coup attempt in 2021 and preparing the ground to overturn future results in 2026 or 2028—if those elections even occur.

Democrats sweep in Virginia

The Democratic Party swept the gubernatorial and legislative elections in Virginia, with former CIA officer and Congressperson Abigail Spanberger winning the governor's race and the party securing control of both chambers of the state legislature. Spanberger bested Republican Winsome Earle-Sears by a wide margin of 56 to 44 percent, while Democrats have won a majority in the House of Delegates. Party leaders are calling the outcome their biggest victory in the state since 1989.

Spanberger's campaign benefited from the collapse of Republican support in suburban counties, such as Loudoun and Prince William, where she outperformed Kamala Harris's 2024 showing. The *Times* reported that even traditionally conservative areas, like Surry County and the town of Waynesboro—both of which voted for Trump in 2024—flipped to the Democrats, reflecting widespread outrage at Trump's government.

Democratic State Senator Ghazala Hashmi defeated Republican John Reid and will serve as Spanberger's lieutenant governor, presiding over a narrowly divided State Senate, where Democrats hold a 21–19 edge.

The Democrats' sweep represents not a turn to the left by the party but the consolidation of a section of the national security and intelligence apparatus within the political establishment. Spanberger is one of the original "CIA Democrats," part of the 2018 wave of candidates with backgrounds in the military and intelligence agencies that the *World Socialist Web Site* described as "the political instrument of the Pentagon and the CIA within the Democratic Party."

Throughout her campaign, Spanberger presented herself as a defender of "law and order," an opponent of Trump's mass layoffs of federal workers, and a reliable partner of Wall Street. Her banal campaign focused on "affordability," "pragmatism" and building "an economy that works for everyone" while exploiting the fact that her opponent refused to distance herself from Trump under conditions of mass opposition to Trump's police-state policies and layoffs.

Spanberger's victory underscores how the Democratic Party functions as the second political instrument of American imperialism. While Trump and the Republicans openly cultivate fascism, the Democrats work through the institutions of the military, intelligence and corporate bureaucracy to suppress social opposition from below and channel it back into the dead-end of electoral politics. The result is a division of labor between two wings of the same capitalist ruling class.

The Republicans' collapse in Virginia was accelerated by Trump's own attacks on his former ally, Winsome Earle-Sears. Trump refused to

endorse Earle-Sears after she criticized him following the January 6 coup attempt. Earle-Sears, a black woman and Jamaican immigrant, is also a Christian fundamentalist who focused her campaign on demonizing transgendered people. Trailing badly in the polls, she was largely sidelined by the Republican Party apparatus in the final stages of the election.

Even as Trump's government continues to slash public jobs, furlough federal workers and deepen the ongoing government shutdown, Virginia Republicans remain loyal to him. The cuts have devastated the state's economy, producing a recession that has hit public sector workers, educators and service employees hardest. The Democrats capitalized on this anger, posturing as defenders of workers while offering nothing to alleviate mass unemployment and poverty.

Mikie Sherrill defeats Trump-backed Republican Jack Ciattarelli

In New Jersey, Democrat Mikie Sherrill has been declared the winner of the gubernatorial election, defeating Republican Jack Ciattarelli by a commanding margin of roughly 57 to 42 percent, according to *The Hill* and NBC News. With over half the vote counted, Sherrill's lead is well beyond expectations, as late polling from Emerson College and *The Hill* had suggested a race within a single percentage point—or even a potential Ciattarelli upset.

Sherrill's victory reflects both Trump's deep unpopularity in the state—his disapproval rating stands at 51 percent—and the Democrats' success in consolidating sections of affluent suburban voters alienated by Trump's fascistic appeals. Like Abigail Spanberger in Virginia, Sherrill is one of the original "CIA Democrats" identified by the *World Socialist Web Site* in 2018: a former Navy helicopter pilot and federal prosecutor whose career and politics are inseparable from the military-intelligence establishment.

Throughout the campaign, Sherrill repeatedly invoked her record in the U.S. Navy, portraying her service as proof of patriotism and "leadership under pressure." Ciattarelli, running an increasingly desperate right-wing campaign, identified himself entirely with Trump. His television spots smeared Sherrill for being barred from walking in her 1994 commencement ceremony at the U.S. Naval Academy, because she had failed to turn in a classmate who cheated on an exam.

Sherrill's decisive win, like Spanberger's in Virginia, does not represent an endorsement of militarism or capitalism. Rather, it shows how popular opposition to Trump is strangled within the framework of the corporate-controlled two-party system, and demonstrates the Democratic Party's deepening dependence on the military-intelligence apparatus.



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