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**NH Voter, December 2022. The newsletter of the League of Women Voters NH.
Election 2022 wrap-up and a look forward.**

Report on the two ballot questions: New Hampshire voters 2 to 1 turned down the opportunity to hold a constitutional convention. That question comes up every 10 years. The other question, whether to get rid of the county office of Register of Probate, needed a 2/3 vote and fell about 3% short of that. So the office stays, even though it has no official duties.

Some interesting statistics: Here we are, 102 years after women secured their right to vote and to hold office. Nationally, twelve women have recently been elected to serve as governors in the US, a new record. Women now make up about a quarter of governors in the US. Over 24% of Congress members are female. Although Nancy Pelosi has stepped down from party leadership in Congress, her 35 years spanned many bills and seven presidents, and she was the first female Speaker of the House, serving under four presidents.

Here in New Hampshire, half the newly elected state senators are women. The Executive Council make-up did not change, with 2 of the 5 members female.

A surprising number of younger people ran for the NH House. We hope to see a breakdown soon of the winners. The youngest of the new NH House members is an 18-year old woman from Salem.

Is New Hampshire really a “purple” state, the swing state that we’ve claimed for the last 20 years or more? It would seem the independence of NH voters can’t be denied: We sent three Democrat incumbents back to DC with clear majorities, but we voted for a Republican governor and a Republican (4-1) dominated Executive Council.

Part of the heavy Republican lean in state senate seats is due to partisan redistricting.

Specifically 14 of the 24 state senate seats were won by Republicans, even though Democrat candidates got 50.5% of the NH Senate votes overall.

Eight NH House races had fewer than 8 votes each between the winners and losers heading into the recounts.

Registered voters in NH: From Garry Rayno of InDepthNH on 11/22/22-- After the Nov. 8 election, there were 289,590 registered Democrats, 284,705 Republicans and 351,106 undeclared voters.

Many NH House races were very close, with recounts going on for more than a week. Most dramatic is in Rochester's ward 4 where Democratic incumbent Chuck Grassie and Republican challenger David Walker are now locked in a tie at 970 votes each. To be seen: how will the tie be broken? Sec. Of State Scanlon drew laughs from the crowd when he said they could let the legislature decide. As he spoke, the legislature's unofficial count was 200 Republican seats to 199 Democratic seats.

(The next day someone told me that in the mid-60s there was a tie vote for a House seat and they ended up seating both representatives, with each getting one-half of a vote on bills. I'd love to hear from someone who knows whether this bizarre solution really happened.)

Don't every let anyone tell you your vote doesn't matter!

A bit of history: **1974, the US Senate race in New Hampshire**. Now that was a close race for the record books! And a badly handled recount process.... (with thanks to Wikipedia for summing this up for me) On election day November 1974, Republican [Louis Wyman](#) won NH's US Senate seat with a margin of just 355 votes out of more than 220,000. Of course there was a recount, which his opponent [John A. Durkin](#) then won by 10 votes. After a second recount, Wyman won by just 2 votes. The Democrat-controlled Senate at first agreed to seat Wyman, who served the last 3 days of Senator Norris Cotton's term (Cotton had decided not to run again in 1974 after 27 years, first in the House and then in the Senate). But the US Senate began to deliberate again when the new Senate took office in January. The Senate was deadlocked for months, national attention to NH's plight of having just one senator was embarrassing, and the Governor and Executive Council threatened to sue the US Senate for not seating someone! Durkin agreed to Wyman's proposal for a new election. Before the US Senate recessed in August they declared the seat vacant. That allowed the NH governor to appoint retired Norris Cotton to hold the seat for six weeks until a special election on September 16. John Durkin won the special election by 27,000 votes, with the largest turnout till then for any special election.

Other political updates from NH:

Former NH Senator Melanie Levesque, a champion of voting rights during her time in the senate, has announced she will run for Secretary of State. The SOS is elected by the legislature in our state, on December 7 this year during their "organization day."

Leadership chosen in the NH House and NH Senate:

NH House: Democrats picked Rep. Matt Wilhelm from Manchester to serve as the Democratic nominee for NH House Speaker. The Republican caucus chose Sherman Packard, who served for the past two years as speaker. The vote will depend on how many reps from each party show up on organization day. As I type the first draft of this newsletter, the count is 200 GOP seats and 199 Dem seats, with the Rochester recount pending.

NH Senate: With a 14 to 10 seat majority, it is clear that Republican senator Jeb Bradley will be elected senate president. Donna Soucy will be the minority leader.

We had a good election. Record voter turnout for mid-term election (nearly 70% turnout statewide). For the most part voting ran smoothly, with only Derry having ridiculous waits to get into the polling place. The state conducted random audits of four polling places, per the new law that went into effect this year, and found very little discrepancy between polling place results and audit results, and all differences could be explained. Our election workers are to be thanked for doing a complicated job well. In some towns counting took a bit longer than usual, due to new reporting requirements and to more ballots needing to be hand-counted, but we got results by the next day, as expected. To League members and friends who stepped up to work at the polls or to be non-partisan observers, thank you! And to those of you who helped spread voting information to others about how to vote and what the ballot questions were about, another round of thanks.

The 2023-24 NH Legislature begins its work in early January. This will be a budget year and all the hearings that entails. We'll also have new bills to deal with. League will begin its weekly "legislative alerts" in January, with instructions on how all of us can observe bill hearings and submit testimony. Our voices matter, and we should take advantage of the opportunity to guide legislation by our lived experiences. Those alerts are emailed to members and others on our Mailchimp list, and will also be posted on the Issue/Actions page of our website: <https://lwvnh.org/> *If any League members want to track a certain kind of legislation for us, please email us via our website.*

For those who missed our recent webinar, "**Supporting Our Public Schools,**" on November 16—it was recorded and is available as a youtube video (free; just click on the link below). Guest speakers from Higher NH and from NH Charitable Foundation shared their work to support NH public schools in the face of legislative and other threats.

Watch a recording of the webinar, here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SV1rJPVQe4A>

A number of resources were shared during the webinar, which you can find here:

- [Together We Thrive](#) (NH Charitable Foundation's new strategic plan)
- [Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis](#), by Robert D. Putnam
- Reaching Higher NH website: <https://reachinghighernh.org/>