



2005 Election Impact on the Arts Report

Citizens Vote Overwhelmingly for Pro-Arts Ballot Initiatives and Candidates

While 2005 is considered an off-year for national and most statewide elections, hundreds of local elections took place in communities across the country as well as two statewide elections in New Jersey and Virginia. Four out of four local ballot initiatives having a positive direct impact on the arts and arts education passed overwhelmingly in Arizona, California, Ohio, and Utah. Additionally, Colorado passed a statewide ballot that will temporarily suspend implementation of the controversial “Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights” law, the outcome of which could potentially benefit the arts and other social services in that state.

Dozens of pro-arts mayors were re-elected to office as well as both governors-elect in New Jersey and Virginia. Whether this year’s election results foreshadow future trends in American politics is yet to be determined. However, we know candidates watched closely as they prepare for the 2006 mid-term election when a third of the U.S. Senate, all 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, dozens of Governors, and thousands of state legislators are up for election.

LOCAL BALLOT INITIATIVES

ARIZONA

Holbrook Bond Initiative – *Passed with 65% of the vote.* During a special bond election for the Holbrook School District, voters were asked to authorize the proposed construction of an auditorium, the 800-seat George Gardner Performing Arts Center. Approximately \$4.1 million in ad valorem tax bonds will be issued for the purpose of constructing and equipping the new auditorium and related improvements at the Holbrook High School campus.

CALIFORNIA

Santa Cruz Measure B – *Passed with 80% of the vote.* Voters overwhelmingly passed a reauthorization of a parcel tax that will generate more than \$2 million annually for Santa Cruz City Schools over the next seven years (beginning on July 1, 2006). The measure required a two-thirds majority approval in order to pass. Measure B, allows for a tax to property owners in the city of Santa Cruz of \$70 per parcel to pay for teachers, art and music programs, and librarians and counselors in elementary and middle schools. School officials strongly supported the tax in light of recent funding cuts at the state and federal levels.

OHIO

Lima Levy Initiative – *Passed with 55% of the vote.* The Ottoville school board placed a one percent income tax (for five years) on the ballot to cover operating expenses in schools. Beginning on Jan. 1, 2006, the tax will raise approximately \$525,000 per year. Due to decreased

funding from the state, the levy will help avoid additional cuts to the only program areas that have not already been eliminated in schools including -- industrial arts, elementary art and music.

UTAH

Orem City Initiative: *Passed with 58% of the vote (5,016 voting “yes” and 3,661 voting “no”)*

The tax proposal known as CARE (Cultural Arts and Recreation Enhancement) will allocate 10 cents from every \$100 in sales tax and funnel it into cultural arts and recreation programs in the city. The tax is projected to generate almost \$1.6 million a year, based on the city's current sales tax figures. The funds can be used for live theater, symphonies, operas, ballets, or other nonprofit entities, specifically naming the Utah Regional Ballet, the Utah Valley Symphony, and the Youth Symphony. The money can also be used for publicly owned facilities such as parks, trails, bike paths, performing arts centers or museums.

LOCAL MAYORAL RACES

At the local level, approximately 100 mayoral elections (in cities with populations over 75,000) were held, bringing more good news to the arts as many incumbent mayors who were arts supporters won re-election. Most incumbent mayors in large cities retained their seats.

In **Atlanta** for example, popular Mayor Shirley Franklin (D) won with an astounding 91 percent of the vote. The mayor has vowed to make quality of life issues including the arts a priority during this term. Mayor Franklin has helped raise local government funding to the City of Atlanta's Bureau of Cultural Affairs and has worked closely with the county to maintain local funding for the arts.

Boston's longstanding Mayor Thomas Menino (D) won a fourth-term with 68 percent of the vote. Mayor Menino has notably increased the number of performing arts venues in his city supporting the local arts scene while advancing neighborhood development. Perhaps the most dramatic of his theater development projects is the Huntington Theatre's new Calderwood Pavilion Theater at the Boston Center for the Arts. This project located on city-owned land, took ten years of sustained development work to complete including cleaning up industrial waste.

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg (R) won reelection with 58 percent of the vote. Recently referred to as “The Arts Administration” by *The New York Times*, Mayor Bloomberg's administration has done more to promote and support the arts than any other in a generation. The mayor has ensured that public art has a presence throughout the big apple - from placing a Roy Lichtenstein sculpture in the center of the former Tweed Courthouse, to bringing “The Gates,” a project by artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude that was showcased in Central Park earlier this year and attracted thousands of tourists. He has also put his full support behind the city's arts commission, which is now involved in essentially every important public-works project in the city.

In **Seattle**, Mayor Greg Nickels (D) was reelected with 63 percent of the vote. Under Mayor Nickels's leadership, the Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs was elevated to an executive agency. The Mayor has also appointed high profile commissioners, and given his support to major projects like the McCaw Hall Opera House and the Wing Luke Asian Museum expansion. He also instituted the Mayor's Arts Awards and Hip Hop Awards, and restored funding for arts and culture.

Additional Highlights from the Mayoral Elections:

- In **San Diego**, after a period of uncertainty and political turmoil, Jerry Sanders (R), a former police chief, took the mayoral election with 54 percent defeating city councilwoman and surf shop owner Donna Frye (D).
- In **Buffalo**, State Senator Byron W. Brown (D) was elected into the mayoral seat with 64 percent of the vote making history as the first African-American mayor of New York's second-largest city. He defeated Kevin J. Helfer (R) who received 27 percent of the vote. Incumbent Mayor Anthony M. Masiello decided earlier in the year not to seek a 4th term.
- In **Cincinnati**, Mark Mallory (D) a local state representative also had a historical win by becoming the first black elected mayor. He beat David Pepper (D) with 51 percent of the vote.
- In **St. Paul**, incumbent Mayor Randy Kelly (D) was defeated with 30 percent of the vote by former city Councilman Chris Coleman (D) who won with 69 percent of the vote. Polls suggest that Kelly was defeated after he went against his party last year to endorse President Bush's reelection campaign.
- **Cleveland** Incumbent Jane Campbell (D), who became the first female mayor in the city, was ousted by Frank Jackson (D), the City Council President who won with 55 percent of the vote.
- In **Miami**, Hurricane Wilma led to a postponed mayoral election now set for November 15. Mayor Manny Diaz (I) appears to be at the top so far, against four opponents in his bid for a second four-year term.
- Bob O'Connor (D) won the **Pittsburgh** mayor's race with 67 percent of the vote. Former Mayor Tom Murphy did not seek re-election.
- **Charlotte's** incumbent Mayor Pat McCrory (R) won reelection with 56 percent of the vote.
- **Houston** Mayor **Bill White** (D) won his bid for another term with 90 percent of the vote.
- **Detroit** Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick (D) won reelection to a second term with 53 percent of the vote.

STATE BALLOT INITIATIVES

Citizens in eight states voted on a total of 41 statewide ballot initiatives. But, of the 41, only one in Colorado has a potential positive impact on the arts. Of the 41 initiatives, only 51 percent passed. This is in stark contrast to last year's elections, when voters overwhelmingly approved various statewide ballot initiatives. The range of ballot issues in 2005 was fairly broad. Ten dealt with state tax revenues (eight passed), six dealt with election/redistricting laws (zero passed), six with health issues (one passed), six with state budgets (three passed), and finally another six with state and local government issues (three passed). Five statewide ballots were concerned with transportation (four passed) and, of note, four of four statewide initiatives dealing with economic development passed.

COLORADO

Colorado Referendum C: *Passed with 52 percent of the vote.*

This statewide ballot suspends for five years implementation of the highly controversial Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) referendum that originally passed in 1992. By way of background to this complex issue, Colorado's budget crisis has been mounting for the last several years as a result of TABOR, which established both a low limit for state expenditure growth and mandated immediate refunds to taxpayers of all surplus revenues. These budgetary challenges were later compounded by a state constitutional mandate to increase education funding, which meant that over time a progressively larger share of Colorado's budget would be devoted to education. As a result, the state's budget was largely stripped of discretionary funding for such programs as the arts, thereby slashing the Colorado Council on the Arts budget by 93 percent in 2004. Now, with passage of this year's referendum, the state will have more revenue and flexibility to restore funding to various social service and other discretionary programs, including the arts. It is of interest to note that several other states with TABOR laws were closely watching Colorado to determine if they should also present a similar ballot initiative in their states to temporarily suspend implementation.

STATE GUBERNATORIAL RACES

NEW JERSEY

In New Jersey, Democratic candidate for Governor Jon Corzine emerged victorious over Republican Douglas Forrester with a voting margin of 54 to 43 percent in one of the most expensive political campaigns in the history of New Jersey state elections. Governor-elect Corzine also withstood an onslaught of negative attack ads that citizens ultimately rejected.

Having served the past five years as one of New Jersey's U.S. Senators, Governor-elect Corzine has both demonstrated his support for the arts in the Senate and pledged an excellent gubernatorial platform of state support for the arts. Earlier this year, our state arts advocacy partner, **ArtPride New Jersey**, conducted a candidate questionnaire on the arts. Governor-elect Corzine provided the following responses regarding state funding of the arts.

“Yes. I support the continued implementation of the 2003 hotel/motel occupancy dedication as a practical way to ensure continuous funding for the arts, cultural and historical trusts...New Jersey has tremendous arts ‘assets,’ such as the Newark PAC to the State Theater and so many

other wonderful arts and cultural institutions that the government should promote and invest in. I am a strong believer in an ‘invest, grow and prosper’ philosophy and the arts play a critical role in the state’s tourism industry.”

Governor-elect Corzine was also asked if he believes that every student should have arts education as part of a basic education, and if he supported the implementation of the visual and performing arts education standards for New Jersey schools. His response follows.

“Yes. I believe every child benefits from arts education. I think the arts are something that bridge the differences in our society. Arts create a place where people can touch each other’s lives across racial, gender, political, all kinds of lines. It enlightens our lives. It’s an extraordinary, positive ingredient.”

It is of interest to note that once he is sworn in as Governor, one of his first duties will be to appoint someone to fill out the balance of his term in the United States Senate.

VIRGINIA

While New Jersey traditionally leans Democratic, it was not a big surprise for a Democrat to be elected into the Governor’s office. However, it is a different story in Virginia where the state legislature is controlled by Republicans and President George W. Bush won that state by a nine percent margin in 2004. Virginia citizens split the ticket and elected a Democrat for the top position of Governor and a Republican for Lt. Governor. Governor-elect Tim Kaine, a moderate Democrat and the current Lt. Governor, realized an unexpectedly wide victory of 52 to 46 percent over Republican Jerry Kilgore, a former state Attorney General. As in New Jersey, Virginia citizens seem to have rejected the unusually negative attack ads that the Governor-elect’s opponent ran in the final weeks of the campaign. The margin of victory for the Lt. Governor’s race was razor thin, 50.5 to 49.3 percent.

Earlier this year, our state arts advocacy partner, **Virginians for the Arts**, conducted a candidate questionnaire on the arts. Governor-elect Kaine provided the following response regarding state funding of the arts. He agreed with the statements that would support *“increasing the present appropriation for grants made to arts organizations throughout Virginia by the Virginia Commission for the Arts in the 2006-08 biennial budget ...and the goal of providing \$1 per capita in funding for grants to arts organizations.”* It should be noted that the Lt. Governor-elect also agreed with this pro-arts platform.

STATE LEGISLATIVE RACES

In both New Jersey and Virginia, the entire House of Delegates was up for election. For the most part, most races were uncontested with Democrats netting a one-seat pick up in New Jersey and a two-seat pick up in Virginia, but there was no overall change in political control of these state houses. Additionally, the overall balance of control of state houses in the nation has not changed. Republicans still control 20 state legislatures and Democrats control 19. Ten state legislatures split control and one unicameral legislature is non-partisan. Regarding the nation’s Governors, Republicans still hold the top spot in 28 states while Democrats control 22.