



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on November 7, 2018

Did Third-party Candidates Help Defeat Viable GOP Candidates?

It was a so-so night for conservatives, but perhaps an instructive one for the ideological purists who vote for Libertarians and “Independents.” Those votes can mean electing a socialist or Democrat to office and defeating a conservative.

But that isn't the only lesson from last night's election. Americans are no longer embarrassed to vote for candidates who, 50 years ago, could never have gotten close to a party nomination, much less win a seat in Congress or a governor's mansion.



On a positive note, the GOP losses last night weren't as bad as some predicted. [The party gained](#) two seats in the U.S. Senate and [lost 27 seats](#) in the House as of this writing. By contrast, in 2010, President Obama's first midterm, the [Democrats lost 63 seats](#). [They lost another 13](#) in 2014.

Libertarians, Independents Hurt Republicans

Libertarians and independents, whose politics generally lean right not left, likely factored into the defeat of at least four Republican candidates, contributing to the shift in the House from Republican to Democrat control. This is not to say the typical Republican is constitutionalist (far from it, unfortunately!), but a shift to Democrat control makes the overall situation in the House worse, not better.

In West Virginia, [Democrat Joe Manchin barely defeated](#) Republican Patrick Morrissey, 288,808 to 269,872 votes, a difference of 18,936 votes. But Morrissey likely would have won if Libertarian Rusty Hollen hadn't taken 24,231 votes.

In Iowa District 3, [Democrat Cindy Axne defeated](#) incumbent Republican David Young, 169,886 to 164,656, a difference of 5,230. The Libertarian candidate, Bryan Holder, received 7,005 votes. Two independents took 3,177 votes.

In Virginia, incumbent conservative Dave Brat, a tea party candidate [who knocked over](#) Republican Majority Leader Eric Cantor four years ago, [lost a squeaker](#) to a former CIA operative, Abigail Spanberger, 170,737 to 165,962. Just 4,775 votes separated the two. The Libertarian, Joseph Walton, received 4,135 votes. Had Walton not polluted the race, it would have been closer, and Brat might have been able to force a recount that could change the race.

In Kansas, [an independent knocked out](#) GOP gubernatorial candidate Kris Kobach. Leftist Laura Kelly defeated Kobach 489,337 to 443,346, a difference of 45,991. But the Independent Greg Orman collected 66,163.

In Florida, four candidates with no chance of winning collected 99,848 votes, which nearly cost GOP gubernatorial candidate Ron DeSantis the race against hard-leftist Andrew Gillum. [DeSantis won](#) by only 55,439 votes of 8,148,645 cast, or 0.68 percent.



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One might say those candidates cost Gillum the race, which certainly might be true. But it still proves the point that down-ballot candidates with no chance of winning harm the chances of serious candidates.

And, again, most libertarians tend to fall on the right side of the political spectrum given their skepticism of anything to do with government.

In Georgia, Democrat Stacy Abrams [refuses to concede](#) to Republican Brian Kemp in the race for governor. Why is that? [Kemp received](#) 1,962,547 votes to Abrams' 1,887,161, a difference of 75,386. It was 50.5 percent to 48.5 percent. The libertarian received 36,706 votes. Those votes might push the race [into a runoff](#) if Kemp's total dips below 50 percent.

Admittedly, there are cases where independent candidates are viable. But how about other cases where independent candidates do not have a chance, yet result in a worse candidate being elected?

Oddball Candidates Win

In three important races, candidates who in the past would never have run, much less won, performed well. Of course, they were Democrats.

Coloradans can proudly say [they have elected](#) its first open homosexual as governor, Jared Polis.

In Minnesota, the Democrats went even further round the bend. [Winning as attorney general](#) was Keith Ellison, [the radical Muslim supporter of Louis Farrakhan and cop killer Mumia Abu Jamal](#), despite a serious accusation that [he beat](#) the tar out of his girlfriend.

Ellison defeated his opponent, Doug Wardlow, by 98,657 votes, far less than the 145,665 votes taken by the candidate who ran for the Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis Party. So again, maybe this third-party candidate provided the margin of victory given that many libertarians who might have voted for Wardlow went to the pro-pot candidate. Legalizing dope is a key concern of libertarians.

And Minnesotans in its 5th District [have elected](#) a Somali refugee, Ilhan Omar, to replace Islamic radical Ellison. Omar's claim to fame is that [she married her brother](#) to perpetrate immigration fraud.

Democrats put up another crazy candidate for governor in Vermont, Christine Hallquist, a [man who thinks he's a woman](#).

[Voters rejected](#) this lunacy by a wide margin, although [they did return](#) socialist Bernie Sanders, the [longtime and faithful friend of communist murderers](#), to the Senate.

Another winner, of course, was the young socialist [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez](#), who has zero political experience and even less knowledge about economics and the public-policy matters about which she has some measure of influence. The young socialist told an interviewer that unemployment was low "because everyone has two jobs."

Ocasio-Cortez is an acolyte of Sanders, and like Sanders, thinks the government can provide "Medicare for All."

Hilariously, when CNN's Jake Tapper asked Ocasio-Cortez how she would pay for this \$40 trillion program, she answered with the usual socialist nonsense: "Medicare for All," [Ocasio-Cortez replied](#), "would save the American people a very large amount of money."

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