

# PEOPLE'S WORLD

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continuing **THE DAILY WORKER**

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## Communist Party leaders meet to analyze election results and plan resistance strategy

By C. J. Atkins



Communist Party Co-Chair Joe Sims delivers the opening report at the meeting of the CPUSA National Committee in New York on Saturday, Nov. 16. | C.J. Atkins / People's World

NEW YORK—"The results are in, and to put it mildly, comrades, it ain't pretty."

CONTINUES ON PAGE TWO

That was the blunt assessment made by Joe Sims in his opening remarks to a Nov. 16-17 meeting of the Communist Party USA's National Committee in Manhattan. It was the first in-person conference of the full CPUSA leadership since the victory of Donald Trump.

Despite their disappointment, however, Communists are not in a state of paralysis over the Trump win, the party's national co-chair said. The mass labor and democratic movements are strategizing about what to do next, he pointed out, and hundreds of people have applied to join the Communist Party since Election Day.

Trump won't be inaugurated for another two months, but "Resistance 2.0 is already underway," Sims declared, and "Project 2025 is not inevitable."

His report, along with major new initiatives taken by the party at its weekend meeting, indicate the situation is far from hopeless.

### No shift to the right

"Trump won on the margins, or you could say Harris lost on the margins," Sims said, taking note of the fact that the MAGA leader probably eked out his popular vote win by only around one-and-a-half percent. "It's not the national realignment to the right that the talking heads have been crowing about.

"Big sections of the ruling capitalist class moved right, and the government will certainly move to the right," he argued, "but not the people."

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# Communist Party leaders meet to plan resistance strategy

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

The 2024 Republican election machine put on “the most racist, sexist, and homophobic campaign in memory,” with issues like “the Gaza genocide; the price of gas, eggs, and rent; the crisis at the border; and student debt” combining in an electoral storm that propelled Trump back to the White House.

Contrary to the centrist commentators alleging that Kamala Harris spent too much time focused on “identity politics,” Sims said down-ballot results and referendum questions contradict that conclusion. “There was no major repudiation of abortion rights, LGBTQ rights, civil rights, and other equality issues,” he said. “Woke ain’t broke.”

The fact remains, however, that “a majority of those who cast their ballot did so for a Hitler-loving rapist and insurrectionist” and the “anti-MAGA majority did not show up in sufficient force.”

### Context of capitalist crisis

Sims urged the assembled CPUSA leaders not to forget that “this bourgeois democratic campaign occurred within the context of a deep systemic crisis of capitalism.” Key to understanding the outcome was the fact that “our working class – citizen and non-citizen, Black, white, Latino, Asian, straight and LGBTQ, women and men, young and old – are hurting.”

Millions have lost trust in the presidency, Congress, the courts, mass media, big business, religious institutions, and both major political parties, he emphasized. “Union popularity is up though, and the number of people who say they’re independents is now larger than the combined total of both parties.”

The truth, Sims said, “is that neither of the parties or their candidates addressed the real underlying causes for the conditions our class is facing, nor did either of them propose solutions.”

Trump and the MAGA movement had years to prepare for this election, as they’ve been organizing since the day they left office in 2021. “There was no such momentum around Biden,” this time, though. Even in 2020, the massive 81 million-vote win that he scored was less about excitement for Biden per se, but rather due to the “public reaction to Trump’s mismanagement of the pandemic along with the impact of uprisings against police violence and murder.”

Harris entered the race with only 100 days to go, and there was an explosion, Sims said, of excitement among many for the prospect of electing the first African-American woman president. In a short time, her campaign sparked mass rallies, the organization of tens of thousands of volunteers, and raised over \$1 billion to take on Trump.

At the same time, Sims said, there are serious questions to be asked about the Democratic campaign’s strategy of courting the “never-Trumper wing of the GOP.” He said many are asking whether it would have been better to focus on turning out the sections of the coalition who failed to show up on Election Day, particularly in blue states where turnout dropped.

Sims said it’s important to remember, though, that the Harris effort was a “multi-class coalition,” which pulled the campaign in often contradictory directions. “The ruling class was the dominant force in both campaigns, including the Democratic campaign, and the working class and trade unions were unable to adequately place their imprint on it.”

There was a failure by the Democrats nationally, Sims said, “to adequately voice the depth of frustration of both rural and urban working-class folks regarding their conditions of life and to put forward a convincing platform to address those issues.” The Harris proposals for raising the minimum wage, child tax credits, Medicare-paid home care, home ownership tax credits, and non-specific price gouging efforts were important, but “they did not address the scale of the crisis.”

### Anti-MAGA majority still in place

While the analysis of what happened will continue, the CPUSA co-chair said there’s no time to waste when it comes to planning for what’s next.

“The anti-MAGA majority has not disappeared,” he said. “It may have gotten sidetracked on Election Day, but it’s still with us.” The Working Families Party, Win With Black Women, Indivisible, and other broad-based organizations have already been hosting strategy sessions, “and we have to be part of this effort.”

Sims emphasized coalitions and pushed back against any urge to go it alone or retreat into isolation at this crucial moment. “Coalitions, united front efforts, are a way of life for the Communist Party...and when we say coalitions and united fronts, we mean building unity of action on issues with anyone who agrees to work on the issue, without preconditions.”

While many may be disappointed about the direction this or that group of voters broke when it came to voting for Trump, now is no time to question the people’s front strategy.

“I hear some are questioning coalitions, claiming it doesn’t work, or if they favor coalition, it’s proposed that we bond with the sectarian left. That would lead us down a narrow path precisely when we need to build ties and influence broad sections of the population – including those influenced by Trump. That’s where the action is.”

### Party of action

Reports and discussions from a number of other commissions, districts, and clubs filled the rest of the weekend after Sims’ opening report.

Joelle Fishman, chair of the party’s Political Action Commission, detailed the efforts of Communists in the 2024 election and outlined the developing “Resistance 2.0” movement.

CPUSA members, she said, “knocked on thousands of doors, participated in phone banks, voter registration, tabling, and traveled to Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Arizona to boost the fight against Trump and MAGA.”

The party “made new friends and worked side-by-side with the AFL-CIO, SEIU and other unions, the Working Families Party, Poor People’s Campaign, Indivisible, Power to the Polls, Seed the Vote, and so many more.

“All our efforts materially contributed to victories in a number of House and Senate battleground races, and victories in state and local races and on ballot questions.”

She said the work done during the election is a foundation for organized and united action as the Trump administration takes power. “We’re not starting from scratch, and we’re not alone.” In fact, she said the resistance had already won a first victory when it forced a “no” vote in Congress on the Trump proposal to defund any non-profit organizations who oppose him. Republicans are working to reintroduce the measure.

Fishman predicted that the Trump-MAGA crowd would barrel ahead in trying to pursue their extremist agenda and prompt many people to reconsider their view of Trump. “When they overreach,” she said, “we do outreach.”

The working class is entering a difficult period, she said, which will mean that the Communist Party is needed more than ever. “Our united front approach, support for real multi-racial democracy, and our working-class socialist vision will bring new members to our doors.”

The latter point was confirmed by Rossana Cambron, co-chair of the CPUSA alongside Sims, who said that over 300 applications for membership have been received since Election Day.

Members of the National Committee and guests from around the country reported on how the work they did during the election has strengthened bonds with allies.

“Having our clubs on the ground during the campaign allowed us to keep building trust with the community, it gave us direct insights into residents’ needs,” Jahmal Henderson of Connecticut told the meeting. “It ensured our ward had one of the highest turnouts, but we still have a lot of work to do on all fronts.”

Dom Shannon, from Pennsylvania, said that the Democratic Party didn’t have much of a ground game in some areas of Philadelphia and that the labor and people’s movements had to pick up the slack. CP members were a key part of the effort. “Some folks at the canvassing headquarters asked, ‘Are all these people Communist Party members?’ And we were like, ‘Hell yeah, they are.’”

Shannon said the CPUSA club in Philly concluded, “If the Dems aren’t going to fight fascism, we have to do it. Not for the sake of the Democratic Party, but for the sake of our working class.”

Noah Palm reported that the CP club in Peoria, Illinois, dispatched its members to assist in battleground races in Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. While they went to help, he said they also learned a lot.

“We’re bringing that election experience of talking to working-class people about economics and politics back to Peoria” to improve work there. He said that the local club’s first meeting after the election saw a turnout that was double its norm.

Similar stories were repeated by club and district leaders from other states

### **Voice for the movements, voice of the party**

The People’s World Editorial Board presented information on the publication’s election outreach efforts and fresh developments in its work. Over 500 election-related articles were published in 2024, with the website garnering nearly 2.7 million reads – 100,000 of those since Nov. 5.

People’s World’s [first post-election analysis article](#), published the morning after the vote, has received wide circulation at home and abroad, including reprints in Britain, Brazil, Canada, India, and Spain and translations into Portuguese and [Spanish](#).

The number of print digest editions of People’s World also continues to grow, with issues now circulating nationally among incarcerated persons and regionally in Connecticut, Michigan, Ohio, Oregon, and the South. Initial planning is also underway for a major revamp of the People’s World flagship website, which has not seen a substantial upgrade since 2016.

In a related issue, John Bachtell – the president of Long View Publishing, the company that produces People’s World – brought it to the meeting’s attention that the 2024 People’s World Fund Drive has not yet been completed, with \$36,000 still to be raised by the end of the year to reach the publication’s \$200,000 goal.

In response, a motion was raised from the floor noting that since People’s World is the voice of the party, the membership should do more to make sure it keeps publishing. The motion suggested that each CPUSA club be asked to commit to contributing \$360 by the end of December; if 100 clubs are able to do it, that would wipe out the gap. The proposal was adopted. Separately, CPUSA districts that have not yet set or fulfilled their own 2024 fund drive goals were asked to step up the pace.

### **SOCIAList SECURITY**

In addition to surveying the election results and coalition work, the National Committee also took several steps to strengthen the party’s finances and organizational structure.

Roberta Wood and Daniel Carson made a presentation on behalf of the Finance Committee and launched a new legacy-giving program called “SOCIAList SECURITY,” a name that is a nod to the Social Security insurance program that protects workers in their retirement.

“Our movement is 100% funded by its working-class members and supporters – including those who are no longer with us,” Carson said when unveiling the initiative. “We have no corporate backers or big money foundations.” As part of the effort to strengthen the movement’s financial foundations, the meeting saw the launch of SOCIAList SECURITY, a revamp of the legacy giving program.

Much of the work that the CPUSA and the family of organizations under its umbrella do is only possible because of the contributions made by generations of Communist activists and allies.

“It’s not just the super-rich who have estates; working-class people also accumulate some small resources,” Carson said. “They want to make sure their family is taken care of, and for many people, they also consider the party a part of their family.”

Wood said, “Legacy giving is really the bedrock of support for working-class struggle that is passed on from generation to generation.” In a new promotional video for the effort, 106-year-old Bea Lumpkin encouraged everyone to consider signing up: “The struggle for socialism will go on long after you and I are gone, but we can still be a part of the movement.”

Carson and Wood asked members and friends of the party and readers of People’s World to think about their own legacy and how they can go on supporting the movement for years and years to come. And they emphasized that it’s not only seniors who should be giving it some thought.

Details on how to join the Socialist Security community are available on the [People’s World](#) and [CPUSA](#) websites.

### **Education and organization**

The CPUSA’s Education Commission and its Working Class Project are also taking up the challenge of preparing the party’s ranks for the struggles ahead.

Dee Miles, who chairs the work of these bodies, reported that a National Marxist School will take place from Jan. 18 to Feb. 25, 2025. She encouraged clubs and districts to start thinking now about who can attend.

A “Journalistic Writing Series,” with lessons on conducting interviews and writing news articles, will be held in conjunction with People’s World on Tuesdays in March. There are also ongoing sessions on a variety of topics under the theme “Mental Health for Activists,” and a book talk on [Historical Materialism](#) will be held in the coming weeks.

Miles said there is more to come. “We ask you: Invite the Ed Commission to your clubs and districts; tell us what you and your members need. Our movement’s Marxist analysis needs to be living, and it needs to be shared.”

Another step taken by the National Committee was the election of Anita Waters as the party’s new Organizational Secretary. The party’s National Convention, its highest body, voted to create the position earlier this summer and instructed the incoming National Committee to find a suitable candidate.

Having served as chair of the Ohio District, Waters played a major role in coordinating the growth of the state’s membership and organizing them into cohesive clubs – expanding from a single club to seven, so far. Waters is also involved in the party nationally, serving on its National Board and Executive Committee.

In nominating Waters, Co-Chair Rossana Cambron said that the role of Organizational Secretary is “not an administrative job, but a political one.” She said the job is about “facilitating conversations and relationships, building up clubs and districts so that the party acts as one.”

After being elected, Waters said she was excited to take on the assignment and overwhelmed by the possibilities the party has before it at this moment.

“I joined the party in 1980 when Reagan was elected,” she said. “In 2016, after Trump won, my youngest son threw two \$20s at me and said, ‘OK, I’ll join.’ This moment is another one of those times when people are looking for how to join the movement for change.”

### **Make the seemingly impossible possible**

On Sunday afternoon, Cambron surveyed the discussions of the weekend and offered thoughts about the way forward for not just the CPUSA but the whole labor and progressive movement.

“The discussion this weekend has helped us to get a clearer picture of what happened, helped us to not have knee-jerk reactions to the results. Because we’re Marxist-Leninists, we have the ability to objectively look at the situation, see where we are, and ask what options are available to us now.”



She encouraged the leaders of the party to “take stock of the opportunities before us in terms of what’s possible” and “share it with others.” She said, “Fear and division is the branding of the capitalist class, but optimism and unity is our branding.”

Speaking of the hundreds who’ve applied for CPUSA membership in the last several days, she said that people “are looking for a community, and they see our party as the community they want to be a part of.”

As the U.S. working class – and particularly people of color, immigrants, women, and LGBTQ people – brace for the onslaught of Trump’s return, she said, “It’s time to meet the moment, to make the seemingly impossible possible.”

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## Sanders to try again for Israeli military aid cutoff

By Mark Gruenberg



*Ind. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont. | AP*

WASHINGTON—Sen. Bernie Sanders, Ind-Vt., the only senator ever to have lived in Israel, but long before its current right-wing nationalist regime took power, will try again to cut off U.S. military aid to that nation. He’s pushing for votes on November 20 on two aid cutoff resolutions.

As usual, Sanders has the support of J Street, the progressive pro-peace and pro-democracy Jewish-American group which now declares it has supplanted the notoriously right-wing “Israel lobby,” AIPAC, as the speaker for most U.S. Jews. AIPAC, funded by right-wing Republican big givers, staunchly supports the Israeli right—even when the right’s not in power—and Israel’s war on Gaza.

Sanders has tried twice before to cut off the aid, arguing both times that Israel’s war on Gaza is not only an international humanitarian disaster but a violation of U.S. law. He failed both times.

The Democratic Biden administration has drawn several “lines in the sand” against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s regime. Netanyahu, an open Donald Trump supporter, has crossed those lines with impunity.

Biden is increasingly nettled but unwilling to cut off military aid. Vice President Kamala Harris gave Netanyahu a steaming private lecture about violating humanitarian aid law, then informed the press. But in the recent presidential campaign—which she lost to bombastic pro-Israel Trump—Harris shied away from advocating a military aid cutoff.

That law, approved during the Kennedy administration, says the U.S. must withhold military aid to any ally which uses U.S. arms, aid, weapons, and other assistance in violation of international law. He’s making the same argument now, even more forcefully than before.

### Stop violating the law

“The United States government must stop blatantly violating the law with regard to arms sales to Israel,” the senator wrote in a November 18 Washington Post op-ed. “The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Arms Export Control Act are very clear: The United States cannot provide weapons to any country that violates internationally recognized human rights.”

The Foreign Assistance Act also cuts off U.S. military aid to any nation that “prohibits or otherwise restricts, directly or indirectly,” delivery of U.S. humanitarian aid, he added.

Right-winger Netanyahu’s government is breaking both laws, Sanders argues.

And Israel’s using U.S.-supplied one-ton bombs, drones, planes, and ammo, bought with \$18 billion, so far, in U.S. military aid to Israel—money which goes to U.S. military contractors. That’s yielded “more than 50,000 tons” of weapons and warplanes, Sanders says.

Sanders declares Netanyahu’s rightist nationalist Israeli government unleashed the Israeli military to turn Gaza into a smoking ruin, starving its people, depriving them of water, power, and medicines, killing more than 43,000 Gazans, injuring at least 103,000, creating more than two million refugees and 17,000 orphans.

And Israeli warplanes, bought with U.S. aid and built by U.S. military contractors, bomb and strafe hospitals, schools, and columns of refugees in what the Israelis themselves term “safe” corridors.

The Israeli attack on Gaza continues a long war on Palestinians that goes back to when the British took control of Palestine, starting in 1922.

More recently, Netanyahu unleashed right-wing nationalist settlers on the Palestinian inhabitants of the occupied West Bank, while its army and police stood by and did nothing. Netanyahu also sent Israeli warplanes to bomb southern Lebanon, to destroy another pro-Palestinian fighting force, Hezbollah.

That bombing, up to and including the Lebanese capital of Beirut, has killed more than a thousand Lebanese civilians. Like the dead Gazans, most are women and children.

Both Sanders and J Street say enough is enough.

“As I have said many times, Israel clearly had a right to respond to the horrific Hamas terrorist attack,” Sanders wrote in his op-ed. Netanyahu is not just waging war on Hamas, but engaging in “all-out war against the Palestinian people.

## Driven from homes

“During the last year, millions of desperately poor people in Gaza have been driven from their homes, forced to evacuate again and again with nothing more than the clothes on their backs,” Sanders said. “Families have been herded into so-called safe zones, only to face continued bombardment.

“The children of Gaza have suffered a level of physical and emotional trauma that is almost beyond comprehension and that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

“As horrific as the situation in Gaza has been over the past year, it is getting unimaginably worse. Humanitarian aid workers on the ground report tens of thousands of children now experience malnutrition and starvation because of Israel’s restrictions on humanitarian aid.” Those curbs break U.S. law, too.

“Infuriatingly and bewilderingly, however, the Biden administration said it cannot see any violation of our laws,” Sanders said.

Sanders and J Street both declare the public supports a cease-fire and a U.S. role in negotiating Israeli-Palestinian peace. In its latest surveys, in September, the non-partisan Pew Research Center reported that 61% of respondents want the U.S. to play a minor (37%) or major role in ending the war. The rest are evenly split between saying the U.S. should stay out of it and those with no opinion.

That end-the-war majority covers both political parties, though Republicans are more likely to say the U.S. should stay out of trying to settle the conflict.

J Street adds that not only does the war violate U.S. and international law, but it also violates Jewish values, proclaimed in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible.

“Parents in Gaza are going days without food in order to feed their children. Doctors are operating without anesthetics or antibiotics. It’s a painful violation of our Jewish values,” J Street President Jeremy Ben-Ami wrote in a “contact your senator” mass e-mail.

“Setting a 30-day deadline, the administration demanded a tenfold increase in aid trucks, that aid crossings be kept consistently open, and outlined a series of steps to get aid workers in, ensure they are safe, and allow families to return to their homes where possible.

“Since then, there has been distressingly little progress. Last week, the U.S. said Netanyahu earned a ‘fail’ grade. This week, the world’s leading aid agencies reported not a single benchmark had been met. Israel’s own figures bear it out.”

“Because of its immoral actions, Israel is less secure and increasingly isolated” and “becoming a pariah nation condemned by governments around the world, international institutions and humanitarian organizations,” said Sanders. He cited examples, most of them from Europe and the United Nations.

Netanyahu has turned a deaf ear to Biden, the Europeans, U.S. opinion, and Sanders. A check of White House statements of policy discloses no stand on Sanders’s latest anti-arms aid resolutions.

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## Trump’s RFK Jr. pick a serious health hazard to Americans

By Mark Gruenberg And C.J. Atkins



*‘Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., speaks before Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump at a campaign rally at Madison Square Garden, Oct. 27, 2024, in New York. Now that he is getting the top health position in the nation there is widespread fear that, as he did in Samoa, he may push policies that result in life-threatening epidemics. | Evan Vucci/AP*

WASHINGTON—Will Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Republican president-elect Donald Trump’s pick to head the giant Health and Human Services Department, be—in the words of the warning on cigarette packages—a hazard to your health?

Off both his past stands against vaccines, against fluoridation of water, against the Food and Drug Administration, and more, the answer to that may well be “yes.”

And he’s never spoken out, as National Nurses United has, against Big Pharma or for-profit hospital chains that greedily gobble up healthcare facilities and slash staff and services in the name of the almighty dollar.

Kennedy’s also been silent about the deadly players who really impact the nation’s health care, or lack of it, by controlling the purse strings that determine whether people can afford health care, medicines or not: The giant health insurers and the pharmacy benefit managers.

Both special interests are staffed by bean-counters, mostly untrained in health, who aim to rake in premiums while denying care. A study several years ago by the Harvard Medical School concluded that deliberate denial of care by insurers refusing to pay for it cost the U.S. 44,000 needless deaths annually.



Kennedy hasn't said a word about that, either.

The Committee on Interns and Residents, a Service Employees sector that has been unionizing those underpaid, overworked groups in hospitals, has.

"Before the election, we were fighting for a better healthcare system for our country," said Dr. Taylor Walker, president of CIR/SEIU and a family physician and abortion provider in Massachusetts. "That fight will continue until every person in this country can receive quality, affordable care from their physician regardless of their race, gender, income, pregnancy status, or immigration status.

"More and more often we are hearing about pregnant people being turned away from receiving life-saving care when they encounter a complication during their pregnancy, causing many of them to die as a result. This is especially true for people of color. That has to stop.

"Too often money that should be spent on resources and staffing to improve patient care is going to executives' pockets. That has to stop.

"Our patients rely on us to provide them the best possible care, and we will continue to fight for the tools we need to provide that care. We need strong contracts that give doctors a voice at the decision-making table to ensure we have resources for cutting-edge technology, patient support, and clean and safe working conditions.

"Today, tomorrow, and always, our plan stays the same: WE FIGHT. Solidarity forever."

In a straight political payoff, Trump nominated Kennedy, son of the murdered presidential candidate, U.S. senator and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, to head the Department of Health and Human Services, the sprawling entity that handles everything from public health to Medicare and Medicaid and more.

Kennedy Jr., a former Democrat, first challenged incumbent Democratic President Joe Biden in party primaries, then turned independent to mount his own run for the White House, then dropped out of that to endorse Trump—but with the caveat that Kennedy would stay on the ballot in states where voting for him wouldn't make a difference. It worked, and Trump rewarded him with the HHS nomination.

Kennedy first made a name for himself as an environmental lawyer but has since veered off the deep end into anti-health crusades, so much so that his siblings, including former Maryland Lieutenant Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, and his cousin, JFK's sole survivor, daughter Caroline Kennedy, made very clear early in the campaign that RFK Jr. had zero family support.

Kennedy opposes vaccination—a favorite bugaboo of Trump supporters during the coronavirus pandemic—fluoridation of water, which helps prevent tooth decay, and opposes regulating the nation's food and medicines.

Those RFK policies, if imposed, could lead to further health crises. In one case, in American Samoa, they already did.

"It is hard to overstate what a terrible decision" the nomination is, British Columbia physician Robert McAlpine tweeted on X Thursday. "RFK, Jr. has no medical training. He is a hardcore anti-vaccine and misinformation peddler. The last time he meddled in a state's medical affairs" in American Samoa, "83 children died of measles."

McAlpine explained that in 2018 two nurses in Samoa accidentally prepared the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine using muscle relaxant rather than water. Two infants died after receiving the contaminated formula. The Samoan government temporarily halted vaccinations to investigate but eventually concluded the problem was the error in mixing, not with the vaccine in general.

That didn't matter to Kennedy.

He descended on the island with his anti-vaccine front group, Children's Health Defense, to exploit the deaths. News reports said his organization ran a massive publicity campaign to spread falsehoods about vaccines and to encourage parents not to vaccinate their children. Vaccination rates dropped from nearly 70% to 30%.

### 57,000 infected, 83 dead

One year later, a sick traveler brought measles to the island and sparked an epidemic that infected over 57,000 people and killed 83, including children.

Kennedy's record didn't give pause to Sen. Bill Cassidy Jr., R-La., an M.D. who, more importantly, will chair the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in the next Congress. The HELP panel will hold the confirmation hearings on the Kennedy nod.

"RFK, Jr. has championed issues like healthy foods and the need for greater transparency in our public health infrastructure," said Cassidy. "I look forward to learning more about his other policy positions and how they will support a conservative, pro-American agenda."

Trump's Kennedy nod has yet to produce specific anti-Kennedy reactions from most top health and medical groups. But recognizing the danger of ideology to public health in general, some are taking preventive action.

Healthcare policies from a new administration "can on occasion, even take us back a few steps," warned Dr. George Benjamin, M.D., president of the American Public Health Association, three days after Trump's election.

"As we look toward a new administration and session of Congress, APHA will not waver from its commitment to support strong evidence- and science-based policies and champion efforts for optimal, equitable health and well-being for all. We still believe it is important we work together and collaborate across sectors with health-minded officials, community leaders, local health practitioners, and others to achieve success.

"The American public wants, and deserves, clean air and water, access to care, reproductive health and so much more of what we advocate for.

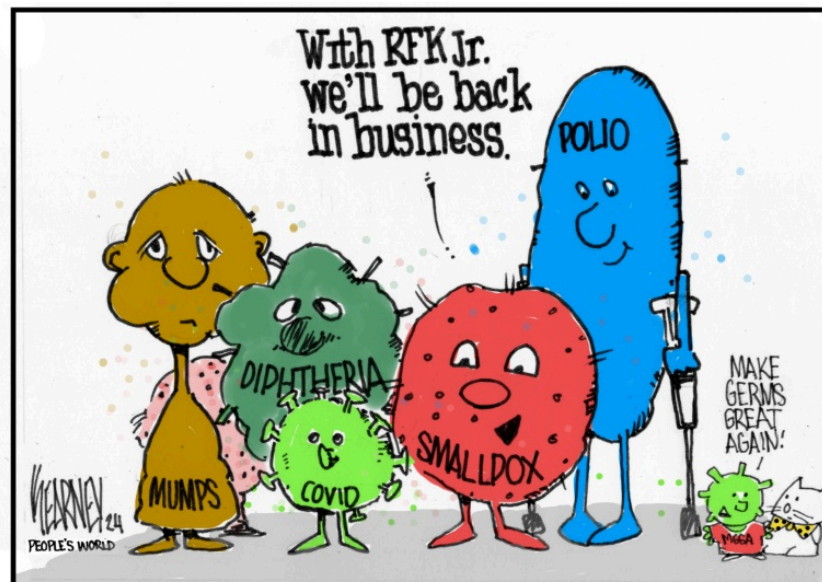
"While we expect significant policy changes with the new administration, we reject the idea that the values, perspectives, and guidance we have articulated for many years are wrong and that we should back off. I assure you, that's not going to happen.

"We will continue to work on behalf of the American people to improve their health by advocating for the best science-based social and health policies and programs. Achieving optimal health regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, age, economic status or geographic residence will remain our chief objective."

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, the Michigan family physician who blew the whistle a decade ago on the health hazard of lead in the drinking water of Flint, Mich.—and elsewhere—sounded the same theme when her institution, Michigan State University, named her associate dean of its new school of public health policy.

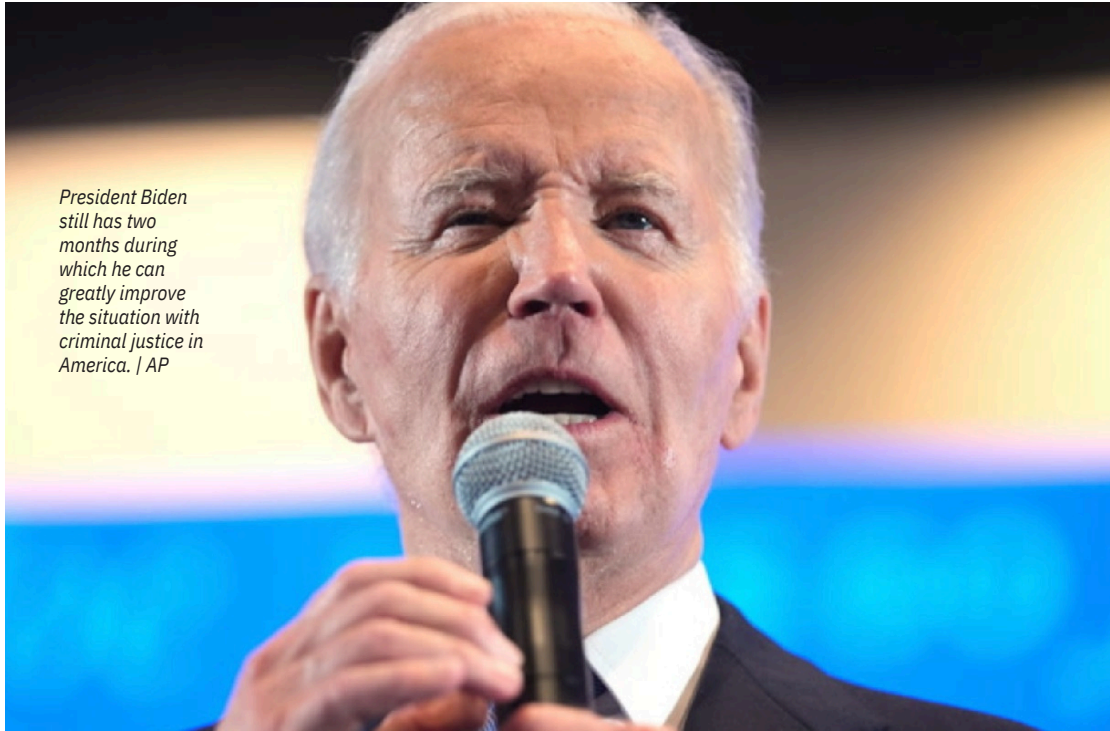
"A public health approach focuses not on treating individual patients when they become ill, but on what keeps people healthy," she said then. "There is a seismic shift in how we think about health care, partly driven by the pandemic. We want to know how to make an impact on health at the population level. How can we do better?"

The many social determinants of health, including racism, poverty, violence, climate change, mental health, and other factors "all impact health. Your census tract is one of the greatest predictors of health outcomes," Hanna-Attisha said.



# Before leaving, here's what Biden must do on criminal justice

By Jamiles Lartey



*President Biden still has two months during which he can greatly improve the situation with criminal justice in America. | AP*

Donald Trump's second presidential term will begin on Jan. 20, bringing with it [promises to dramatically reshape many aspects](#) of the criminal justice system. The U.S. Senate — with its authority over confirming judicial nominees — will also shift from Democratic to Republican control.

In the 65 days between now and then, the outgoing — or “lame duck” — Biden Administration will likely take steps to maximize its influence and legacy or preempt some Trump administration priorities. Here are three key areas where that may happen.

## Judicial nominees

The Biden team has already begun pushing the Senate to [confirm its roughly 30 pending judicial nominees](#) for vacancies on the federal bench. This week, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said that he plans to devote “significant floor time” to the effort, but the Democrats’ [slim majority in the Senate could slow down](#) the fast-paced process that some in the party are hoping for. Any confirmations will come over the objections of President-elect Trump, who has [suggested that judges should not be approved](#) by a lame-duck administration.

[Some in the judiciary bristle](#) at the idea of “Trump judges” or “Biden judges,” as the role is supposed to be nonpartisan. [Studies routinely find dramatic and persistent differences](#) in case outcomes based on party affiliation, however, and [the effect may be widening](#) in step with [increasing political polarization](#). Over the last two administrations, there have also been [vast demographic differences](#) in judicial picks based on the party that made the nomination, with the Biden administration selecting far more women and people of color.

Federal judges [restricted hundreds of Trump administration policies](#) during his first term, and will likely play a significant role in determining the trajectory of his second.

It's [not uncommon for judges to decide whether to retire](#) based on the presidential administration that will be picking their replacement. This week in Ohio, a federal district judge who had planned to take “senior status” — a kind of semi-retirement — [withdrew that decision](#), leaving one less vacancy for Trump to eventually fill. Many observers expect Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito — who are 76 and 74 years old, respectively — [to retire during Trump's next term](#), giving the president-elect the [ability to make his fourth and fifth appointments to the court](#). Some have also suggested that 70-year-old Sonia Sotomayor, one of three liberal justices on the court, should retire now, to allow Joe Biden to appoint a younger replacement before Trump takes office. However, reports indicate that [Sotomayor is not considering such a move](#).

## Pardons and commutations

While court appointments require Senate confirmation, the president has the sole authority to issue pardons or shorten sentences for federal crimes. In the face of Trump's [frequent calls for retribution against his political enemies](#), Paul Rosenzweig argues in *The Atlantic* that Biden should preemptively [pardon some of the figures Trump has in his sights](#). Rosenzweig, a law professor who served in the George W. Bush administration, names prominent Democrats, Republicans, military officials, and former Trump administration members who testified against Trump during congressional hearings as possible pardon recipients.

Others are pushing for Biden to [commute the sentences of people on federal death row to life in prison](#). [Dozens of Catholic organizations are appealing to Biden](#) on the basis of their shared religious faith. This kind of mass death-row clemency [has been done before by several state governors](#).

In 2020, Biden [ran on a campaign promise to end the federal use of the death penalty](#). While there have [been no federal executions during his time in office](#), he did not take any steps that would prevent the Trump administration from [picking up where it left off in 2020](#), executing people on death row at a rate not seen in generations — something Trump has [indicated he plans to do](#).

Because of how [slowly the death penalty appeals process moves](#), a commutation of all death row sentences would likely stop the Trump administration from completing any executions during this four-year term, assuming current legal precedents remain intact.

Abraham Bonowitz, the executive director of Death Penalty Action, a group that opposes capital punishment, told *Newsweek* that Biden has the chance [“to take away one of the things Donald Trump loves](#), which is the power to execute people.”

Biden also has some [8,000 petitions for clemency from federal prisoners](#) serving non-death penalty sentences that the president could either commute (shorten) or throw away with a pardon. To date, Biden has made [much less use of this power than his predecessors](#), but it's often in the waning days of a term that presidents use the power most.

## Policing and prisons reform

It's far less clear what the Biden administration can do to preserve its efforts to shepherd reforms in troubled police departments and prison systems. Under Biden, the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division has launched 12 investigations into local police departments to determine if they engage in a pattern or practice of civil rights violations.

In October, Reuters reported that [only four of those investigations have been completed](#), and none of those have led to a final agreement, known as a consent decree, on how the department will be required to fix the problems — though two have produced preliminary agreements.



One of those two is Louisville, Kentucky. This week, Mayor Craig Greenberg said he would not commit to signing a final agreement before the Trump administration takes over. Minneapolis is the other city with a preliminary agreement, and there are doubts there, too, about whether an agreement will materialize, although city attorney Kristyn Anderson expressed hope to the Star-Tribune that it could be completed.

Under the first Trump administration, the Civil Rights Division largely stopped using these kinds of investigations. It's expected that they will also halt such investigations in a second term. More than that, Trump and his allies have expressed a desire to “reorganize and refocus” the division, reported Vox in the days before the election, aiming to make it into “the vanguard” of the administration’s crusade against “an unholy alliance of special interests, radicals in government, and the far Left.”

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## Biden goes out with a bang, approving U.S. missiles for strikes on Russia

By John Wojcik



*A U.S.-made ATACMS missile is fired during a training exercise in South Korea. The Biden administration has now approved Ukraine firing the weapon deep into Russian territory, representing a major escalation of NATO's involvement in the war. | Photo via Korean Defense Ministry*

The news has broken that President Joe Biden has given Ukraine “permission” to fire U.S.-made ATACMS missiles deep into Russian territory, and the first attack hit Bryansk on Tuesday.

This escalation of the war is made worse by the fact that the U.S. has to directly provide the training, logistical assistance, and intelligence targeting data for the use of the missiles. This leaves Ukraine, essentially, just pushing the final launch button.

The move brings the U.S. and Russia closer to direct conflict in what has otherwise been a proxy war.

For many months last year, one of the main arguments in Washington against sending ATACMS (Army Tactical Missile System, pronounced “attack-’ems”) to Ukraine was that the level of technology involved in deploying the weapons and getting them to their targets required the expertise of U.S. personnel. The Ukrainians, it was said, lacked the training and intelligence information needed to use the missiles themselves.

There was a fear that this level of direct U.S. action in the war would be viewed as an attack by NATO on Russia. The Biden administration apparently got over that fear, as the ATACMS missiles were approved for use by Ukraine on its territory and in Crimea in late 2023, and now the green light has been given for firing them anywhere in Russia that they can reach.

The White House is engaged in this dangerous escalation because it supposedly wants to step up the fight for democracy in Ukraine before a less-friendly-to-Ukraine Trump administration takes over in 60 days. U.S. peace groups, however, are deeply concerned, and understandably so.

CodePink issued a statement condemning the move by Biden.

“We denounce President Biden’s decision to approve long-range missile strikes – already underway – deep inside Russia. Biden’s reckless decision ignores past Pentagon advice against such long-range strikes, thereby escalating tensions between the two most nuclear-armed nations, the U.S. and Russia, to endanger the entire world.

“In approving these strikes, the Biden White House chose to make the U.S. a direct party to the Ukraine-Russia war, crossing a previous red line and causing Russia to lower the threshold on the use of nuclear weapons.”

The group was referring to the announcement by President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday that his government would now consider an attack against Russia by a non-nuclear power with the “participation or support of a nuclear power” as a “joint attack on the Russian Federation.”

CodePink noted that a settlement to the war “could have been brokered a month after the February 2022 Russian invasion had Western powers not sabotaged the peace deal between Ukraine and Russia.”

Tuesday marked the 1,000th day of fighting since Russian forces crossed the border into Ukraine.

The broader permission to use ATACMS against Russian targets is not the only escalation made by the Biden administration this week. The Associated Press reports that the Pentagon will send Ukraine at least \$275 million in new weapons, including an undisclosed number of antipersonnel land mines.



The White House appears to be rushing to do as much as it can in Biden's final weeks to make things difficult for Russia. The one administration figure who has told the truth, perhaps by mistake, about the U.S. role in the war in Ukraine was Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who famously said the goal of the U.S. in Ukraine was to "weaken Russia."

That goal was long clear, with U.S. support for NATO expansion and the push by U.S. armaments makers and fossil fuel companies to destroy the long-existing policy of peaceful cooperation between Russia and the EU under which Europe purchased energy from Russia, and Russia benefited economically.

Contrary to earlier U.S. accusations, it is now clear that it was not Russia which was behind the blowing up of pipelines that delivered Russian gas to Europe.

The ending of that arrangement caused hardship in Europe and replaced a peaceful relationship with a dangerous pro-war footing. The beneficiaries were the U.S. fossil fuel companies that replaced Russia as the provider of energy to Europe and the U.S. armaments makers that continued a festival of weapons selling.

Meanwhile, Defense Secretary Austin is in the Indo-Pacific region now hammering out deals that allow expansion of U.S. nuclear weapons placement into countries throughout that region. The Korean peninsula and the surrounding area are already saturated with U.S. nuclear submarines prowling the waters, and South Korea has agreed to the placement of these weapons on its territory.

Japan, too, has been cajoled by the U.S. into giving up its official policy of pacifism. Austin is reportedly assuring leaders in the region that there will be continuity between the Biden policies of armaments buildup and those of the incoming Trump administration. Such assurances are of little comfort to pro-peace forces in the U.S. and around the world.

Some of the corporate press is assuring everyone that Putin's saber-rattling about his country's alleged readiness to use nuclear weapons is nothing to worry about. The New York Times, as if to encourage the Biden administration's escalation of the war, says the threats are hollow and that Putin will never act on them.

The implied message is that it's therefore fine for Biden to escalate the war. The Times expresses no concern, however, for what will be the obvious result of the Biden policy – many thousands of additional deaths on both sides of a war crying out not for escalation but for a negotiated settlement.

Thus far, hundreds of thousands have been killed and millions of lives have been shattered because of decisions like the one that Biden has made to provide ATACMS missiles. "We will continue to provide Ukraine the support it needs to succeed on the battlefield and prevail in its defense against Russia's aggression," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement. Shortly after that, the White House made its land mine announcement.

Also in the new "aid" package will be an infusion of air defense, including munitions for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), as well as 155mm and 105mm artillery rounds, Javelin anti-armor munitions, drones, and other equipment and spare parts.

AP reports that the weapons will be provided through presidential drawdown authority, which allows the Pentagon quickly to pull supplies from its shelves to speed them to Ukraine's front line.

The Biden administration is now racing headlong to deliver \$7.1 billion in weapons from the Pentagon's stockpiles, aiming to spend all of those funds before Trump is sworn in.

Asked if the department can get that done before Jan. 20, when Trump takes office, Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said officials are "working to get Ukraine what it needs."

In addition to the weapons in the Pentagon drawdown, the State Department told the press Tuesday that it had authorized the sale to Ukraine of \$100 million in unspecified defense equipment and services, including vehicle refurbishment, technical assistance, training, and "other related elements of logistics and program support."

Those "related elements," although they won't admit it, would very well cover the costs of using U.S. military personnel to support the latest attacks on Russia.

## Defend immigrant communities!

By Immigrant Rights Subcommittee Of The Political Action Commission, CPUSA

*Immigrant communities across the country are facing the terrifying threat from the incoming Trump administration of mass deportations and family separation. As immigrant families and organizations come together to strategize, solidarity from the entire community is key. Here are some ideas for an action plan, working with immigrant rights groups, that can be adjusted to the situation and needs in your state or city:*

- Sanctuary Cities efforts at the municipal and state levels. (Los Angeles is an example).
- Confirm state, county, and local authorities' promises of non-cooperation with enforcing immigration laws, and to not accept federal funding such as those coming from Operation Stonegarden. Hold meetings with local and state law enforcement entities, get confirmation and buy in – in writing, if possible.



- Work in coalition with immigrant-led groups to form Neighborhood Defense Committees. Include actions such as Rapid Response Networks with community allies responding to raids, stops, and other attempts to detain undocumented neighbors. Develop committees to provide legal assistance, Know Your Rights trainings, funds to bond out of immigration detention, accompaniment to court.
- Organize at the local level and the national level with national organizations to help boost local organizing.
- Invite allies to work in coalition – eg. faith leaders, labor unions, Mexican and Guatemalan consulates, Mexicans living in the U.S., and the small business community.

- Legislative efforts as possible – to create sanctuary states and to strategize ways to not enforce Trump's deportation orders.
- Legal efforts – organize groups of lawyers willing to help represent those detained, and to bring lawsuits against the unconstitutionality of the actions.
- Campaign to defend the Constitution, especially the 14th Amendment guaranteeing birthright citizenship.
- Education of the general public on who are the immigrants in the U.S. and what they contribute to the economy.

By Joe Bernick

**Trump will not bring peace – the view from Gaza.**

By Mohsen Abu Ramadan

*Mohsen Abu Ramadan is a prominent activist on the Palestinian left who lives in Gaza. This is an edited translation of an article that originally appeared in Al Ittihad the Arabic language newspaper of the Israeli Communist Party. As with all op-eds published by People's World, the views represented here are those of the author.*

Some commentators are trying to reassure themselves and the rest of us that Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election won't necessarily be so bad for Palestine and the Middle East. Such arguments, however, are based more on subjective desires than objective analysis.

Among the things that the optimists base their case on are Trump's statements that he "wants to stop the war" on Lebanon and Gaza and that he met with the Arab community in some U.S. states and promised them that. He is "a man of deals and financial calculations," we are told, and he "does not want the United States to spend billions on wars" and on supporting a rich country like the occupying state, Israel. His relationship with Benjamin Netanyahu, some claim, was bad because the latter congratulated Joe Biden when he won in 2020.

These "analyses" run contrary to reality, however, as Trump is known for his support for the fascist right in Israel, and it was he who put forward the "Deal of the Century" and proposed an "economic peace" by forming a fund to liquidate the refugee issue – essentially paying off Palestinians to leave.

There is a cultural dimension to the relationship between Trump's concepts and the Zionist project of expansion and occupation, as Trump believes that the experience of Israel is similar to that of the white European colonists of the American continent in an earlier time.

The danger of Trump's return to the White House lies in its coincidence with the rise and control of the fascist right in Israel. The latter now envisions the possibility of fully carrying out its genocide and ethnic cleansing, annexing large areas of the West Bank, confining the Palestinian people to enclaves and Bantustans, and adopting a policy of giving economic crumbs to the Palestinian people instead of the right of self-determination.

We need to face the truth and not hide behind a few vague phrases about peace that Trump might have made during the election campaign. Politics is based on the balance of power. Trump will only work to "stop the war" if he finds that the interests of the United States are harmed by its continuation.

We have to block the road to the racist occupation attempts at annexation, division, and fragmentation. Trump is no ally in that process.

Los líderes del Partido Demócrata de Arizona y los progresistas esperaban que una oleada de mujeres que votaran por el derecho al aborto llevara a Harris a la Casa Blanca y diera la vuelta a ambas cámaras de la legislatura estatal, así como un escaño en el Congreso de dos. No sucedió.

La enmienda constitucional para legalizar plenamente el derecho al aborto fue aprobada con el 62%, pero no tuvo el impacto esperado. Sin embargo, Arizona hizo historia al elegir a su primer senador mexicano-estadounidense, Rubén Gallego, para reemplazar a la independiente saliente, Kirsten Sinema.

Gallego, que ha sido miembro del Caucus Progresista del Congreso, abandonó algunas de sus posiciones progresistas, como el sistema de pagador único Medicare para todos, cuando anunció su candidatura al Senado, pero aún se espera que sea una voz progresista en Washington.

A diferencia de la mayoría de los otros llamados "estados en disputa", los encuestadores tenían a Trump liderando en Arizona durante todo el año de campaña de 2024, pero fue una ventaja ajustada en las encuestas y no la ventaja del 5,5 por ciento con la que terminó Trump. En lugar de perder terreno, los republicanos lograron pequeñas ganancias en la legislatura y mantuvieron todos sus escaños en el Congreso, incluidos los dos que habían ganado en 2022.

La legislatura de extrema derecha había puesto once propuestas en la boleta, todas ellas leyes vetadas por el gobernador Hobbs o que, según ellos, incitarían a los votantes de MAGA a acudir a las urnas. Los votantes rechazaron las propuestas destinadas a reducir los derechos democráticos y de voto, incluida una que habría hecho prácticamente imposible que se incluyeran iniciativas ciudadanas en la boleta.

Sin embargo, los votantes aprobaron una propuesta particularmente racista, la de "muéstrame tus papeles", dirigida a los inmigrantes, y otra contra los campamentos de personas sin hogar. Los partidarios de los derechos de los inmigrantes ya se reunieron la semana pasada para empezar a planificar la resistencia a cualquier intento de acorralar a los inmigrantes por parte de agentes estatales o federales.

El recuento de votos en Arizona tardó 12 días, mucho tiempo incluso para los estándares de Arizona. La lista extra larga de candidatos y propuestas requería una boleta de dos páginas que tardaba el doble en tabularse. Los resultados muestran que el área metropolitana de Phoenix, donde viven dos tercios de los arizonenses, se movió ligeramente hacia la derecha y que la Arizona rural votó más por Trump que antes.

El único punto brillante para los votantes progresistas fue Tucson. Los demócratas obtuvieron todos los cargos del condado de Pima y cuatro de los cinco supervisores del condado. La supervisora recién elegida, Jen Allen, agregará un tercer voto progresista en la Junta. Los votantes del condado también reeligieron a doce legisladores estatales demócratas y dieron vuelta uno de los tres escaños republicanos restantes. Eso hace que 23 de los 26 cargos del condado de Pima estén en elección.

Además, en la pequeña ciudad de South Tucson, las fuerzas progresistas aliadas con Casa Maria Soup Kitchen completaron su toma de posesión del Ayuntamiento. Ganaron dos de los cuatro escaños en juego esta vez para agregarlos a los tres escaños ganados en 2022 para una mayoría de 5-2. Esta fue una carrera no partidista. Hubo poca evidencia de que los votantes mexicano-estadounidenses se inclinaron por Trump en el condado de Pima.

Una nueva táctica republicana que está surgiendo en Arizona, y probablemente en otros lugares, es presentar candidatos mexicano-estadounidenses de derecha, especialmente en carreras no partidistas. Anteriormente, la derecha no nominaba a ninguna persona de color para la legislatura y a muy pocos para las juntas escolares, excepto en los distritos de mayoría chicana. Los votantes del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Tucson lograron derrotar esos intentos y reeligir a tres titulares progresistas.

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