



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on August 4, 2017

West Virginia Governor Latest Loss for Democratic Party

“Governor Justice’s party switch is another  blow to a Democratic Party that would rather obstruct than work to make our country great again,” said Ronna Romney McDaniel, who chairs the Republican National Committee, in response to the announcement by West Virginia Governor Jim Justice that he is the latest Democrat to change his registration to Republican.

Governor Jim Justice (shown) made his announcement at a Thursday night rally with President Trump. He told the cheering crowd that he just could not help West Virginia any more as a Democratic governor, saying that the “Democrats walked away from me.” Justice’s parents were both “staunch Republicans,” he told the Trump rally, adding that they are both in Heaven saying it’s about time “you came to your senses.”

Romney, a niece of former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, the 2012 nominee of the Republican Party for president, and a granddaughter of former Michigan Governor George Romney, issued a statement that the party switch is “another blow” to the Democratic Party that no longer has the White House or either house of Congress. Across America, voters have put their faith in the Republican Party because we are the Party fighting to give every individual the opportunity to achieve the American Dream.”

Senator Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) declared, “I have been and always will be a proud West Virginia Democrat. I am disappointed by Governor Justice’s decision to switch parties. While I do not agree with his decision, I have always said that I will work with anyone, no matter their party affiliation, to do what is best for the people of West Virginia.”

Romney noted, “With only 15 governorships and control of the fewest state legislatures in history, Governor Justice’s announcement is just the latest rejection of a party that is leaderless from top to bottom and unable to find a positive, unifying message. While Democrats continue to put politics before the American people, Republicans are working with President Trump to lead America towards a future with fewer burdensome regulations, greater economic stability, and stronger national security. Governor Justice, welcome back to the Republican Party.”

While West Virginia has become strongly Republican, and indeed is one of Trump’s best states, where his popularity remains high, it was considered a bedrock Democrat stronghold until fairly recent years. For example, in 1980, when Republican candidate Ronald Reagan carried 44 states in a 449-89 landslide over incumbent Democratic President Jimmy Carter, West Virginia was one of only six states Carter managed to carry.

But with the national Democratic Party’s lurch to the Left on social issues, and its unrelenting attacks upon the coal industry so important in West Virginia, Trump (who strongly supported the coal industry, while it was attacked by Obama and Clinton) remains popular there and was greeted warmly for his rally.

Justice’s party switch is illustrative of the electoral decline of the Democratic Party nationally after



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Barack Obama became president in 2009. Since that time, the failures at the polls have been dramatic. The Democrats have lost more than 1,000 state and federal positions, including seats in Congress and the state legislatures, governorships, and finally, in November of last year, the White House. The Democrat share of the U.S. House of Representatives went from 256 seats to only 194.

In the 2016 presidential campaign, Obama attempted to stem the tide, at least at the presidential level, telling the country in September that his legacy was “on the ballot.” Despite Obama’s support for Democratic Party nominee Hillary Clinton, Republican candidate Trump flipped several states from Democrat to Republican, including Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.

With the loss of West Virginia’s governorship, the Democrats now hold only 15 of the nation’s 50 governorships.

While some Democrats refuse to admit the voter disaffection for their party, blaming losses on various things such as “the Russians,” Representative Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), who challenged House Democratic Party Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) for that position, made it clear that he believes they have a problem. “We’re not even a national party at this point,” Ryan lamented. “We have some support on the coasts, but we’ve lost the support of middle America, and we’ve got to make some changes. So, I’m pulling the fire alarm here, because the house is on fire.”

Despite Ryan’s realistic assessment, Republicans are not taking advantage of the Democrat’s problems to craft a limited-government and free market agenda. While the Democrats suffered massive electoral losses during the Obama years, they were still able to advance their agenda, pushing through a virtual government takeover of the healthcare industry. Republicans, on the other hand, despite having majorities in both houses of Congress and control of the presidency, have not been able to roll back Obama’s greatest legislative achievement.

While Romney and other Republicans can rightly crow about the defection of the governor of West Virginia from the Democrats to the Republicans, the GOP has not yet translated these huge gains into substantive advancements of a limited government and free market agenda of their own. The American people have spoken clearly in the 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016 elections that they do not want socialism, yet not enough Republicans are listening to make the changes that are needed.

Image of Jim Justice: Screenshot of [Jim Justice Facebook page](#)



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