



May 17th, 2026

To: Interested Parties
From: Stephen Clermont, Change Research
Re: Recent Governor Elections

Voters in recent elections for Governor have moved away from the party occupying the White House and that shift has largely come from people switching their vote. This memo highlights the races in New Jersey and Virginia in 2025 compared to 2021 along with the factors that shifted Florida away from the Democratic Party in 2022 and how those conditions are reversed today.

After every Presidential election, Change Research's analytics team assigns a score to every voter on the file indicating their likelihood to vote for the Democratic presidential nominee and for Donald Trump. This allows us to measure the partisanship of future electorate to determine how much of the result comes from one party turning out at a higher rate and/or the winning candidate gaining votes from people who voted for a different party's nominee for president.

In 2025, after Trump's victory:

- New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill won by 14.4 points - a 9.7-point improvement over Kamala Harris (+5.9 to +14.4). We estimate 68.2% of the shift came from flipping Trump voters and 31.8% from an increase in Democratic turnout. Sherrill reversed all of Kamala Harris's decline in the most Hispanic parts of the state.
- Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger won by 15.4 points - an 8.5-point improvement over Kamala Harris (+7.2 to +15.4). We estimate 84.5% of the improvement came from vote switching and 15.5% from turnout.

In 2021, after Biden's victory:

- New Jersey shifted 12.7 points in the Republican direction - 44.1% from vote switching and 55.9% from a Republican increase in turnout.
- Republican Glenn Youngkin shifted the Virginia electorate 12.1 points in his favor - 66.1% coming from vote switching and 33.9% from turnout.

In Florida:

- In 2022, Ron DeSantis shifted the margin from Trump 16 points in his favor - 62.5% from vote switching and 37.5% from turnout. This was consistent with what happened in 2021 in Virginia and New Jersey.

- According to Civiqs, Donald Trump's approval has fallen further since his Inauguration Day (52%-44% to 43%-53%) than Biden's did during his first two years (43%-49% to 36%-57%).
- Democrats have shifted voters in elections: 16-17 point shifts to Democrats in the CD-1 and CD-6 special elections in April 2025, Eileen Higgins winning by 19 points to become the first elected Democratic Mayor of Miami since 1997, and a 21-point shift to Democrats in flipping FL-59, the home of Mar-a-Lago, in March of this year.

Ron DeSantis's big victory in 2022 was foreshadowed by what happened in Virginia and New Jersey the year before. **Those conditions are completely reversed today** as our most recent Florida poll shows with Byron Donalds lagging David Jolly among those who will likely vote this fall.