Introduction and Analysis

Nationally, Democrats were able to flip a handful of Gubernatorial seats and take control of the United States House; Republicans were able to hang on in a couple closely watched Governors' races and did gain two seats in the United States Senate. In Ohio though, Republicans performed much better than expected. Overall, if there was a 'blue wave', it certainly missed the Buckeye State.   Voter turnout stands at 54.3%, which is higher than recent high-profile Ohio midterms: in 2006, turnout was 53.3% and in 2010 the turnout was 49.2%.

Gubernatorial Race

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine (R) coasted to victory against former Consumer Finance Protection Bureau Chief Richard Cordray (D). Going into Election Day, Cordray held a modest lead in most polls and forecasters including *FiveThirtyEight* and *Sabato's Crystal Ball* rated the seat as 'lean Democratic'. However, once results started pouring in, DeWine surged ahead and Cordray never caught up. DeWine won by nearly 200,000 votes (4%); this is larger margin than the Governor's race in 2010, where John Kasich (R) defeated incumbent Democrat Ted Strickland by a margin of just 2%.

DeWine / Husted (R)	Cordray / Sutton (D)
50.7%	46.5%
2,187,619	2,005,627

Predictably, Cordray carried counties with large, urban centers (Lucas, Franklin, Hamilton, Cuyahoga, Summit) and also carried Lorain and Athens Counties. Cordray also performed well in the Mahoning Valley, which is a region that President Trump flipped in 2016. DeWine carried 79 counties, including Montgomery, Delaware, and Clark Counties and all of Appalachia Ohio (except Athens County). With Democratic Governors taking over in Michigan and Wisconsin, President Trump will rely heavily on Governor DeWine for 2020; Ohio is a must win if Trump wants to remain in the White House.

Other Statewide Races

Democrats appeared almost certain to win Secretary of State and Auditor of State, based on polling released in past two weeks. However, all Republican candidates for statewide office cruised to victory by comfortable margins. Republicans will now control redistricting for Congressional Districts and reapportionment for State Legislative Districts following the 2020 census. Given that many of these offices are often spring boards for higher office, Democrats also miss out on grooming potential challengers for key races in 2020 and 2022.

Ohio Attorney General

Dave Yost (R)	Steve Dettelbach (D)
52.4%	47.6%
2,226,368	2,021,194

Auditor of State

Keith Faber (R)	Zach Space (D)
49.9%	46.1%
2,110,073	1,946,544

Secretary of State

Frank LaRose (R)	Kathleen Clyde (D)
50.9%	46.7%
2,166,125	1,987,916

Treasurer of State

Robert Sprague (R)	Rob Richardson (D)
53.5%	46.5%
2,257,955	1,960,075

Ohio Supreme Court

Republicans will continue their dominance on Ohio's high court, however Democrats did manage to win back two seats. Judge Melody Stewart defeated recently appointed Justice Mary DeGenaro. DeGenaro had been appointed to replace Justice Bill O'Neill, who was previously the high court's lone Democrat. Judge Michael Donnelly also defeated Republican Craig Baldwin. The Court's split will now be 5R – 2D.

Michael Donnelly (D)	Craig Baldwin (R)		Melody Stewart (D)	Mary DeGenaro (R)
61%	39%		52.5%	47.5%
2,116,136	1,352,859		1,803,277	1,630,977

Congressional Races

Democrats were able to win control of the United States House of Representatives, but as we predicted, they did not do so with any help from Ohio. Despite energy and fundraising advantages in many districts, no incumbent Republican members of Congress from Ohio were defeated. In the only open race, Anthony Gonzales (R) easily defeated Susan Moran Palmer (D) 56.8% - 43.2%. Democrats were unable to close the gap in Ohio's 12th District, where Congressman Troy Balderson (R) had narrowly won in the August Special Election. He comfortably defeated challenge Danny O'Connor (D) by 4%—

Troy Balderson (R)	Danny O'Connor (D)
51.6%	47.1%
171.757	156,863

Election Day wasn't all bad for Democrats—Incumbent Senator Sherrod Brown easily defeated Congressman Jim Renacci (R) to win a third term. He won by nearly a 7% margin, which is notable since President Trump carried Ohio by 8% in 2016. Brown is considered to be a potential candidate for President or Vice President in 2020 and his strong performance in Ohio will certainly bolster his prospects—

Sherrod Brown (D)	Jim Renacci (R)
53.2%	46.8%
2,286,730	2,011,832

Nationally, Democrats were able to flip a Senate seat in Nevada by knocking off incumbent Republican Dean Heller; however, Republicans defeated democratic incumbents in Missouri (McCaskill), North Dakota (Heitkamp), and Indiana (Donnelly). The new United States Senate majority will by 53R – 47D. This will likely make it easier for President Trump's judicial nominees to win confirmation. As previously noted, Democrats did gain control of the United States House of Representatives, though the exact margin will not be finalized until a handful of outstanding races are counted and certified.

Ohio General Assembly

The freshman class of the 133rd General Assembly will be the largest in history—42 freshman legislators will be sworn in next year. However, only 29 are newcomers to the state legislature; the rest currently serve in one chamber and are jumping to another.

Ohio House of Representatives

Democrats saw a net gain in the Ohio House of 4 seats; the new partisan split for the lower chamber will be 62R – 37D. As expected, Democrats did very well in competitive races in Franklin County and Northeast Ohio, but failed to break the GOP supermajority in the House. The election also has implications for the Speakership race between Reps. Ryan Smith (R-Bidwell) and Larry Householder (R-Glenford); the Republican candidates in many of these competitive districts were considered to be in the Householder camp. At this point, Speaker Smith is likely to retain his gavel in 2019. Key seat changes are as follows—

District	Republican	Democrat	Result	Gain
6	Jim Trakas	Phil Robinson	Robinson	D + 1
19	Tim Barhorst	Mary Lightbody	Lightbody	D + 1
21	Stu Harris	Beth Liston	Liston	D + 1
24	Erik Yassenoff	Allison Russo	Russo	D + 1
37	Mike Rasor	Casey Weinstein	Weinstein	D + 1
59	Don Manning	Eric Ungaro	Manning	R + 1

Ohio Senate

Republicans managed to add to their majority in the Ohio Senate by winning a open seat in the 33rd Senate District. Businessowner Mike Rulli (R) defeated State Representative John Boccieri (D) in the race to succeed term-limited State Senator Joe Schiavoni (R-Boardman). Democrats were unable to flip any seats, despite close margins in the 3rd Senate District (Gonzales v. Maharath), 5th Senate District (Huffman v. Bradley), and 19th Senate District (Brenner v. Valentine). The 3rd Senate District, which featured State Representative Anne Gonzales (R-Westerville) and challenger Tina Maharath (D) is too close to call; Gonzales leads by only 329 votes. Assuming Gonzales prevails, the new Senate split will be 25R – 8D.

Issue 1 Constitutional Amendment

Issue 1, the constitutional amendment to reform Ohio's sentencing laws for drug offenses, failed by nearly a 2-to-1 margin. The Ohio General Assembly might take up sentencing reform next year, so supporters of Issue 1 might still see progress on this front. Many pundits and opponents argued that Issue 1 was merely a 'get out the vote' maneuver from wealthy, progressive interests. If that was case, the issue did not succeed in driving Democratic voters to the polls.

For Issue 1	Against Issue 1
36.6%	63.4%
1,568,347	2,716,958