Political Committee Chair Newsletter Submission

11/6/26

Although West Virginia still remains one of the most Republican states in the union, the November 3, 2026 mid-term election results made it clear that there are a good number of voters who want change and that money isn't always the determining factor in campaigns.

The biggest challenge that West Virginia faces is low voter participation rates. Only 38% of West Virginia's registered voters participated in the 2026 mid-term elections. WV Sierra Club Chapter Chairman, Bill Price is concerned and asks "what can grassroots community leaders do to reverse this trend?" He suggests "civic education coupled with listening to non-voters about what they would need to see to get them engaged."

The elections saw the return of high-profile incumbents at the federal level with Shelly Moore Capito capturing 58.3% of the votes compared to Rachel Fetty-Anderson with 37.9%. Riley Moore had 59.4% of votes compared to Ace Parsi's 40.6%. Considering the funds that Capito and Moore had at their disposal the numbers of the challengers should be a message to Capito and Moore that West Virginian's are looking for something different than the status quo.

At the state level, Democrats more than doubled their numbers in the House of Delegates going from 9 to 21. They made similar gains in the Senate going from 2 to 4. These numbers indicate a historic shift in the local legislative composition.

Democratic women made strides in West Virginia on Election Day, winning eight seats in the House of Delegates. West Virginia's Legislature has the fewest number of women lawmakers, with just 12 Republican and Democratic women serving in the House. In 2027, that number will grow to 19.

Out of the eleven candidates endorsed by the WV Chapter Sierra Club the results are as follows:

House of Delegates:

- **Kayla Young** (D) incumbent, District 56 (Kanawha)- Won
- **Mike Puskin** (D) incumbent, District 54 (Kanawha) - Won
- **Evan Hansen** (D) incumbent, District 51 (Monongalia) - Won
- **Olivia Miller** (D) challenger, District 80 (Monongalia) - Won
- **Lucia Valentine** (D) challenger, District 97 (Berkeley-Jefferson) - Won
- **Jenny Thacker** (D) challenger. District 100 (Jefferson) – Won
- **Steve Williams** (D) challenger, District 24 (Putnam) - Won
- **Marta Beck** (D) challenger, District 98 (Jefferson) - Lost
- **Mike Mosteller** (D) challenger, District 21 (Putnam) - Lost
- **Elizabeth Sanchez** (D) challenger District 94 (Berkeley) - Lost
- **Deborah Stiles** (D) challenger, District 85, (Grant-Tucker) – Lost

Congratulations to all the candidates who participated! To the winners, your hard work, strategy, and dedication truly paid off! To those who didn't win their seats this time, your resilience and determination are what make a great competition, and we can’t wait to see you come back even stronger next time!

Molly Martin, Political Committee Chair

Sierra Club WV Chapter Executive Committee Member