



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on July 22, 2023

College Towns Now Drive Landmark Democrat Turnout, Putting GOP in Panic

The nation's universities continue to play a significant role in electoral politics.

As seen in a new piece by [Politico](#), a startling trend is taking place across the country: College towns are not only getting bluer, but getting bluer by higher margins and driving higher turnout for Democrats in elections — in some cases, providing the party with enough force to soundly trounce Republicans in statewide elections.

This is the case in Wisconsin. Dane County, home to the University of Wisconsin and the state's next-most populous county after Milwaukee, saw higher turnout in the recent state Supreme Court race than anywhere else in the state. Moreover, Democrats' victory margin was higher than in any other county.



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As *Politico* notes:

The margin was so big that it changed the state's electoral formula. Under the state's traditional political math, Milwaukee and Dane — Wisconsin's two Democratic strongholds — are counterbalanced by the populous Republican suburbs surrounding Milwaukee. The rest of the state typically delivers the decisive margin in statewide races. The Supreme Court results blew up that model. Dane County alone is now so dominant that it overwhelms the Milwaukee suburbs (which have begun trending leftward anyway). In effect, Dane has become a Republican-killing Death Star.

This trend could make it nigh impossible for the GOP to win a race at the statewide level in Wisconsin again.

And unfortunately for Republicans, this phenomenon isn't limited to the Badger State.

In Michigan, for instance, Joe Biden's margin of victory over Donald Trump in the University of Michigan's Washtenaw County in 2020 was a massive improvement over the performance of Al Gore against George W. Bush. In 2000, Gore scored a 34,000 lead over Bush, resulting in a 60-36 margin.

But in 2020, Biden won Washtenaw by approximately 101,000 votes — commanding a lead of nearly 50 percentage points. With that margin, Hillary Clinton would have beaten Donald Trump in Michigan — a state that was crucial to Trump's 2016 victory.

Politico further notes how college towns have increasingly become megacenters of turnout in Democrats' electoral machine:



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The American Communities Project [ACP], which has developed a typology of counties, designates 171 independent cities and counties as “college towns.”

... Of those 171 places, 38 have flipped from red to blue since the 2000 presidential election. Just seven flipped the other way, from blue to red, and typically by smaller margins. Democrats grew their percentage point margins in 117 counties, while 54 counties grew redder. By raw votes, the difference was just as stark: The counties that grew bluer increased their margins by an average of 16,253, while Republicans increased their margins by an average of 4,063.

Back in 2000, the places identified as college towns by ACP voted 48 percent to 47 percent in favor of Al Gore. In the last presidential election, the 25 million who live in those places voted for Joe Biden, 54 percent to 44 percent.

The GOP, meanwhile, is figuring out the appropriate way to respond. Some of the tactics suggested and being pursued are to draw electoral maps that dilute the college voting blocs, and to restrict the ability of students to vote in the local community.

At the Wisconsin Republican state convention in June, for example, a resolution was proposed to call on the Legislature to draft a bill that would require students to vote absentee in their home communities, thereby limiting their electoral influence in college towns. But the proposal was shut down amid opposition from GOP chairs of Dane and Milwaukee counties.

The county’s Republican Party chair, Hilario Deleon, told fellow party officials that, while Dane may be home to the University of Wisconsin, antagonizing college students by restricting their vote would be a bad idea.

“Why on Earth would we send a message to the students that we don’t want them to vote our way?” Deleon argued. “Do not give the Democrats ammunition, give them competition.”

From North Carolina to Colorado and even Texas, college towns are vastly changing the political landscape. The shift is not only due to the way in which college students are increasingly becoming more leftist due to socialist education, but to suburbs becoming more blue. Moreover, the leftist atmosphere of college towns attracts left-leaning people to move there.

The *Politico* piece details some of the college towns that have seen major change over the years:

The University of Arizona’s Pima County ... has seen Democratic presidential margins grow by nearly 75,000 votes since 2000. In Nevada, Reno’s fast-growing Washoe County — home to the University of Nevada and its 20,000 students — flipped blue in 2008 after decades of backing Republican presidential candidates and hasn’t returned to the GOP fold since. The University of Georgia’s Clarke County has seen its Democratic presidential margins roughly double since 2012. It’s considerably smaller in population than either Pima or Washoe counties, so Biden’s winning margin in 2020 was a mere 22,000 votes. But that’s in a state so closely divided that it was decided by just 11,000.

If Republicans don’t come up with a solution, Democrats may be on the path to becoming virtually unbeatable in a number of once-contested states.



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